

The Believer's Magazine.

A Monthly Journal of
Ministry of the Word of God,

*Biblical Exposition and Study, with Questions
and Answers.*

EDITED BY

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THE BELIEVERS' MAGAZINE.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF SCRIPTURE EXPOSITION.

A NEW YEAR WATCHWORD,

"I PRESS ON TOWARD THE GOAL" (Phil. iii. 14 R.V.).

AS we set forth on the untrodden pathway of another year, these words of holy ardour and devotion, written by Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, in his cell, and borne by Epaphroditus "to the saints at Philippi" over nineteen centuries ago, yet withal inspired words from the mouth of God to His saints of all the ages, meet and greet us as a message and a watchword for the daily path throughout the opening year. What a spirit of spiritual progression they breathe! What a contrast to the self-complacency in spiritual attainment of our times! Here the heavenward traveller is in full and energetic movement along the path. Forgetting all that he has gained; leaving behind as milestones on the road all his victories and attainments, he presses on like a racer on the course, with head thrown forward and hands outstretched, reaching forth toward the mark, the goal, the prize, the victor's crown. It is not the Christian's standing that is here in view, but his state; not his position "in Christ Jesus," in which all alike share, but the progress of his spiritual life, his laying hold on that for which he has been himself apprehended, the answer of the Christ-filled heart to the call upward and heavenward, the response to that Divine purpose made known to faith, that the believer is predestinated to bear the image of his Lord, and to be like and with

Him in that bright glory into which He as Forerunner has already entered. There is much, very much to hinder, to retard, to weaken this progress of the soul; much to discourage one whose desire is, to lay hold of, to possess, to go straight on along the path. There was in the apostle's day, alike in the world and the church. Powerful enemies, bonds and imprisonments in the world; secret foes, growing errors, and fickle friends in the church, while even in the inner circle of his fellow-believers, some like Demas had turned aside from the path. Nevertheless, over against and in spite of all these discouragements and depressions, grace triumphed in his soul, and the ringing words, "I press on toward the mark," tell how fully and blessedly he was occupied with the supreme Object, Christ in glory, who had won his heart and set him on that road at the beginning. Thus may we press on, in the triumph of Christ, along the same heavenly road till the goal is gained—Christ in glory. That there are difficulties, and foes and countless opposing forces, faith knows, but it knows also from whence come the supplies of strength and victorious power, to enable the saint of God, the servant of Christ to press on with unwearied step along the path marked out in the Word of God, our unerring guide and counsellor. This is no time for leaving the path or loitering on it. Therefore, let us 'Press on.'

THE WORD OF GOD :

ITS PURITY, USES, DAILY READING, AND STUDY.

PART I. BY THE EDITOR.

THE Bible is God's own Book, His Divine and perfect Revelation, His living Voice speaking to men, in all ages. It should be read prayerfully, listened to reverently, received believingly, obeyed implicitly. Its central object is Christ, its Teacher the Holy Spirit, its design man's blessing, its end the glory of God. It is the instrument in regeneration, the means of sanctification, the channel of edification to the believer. It gives light upon all his path, regulates all his relationships and gives counsel for all his behaviour, in the family, the church, and the world. It should be dealt with daily, personally, prayerfully, purposely, perseveringly, in the presence of God, for the soul's individual need. It is bread to feed, light to search, water to cleanse; the secret of growth, the source of strength, the shield of preservation, the sword of victory. *Read* it regularly, connectedly, consecutively. Give your heart and mind the whole field of Scripture; Christ in type and prophecy in the Old; Christ on earth, in life, in death and in glory, in the New. The Bible is from God. It is Divinely inspired, has been miraculously guarded, is of supreme authority, all sufficient, eternal. The standard of doctrine, the channel of blessing, the rule of life, the final appeal on all God's things, in all ages. Nothing needs to be added to it because nothing is wanting; nothing taken from it, because nothing is superfluous. Like its

Author, it is Divine, unchanging, eternal. Its writers were men, but their words were the words of the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. i. 21; 2 Sam. xxiii. 2). It was accepted as it existed, was read, used and spoken of as "the Word of God" (Mark vii. 13), "the Scripture" which cannot be broken (John x. 35) by the Lord Jesus, of whom it is declared that He "knew all men" (John ii. 24), and had "all things" given into His hand (John iii. 35), of whom His own disciples confessed, "Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things" (John xvi. 30)—a glory which some deny Him. Would the Lord have put His imprimature upon a Book, accepting its various divisions as they stood (Luke xxiv. 43-44), calling it the "Scriptures," opening His disciples' understanding that they might understand these Scriptures, and sending the Spirit to teach and guide them into "all the truth" therein contained, had He believed, as some now would fain persuade us, that the Book is a combination of truth and error, of Divine revelation and human legend? The Bible carries its own credentials. It causes its voice to be heard. Its light convicts, its warnings alarm, its grace converts the soul. It shews man, reveals God, testifies of Christ. It is the instrument in conversion, the means of instruction, the power for edification. It teaches the babe, guides the youth, and fully furnishes "the man of God" unto all good works. All God's mighty men have been readers, students, lovers of the Book. Charles H. Spurgeon says: "The Word, the simple, pure, infallible Word of God we must live upon if we are to

become strong against error and tenacious of truth." Robert C. Chapman writes : " Meditation on the Word of God is the chief means of our growth in grace. It is a thriving soul that finds the Book of God growing more and more precious." J. Nelson Darby testifies—" My joy, my comfort, my food, my strength for near thirty years have been the Scriptures received implicitly as the Word of God. In the beginning of that period I was put through the deepest exercise on that point. Did heaven and earth, the visible church, and man himself, crumble into nonentity, I should, through grace since that epoch, hold to the Word as an unbreakable link between my soul and God."

Read the Word *daily*. Set apart a fixed time for the daily reading of the Word. When left to be read at any time it is frequently not read at all. Keep to your set time, do not allow trivial engagements, social functions, or business calls to deprive you of it. God and the soul first, other things fall into their proper places after.

Read the Word *prayerfully*. In prayer you speak to God ; through the Word God speaks to you. While your eyes rest on the sacred page, let your heart be lifted up to God, with the prayer that the eye of faith may be opened to " behold wondrous things " out of His law (Psa. cxix. 18). Remember that the Spirit of God is your Teacher, that He by whose inspiration these words of God were written, alone can unfold their spiritual meaning to your understanding and your heart (1 Cor. ii. 10-14), and make them strength and comfort to your soul. When you discover some fresh aspect of truth,

when you dig out some hitherto unknown treasure, when some new ray of heaven's light enters your heart, meditate on it, speak to God about it, praise Him for it, ask Him to make it your soul's personal possession, to make it good to you experimentally.

George Müller, of Bristol, says : " It is a common temptation of Satan, to make us give up the reading of the Word and prayer when our enjoyment is gone, as if it were of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were of no use to pray when we have no spirit of prayer ; whilst the truth is, in order to enjoy the Word, we ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer is, to continue praying, for the less we read the Word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray."

—o—

ALL THE DAY LONG.

FEARING to grieve Thee, Master,
Fearing to do Thee wrong,
Oh ! keep me, I beseech Thee—

" All the day long."

Covered in hours of conflict ;

Covered when foes are strong ;

Under Thy mighty shadow—

" All the day long."

Waiting through hours of darkness,

Waiting while trials throng,

Hoping alone in Thee, Lord—

" All the day long."

Praising for countless mercies ;

Praising with joyful song,

For ALL Thy loving-kindness,

" All the day long."

THE UNSELFISHNESS OF LOVE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT KENSINGTON HALL,
BRADFORD, 5TH NOVEMBER, 1904.

PART II.—BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

AND so we come back to this, that, whatever God claims from us, His claim is based upon what He Himself has done for us; and again we say that, as we contemplate this wonderful pattern, we are amazed, not that God should ask so much, but that we should be so unmoved at our feeble response to claims thus enforced.

And now let us turn back to the Scriptures with which we commenced. In 1 Cor. x. 24, it is *the things of others* which are put in contrast with *our own things*. But in Phil. ii. 20-21 the contrast is with *the things of Jesus Christ*. How instructive and how searching to the conscience this is. I earnestly desire to seek the things of Jesus Christ, and God's test as to whether I am doing so is simply this—"Are you caring for the state of others?" Among those regarding whom the apostle so sorrowfully laments that all were seeking their own things, there were doubtless many whose love to and zeal for the Lord Jesus were unquestioned by those who knew them. Yet when this test is applied, what universal failure became manifest. "I have no man like-minded, who will genuinely care for your state." We are ready to admit that we are not our own, for we have been bought with a price, and we belong to Him who bought us. But He claims the manifestation of this in our genuine care one for another, a care that will always be shewn according to our estimate of how much we

owe to our blessed Lord. When the disciples were striving which of them should be accounted the greatest, and the Lord was instructing them that the greatest must be the servant (Luke xxii. 26), He enforced what He was saying by putting the question to them—"Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth?" The answer was obvious—"Is not he that sitteth at meat?" And then came the heart-searching comment—"But I am among you as He that serveth." Yes, He was the only one of that company who had taken the servant's place, for this was after He had washed their feet. All the rest had reclined at ease, while He, His garment laid aside, and girded with a towel, had knelt beside each one and ministered the refreshment which none had offered to Him. "I am among you as He that serveth." That is always His claim, even when He takes the place of authority and gives us His commandments. The two always go together. "Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am." But none the less He is among them as the serving one. He had cared for their state in such an unmistakeable manner that every word He uttered as Master and Lord carried irresistible force with it.

And this is the indispensable requisite in connection with our attempts at shepherd work and oversight. Do our brethren recognise us as those who serve, who seek not our own things but the things of Jesus Christ; and that by genuinely caring for the state of our brethren, no matter at what cost to ourselves?

We might consider some of the ways in

which this care is to be exercised, for it is very far reaching, and comes into every detail of our relationship to fellow-believers. The words we have been dwelling upon in 1 Cor. x. are followed immediately by a practical application, which needs to be enforced to-day as much as when the apostle made it. Of course, I do not mean that the question of meats offered to idols is ever likely to trouble us. But the principle is that of sacrificing my liberty and declining to do what is perfectly lawful, because it might make a weak brother stumble. If I am to do all to the glory of God, I must not put a stumbling block before any. It matters not that the occasion of stumbling lies in their ignorance. My concern should be that they do not stumble, and I must readily forego my liberty for such a cause. But how often do we hear this principle deliberately set at nought? "I can do such a thing with a perfectly clear conscience, and I don't see why I should be expected to give it up because some one else thinks differently." When the heart is so little concerned as to the consequences of our behaviour, there is great reason to fear that the conscience we boast about is at fault also; and that our first need is to judge ourselves about the things we have proclaimed to be lawful.

Another most important point is whether we are able to bear within gratitude, with evil returned for good, with misrepresentation and other painful things from those we seek to care for. It is delightful to visit those who are themselves happy in the Lord, and who are sure to give us a welcome. But a large

part of our shepherd visits will have to be to those who have got away from God, and are, therefore, little disposed to listen to us. It is not, as a rule, those who have openly wandered into sin with whom the great difficulties arise. They may be very hard, but they seldom treat us badly. Their conscience condemns them for the course they are walking in, and they do not pretend to justify their ways. But it is those who profess to be all right with God, while, in reality, Satan has got a sad advantage over them, that put shepherd grace to the severest test. In these cases it is commonly wounded pride or vanity that is at the bottom of all the trouble. But this is the last thing that any of us like to admit, and it is wonderful what ingenuity the flesh displays in such cases in finding other pretexts to account for the position that has been taken up. We may expect to have all kinds of charges levelled against us when we seek to reach the conscience of a brother under such circumstances. Are we able to bear this meekly, not once, but again and again? For such an one is often hard to be won, and nothing but the having learned deep down in our hearts to care for the things of Jesus Christ, and to see those things in the state of our brother, will enable us to go on with unfailing patience till he has been won back to a lowly subjection to the Lord, which will put everything into its proper place.

When Paul wrote to Timothy about the work of oversight, do we wonder that he should preface his instructions with these words, "If any one stretches forth his hand to oversight, he desires a beautiful

work?" The pathos of this declaration is completely destroyed by the Authorised Version, with its "office of a bishop." The word translated "desire" only occurs three times in the New Testament, and its full meaning is to stretch out the hands in entreaty. The other two places where we find it are Heb. xi. 16, "But now they *desire* a better country, that is an heavenly;" and 1 Tim. vi. 10, "For the love of money is a root of all evil; which some having *coveted after*," &c. What a picture of real, soul-absorbing longing we get in the thought of one entreating with outstretched arms. Terribly true of many believers who have set their hearts upon money, and so have pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But how beautiful when it describes the attitude of one who is earnestly beginning to show a care for the saints, and genuinely to seek after their well-being. This is the foundation, and without it all the qualifications named afterwards, will not make a true shepherd and bishop of souls. It is like the love of 1 Cor. xiii.

In conclusion, let us again consider some of the ways in which the Lord Jesus genuinely cared for the needs of others, seeing in them the very thing the Father had sent Him for. We will look especially at the solemn closing scenes of Calvary. We read in Ps. lxxix. 4, "They that hate me without a cause are more in number than the hairs of mine head; they that would destroy me, being mine enemies, wrongfully, are mighty. Then I restored that which I took not away." Think of the night He had passed through in the palace of the High Priest. "Then did they

spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands" (Matth. xxvi. 67). The Holy Spirit makes no comment. He leaves us to ponder upon the Lord of Glory thus treated. Then He is hurried off to Pilate, and the crown of thorns and the scourging are added to what He had endured before. And at last the full desire of those who hated Him without a cause is to be gratified, and He is led away to be crucified. Has the moment then come when He may ask the Father for the twelve legions of angels, who shall destroy all His adversaries in an instant? Oh, no. It had been written of Him in the Scriptures, "Then I restored that which I took not away," and the destruction of His enemies would in no wise have fulfilled that Scripture. No, His answer to it all was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Who can tell the delight of that prayer to the Father's heart? God had beheld a world full of corruption, bloodshed, and violence, and in all this, God had been robbed of that for which He had made man in His likeness. For God created us that we should love another as well as Himself. And in this prayer the Lord Jesus gives back to God that which He had never taken away. He had no thought for Himself, but only for the perishing sinners around Him, who hated Him without a cause.

Then, again, see the same utter self-forgetfulness in His care for His disciples. Turning again to Ps. lxxix. 6, we read, "Let not them that wait on Thee, O Lord God of Hosts, be ashamed for My sake; let not those that seek Thee be confounded

for My sake, O God of Israel." Who were those that waited on God at that time? I do not deny the application of this Psalm to the time of Jacob's trouble, when the godly remnant will seek God's face. But there is an earlier application, and the Lord, in the midst of His own anguish of spirit and body, is thinking of a little company, who, after much boasting that they would never leave Him, had all fled, and He will not deny them their name of seekers after God. He is concerned for them, and He prays that they may not be ashamed or confounded. In Heb. iii. we are told to "consider" Jesus. In chap. xii. 3, we have quite another word; the exhortation is really to *compare ourselves with Him*. We have been considering Him. May the blessed Holy Spirit so enable us now to compare ourselves with Him, that every conscience may be exercised by those solemn words, "I have no man like-minded, who will genuinely care for your state," and that every heart may be stirred to imitate Him in self-forgetful care for others.

"IT NEEDS GOD."

A FEW believers in a mining village had begun to assemble in the Lord's Name for worship and mutual edification according to the principles set forth in the Word. Most of them had been accustomed to the order of things practised in the world's churches, with their one-man minister, office-bearers, choir, and such like. They had no need in those days to be exercised before God as to what part He would have them take in the worship

or edification of His people; all was arranged by man, and the whole thing went like clockwork, even when there was not a breath of spiritual life in the sermon or the preacher. But when God opened their eyes to see "the more excellent way" of assembling as a company of purged worshippers, subject to the Lord, and under the guidance of His Spirit, they sometimes found things did not go so sweetly or orderly as they had hoped. An aged servant of Christ, on a visit to them one Lord's day, gave a word of ministry, and one of his remarks at least stuck to them. He said—"When we were in man's systems, everything was so arranged that there was no possibility of disorder, but when we came to take God's way of things, there was liberty and blessing instead of bondage and barrenness; but there is also the opportunity for the flesh in us to manifest itself, which, unless we are right with God, it will surely do. The fact is, man's way can go on as long as man is at the helm, but God's way needs God Himself, and keeps us in dependence upon Him, that we may do all according to His will. When we get away from God, all sorts of disorders creep in, and manifest where we are. And it is well that it is so, for unless we are right with God and have God with us, our assembly testimony is not worth the room we occupy on God's earth." That was a sound testimony, and explains many a breakdown. It is a law of the spiritual kingdom, operating alike in the individual believer and the church, that God's business needs God Himself to carry it on. Human efforts without God always fail.

THE EPISTLES OF PETER.

NOTES OF BIBLE READINGS.

BY THE LATE J. G. BELLETT.

BEFORE we enter on the 1st Epistle of Peter, we will look for a moment at Peter himself. There is one very comforting thing to see, in looking at the apostles: there were three classes among them—those who were unnoticed but by name, as Thaddeus and Bartholomew; others who were occasionally named, and some who are always prominent, as Peter, James, and John. We find these distinctions still in the Church. We find some very active, and others coming only occasionally forward. Then there were other distinctions. Thomas was a very *reasoning* man; Peter a very *uncalculating* man. Peter, again, was a very *social* man; John very *retiring*. It is very happy to find these modern distinctions in what passed under the eye of Christ.

Among the Apostles we get three very prominent persons; and, even among these three, we get Peter greatly distinguished. Peter was ecclesiastically the first, and as long as the apostleship was the apostleship of the twelve, he was the chief. Now, we have lost sight of the apostleship of the twelve, and are under the irregular Gentile apostleship. And not only so, but Peter was brought into special exercises. He was separated by mistakes and by affection, and we find him distinguished by the Father and by Christ. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but *my Father*." The rock of the Church was disclosed to Peter by *the Father*. Then he was distinguished by the *Lord* at the close. "Simon, Simon,

behold Satan hath desired to have *you*, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for *thee*." This is very striking. "And when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." And now, let me ask, did Peter fulfil this commission? He did, eminently. We see Peter, in the first twelve chapters of the Acts, strengthening the brethren, and feeding the sheep. In the opening of the Acts, he is the man in the gap, as we say. In chapter i, he shows the secret of the 109th Psalm. In chapter ii, he interprets the day of Pentecost for the strengthening of the brethren. In chapter iii, he stands in the face of Jewish persecutors; and so on to chapter xii. When we look at these things, there is something very comforting in them. If we see our brethren more signalled than ourselves, let us rejoice. We see, in the Lord's dealings with the Apostles, the same variety that we see among ourselves. Are there not social Peters among us, and retiring Johns? Thaddeus was as evangelically dear to Christ as John, but the Lord was training John for special service. But as to His love from everlasting to everlasting, it is a common affection, though in the midst of its commonness we find this beautiful variety. Peter gives place when we find God about further to unfold His purposes. The Apostle of the flesh gives place to the Apostle of the glory. Those who say Peter was not the chief of the twelve are ignorantly contending for a piece of Protestant doctrine. But you and I are under a ministry that began from the glorification of the Son of Man (see Acts ix.) in heaven.

"IT WILL TAKE GOD TO DO THAT."

I REMEMBER when I was a very young Christian, hearing of a quarrel or disagreement of some sort among a company of believers, and of some being asked to "arbitrate" or "judge" in the matter. In this they had evidently failed, or at anyrate their efforts had no satisfactory result in the healing of the sore. When one who had shared in the unfruitful service had related how they had been baffled in their attempt, an aged Christian man, who was one of the company, and who, from a long experience in the things of God, had evidently seen the hopelessness of the task they had undertaken, shook his head and quietly remarked, "I do not wonder at your failure to put matters right there, *it will take God to do that.*" Nobody made any reply; probably they all felt the force of it, at anyrate it formed an abiding place in my heart and mind, which it holds till this day. There are difficulties and troubles, both in the individual lives of God's people and in their relation to each other, which no art of man can reach, and no human ability can remedy. "It will take God to do that," is a principle that applies to such troubles, and the sooner that this recognised and men leave them alone, the sooner will an All-wise God have room to magnify His grace and manifest His power in dealing with those troubles and the hidden causes that produce them. Man, in his shortsightedness, can only deal with the effects, or such of them as come under his observation, but when God puts forth His hand

in discipline and correction, with a view to restoration, he goes to the root of the matter and deals with the hidden causes which men cannot see. In all such matters, the aged Christian's word, "It will take God to do that," is worth remembering.

WAITING FOR CHRIST.

WAITING and watching the live-long day,

Lifting the voice of her heart to pray,
She stands in her beauty, the bride and queen,

Counting the hours that lie between.

Abroad through earth is a sound of war,
Distress among nations wide and far;
And the failing of strong men's hearts,
for fear

Of the dreadful things that are drawing near.

But she stands in her safety, the bride and queen,

Leaning, as only the loved can lean,
On the Heart that broke in its love for her,

When bearing the burden she could not bear.

Famine and pestilence stalk abroad,
Scoffers are slighting the Word of God,
And the love of many is waxing cold—
Dimmed is the sheen of the once-fine gold.

But she stands in her beauty, the bride and queen,

Counting the hours that lie between—
Counting the hours till He shall come,
The hope of her heart, her Star and Sun.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES FOR BIBLE READINGS.

THE BELIEVER'S BODY.

- A Member of Christ (1 Cor. vi. 15).
 A Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19).
 A Sacrifice to God (Rom. xii. 1).

THREEFOLD VICTORY.

- Victory over Sin (Rom. vi. 14)—By Grace.
 Victory over the Devil (1 John ii. 13-14)—By the Word.
 Victory over the World (1 John v. 4-5)—By Faith.

THE TRIUNE GOD FOR US.

- As set forth in Romans, chapter viii.
 God our Justifier (ver. 31-32).
 Christ our Intercessor (ver. 34-35).
 The Spirit our Helper (ver. 26-27).

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

"Do the words 'married to another,' in Rom. vii. 4, refer to the same event as described in Rev. xix. 7. The individual believer's union with Christ as risen from the dead, is the truth taught in Rom. vii. 4. "The marriage of the Lamb"—the future union in glory of the whole company of the redeemed of this dispensation, is the subject of Rev. xix. 1-8. The present relation of the church is that of an espoused virgin (see 2 Cor. xi. 2) destined for Christ, in contrast to the earthly people who are said to have been "married" unto Jehovah (Jer. iii. 14).

"Does the Scripture 'obedient unto death' (Phil. ii. 8) mean that the Lord Jesus yielded obedience to death as a power?" No; but that He yielded obedience unto God, whose willing Bond-servant He had become, up to the length of death, and that the death of utmost shame and degradation of the Cross. Death had no claim on Him, no power to demand or take his life. He "gave Himself" (Gal. i. 4), He laid down His life (John x. 17-18).

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Answers to Correspondents.

"INQUIRER."—The best book known by us on the subject is "The Coming Prince," by Sir Robert Anderson. Its price is 5s.

A.L., CARDIFF.—Where there is spiritual warmth and a ministry of Christ, young believers will be drawn, and no power of man will be able to hinder them from coming to hear and be helped on in the truth. But where there is little of the magnetism of true Christian fellowship, and a ministry of the Word suited to their need, they will wander into byways, and soon become lost in the crowd.

H.B., EDINBURGH.—A glance at the advertisement page of the Glasgow Saturday "Evening Citizen," in which the Sunday services are announced, will show you how far in the direction you name some preachers of small calibre are going. Very likely they find it difficult to get or hold an audience by any preaching ability they have, so the "Soloist" is called to their aid. Both combined, the result is generally pithless enough.

J.B., NORWOOD.—There is a vast difference between a mutual arrangement amongst brethren in an assembly qualified to preach the Gospel, as to who among them shall be responsible for the meetings, and a few seizing and retaining the right to bring whoever they think fit, without the least consideration of either the assembly or those taking oversight in it. The former is godly fellowship, the latter clerical domination.

J.B., SOUTH WALES.—We rejoice to hear of the workings of the sovereign Spirit of God, and of sinners being truly converted, notwithstanding much of man's work being mixed up with it. Whatever is of God will stand. The lack of solid ministry of the Word amongst those born of God is the cause of the reaction you mention. Feelings, testimony, and revival singing, cannot feed the new life, or guide the outward steps. The Word is God's provision for both. Use it and get it in among young converts. They need and must have the Bread of Life broken small.

H.B., SOUTHPORT.—If young believers are taught the importance of taking the Word of God as their guide and rule of life in everything in the earliest stages of their Christian life—as those converted at the Gospel meetings of Christians gathering according to the Word used to be—there will be little difficulty in leading them on in the path of separation to God and from the world in all its forms, religious as well as social. But if they are fed on "light bread," occupied with "choir practice," and initiated in the art of "solo singing," instead of meditation on the Word of God and prayer, their spiritual life will be shallow, not characterised by reverence for the Word or a walk with God in the

path of obedience and separation from the world. It is the lack of inward condition that causes decline in outward testimony and walk.

W. D., GLASGOW.—We do not believe that children of God who are in denominational connections, generally either ask to be allowed to break bread, or want to do so, when they come on a visit to halls where believers gather. When their visit is due to exercise of mind regarding the truth, they come to see whether what is there done is according to what they have been learning from the Word, and it is well that they be allowed to do so, and not hurried beyond their light. If the visit is from curiosity or worse, it would be impious to encourage any in such a frame of mind to partake of the Lord's Supper. A genuine inquirer, being led on in the Word and desiring to please the Lord, will always be characterised by a spirit of subjection to His will, and never claim as a "right" to bread break as an isolated act, refusing all other privileges and responsibilities of the Christian Assembly. Where such a condition of things exists, it is mostly due to untaught or self-willed persons bringing their friends and visitors—as it is customary for worldly-religious people to take their guests to "their church"—and placing them within the assembly for the day, on their own responsibility, generally without any exercise on the visitors' part, other than etiquette in "going to church" with their host, and the same rule is expected to be observed when a return visit is paid, the professedly separated believer appearing "in church" with his host. But while all this may be worldly custom and etiquette, it is not conformity to the will of God. Either the sects are *right*, and should never have been separated from—in which case those who have done so should at once confess the sin of so separating, and go back honestly—or, they are *wrong*, and if so, should not be recognised or visited for any cause whatever by those who have been out from them.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION I.—What action should be taken (if any) toward those who come to the Assembly, in a place where they are visiting, and immediately after breaking bread there, go to sects and missions,

openly identifying themselves with and preaching for them, claiming this as a "liberty" given them by the Lord, and not infrequently using a good part of the time on the Lord's Day morning in defending their conduct, or scolding those who do not follow their example.

ANSWER A.—There are and always will be ignorant ones in the "churches of the saints," who need instruction, and weak ones who require to be borne with on account of their fickleness. But there are also those who are wilful and "unruly," for whom the apostle commands a very different mode of dealing (1 Thess. v. 14). The little value that is placed by some on "the fellowship of saints," compared with an opportunity to speak anywhere, is the cause of such conduct. If these sects are right, why should they ever have left them? If wrong, why should they come and go with them? This should be freely and clearly set before them at least. If they refuse to listen, that is their responsibility, and if such is their attitude toward God's truth, very likely they will soon migrate to the sects altogether.—J.S.

ANSWER B.—The line of things named in this question, is one of the results of the kind of teaching to which some are now accustomed, namely, that one may attend, if he so desires, "the breaking of bread" on the Lord's Day morning, who has no other and wishes to have no other part with believers so gathered. The rest of the day is spent in hearing clerical preachers, or in preaching in sectarian places. And this is now regarded in many places as so proper, that if any who are seeking to maintain the path of separation as taught in the Word, and once professed at least, (whether ever really learned from God is another matter) by some who now ignore it—open their Bible even to read God's own words, they will get a very restless and unwelcome hearing, and in all probability be taken to task by those who least wish the consciences of God's people to be exercised thereby. It is difficult to see why such persons should wish to be an hour each week in company with those whom they are either not in sympathy with, or do not find sufficient recognition of their gifts amongst at all other times. We fear the chief attraction to some of this class is, the opportunity afforded around the Lord's table for the display of their talent, generally in the manner named by the questioner. This, for the sake of the Lord's Name, unto which His people gather, should be caused to cease.—W.J.M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Over thirty years ago, when we were brought out from denominationalism to gather simply in the Lord's Name, such a condition of things as this question reveals was unknown. The line of separation between the simple gatherings of believers and the sects was clear and distinct; there was no demand in the kirks or missions of these days for preachers from among those who had gone forth to own a rejected Christ as Lord, outside the camp of worldly religion. They were denounced as heretics and people warned against them and their doctrine, as if both had been plague-stricken. It might be relevant to inquire—What has brought about such a change, that preachers can now leave the one circle and go across to the other, dividing the day between the system, they—or at least others with whom they profess to be in accord—once left, because they could no longer remain in it and obey God, and the assembly which when they sought and obtained fellowship with it, they thereby confessed to be in its separated position, where God would have it? It will scarcely be seriously contended that the denominations have, during the intervening years—in which most of them have been supplied with Rationalist preachers, brought up at the feet of Professors who deny the inspiration of Scripture and more or less every fundamental doctrine of the Gospel—become more spiritual, or that their systems have more approximated to God's Word. The answer therefore must be found in the laxity of those who have either never learned or accepted the path of separation to God, or who having become weary of it, have abandoned it for something more pleasing and popular. This, with the new theory that any and every believer may come and break bread as often or as seldom as he desires, while refusing all fellowship or share in other assembly functions, at the same time retaining his place (or membership, if he has such) in the denomination or mission of his choice, are the contributive causes of such disorder. Wherever these have had sufficient time to operate and bear their fruit, they have reduced the character of the gatherings, to interdenominational meetings, where anybody may come the one part of the day and probably nobody be found the other, because all have gone to their respective missions or to hear their pet sectarian preachers. When such go on holiday, or appear as visitors to break bread when they are out for the day to preach in some chapel, in assemblies where a more Scriptural way of things prevails, they are usually "shocked"

at having their conduct called in question, and if they get the chance, "deliver" themselves after the fashion our question describes, and this is the last ever seen of them there. We believe that the remedy is a simple return to the way of God, to set before all who seek fellowship what our position is in relation to the sects, that those who are received are so to be sharers in worship, service, and all else which is the common privilege and responsibility of saints, and that while individual liberty is to be respected, so is the collective testimony of the assembly, which all who seek its fellowship are expected to share and seek to "excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. xiv. 12); not every man doing that which is "right in his own eyes" (Judges xxi. 25), as if there were no "Lord" whose authority in all things belonging to His house and its service is to be owned. Gracious, faithful instruction in the Word will help those who are willing to be taught, and correct those who are ready to bow to its authority (2 Tim. iii. 16). Godly rule, administered on the lines laid down in the Word is God's remedy (2 Thess. iii. 6; Titus i. 9). We know no other.

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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.

QUESTION II.—What is the Scriptural method of distributing the Assembly's collections of money for the benefit of those who are wholly engaged in preaching the Gospel, especially in places where there are no Assemblies of believers. There seems to be a good deal of overlapping in the way this is generally done; some evidently receiving superabundance, others nothing?

QUESTION III.—Do not the generally unsatisfactory results of what are called "Special Efforts," which commonly consist of a week or fortnight's meetings by a preacher "engaged" months beforehand, carried on at high pressure, then ended as abruptly as they began, in most cases yielding very little enduring fruit, point to a lack, or a departure from God's way? In former times when Gospel work was carried on, on simpler lines, with less form, there were infinitely better results. Help in this will be valued. It is exercising very many at present.

THE HOUSE OF GOD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY DR. W. J. MATTHEWS,
AT ABERDEEN.

WHILE the subject, "The House of God," has often been made a debatable one, it is not from a polemic standpoint that I purpose to consider it briefly now. God dwelling and abiding in His people is something higher than a thing for Christians to contend about. No truth, indeed, is given for that purpose. What we learn from the Lord, we have no need to contend about, and when it is allowed to become a matter of dispute, the truth is lost sight of and its blessing forfeited.

The earliest mentions of the House of God we find in Gen. xxviii. 18, where it is recorded of Jacob, "He called the name of that place Bethel" ("The House of God," margin), "and he said, Surely God is in this place." Then in Exod. xxiii. 19, we read, "The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the House of the Lord thy God." And again in Num. xii. 5-7, "My servant Moses is . . . faithful in all Mine House."

In Genesis xxxv. 3, Jacob refers to his distress on the occasion of his flight from the face of Esau. He had taken the birthright blessing, and found himself a wandering fugitive from the face of his brother Esau. It was the day of Jacob's trouble. Like him we betake ourselves to God in trouble, and hide under the shadow of His wings. Jacob lay down anything but comfortable, but God drew near and revealed Himself to him, giving him great promises—promises so full, that they yet

await their final accomplishment. "God is in this place," he said: that is the way God manifests Himself. Any truth learned apart from this, will tend to puff us up. To perpetuate the remembrance of this manifestation, Jacob took stones and set them up for a pillar, calling the place "Bethel"—The House of God. The stones were nothing: they were only to perpetuate what was real. God in the midst of His people, is the reality of what is called in the New Testament Scriptures "The House of God." That is the cardinal point. Bethel then, or God in the midst of His people, is the most primitive and most simple view of the subject, and the same trait runs throughout the Scriptures.

In Exodus xxiii. 19, we have a development. The people of Israel were to bring their firstfruits into the House of the Lord. In Exodus xxv. we learn how Jehovah took Moses into His presence and told him to construct a tabernacle after the pattern shewn. God's idea was to have a place where He could dwell in the midst of His people; He wanted their companionship. The wilderness provocation was Israel's wretched response to that desire. In this same chapter (Exod. xxv.) we have mention of Jehovah's communion with Moses, which foreshadows the Throne of Grace. Those who are best acquainted with that throne come oftenest to it, but we are all told to "come BOLDLY" (Heb. iv. 17), which means that we are invited to speak all that is in our heart. We often feel that we cannot speak a word, but remain until the victory is gained. There liberty

increases, and ultimately we are able to pour out all that is in our heart into the ear of God. In Hebrews x. 22, we are exhorted to "draw near." Every child of God is now a priest, therefore all are bidden draw near. When Aaron came into the Holiest, he never spake a word; his presence with the blood and the incense was enough for Jehovah; but we are told to speak out all that is in our heart. If we only had a better understanding of our High Priest, our hearts would be more filled with gladness.

In Exodus xxiii. God's dwelling place is shewn to be for His people's good and blessing. Three times a year—at the feasts of the Passover, Firstfruits, and Tabernacles—they were to meet at the place where He had chosen to cause His Name to dwell—which phrase we find in Deuteronomy twenty-one times, answering to the three persons of the Godhead—a fulness of blessing. We have also the negative side. Israel was forbidden to bring their offerings anywhere else (Deut. xii. 13 and 14); if they did so, they were cut off from the congregation (Lev. xvii. 4). For us too there is a place of gathering (Matt. xviii. 20), and a corresponding solemn responsibility comes upon those who do not bring to that place their sacrifices and offerings (see Num. ix. 13, with 1 Cor. xi. 27). Ignorance cannot be pleaded; it is our own responsibility if we do not know the Lord's mind. "Had the princes of this world known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor. ii. 8), yet Pontius Pilate, Herod, and the people are all held guilty of His murder (Acts iv. 27). One of our objects

then in meeting on the first day of the week is to bring an offering, and if we were more concerned about that, our meetings would not be so barren as they sometimes are.

In Numbers xii. we hear the Lord speaking of His servant Moses as "faithful in all Mine House," as one with whom He could hold "mouth to mouth" communion. This is something even higher than bringing an offering. It is communion, the highest thing the Scriptures give us. We see this in Ex. xxv. 22, where the Lord "meets by appointment" (Hebrew) His servant Moses to commune with him of all He would give him in commandment. With this compare Numbers vii. 89. Samuel Rutherford speaks of the seasons when His Lord and he "oft held tryst," and the Christian who does not go in for the same, will soon become barren. In Exodus xxxiii. 34, Moses is afforded a sight of the God of Israel, and to him is the Name of the Lord proclaimed, "Merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth"; yet Moses saw only His "back parts." In the New Testament, our place is now with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. iii. 18), and soon it will be "face to face." What a contrast! The substance really as compared with the shadow! In Heb. iii. the reality is compared with the type: Moses was faithful to Him who appointed Him, but Christ is as the builder of the House. Moses was a servant in it, while Christ is Son over the House of God. To the careful reader, the thought presents itself, What is the House in Numbers xii?

The people or the tabernacle, or both? I think both. This is also shewn in Eph. ii. 19-22. The "household of God" are the people as seen inside. Then the Spirit passes from the inmates to the house itself; "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Foundation Corner Stone," while in another place He is called the "Chief Corner Stone," thus giving a double allegory. This building by continuous growth ultimately develops into a "holy temple," which is a synonymous term, God's presence being the centre of the whole. All the building—composed of Jew and Gentile—is fitly framed (i.e., joined like wood dovetailed) together for a glorious inner temple in the Lord, which we find in its completeness as symbolically set forth in Rev. xxi. it is said that there is no temple there, because "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof" (ver. 22), the whole is temple. In 2 Cor. vi. 16, it is said that the saints even now are God's temple, the truth being culled from several Old Testament Scriptures. God's abiding presence constituted every place where He was, holy; hence the presence of God and the Lamb constitute the city "all temple." Comparatively few Christians are prepared to go in for the experience of this great truth: it is so intensely practical. They know that it would cost them something, that it would bring them out of all unequal partnerships, Limited Liability Companies, Co-operative Societies, and indeed out of everything involving an unequal yoke and contrary to God and His Word. There are five distinct par-

ticipations forbidden here:—Righteousness with unrighteousness, Light with darkness, Christ with Belial, Believers with unbelievers, The Temple of God with idols. God's presence and power alone will enable us to maintain this uncompromising separation to God. It cannot be done apart from the power of the Holy Spirit, who always guides by, and never a rt from, the truth of God. To those wh thus obey the call "Come out" is the promise given, "I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters" (ver. 18). How we ought to count upon and revel in that promise! In Heb. xiii. 5, as given in the original, how strong the word is! "I will never, never (by no means) leave thee; no, never, never (neither will I by any means) forsake thee." Five negatives. What consolation! This presence of God, the enjoyed manifestation of which we want so much more, is all-sufficient to make and keep us separate (see Exodus xxxiii. 16), and nothing else will.

(To be Continued.)

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP.

WE are citizens of heaven!
 And as one who has no ear,
 For the turmoil of the journey,
 When the home he loves is near;
 One whose step is onward hasting,
 Where his heart went long before,
 We are now in spirit dwelling
 Where earth's discord all is o'er.
 'Tis the love of Christ attracts us
 Like a magnet to His heart;
 On the wings of faith borne upward,
 Lord! we see Thee where Thou art.

THE WORD OF GOD:

ITS DAILY READING, MEDITATION, AND STUDY.
PART II. BY THE EDITOR.

HELPS to the study of the Bible are not to be despised, nor ought they to be neglected. We may surely profit through the toils of others who have given their time and talents to the textual criticism, careful translation, and microscopic examination of the Sacred Word, and thus, according to the will of God, His servants become helpers one to another. But let the Book of books, the inspired, eternal Word of the living God have the chief and honoured place. Let it be THE Book, the supreme authority, and all else but as helps to the discovery of its holy treasures, hewers of wood and drawers of water to the sacred Volume which they seek to serve. Have a good REFERENCE BIBLE, with readable type and margin sufficient for notes and jottings; one good enough to last a number of years of hard wear, for it is not good to change your Bible often. A *fac-simile* Bible, the same in all sizes, in which you will soon learn to find the verses by their location, being always in the same place, whether large or small in type. A REVISED or other translation, a complete and trustworthy CONCORDANCE to the Bible, and a reliable BIBLE DICTIONARY are useful and now easily acquired helps in the study of the Sacred Word. These, with EXPOSITIONS of truths by gifted and Divinely-taught ministers of the Word, are to be received with thanksgiving and used with wisdom, always in leading you to the Word to dig

there for yourselves, never to take its place, or to be read as a lesson book to be repeated to others, without having been proved or personally experienced in your own souls. COMMENTARIES, as a rule, are theological and dry; many of them muddy, some quite erroneous, and generally even when sound, cold-blooded, with little in them to enrich the soul, exercise the conscience, or lead the heart out to God. The Word of God itself, under the teaching of the Spirit, opens its secret treasures to the waiting heart, which in patient, diligent and continuous study of its sacred pages, seeks to become acquainted with the will of God to do it, and with the ways of the Lord to walk in them. Regular and systematic study of the Word, day by day, and every day, gathering here a little and there a little, treasuring, husbanding, and using what we gather, is the slow but sure and only way of becoming acquainted with the whole truth of God.

METHODS of study must be largely left to the tastes, the capabilities, and the conveniences of the individual. What suits one well, does not lend itself to another. Clearly there must be some method, or many methods adopted; random reading profits little. The Word should be studied systematically, consecutively, topically. The character, scope, subject, and purpose of a book; the outlines, context, setting of a Psalm; the subject, occasion, date and keywords of an Epistle sought for and grasped; then its teaching will be understood, its doctrinal, dispensational and practical parts distinguished, and its application

made plain ; "rightly dividing the Word of truth" (2 Tim. ii. 16), as the apostle commands. Error is often truth distorted, wrenched from its connection, and presented from one side, apart from the countertruth needed for its balance.

SEARCHING the Scriptures, tracing a word, a subject through them, as a dog scents (for such is the meaning of the word "Search the Scriptures" in John v. 39), is one method. "Searching the Scriptures"—examining them closely, scrutinising and comparing them, as the Bereans did (Acts xvii. 12), is equally important for the accurate study of the Word. Thus acquainted with the truths of Scripture, having them dwelling richly in the mind and heart, kept there in freshness by the Holy Spirit who indwells the saint (2 Tim. i. 13-14), they will be brought to remembrance, and wisdom given to utter them by that same Spirit (1 Cor. ii. 13-14), in due season with blessing to others. May the Book of God, the Written Word, in which the Living Word is unveiled, become increasingly precious unto and be unceasingly used by all the people of God.

"A glory gilds the Sacred page,
Majestic like the sun ;
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none."

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WHAT TO PREACH.—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.—Donald Ross.

THE EPISTLES OF PETER :

NOTES OF BIBLE READINGS.—NO. 2.
BY THE LATE J. G. BELLETT.

HAVING said this, we will address ourselves to our chapter. The first twelve verses of chapter i. are the foundation of the epistle ; because we enter then on hortatory matter at once. The apostle addresses himself to *strangers*. Now the moment you get God looking at Israel as a stranger, you get everything on earth out of order. That is the secret of James's epistle. We get "the twelve tribes" exhorted to poverty and patience. If things were in order, the twelve tribes would be *at home*. Now things are out of order in the earth, and while they are so, the saints should be prepared for poverty and patience. And they should be prepared for heaven. Heavenly calling is a relief. It is *more* than a relief, because it is God's necessary way to bring a better thing out of a ruin ; but it *is* a relief. Consequently Peter addresses us as having "an inheritance reserved in *heaven*." He is looking at strangership—a terrible condition. Shall Israel be in Babylon and I not mourn ? No ; but God is working in grace all the time. All that the earth can give to the foot of the people of God is a *travelling* place ; the scene of wearied, travelling pilgrims, looking for an inheritance reserved in heaven. And we see they are separated unto two things, "obedience and the blood of sprinkling." Then he blesses the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," who has begotten us again "according to His abundant mercy." It is *abundant* mercy, because, let man fail as he may in the earth, mercy

abounds over it all. We are glancing back here over man's constant failure, and looking for God to be weary. Is He wearied? No; by "His abundant mercy" He is still at work, and He has now established a *lively* hope—a hope secured by the resurrection of Christ from the dead. It is not now the garden committed to Adam, the new world committed to Noah, or the land of Canaan committed to the Israelites. It is "a lively hope" through the Lord risen from the dead. God has now found eternal relief in Christ, and he invites you to partake in that relief. That is faith. *Christ* now has secured in heaven for you "an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." A rich exposition of the divine mind Peter gives us here! His very *communications* are lively and abundant. Then he says, as the inheritance is kept for you, *you* are kept for it. It is now unrevealed—but it is kept for you, and you are kept for it.

Then he gives us an *individual* thing. The inheritance is a common property; there are no eldest sons in this family estate. But now he looks at individuals. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." The trial of faith does not work the incorruptible inheritance; *Christ* worked *that*. The trial of faith works "praise and glory." Let the dear martyr company go on to that! We must distinguish things that differ. We shall have an inheritance in common, and we shall rejoice to see

the crown of glory that may never be on our own heads.

Then he comes to look at us again in our *proper* place. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of "your souls." You have got to the end of your *faith*, but not to the end of your *hope*. There are two salvations. The first is the end of your *faith*, you are at peace with God. The salvation which is the end of your *hope* is to be revealed in the day of His appearing. There is a salvation already accomplished, and a salvation about to be revealed.

Then he closes this beautiful preface by another wonderful communication—that the things of which we are talking have been the gaze of prophets and angels. We have been carried along in a current of most wonderful revelation. A travelling company of Gentiles are bound for glories, into which prophets have searched diligently, and angels have desired to look! Verse 12, closes the foundation of the Epistle.

Now, if we were to read from chapter i. 13 to chapter ii. 3, that is the way I would separate it. Here the HORTATORY part begins. We have had the DIDACTIC teaching in the first twelve verses.

Peter is eminently a nourisher of *hope*. Paul establishes the conscience in *peace* and the certainty of *faith*. Peter opens to the eye of hope the glory to be revealed. Well, the girdle (verse 13) suits a *hoper*, because the girdle is the symbol of the thing that denies present enjoyment. The girdle and the lamp are the symbols of an expectant. The girdle refuses to let the affections dally with present objects;

the lamp signifies that I am a traveller along a dark road till the day dawn. So the first exhortation is, "Gird up the loins of your mind." Do you and I daily do that business; or do we think we may let the eye, and the thoughts, and the imagination sport themselves as they please? I am sure I have no business to be a servant to my thoughts and imaginations. They may *surprise* us, but we are not to *serve* them. Then, "hope to the end." Not till to-morrow, or the next day; but till the journey is over; because the object of hope lies on the other side of the journey.

We are addressed here in three relationships: as children^①, as brethren^②, and as newly born^③. We are to be obedient as children (verse 14). That refers to verse 2, "Sanctified unto obedience." The Holy Ghost has separated you to obedience, as well as to sprinkling, and what God has joined together, let no man put asunder. Consequently, in verse 14, he addresses us in the character which He had attached to us in verse 2—as "children^① of obedience," which is the force of the word in the original, a well-behaved family. "And if ye call on the Father," &c., "pass the time of your sojourning here in fear." In that fear which would become a child, walking in reverential love in his father's house.

As children, we are to walk as knowing we are under discipline; as brethren, we are to love one another; and in our persons, as newly born^②, we are to lay aside those poisonous ingredients that would hinder the action of the "unmixed milk of the Word," so that we may grow thereby.

NOTES ON ROMANS.

PART VI.—CHAPTER VII., 15-25.

BY GEORGE ADAM.

AS already suggested, the painful experience which Paul records, may have been a necessary part of his fitting for future usefulness in his work of shepherding the saints under his care. Before the Apostle Peter got the care of Christ's sheep and lambs committed unto him, he was taught the deceitfulness of the human heart, and also the power of sin, although in a different way from Paul. One may preach the Gospel as an evangelist without much knowledge of the power of sin in a believer's heart, or with little knowledge of the wiles of the devil, but unless one has been divinely instructed in these things—often through painful experiences—he will make sad havoc if he attempt to do the work of a shepherd. Unless one has learned his own heart, and what a saved sinner is capable of doing if left to himself, and how helpless he is to combat the power of sin in his own strength, he is ill fitted to do pastoral work. Regarding this passage the question arises:—Is the experience given in these verses, designed to reveal the *normal* condition of a healthy believer? Does the agonising cry in verse 24, "O wretched man that I am," harmonise with the tenor of Christian experience as recorded in the New Testament? I do not think it does. We read in Gal. v. 1—"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." The experience of the end of

Rom. vii., seeme to be that of one who has "fallen from grace" (Gal. v. 4)—that is *experimentally*, not in his standing before God. A believer in Christ can never fall from that, but he may so fall away from the enjoyment and power of grace that the sin that dwells in him gets the upper hand, or the mastery over him. 'For sin shall not have dominion over, you; for ye are not under law, but under grace' (Rom. vi. 14). The power of sin in a believer cannot be kept under by the power of law, as this passage abundantly proves. It is only the sweet constraining power of "gracereigning through righteousness" that can subdue the love and power of sin in the experience of the child of God.

There are two extremes, into either of which an inexperienced believer is liable to fall. One is, that a child of God should always be living in the helpless and "wretched" spiritual condition of Rom. vii. The other, that the believer's victory over sin should be so complete that it will cease to give him any more trouble or conflict. Neither of these will bear the test of Christian experience as we find it set forth in the New Testament. The same man who says here, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," and has a strong desire to live according to the requirements of that law; but the law of sin in his members is too much for him so that he has no power to yield up his members unto God as he would earnestly desire to do. That same man says in Phil. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Wherein lies the secret of this differenc?

It lies in the two words "THROUGH CHRIST." In Rom. vii. he is attempting to do the things in his own strength, in Phil. iv. he is doing them through Christ who is strengthening him and thus enabling him to do all and to bear all *which HE gives him to do and to bear*. After many years of careful thought and much painful experience to my mind, the conflict of the end of Rom. vii. is the experience of one who has not only been delivered from the *guilt of sin* as in chap. v., but has also learned the *doctrine* of death and resurrection with Christ as taught in chap. vi., as also his responsibility to "yield himself unto God," but who is endeavouring to live out his ideal of scriptural holiness in his own strength. Hence it is I, I, I, through the whole passage. The uniting bond of *communion* between himself and Christ has for the time being been broken, and the saved sinner is thus utterly helpless and wretched, until he gets a fresh look of the Saviour, and also a sight of Him as a Saviour from the *power of sin*, as well as as from its guilt. A believer who is never led to cry out "O wretched man," as in verse 24, will never be able to fully "thank God through Jesus Christ" as in verse 25. So many people nowadays are satisfied to enjoy the first instalment of salvation, that is from sin's penalty; and as long as they believe they are safe, the claims of Him who has saved them from the doom of sin gives them little or no exercise of soul. The rest which many have, is not the Scriptural rest of victory over sin by walking in the Spirit, as in Gal. v. 16, and with the eye of faith fixed

on the Living Saviour at God's right hand. It is the rest of a *very low ideal* of Scriptural separation unto God, and of His claims over them. When Jacob blessed his sons as recorded in Gen. xlix., he said of Issachar, "He is a strong ass crouching down between two burdens: and he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant: and bowed his shoulders to bear, and became a servant to tribute" (verses 14-15). This seems to illustrate the carnal rest of much that obtains in this day of fleshly ease. There is the burden of the flesh inside, and that of the world outside, so that many dear saints know nothing of Spiritual liberty in Christ, but like Issachar are content to "crouch down" between their burdens and have it so.

STRIVING TOGETHER.

STRIVING TOGETHER (Phil. i 7). The word here thus rendered is given in some versions "co-operating vigorously." The only other place in which the same word occurs is in Phil. iv. 3, where the Apostle speaks of "those women who laboured (or co-operated vigorously) with me in the Gospel." Thus, the saints are to stand fast in one spirit, co-operating vigorously together in the Gospel. Never was such vigorous co-operation, of a godly and Scriptural order, more needed than it is now. There is solid agreement and vigorous co-operation in the ranks of the enemies of the Cross of Christ; men of all creeds and churches writing to assail the faith and to fight against the Truth of God.

REJECTION WITH CHRIST.

AN EXTRACT FROM AN AGED SAINT'S LETTER.

MY heart has perfect repose in the thought of being rejected. I only trust I shall always be able to bear it in meekness; neither in disdain turning from and scorning those who thus act, nor in self-vindication retaliating, but accepting all simply as that path in which we are to have fellowship with Jesus, who was so misunderstood, and whose principles were so little appreciated even by His apostles and brethren. It is so valuable a school to learn in; the one in which the more you love, the less you are loved, and still not to be faint or be weary.

At times my heart is very sick at the aspect of things; such divisions, such jealousies, such evil surmisings. But then I think, thus it was with Jesus. If I am called a teacher of blasphemy, so was He; if I am called a Sabbath-breaker, so was He; if my authority to teach was questioned, so was His, though it was the wisdom of His Father. If He was neglected by His own people, so are we; if we are accused of betraying the city of Zion into the hands of her enemies, because we would turn out those who occupy the temple as thieves, to buy and sell in it, so was Jesus. He was accused of betraying His nation to the Romans, or of so acting that they would come and take it away, if He were allowed to continue. Should we then be surprised, that if He was called Beelzebub, His household should share the same fate? "The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you," are His own words to us.

The Bible Annotator.

BRIEFS FOR WORKERS.

THE GOSPELLER.

Saved by the Gospel (2 Tim. i. 8-9)—Conversion.
Separated to the Gospel (Rom. i. 1)—Consecration.
Sent with the Gospel (Acts xiii. 4)—Commission.

CREDENTIALS FOR SERVICE.

Gift from God (Eph. iv. 8 ; 1 Pet. iv. 16).
Grace to use it to God (Eph. iv. 7 ; Rom. xii. 3).
Godliness to commend it for God (1 Tim. iv. 7).

A THREEFOLD SERVICE (JUDE 20, 21).

"BUILDING up yourselves" (ver. 20)—The Word.
"PRAYING in the Holy Ghost" (ver. 20)—The Throne.
"LOOKING for the mercy of our Lord" (ver. 21)—The Hope.

Difficult Texts.

1. "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things" (Isa. xlv. 6-7). The word "evil" is not here used in a moral sense, but of calamity and trouble in contrast to peace and prosperity. It is so used by Job, when he says, "Shall we accept good at the hand of God, and shall we not accept evil" (Job. ii. 10). The prophet, speaking about Divine judgment about to fall upon Babylon, says, "Therefore shall evil come upon thee" (Isa. xlvii. 11). The passage does not teach that God is the Creator of sin—as sceptics scornfully affirm it does—but that He who in grace now brings "life" and "peace" will, as the righteous God, bring "tribulation and wrath" (Rom. ii. 9) upon all His foes.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

What do the letters "LXX" mean, used in connection with a translation of the Old Testament? They stand for the "Septuagint" or Greek Version of the Old Testament, which tradition says was formed by "seventy" translators in Alexandria, 285 years before Christ.

Does the parable of the prodigal son teach the doctrine of "the universal Fatherhood of God"? No. Parables need to be expounded in the light of the clearly revealed doctrines of the Word, and the "universal Fatherhood of God" is not one of them. The Lord Jesus said concerning some, "Ye are of

your father the devil" (John viii. 44), and the apostle John gives the marks by which "the children of God" and "the children of the devil" are manifest. Only those who have become "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 24), can truly say to God, "Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). On the lips of all others, such words are but empty form or hypocrisy.

Answers to Correspondents.

S. J., GLAMORGAN.—We greatly rejoice to hear of God's sovereign grace in saving sinners in your midst. You need not wonder if He sets aside the ordinary channels and takes up what will best serve His purpose and magnify His grace. It is God's way, especially in times of universal failure and departure from Himself. Keep right with God yourself; keep fast hold of what He has taught you of His Word—nothing can warrant the surrender of that; wait upon Him for guidance, and be willing to be or do whatever He may call you to. To feed and lead the lambs of the Lord's flock, to help those who are newly saved, is a privilege and an honourable service, even if it be unrecognised by man.

G.L., FIFE.—The old fashioned "Bible Reading," in which many took part, where an opportunity was given for young believers and others to ask questions, express difficulties, and for older ones to help them on in the Truth, was, as we think, one of the best and most helpful forms of dealing with the Scriptures. It is preserved in some places still, but in most cases a "lecture" often "high and dry," has shunted the simple "Reading" into a siding. But it may be restored; likely it will, when God's people get a reviving. Then they hunger for the Word itself.

J.H., NOTTINGHAM.—The doctrine that all sickness among saints is the result of disobedience to God, and that health of soul will in every case be accompanied by health of body, is contrary to Scripture and fact. Epaphroditus was "sick, nigh unto death" (Phil. ii. 27), but it was not on account of sin, but as the apostle tells us on account of "the work of Christ" (ver. 30)—a cause of sickness rather rare in our day. Trophimus was "left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim. iv. 20), and Timothy was told by the apostle to use a remedy for his "infirmities" (1 Tim. v. 23). Passages such as Deut. iv. 10, v. 16-33; Zech. viii. 4-5, belonging to another dispensation and to an earthly people, are

often pressed into service to support the doctrine, which is usually associated with greivous error such as is taught by Dowie, Baxter, and others. God does send sickness because of unjudged sin (see 1 Cor. xi. 31), and if it be His will, He spares life and heals in response to prayer (Jas. v. 14-15; 1 John v. 16), but this gives no support to the theory that all sickness is punitive, or the work of sin and Satan.

D. E., EDINBURGH.—What is known as ecclesiastical language as "Erastianism," is the theory that the government and discipline of the church is dependent on the will of the civil magistrate or king. It gained its name from the fact that the theory was first publicly avowed and taught by Thomas Erastus, a doctor of Heidelberg, in the 16th century, who contended that the Church ought to be like Israel, over which the king was supreme and ultimate ruler in things both civil and ecclesiastical. It was against this that the Scottish Covenanters struggled, for which many of them shed their blood. It is acknowledged in principle by the State Church of England, in which the King appoints the Primate and Bishops, and in the Church of Scotland, where his representative sits ABOVE the Moderator, who presides over the General Assembly. The New Testament teaches that Christ is Head over all things to the Church which is His body (Eph. i. 22, 23), and His is the only authority that faith own in spiritual things.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION II.—What is the Scriptural method of distributing the Assembly's collections of money for the benefit of those who are wholly engaged in preaching the Gospel, especially in places where there are no Assemblies of believers. There seems to be a good deal of overlapping in the way this is generally done; some evidently receiving superabundance, others nothing?

ANSWER A.—Philippians iv. 15, 16, tells how "the Church" at Philippi "sent once and again" to Paul while in Thessalonica, and we know from the record given in Acts xvii. 1-9, his stay there was short. This, at least, indicates that the habit of direct and frequent communications between the Assembly and the Lord's servant breaking up new ground, is well pleasing unto Him.—W.L.

ANSWER B.—All attempts to centralise funds, or have them distributed from one or more official sources, is a violation of God's principles and should be resisted by all who take the Word as their guide.

It is one of God's prerogatives to provide for those whom He sends on His service (1 Cor. ix. 7), and this He does by keeping them in DIRECT dependence on Himself, and so keeping their faith in lively exercise (1 Tim. iv. 10).—A.N.

ANSWER C.—It has been a help to us in seeking guidance from the Lord in distributing the gifts of the saints, to remember that it is not as fellow-believers in need that the Lord's servants are to be communicated with, or as those whom we are under obligation to support; but as having fellowship with the Master in ministering to those who are doing His work where and how He has commanded them. Immediately they are regarded as needy brethren, or servants who have helped or served among us, the motive drops from heaven to earth, and favouritism, or the thought of remuneration, creeps in.—E.P.

ANSWER D.—When the Lord calls a servant of His to be wholly engaged in the ministry of His Gospel or His Word—either as evangelist or teacher—he is brought into a place of dependence upon God alone, and not upon the saints. If he is only looking to the latter, or expecting to be supported in return for his service toward or among them, he will drift into many a crooked path. It is the responsibility of those who have the care of the Assembly's bounty to see, that the manner in which it is distributed does not encourage any servant of the Lord to count upon them, so taking his eye off the Lord. The Scriptural example of SENDING a gift to the Lord's servant (Phil. iv. 14-15) is generally better than GIVING it to him while he is labouring amongst us, and not only does away with the thought of so much pay for so much preaching, but has the added sweetness of reminding him that he is thought of when far distant from the givers.—W.J.M.

ANSWER E.—Some have the gift of keeping themselves and their work in constant evidence by writing letters to prominent individuals, getting their efforts reported, and thus making their necessities known; while others are more constantly engaged in "working the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. xvi. 10) than in spending time reporting what they do. We know several godly and much owned servants of the Lord, who work in places where their service is much needed, where there are few to help or give. It is surely the responsibility of Assemblies to keep such workers especially in mind, and to communicate with them. If the name of some servant of Christ is mentioned to the saints, to whom their gift is to be sent, before it is contributed, it

tends toward intelligent and sympathetic giving, which is wholly lacking when all is merged in a general fund.—E.A.S.

ANSWER F.—If the “communicating” of money “is a sacrifice well pleasing unto the Lord” (Heb. xiii. 15-16), then the disposal of it should be for Him, in a way worthy of Him, and under His immediate control. If this were sought, He who knows and provides for His servants would guide to send it to the right persons at the right time. This has been fully proved by those who so act. The growing habit of certain preachers spending their time in holding weekly “missions” in large Assemblies where there is superabundance of preaching gift, and of others making “week end” visits their staple work, and being PAID at the close of their visit, is only a shade, if anything, different from the minister with his stipend, or the “hired” preacher who makes his charge for so many meetings. The Lord’s money, given for His Name, ought not to be used for any such purposes. It is little wonder, if believers in sects point to such practices as gross inconsistency with what Assemblies owning the Word of God as their rule profess.—H.J.M.

EDITOR’S NOTE.—Many aspects of the subject are raised in the foregoing answers, and some points governed by great fundamental principles of Scripture hinted at, which we trust may receive due consideration. One class of diligent labourers, of which there are not many now-a-days, is apt to be overlooked, namely, the Gospel pioneer who goes forth alone into unbroken territory, where there are no Assemblies to welcome and arrange for him, no open doors to receive and give him hospitality, no fellow-saints with whom to take sweet counsel; where he has to take lodgings, rent halls, pay advertising, and go from door to door amongst a careless or prejudiced people, patiently plodding, it may be, for weeks or months, with little sympathy or appearance of fruit. Surely such workers have a special claim, working among “the heathen at home” in their own land, with its thousands of unreached parishes and villages, where the Gospel is never heard. The neglect of such may be one of the causes why so little is done to reach them. Such work would be a real cure for many of the endless bickerings caused by overcrowding of preachers in places where “large meetings” are easily found, already gathered by the efforts of others. Even an apostle recognised that the preaching of the Gospel in “regions beyond” (2 Cor. x. 15-16) waited on the

faith and enlargement of the saints, and so assuredly it does this day.

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.

QUESTION III.—Do not the generally unsatisfactory results of what are called “Special Efforts,” which commonly consist of a week or fortnight’s meetings by a preacher “engaged” months before-hand, carried on at high pressure, then ended as abruptly as they began, in most cases yielding very little enduring fruit, point to a lack, or a departure from God’s way? In former times when Gospel work was carried on, on simpler lines, with less form, there were infinitely better results. Help in this will be valued. It is exercising very many at present.

QUESTION IV.—Is it according to God that Gospel Meetings be left “open” for all—including women—to take part? Can it be in “the leading of the Spirit” that such should be?

MR ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

As we go to press, the following touching letter comes from our beloved brother, in whose condition many of our readers are so deeply and prayerfully interested. May we be enabled still to “continue in prayer” on his behalf, and await the Lord’s good will concerning him.

My Dear Brother,

I must send a line in time for your next issue of “The Believers’ Magazine.”

Humanly speaking, my strength is fast ebbing out. Through God’s mercy, I seldom have severe pain, but the utter exhaustion at times, is quite as trying to bear. Still, God’s grace, which has upheld me hitherto, will be all-sufficient to the end, whatever that end may be. These blessed words—“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose,” remain steadfast, and were never more real to me than they are to-day. I am able to praise Him when brought to the lowest, or when suffering most keenly. I write this for the help and encouragement of fellow-believers who may be called upon to pass through the fire and tremble at the thought of entering.—Yours sincerely,

ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

REVIVAL TIMES.

IN many parts of the land the Lord is graciously working. Saints are being restored and revived; sinners are being awakened and converted. There is a spirit of prayerful expectancy abroad among the people of God. The work of reviving and ingathering is by no means limited to the Principality of Wales; it is quietly progressing in many places, although less is being said about it. "There is," as one who is living in the midst of that movement, and has good opportunity of seeing its progress and results, has said, "a popular Revival, reported daily in the newspapers, and there is a quiet but more solid work of the Spirit of God in progress throughout Wales" and many other parts of the country. For all that is of the Spirit of God in the popular movement, for all who have been truly born of God, and united to the Lord Jesus Christ, we unfeignedly praise God, and pray, that in spite of man's devices and Satan's endeavours to hinder and corrupt the work of grace, it may continue and increase, arousing tens of thousands of unconverted church members who have long been lulled to sleep by the opiate of a religion without Christ, turning them to the Lord. That God in grace should raise up a young collier to do this work, setting aside the ordained "ministry" and virtually stopping the whole machinery of the churches, to make room for the operations of the Spirit of God, is a marvellous proof of the Sovereignty of His mighty grace. But it does not follow that God will work in the same manner or according to the

same pattern in every place. Indeed, it may be questioned whether some of the accompaniments of the movement among the Welsh Methodist and Baptist Churches, are any part of, or any help to the Divine working at all, but rather excrescences contributed by man to hinder it. Whatever is of the Spirit of God is always on the lines of the inspired Word of God. This is its mark, and by this standard it is to be tested. The enemy's wile is to point to the success of some means or method of his own devising, with a view of securing for it a permanent place in the service of God, or to so connect that which is the work of God with some system of man's devising as to throw a halo of sanctity around it. But we must distinguish between what God uses and what He *approves* of. The stroke of Moses' rod on the rock at Kadesh (Num. xx. 1-11) was used to bring out water for the thirsty host, but Jehovah neither sanctioned the means used, nor approved of His servant's disobedience, although He gave the blessing. If God blesses and in sovereign mercy saves sinners, in spite of human inventions, how much more would that blessing be, if all were ordered according to His Word. Let the people of God rejoice and give thanks unto Him, for all that He is doing for His great Name. The common danger at this time, as in all Revival seasons, is imitation, something "got up" that is artificial, instead of laying hold on God to "bring down" His blessing, which is as the dew of Hermon on the hill of Zion. There the Lord commands the blessing, even life for evermore.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD JESUS.

READ, PHIL. II. 5-11; MATT. XXVII. 18, 20, R.V.
NOTES OF AN ADDRESS. BY ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

I HAVE read these Scriptures and would seek by the help of God to speak a little of the great truths He set before us, namely, the authority belonging to the Name of the Lord Jesus, in connection with the preaching of that Name to the world, and the place that He occupies in the assembly. In this connection I will ask you to turn with me to two passages of Scripture. The first is Matt. xvi. 13-19. Peter having made the confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Lord said to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." Peter, in his confession, acknowledges God's great Rock-foundation, that never can be shaken, upon which all the purposes of God are to be established. The Lord, on the other hand, speaking of the Church, which He is about to form, as a building, declares that all those who are to be built upon that foundation, must have something in common with the foundation; they must be partakers of the Divine nature. "Peter" in Greek is *Petros*, and "rock" is *Petra*. When the Lord says, "Thou art *Petros*, and upon this *Petra* I will build My Church," He is saying in effect, "Thou art a Rock-man," one who has the same nature as the rock. And to whomsoever it is given by the Father to know Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, such an one becomes a Rock-man, a living stone, possessed of the same life and the same nature as Christ Himself.

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

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

You will observe the difference between it and the rendering of the Authorised Version. This latter gives us the idea that the binding on earth *precedes* the binding in heaven; while the former teaches us that God binds in heaven first, and that, as the one who is taught of God to declare

His mind speaks in accordance with that which has been already registered in heaven, what he says shall stand fast.

What, then, are we to understand that the Lord meant by these solemn and remarkable words which he addressed to Peter? Was He bestowing some special power upon him, such as the "Church of Rome" declares to have come down to her by direct apostolic succession? Was He entrusting Peter with the power to forgive sins, or to keep people in their sins? Let Peter himself again answer the question. Turn to Acts xv. We have it here recorded that a council of the apostles and elders was held at Jerusalem to consider a matter brought before them. Certain Pharisees had been down to Antioch wishing to compel the Gentile converts to be circumcised and to keep the law; and Paul and Barnabas had been sent up from Antioch to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles and elders about this matter. In verses 7-II, we find Peter speaking on this question. Does he claim some special power of "binding and loosing" individuals by the exercise of his own authority? Nothing of the sort. Here is what Peter understood by Christ's entrusting him with the keys of the kingdom of heaven: "Men and brethren," he says, "ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles through my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their

hearts by faith." Peter once again rehearses what he had already declared before the apostles and elders at Jerusalem in chapter xi. He had been justifying himself on that occasion for having eaten with Gentiles, and his justification was, that God had bestowed the Holy Spirit upon them that believed; and who was he, that he should withstand God by refusing to have fellowship with them? And now Peter appeals to the same thing again, to remind those to whom he was speaking, that God had put no difference between the apostles themselves and these believing Gentiles. He does not even say, "We believe that *they* shall be saved even as *we*," but, "We shall be saved even as *they*." Such was Peter's understanding of this matter, and it exactly explains to us what was meant by the "binding and loosing," and by "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" being committed to Peter as in Matt. xvi. 19.

When Peter first preached the Gospel to Jews, on the day of Pentecost, at Jerusalem, and to Gentiles, in the house of Cornelius, God was simply using his mouth that men might hear and believe. But, none the less, when Peter declared that the sinner who trusted in Jesus was delivered from condemnation, his word of loosing or deliverance would be made good, for it agreed with that which was settled in heaven. In like manner, if he declared that the Christ-rejector was condemned already, the word must equally stand fast, being in accordance with the Divine decree. And all this holds good with us also when we preach the Gospel. It is an individual thing. It was not addressed to

the disciples collectively, but to Peter as an individual, yet it did not belong to Peter exclusively, but followed on his individual confession of Christ and his individual proclamation of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ to others. In exactly the same way, it belongs to each one who, being taught of God, confesses Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Such an one is, therefore, a Rockman, built upon the Divine foundation; and when he witnesses to others about the Christ, according to the Divine teaching, he becomes again what Peter was in that day, one binding and loosing according to the Divine decree. Men may say to us, "I don't believe in salvation in your easy way." But, none the less, according to their acceptance or rejection of the Christ whom we preach to them, they shall be loosed from the bonds of sin and judgment, or held fast in them for ever.

(To be Continued.)

RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN.

IN our happy home above, not only shall we be known *personally* to the blessed Lord, but to each other. Peter seems to have no difficulty in recognising, on the Mount of Transfiguration, which was Moses, and which was Elias. So must it be in the resurrection state, where all is perfection. A thorough distinction of persons will be manifest there. Paul will never be taken for Peter, nor Peter for Paul; and each will have his crown and glory. Blessed, yet solemn thought! each saint will have his own crown. All will be known there for what they are in the estimation of the Lord.

THE HOUSE OF GOD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY DR. W. J. MATTHEWS,
PART II.

IN Revelation iii. 12, we find the promise of being made a pillar in the temple is given to the overcomer, the word pillar being there used in the same sense as "pillars" in the Church on earth, as Peter, James, and John were called in Gal. iii. 9.

The question arises, "Is there anything to answer to this House—this Temple of the world to come—now?" I believe there is. In 1 Tim. iii. we have what I will call a divine portraiture of what the temple will be by and by in Heaven, and what it should be like now. The chapter opens with a reference to those who have the desire for overseership, and a list of qualifications is given whereby each one desiring it may test himself as to his fitness. The same applies to deacons. Where the genuine desire to look after the saints exists, its possessors will not care whether they are "in office" or not. Here is the divine constitution of the Church gathered after God's mind, but I do not contend that it has ever been realised in its fulness—at least not for long. At Ephesus there is seen a company of Scripturally-gathered saints, comprising the rank and file, the deacons, deaconesses, and bishops, and one in an official place of authority over all, a place into which no other man has ever been put, thus furnishing us with a view of what the whole will be when completed. Timothy is put over the bishops, deacons, deaconesses, and all. "I write these things TO THEE" said the Apostle (compare chap. i. 18).

Now look at verse 15, in which we find one principal and two subordinate clauses, the latter two explaining the former one:—"The House of God" (prin.), "The Church of the Living God," and "The pillar and ground of the Truth" (sub.). The phrase "Church of the Living God" occurs nowhere else in the Book, but "Church of God" is given eight times, and corresponds to "The congregation of Jehovah." "Living" answers to the testimony in Matt. xvi. about the Messiahship of Christ, "The Son of the Living God." The expression is true, therefore, not only of the local gathering in one sense, but of the whole Church in another. The words "pillar" and "ground" have been the subject of a great deal of criticism for centuries. "Ground" comes from a Greek root signifying "seat"—e.g., the basement of a monument. Upon this is placed the pillar, whereon—as in the case of Nelson's pillar and Wellington's monument in Dublin—is inscribed the virtues, valour, and victories of the hero. But a double idea is conveyed in the application of the figure. The Church of the Living God is the Ground, the resting-place, the stay of the Truth and the pillar also, whereon is inscribed what follows in verse 16. "And great is the mystery of godliness." The "and" links it with "the Truth" in the previous verse. Then, what is the mystery? "He who was (notice the three pairs of statements, and three antitheses).

- { Manifest in flesh.
- { Justified in Spirit.
- { Seen of Angels.
- { Preached among the Nations.

{ Believed on in the world.
{ Received up in Glory. (R.V.)

The first one refers to His birth at Bethlehem, and the last to His resurrection. The mystery has thus for its embodiment all that is in Christ, and answers to the truth concerning Him from the moment of His incarnation till His ascension in the glory cloud. What would have become of this testimony if nobody but Scripturally-gathered saints had maintained it? Was it not nobly held and defended when, for example, Athanasius defended before 300 bishops, at the council of Nice, the truth concerning the Deity and Divinity of Christ, in the great Arian controversy, and when Luther, at the diet of Worms, bore witness to the doctrine of justification by faith, which had been almost lost for centuries? But this is to be no plea for ignorance or disobedience. Now that the Lord has been pleased to give us further light on His Word, to make known His will as to where and how His people are to assemble, we are responsible to gather in Scriptural order, bringing our offerings of thanksgiving, to carry out the Divine appointments, and thus symbolically set forth what the Temple is to be in heaven, and he who overcomes, God will make him a pillar therein.

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RIGHT RECKONING.—What is popular now will be of very little value at the judgment seat of Christ, and what is little valued now will be richly rewarded then. The tables will be turned exactly. It is a great matter to be in God's way of reckoning here and now. It is the only thing that will come out as true gold hereafter.—DONALD ROSS.

HOW THE BLESSING WAS HINDERED.

WE had been waiting upon God for a season of reviving and refreshing amongst His saints, and praying for awakening and conversion amongst the lost. Prayer was fervent, and the spirit of expectancy was high. The faith that lays hold on God had already the consciousness that the blessing was near. Night after night we gathered for prayer, and the "dew of heaven," that refreshing which cometh alone from the Most High, fell upon us. Thus far we were in the leading of the Spirit, and God was having His way with and among us. On the evening of the Lord's day, at our usual Gospel meeting, there was much freedom and freshness in preaching the Word, and several who had long been coming about and were anxious, but not delivered, passed from death to life and right into the joyful liberty of God's salvation. We believed that God had begun to work, and our expectations were from Him alone. For several nights the blessing continued and steadily increased, while interest amongst the unconverted deepened. God is not always in a hurry in doing His work. He ploughs deep, and sometimes takes long to break up the fallow ground, and bring down the self-righteousness of sinners. It is well when we are in His counsel, and so work with Him that we neither lag behind nor run before Him in His working. While most of us fully recognised this, and at such a time felt especial need of being guided aright at every step, others whose zeal and energy exceeded their confidence in God, were

unable to wait the development of God's mighty workings. They brought a gifted preacher, whose name they thought would bring many under the Gospel's sound, and whose reputation as a successful soul-winner would, as they thought, be likely to further the work and bring it to a fruitful issue. The preacher came; the meetings grew; professions were plentiful, but *the blessing ceased*. At the point where we virtually left the Lord's guidance and took the matter into our own hands, the power of the Spirit was hindered, and although the energy and the stir continued, it became painfully evident to all who were in fellowship with God, that we had hindered the blessing by our own wisdom, taking our own way. All who were saved previous to that stood, and bore the marks of the Divine working, not only saved but manifestly the children of God, acknowledged by all; while of those who professed conversion after we had quenched the Spirit's operations by our own wisdom, all that can be said of them is, that they may be in heaven, but they are of little credit to the Lord or His Gospel on earth. It is a solemn thing to interfere with the Divine working, to divert the current of the Spirit's operations by making channels of our own; to first appeal to God to work, and then to arrange for Him how it is to be done. God is God, and His ways are past human comprehension. Our's is to wait upon Him, and watch the way of His working, ready to "be still" or to work with Him as He may appoint, but never to run before or dictate to Him, how, when or where His work is to be done. This is the chief cause of barrenness.

THE EPISTLES OF PETER :

NOTES OF BIBLE READINGS.—NO. 3.

BY THE LATE J. G. BELLETT.

WE read to chap. ii. 3, and now if we go on to chap. iii. 9, I think we shall find there is a connection. There are two things here. It begins by a wondrous and beautiful piece of teaching, and, upon that, a very distinct exhortation. From ver. 1 to ver. 10, is a profound piece of teaching that lets you into dispensational light, but it does not touch on what we have in Ephesians, the elect body.

THE MYSTERY OF THE STONE.

This mystery of the *Stone* occupies the whole book of God. We find it in Genesis, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Evangelists, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. A *mystery* is a divine revelation. I will just remind you of the passages. Jacob's words to Joseph, in Gen. xlix., begin this great subject. He says in a kind of parenthesis: "From thence is the Shepherd, the stone of Israel." The moment he was looking at the sorrows and glories of Joseph, the Holy Ghost takes him, in a kind of rapture, to look at Christ as reflected in Joseph. We see here the quarry out of which the stone was formed; the sorrows and glories of Joseph. This mighty rock was formed in the death and resurrection of Christ. The moment the Spirit touched on the story of Joseph, He thus glances forward to Christ.

In the Prophet Isaiah, we find the stone again taken up, "Behold I lay in Sion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure

foundation." There is no sure foundation that is not a *tried* stone. The true stone was tried to the uttermost, and glorified to the uttermost. When Isaiah takes Him up, he goes beyond. Jacob had spoken of Him as a *stone*. Isaiah tells you additionally that the "tried stone" is laid down as a foundation. Now what did Israel do with the stone? This tried stone was laid down as a foundation, and *they disallowed it*. This the Lord tells us in Matt. xxi. He is quoting Psalm cxviii. So the Psalmist tells me something of this wonderful stone. It was rejected by the builders; and the Lord quotes that, and says, "Here I am, and you have rejected Me."

Then, what did God do with this disallowed stone? He took Him up and exalted Him to the highest heavens. That is the meaning of "the head-stone of the corner."

Psalm cxviii. anticipates this, and Peter speaks of it in Acts iv. And there we see the stone, at this very moment. How blessed and delightful an operation it is to be tracing out these things, picking up the mystery at these distant parts of the Book, bit by bit. And how wonderfully exact it is! God is not afraid of showing His perfect blessed mind thus in parts. He is not afraid of making a mistake. If I taught in that way, how I should be looking back, to see that I had made no mistakes! But these scattered rays at last shine as the noonday sun in glory and brightness. It is as if the Spirit had written a treatise on the very subject.

So we have travelled with the stone

from the quarry where it was formed, in death and resurrection (it would never have been anything without that), till God takes up the rejected stone, setting Him in the highest place of dignity in heaven. And what is God doing with Him now? Having been rejected by Israel or Zion, He is offering Him *to all the world* as a stone of foundation. He is offered to you and me for life and salvation, and Peter comes to tell me what He will be to me if I receive Him. He tells me two things about myself. I shall become a *living* stone as he is, and a *precious* stone as He is. "Unto you who believe is the preciousness." He communicates His preciousness to us as well as His life. I become a living stone; but I become also a precious stone; and when we come to the Apocalypse, we find these precious stones glittering in the New Jerusalem. So I see Christ, firstly, formed in the quarry of death and resurrection; secondly, offered as a foundation; thirdly, rejected by Sion; fourthly, seated in the highest heaven of God; fifthly, offered for life and salvation to every poor sinner; and sixthly, what He will be to those who accept Him. He will impart His life, and He will impart His glory. He will make them pearls, topazes, emeralds, &c. But now, what of those who still reject Him? He will fall from the elevation where He now is, and grind them to powder. The blessed God offers Him to sustain you for eternity. You say, "I will not have Him." Then He says, "You must meet me from my head of the corner-place, and I will grind you to powder." Then, this stone

not only crushes the unbelieving sinner, but it smites the nations, as I read in Daniel. It will fall, in the day of wrath, on the whole image. This is national, not individual. Then this stone is to become a great mountain, and with its glory fill the whole earth. Now, what defect is there in the story? You carry it on from the quarry to its character of a mountain-kingdom to fill the whole earth; and you are carried along with it. Every individual has to do with the stone—in preciousness or in crushing. ————— 542

"A LACK OF SALT IN IT."

"THAT was a splendid address by Mr —," said a smartly-dressed brother, who smelt strongly of his recent cigar, "it was so full of grace and love."

"Maybe it was; but there was surely a lack of salt in it when your flesh and mine enjoy it so well," was the rather quaint and unexpected reply. There is much truth in it too. When carnal believers, men who smoke their cigars and wear their huge gold chains, and live generally as worldlings, can enjoy and commend a ministry of "grace," you may depend upon it there is not much "salt" in it, nothing to grip their conscience or cause them to consider and cleanse their ways. It is not always the teaching that believers like, that they most need, nor are words of grace and love always the truth in season. A "good minister of Jesus Christ" will give the "seasoning of salt" with the "gracious words," and seek to exercise the conscience and cleanse the ways by the truth, as well as "minister grace" to his hearers.

"GREAT IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD."

IT was recorded of John the Baptist before his birth, that he should be "great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke i. 15), and so he truly was. Who among the sons of men was more honoured than he who testified, "Behold the Lamb of God" (John i. 36), and by means of his testimony won the first disciples of the Lord; preached away from himself his own followers, and was glad to have it so? "Great in the sight of the Lord," yet ready to say concerning himself in relation to his Master, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John iii. 30). This, indeed, is true greatness such as is seldom seen or valued on earth, yet very highly esteemed in the courts of heaven. "Men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself" (Psa. xlix. 18), but they cannot understand self-effacement like John's. The dungeon and the executioner's axe are what the world think the proper answer to such a testimony, but in the day of Christ its full reward and recompense will appear. Happy are they who can wait for that day, and go on quietly and enduringly in the lowly path of rejection, unknown or despised of men, yet even now, "great in the sight of the Lord."

A SERVICE LITTLE SOUGHT AFTER.

THERE is often a superabundance of preachers, brethren vying with each other for the platform, especially when meetings are large, gathered through the energies of others rather than their own. But we have never seen any great emula-

tion in the work of following after the backsliding soul, and seeking to restore the one overtaken by a fault (Gal. vi. 1) as Scripture speaks. Is it that the latter work is less popular, and needs more of God, and more "spirituality" on the servant's part? Clearly it is no less needed, and certainly no less Christlike, for the Good Shepherd went after the wanderer "until He found it." Less preaching of the ordinary quality, and more such lowly service would help many out of the ditch.

GATHERED HOME.

GONE on high to be with Jesus,
In His presence blest;

Gathered home to dwell for ever,
Oh, what perfect rest.

"Present with the Lord" and waiting
For the full display,
Of His resurrection triumph,
On that coming day.

Then the voice, the shout of victory,
Tokens of His love,
And the Father's House bursts open
As they soar above.

Bodies of humiliation
Down in weakness here;
Raised in power and incorruption
For the glory there.

Now the world grows poor and empty
As they pass on high,
And the hope of being "with Him,"
Brightens to the eye.

Thus they rest, while some are waiting
Just to tell His worth,
And to gather out His jewels
From a ruined earth.

The Bible Annotator.

BIBLE STUDIES.

GOD AND HIS PEOPLE.

- God *for us* (Rom viii. 31)—Our Justifier.
 God *with us* (Heb. xiii. 5)—Our Defender.
 God *in us* (2 Cor. vi. 16)—Our Strength.

THE JOY OF GOD.

- In the Salvation of the lost (Luke xv. 28).
 In the Obedience of the saved (3 John 4).
 In the Glorification of His own (Jude 24).

ALTARS.

- An Altar of Earth (Exod. xx. 24)—Sacrifice, Atonement.
 An Altar of Brass (Exod. xxiv. 1-8)—Substitution, Acceptance.
 An Altar of Gold (Exod. xxx. 1-10)—Communion and Worship.
 1. The Sinner's Need. The only way to God. The Word made flesh.
 2. God's provision. The Perfect Sacrifice. Christ on the Cross.
 3. The Worshipper's Privilege. Accepted and Communing. Christ in Heaven.

Misinterpreted Texts.

1. "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 12). The text, as it stands in the Authorised Version, has been used as authority for an exclusive or professional ministry; in other words, for a clerical caste, separate from and above "the saints." The text, as properly given in the R.V., does away with this assumption, and sets forth the proper relation of such gifts and their use. "For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." Instead of such gifts monopolising all ministry, by absorption in themselves, they are given with a view of promoting its healthy exercise in others, by equipping and furnishing all the saints to fulfil their part in the service for the upbuilding of the body of Christ. And the best proof that they have answered to the Divine ideal and fulfilled their ministry is, that others are raised up and fitted to do the work, where they have been in exercise, so that the originals can be spared for similar service elsewhere. The Philippians made progress in spiritual life during Paul's "presence" among them, "much more" in his "absence."

The Young Believer's Question Box.

How are we to discern what is and what is not the leading of the Spirit? It takes a spiritual mind, one in communion with God to do that (see 1 Cor. ii. 15). A young believer, with comparatively little experience or knowledge of the Word, in whom the Spirit of God is, whose teaching (1 John ii. 28) has given him "wisdom and understanding," and made him of quick "scent" in the fear of the Lord (Isa. xi. 2-3 margin) will often discern what is of God more readily than a better instructed Christian who has got away from God, and the simplicity of the "ways that be in Christ," to dabble in the world. This blinds the spiritual vision and blunts the spiritual perception; then anything may be accepted as "of the Spirit." The leading marks of the Spirit's working and guidance, will always be to glorify Christ (John xvi. 14), to guide into all truth (ver 13), to lead in the path of God's commandments (Psa. cxix. 135), ignoring none of them. Any professed "leading of the Spirit," which openly sets aside God's Word, must be regarded as a travesty of that blessed reality; Satan's imitation of it and his attempt to discredit it.

The Revival in Wales.

THE REVIVAL amongst the Welsh-speaking people continues to spread, and is reported daily in some of the newspapers. We do not place much confidence in "Journalists'" discernment of the work of God, but we have no doubt whatever, from the testimony of Christian and competent eye-witnesses that the Spirit of God is working, and sinners are being saved in many parts of Wales and elsewhere, not alone, or chiefly, in those places and by such means as are popularly reported, but by the Spirit of God working with the Word preached, as God has appointed, and in answer to the prayers of His people. To what extent, time alone will show. May God's people everywhere be stirred up to pray for a reviving amongst themselves, and an awakening amongst the dead, and be ready to receive it in the way God is pleased to send it, not making plans and expecting Him to own or endorse them, but dealing with a sovereign God, and searching ourselves and our ways, so that in whatever channel the living stream may flow, we shall be ready to share its reviving and refreshing. The danger in all such seasons is imitation, and the devil is ever at hand to help it on.

In Memoriam: Alfred J. Holiday,

Who "entered into rest" at Featherstone Hall, Yorkshire, February 8th, 1905.

It is with deep regret that we have to record the falling asleep of our beloved friend and fellow-helper, whose ministry has so long appeared in these pages, and whose devoted service for the Lord's Name has been well known throughout the British Isles and far beyond them for close on forty years. His pathetic letter which appeared in our last issue, indicated that he felt the end was near, while it bore witness to his unshaken confidence in God, who was doing the very best for him. During the days that followed, he gradually became weaker, and at three o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, February 8th, surrounded by his family, in perfect consciousness, he triumphantly passed into the immediate presence of the Lord, there to await the coming hour of resurrection and reunion.

Alfred John Holiday was brought to the Lord when a lad of sixteen, living in London. Along with a companion, he went to hear a preacher in a Church of England one Sunday, and during the sermon both were converted. He at once took his stand as a disciple of the Lord, desiring to learn and follow in the path marked out in the Word. Passing Crosby Hall, shortly after his conversion, he observed a notice of a mid-day prayer meeting being held there, and entering, found a number of earnest and decided Christians gathered there. Here he made the acquaintance of John and Robert Howard, of Tottenham, two able ministers of the Word, through whom he received much help in the Scriptures, and was first brought into contact with believers assembling simply and only in the Lord's Name, outside of all denominations. He was soon after baptised as a believer, and associated with the assembly in Tottenham. In company with several young men, all converted about the same time, he began to hold open-air meetings on Primrose Hill, and drawing-room meetings, especially for young men in his father's house, inviting different speakers to address them. Here a good work was done, many being brought to the Lord, including his father. In 1861, he went to Birmingham, where, while engaged in business, he served the Lord diligently, especially seeking to help young men in their spiritual life. One who knew him in these days, tells how much he owes to his ministry then. On Sunday afternoons he attended a Young Men's Meeting held in rooms

in Temple Street, to read and study the Word, where, as this brother testifies, "he was able to utter in chosen words and with no uncertain sound," the truth he had gathered on the subject from the Scriptures, and to defend the faith against the attacks of Christadelphians and others who unawares crept in and endeavoured to lead unwary ones into their snares. But the sphere to which the Lord had especially called His servant, and for which these early years were doubtless preparing him, was in Yorkshire, to which he removed in 1869, and settled in the busy town of Bradford, where he held a position of responsibility in the firm of Lister & Co., Manningham Mills, for twenty-three years. Our aged brother, Richard Mason, of Hemsworth, tells how Mr. Holiday, himself, and another, were engaged in the preparing of the first small room used for Gospel work, one cleaning the floor, the other two sawing wood for seats, and how small and obscure was the beginning of the work, which, by the blessing of God, and largely through the energies of our departed brother, with others who were raised up to be his helpers, has grown and spread until now there are some hundreds of believers gathering in the Lord's Name in and around Bradford, while others have been from thence scattered through other parts of Yorkshire and far beyond, to serve the Lord and preach the Gospel. The Bradford Whitsuntide Conferences, convened for many years, have been seasons of spiritual profit and help to many, the hospitality shewn to strangers by Mr. Holiday and others following his example, and the welcome given to servants of Christ from home and distant lands will never be forgotten.

Mr. Holiday was a gifted and able minister of the Word, and not only in Bradford but throughout the British Isles, he was constantly preaching and teaching. When his business took him to London, he invariably had meetings every night, denying himself hours of rest, to help some small company of Christians in or about the city, or en route for home, travelling by night after his meetings. Few, whom we have heard preach the Word, combined grace and truth in their ministry as he did. Firm as a rock for the truth, never failing to preach and teach what he believed God's people needed, even if not always wanted by them, he was wise and gracious

in his manner of giving it, so that few were able to reject or gainsay his message. Many of his addresses have appeared in this Magazine, and have been issued in book form, and we are glad to be able to say, that with the family's approval and help, we hope to preserve in permanent form, and issue in a suitable size, many valuable papers of his on subjects of vital importance to the Church of God. In 1892, Mr. Holiday and his household removed to Featherstone, where he was appointed manager of Lord Masham's estate and collieries. Here, with the members of his family and a few others who had accompanied him, he began to assemble in the Lord's Name and to preach the Gospel in a new and needy field. God marvellously blessed the Word; sinners were saved, a large Gospel Hall was built, helpers raised up, and although the chief worker has ended his labours, the work goes on. In November, 1903, symptoms of internal cancer appeared; a week or two later an operation was performed, but it was found too far advanced to be removed. From then till the end, he became weaker, although continuing to attend to his duties for over twelve months. Twice he was able to publicly minister the Word, on both occasions in Bradford, where he was always welcome, and in which his interest continued unabated. During December and January, he suffered much but never murmured; his confidence in the Lord and his resignation to His good and perfect will being maintained till the end. With all his loved ones gathered around him he said on the early morning of February 8th, "This is the end; but we are all his people and He will come! I have been happy in His service here, now I am to be promoted, higher—HIGHER—HIGHER. I am so thankful for long years of service, but this last year has been the most profitable of all. O Lord, give grace for one step more—only one step more. Then I shall be with Him for ever." His strength was failing fast, yet with remarkable energy and clearness he spoke—"Soon we shall all be TOGETHER in His presence—happy—happy—so happy." Farewell words to each followed; then he said "God bless you all—kneel." Then he prayed most tenderly and fervently, adding—"I can say no more." Then a last word to his beloved wife, a gentle sigh, they heard him whisper "Now"—and the ransomed spirit, freed, was absent from the body and at home with the Lord. His age was 63.

A very large and representative company gathered on Saturday, February 11th, including friends and fellow-believers from all parts, many coming long

distances for the funeral, which, together with local friends, workers, and villagers, who awaited in the cemetery, must have numbered over a thousand. Benjamin Glasgow, W. H. Hunter, and John Ritchie conducted the service there and preached the Gospel to the solemnised crowd around the open grave. Then softly the hymn, "For ever with the Lord," was sung, and we laid him to rest, to await the fair resurrection morning when he, with loved ones gone before, whose faith and Christlike lives still cast their lustre and fragrance on our path, shall be raised together with those who are "alive and remain" to be for ever with the Lord.

—o— Fallen Asleep.

JAMES WRIGHT, of Ashley Down Orphan Homes, Bristol, in his 79th year, son-in-law of the late George Müller, for long his associate and afterwards his successor as director of the Orphanage which grew up under Mr Müller's faith and care. He was a devoted labourer for the Lord, a gifted minister of the Word, and will be much missed in and around Bristol. During the seven years since Mr Müller's death he had Mr G. F. Bergin as his fellow-labourer, upon whom with the staff of Christian helpers, the responsibility of caring for the orphans now rests.

JAMES CAMPBELL, Motherwell, on February 23rd, aged 88, for many years connected with the assembly in Hamilton, with which he was first identified in 1868. He was one of the circle of early brethren, of which our aged brother, Charles Stirling, of Stonehouse, only now remains. Daniel Hamilton, John Strain, H. McCallum, Wm. Watson, and others have long preceded him in entering the homeland. Able to visit and converse with friends until within ten days of the end, he passed away peacefully. He has been in the fellowship of the assembly in Roman Road Hall, Motherwell, for the past twenty years, and took a real interest in its welfare.

THOMAS MUIR, Morningside, near Wishaw, for 25 years associated with Christians gathered in the Lord's Name there, active in Gospel labours and diligent in his care of fellow-believers. He had been in feeble health for over two years, and passed away at the age of 56, on January 21st.

NELLIE HAZELL, Botesdale, Suffolk, aged 17. Converted in her 12th year through the ministry of Edward Stack, she became an earnest student of the Word, and a diligent worker in the Sunday School. She was early called up "higher" on January 24th.

REVIVAL, AND ITS COUNTERFEITS.

GRACIOUS seasons of reviving and refreshing among the children of God, and of awakening and conversion among the unconverted, continue in many places. The work of God is spreading itself far and wide. In some parts the blessing seems to tarry, while in others the stream flows steadily on. There are bands of praying saints to be found in almost every town and village, waiting upon God, for the "little cloud" to arise. In not a few cases, where they met to call upon the Lord for an awakening amongst the unconverted, their attention was turned to their own condition; to their condition of heart individually in the sight of God, and their condition as churches or assemblies of saints, gathered in the Lord's Name. It is always the Lord's way to begin within; to deal with His own, and to put them right with Himself, before He gives blessing through them to the world. The danger is to forget all this, to neglect this inner cleansing and restoration, and to work up an artificial and unreal "Revival" which only adds to the general desolation, leaving the actual condition worse than it was before. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that there is much of this going on at the present time. There is undoubtedly a genuine work of the Spirit of God, resulting in true conversions, which bear the marks of the Divine workmanship, but there is also an artificial movement, bringing into existence "strange children" (Psa. cxliv. 11), counterfeits of God's true heaven-born sons. It may be

said that this is always so, when God is working. That this is true, alas! no one doubts, but we may surely at least see to it that we do not help on the adversary in his favourite device of bringing the Name of the Lord into dishonour, and His work into disrepute, by the multiplication of counterfeit converts.

The desire to have something to show, to have a "Revival" as well as others, without going to the cost of getting it in God's way, is a common danger of the time. We have heard of some going on a visit to Wales, coming home and giving a description of what they saw and heard there, and forthwith setting agoing a "Revival" after the same pattern; men, women, and children being encouraged to take part indiscriminately, without a single reference to God, or the authority of His Word. God will never own such ways, among those who profess to know and own His Word as their rule and guide. A true Revival begins by deep heart-searching, humiliation before God, confession and renunciation of sin, and cleansing ourselves from all that we discover to be contrary to His Word and will. If we have taken the place of separation from the world unto Himself, acknowledging the Lordship of Christ and the authority of His Word in everything, the standard is a high one, and God will hold us to it. If there is trifling with the truth avowed, covert worldly alliances, when separation is professed, God must have such things judged and dealt with honestly, before He can bless. With those who do not know, or profess to walk in such a path, God may deal differently, but He

will, He must have reality in all who take their place before Him as witnesses for the truth of Christ's Headship and Lordship in His Church. If there is to be reviving and refreshing among God's people, sinners saved, and young believers brought in to be fed and nursed for God, the searchlight of His Word must be turned on, and nothing allowed a place in us individually, or in God's assembly, no matter how long continued, or by whom condoned, that will hinder God from manifesting His power and giving us to see His mighty goings in our midst.

The antecedents of genuine Revival are, as they have always been, too costly for light-headed and carnal-minded professors to give much heed to them. Even true children of God, shrink back from the close, personal dealing with God, the severe searchings of heart and of life, in the light of His presence, and by the action of His Word that are involved in being brought up to "the mount of God." Envy, evil-speaking, malice, and back-biting, which are the stock in trade of many a Church "leader" of the Laodicean condition, must all be cleared out as so much "filth" (2 Chron. xxix. 4), from the heart and life, when the light of true Revival breaks in upon the conscience and brings it into exercise before God. Then there are confessions to God and to men; recoveries, restorations, restitutions, all of which cost something to human pride and fleshly pomp: far too much for those who have a reputation to keep up and a place to maintain in the religious world. True revival can only be experienced by honest dealing with God and His Word.

THE GOSPEL.

AN ADDRESS BY W. J. MCCLURE, AT ABERDEEN.

Read 1 Cor. xv. 1-8; Rom. i. 1-16; Acts xx. 24;

2 Cor. iv. 3-4.

IN these passages, we have the different expressions, "The Gospel," "The Gospel of God," "The Gospel of Christ," "The Gospel of the grace of God," "The Gospel of the glory of Christ."

If we were to ask some, "What is the Gospel?" we would be rather surprised at the variety of answers. Some would say "The Bible is the Gospel;" others, "It is simply a synonym for truth," and others "The Four Gospels." The Word of God is true from beginning to end, but we could not, for instance, call Psalms ix. 17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," the Gospel.

"Good news" is what the word Gospel means. Paul was not ashamed of it, and made no apology for telling the Corinthian believers that he declared unto them "The Gospel," as stated in the three grand accomplished facts that "Christ *died* for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was *buried* and that He *rose again* the third day according to the Scriptures." The Corinthians needed nothing less than that, nothing more. That was what they believed, and by that they were saved. The poor, humbled, broken-hearted sinner, who comes to Christ, with trembling faith, like the woman who had the issue of blood, and in that delicate, trembling fashion touched the hem of Christ's garment, is as much saved as the Apostle Paul with his wondrous confidence in the precious Son of God. On the other hand,

the one who has unswerving faith in any human doings of whatever nature, is like the man in the falls of Niagara, who, instead of seizing the rope that was thrown to him, caught on to a big log which was sweeping down, which offered something to buoy him up, but which went over the Falls carrying the man with it unto death.

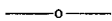
Putting the verses read in Romans together, we enquire—What does “The Gospel of *God*” mean, as compared with “The Gospel of *Christ*?” Should there be a distinction? If so, what is it? The “Gospel of *God*” carries us away up to God Himself as its *origin*. Man, if he had lived for millions of years, could never have imagined that God would give His Son. There is not a religious system of natural men, either learned or unlearned, rich or poor, that by any effort would have stumbled across the glorious remedy of “the Gospel of *God*.” It emanated from God’s own heart. God looked down upon the ruin that sin had brought in, and the one grand sovereign remedy of the Gospel, He Himself devised. The “Gospel of *Christ*” tells of the *channel* through which it came. “And He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Rev. xxii. 1). Does it proceed from the throne of God only? No; “and of the Lamb.” God is its source; the Lamb is its channel. The “Gospel of *God*” takes us to the fountain head; the “Gospel of *Christ*” to the channel through which it comes to us.

In Acts xx. 24, we get “the Gospel of *the Grace of God*.” How refreshing it is to hear the Gospel, in the simplicity and

power of the grace of God, putting man in his place and giving God His. We sometimes ask—What is grace? and are told “It is something for nothing.” I trust that does not satisfy us. There are people who come to us pleading their need, and we give them something but get no equivalent. That is something for nothing, but no grace. Let us illustrate what grace is. There was a man in business in a certain town, where in the same line were two brothers, who, by energy and push, came rapidly to the front, and caused in that man a tremendous spirit of envy, which developed into the deepest animosity. He lost no opportunity of saying bad things about the brothers, injuring them with their customers, and with the wholesale houses, and doing all he could to blast their business. They caught him once at a peculiarly contemptible thing, and said to him, “We will make you rue this.” His dark mind understood this as a threat, to be carried out in the manner that he himself would have done it. Time passed on, and in spite of him and his wicked ways, the business of the brothers flourished, but his own trade so went down, as nothing apparently could save him from closing up altogether. As a last resource, he got the names of merchants in his own town as guarantors, but he lacked two of the required number! What could he do? Dare he go to these men whom he had so deeply wronged? After waiting and waiting, stared with hopeless, irretrievable ruin for himself and his family, he went to them with the paper that required but two more signatures. They looked at it,

and saying, "Didn't we tell you we would make you rue it?" Then each took up his pen and signed the guarantee. Wasn't that grace? And to a man, too, beside whom a thief would almost be respected. And what did he get? Just what God gives to us. We did not deserve it; bankrupt, hopeless, ruined: no wretched creature was ever to his fellows what we were to God. In spite of the wretchedness of our need, we had yet a daring presumption to sin against God, and if we could, would have pulled Him from His throne. O His grace! the grace of God, unmixed with our merit; all grace, pure grace, that gave His blessed Son; that made His blessed Spirit lay siege to our darkened hearts; that opened our eyes to our danger and led us to Christ for salvation, life, and peace.

The last word is "the Gospel of the *Glory*." What is that? It is Christ up there in all the glory of God, and the Holy Spirit coming down from that glory, bringing the Gospel message to me and linking my soul with Christ in glory. This is presently true of all believers, of all who are saved as the days go by. That is the end. Thank God every one of us who believe, have been called by the Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus. May it become sweeter and sweeter to our hearts.



OUR RESOURCES.—The whole of the infinite resources of the eternal God are for us and at our disposal, so that instead of being weak and easily swayed by the things around us, we ought to move and sway everything for God.—*Donald Ross.*

THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD JESUS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS. PART II.

BY THE LATE ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

TURN now to Matt. xviii. 15. I would ask you to notice here, how the subject being dealt with, is commenced from the opposite end to that at which the Lord commenced in the other matter in chapter xvi. There He began with that which was true of Himself, and from that all the rest proceeded. He said, "Upon this rock I will build My Church;" and then He went on to show how that building should be carried on, through the witness of those who had been taught of God, which witness should be accompanied with His power. But in this 18th chapter, He begins at the other end. Starting with a personal matter between two brethren, He shows those brethren to be part of a company or association having responsibility concerning one another, and having instructed them how to carry out certain steps belonging to that responsibility, He leads up to the fact that their association is all founded upon Himself, and that His authority accompanies the steps taken, and he calls that company of believers by the same name of "Church" that He had before applied to the whole building which He had said that He would build. Now, there is manifestly a distinction between those two aspects of the Church. When Christ says, "Tell it unto the Church," He does not mean the Church as He spoke of it in chapter xvi. 18; we cannot tell anything to *that* Church. It is very plain that a brother in a difficulty cannot tell it to the Church of the whole period which began at Pentecost, and

will only be completed when the Lord comes. The Church in chap. xviii. is something well known, well defined, something about which the parties here concerned are in no doubt, something that can be reached by individuals. Now, my object in turning to this Scripture is, to point out what is the character of the Church here spoken of, as compared with the aspect of the Church brought before us in Matthew xvi. 18, but I must pause a moment to ask you to consider the words of the 15th verse: "Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; and if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Is it not true that there is scarcely any instruction in all the Divine record, that we need to have more deeply impressed upon us, than that contained in these exceedingly familiar words? Alas! how much of sorrow, of heart-burning, of division and strife, might have been saved, if we had acted out both the *letter* and the *spirit* of these instructions on all occasions. If I have dared to speak to others about my brother's fault before going to him, I have in great measure unfitted myself for that which is in the heart of God, the gaining of my brother; and I have put myself out of fellowship with God about this purpose of His. I shall need, therefore, to judge myself about my own sin, and to confess it to God, before I venture to go, at the bidding of the Lord Jesus, to seek to gain my erring brother.

Now read verses 17 and 18: " . . . If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an

heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be, having been bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be, having been loosed in heaven" (Young's Translation); The grammatical construction is the same here as in chapter xvi. 19, and then immediately follows verse 20—"For where two or three are gathered together unto My name, there am I in the midst of them." And thus, beginning from the other end, the Lord brings us back exactly to the point at which He started, in Matt. xvi. 13-19. He Himself, that which He is, is the sole foundation, the one only source of power and authority in the one case exactly as in the other; and our relationship in both cases is exactly the same. Here, as in Matt. xvi. 19, the binding and loosing is done in the Name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus. Though the matter began with a personal trespass between two believers, it passed beyond the control of the individual, when, having taken the one or two more with him, and having failed in gaining his offending brother, he now has to tell it to the Church, that they may unitedly, in responsibility to the Lord, and in the authority of His Name, act according to His command about it.

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THE GREATEST HONOUR.—It is an unspeakable honour to be allowed to suffer shame for the Lord Jesus. Paul had no greater honour till he went to Heaven, than when he was let down from a window in a creel, at Damascus, to escape his enemies.—Donald Ross,

THE EPISTLES OF PETER :

NOTES OF BIBLE READINGS.—NO. 4.

BY THE LATE J. G. BELLETT.

BUT now I must speak a little particularly of the chapter before us. The Peter of Matthew xvi. reappears here. In Matthew xvi. he owned the person of the Lord Jesus. He was given of the Father to own Him as Head of Life. The moment Peter acknowledged Him thus, Christ said, "On this rock I will build my Church." Peter now, as it were, went beyond his Master. Christ did not say what He would do with His Church. Peter goes on to tell us that we are built up a spiritual house—a holy priesthood—"to offer up spiritual sacrifices." Is it not exquisite to see the Holy Ghost's light advancing on the teaching of the Lord Jesus? The time had not come, when He was here, for letting out all these divine secrets. "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Peter, by the Holy Ghost, advances beyond the Son's teaching, and tells us what He will do with His house.

There is another thing. We find that Peter stumbled in Matthew xvi. He made a beautiful confession; but he could not understand the disallowance. "They will cast Me aside," said the Lord. Oh, Lord, "that be far from Thee." Would we allow them to do such a thing. "Get thee behind Me, Satan."

Now, that same Peter who, with decision and strength, denied that the Lord should ever be rejected, delights in the thought of the "disallowed" Stone, and, with decision and strength, he takes Him

up as such, and tells us that we shall never build on Him aright, if we do not build on Him as a disallowed Stone.

AS STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS.

Peter addresses us in the beginning as "strangers and pilgrims," and now, in the hortatory part, he cannot look at us in any character that he does not tell us to have a *subject spirit*. That is the very quality that suits strangers. If I am a king in my kingdom, I may exercise authority and dominion; but, if I am a cast-out stranger, the temper that suits me is a spirit of subjection all my life through. Put the stranger in company with what relationship you please, the Spirit of God expects this spirit of subjection, as James challenges a spirit of poverty and patience. How me mistake Christianity in its moral qualities! We play the hero, when we should play the part of a girded servant. Christendom has mistaken Christianity; and I boldly say, if I do not understand dispensational truth, I shall never build aright on the foundation stone. So here he begins: "Abstain from fleshly lusts." Is not that a spirit of control? Then, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man." Do not be talking of your rights. As one has said, "If you talk of your rights, I tell you your only right is to go to hell." Then, "as free," but not using your freedom for anything but service. How beautiful to see the free man bound as a servant! Then you are told to love the brethren. If you love another, will not you serve him? Then, "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps, who did

no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not." Is not all that a spirit of subjection—putting a rein on the ways and tendencies of nature? Then, "ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands." "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them, according to knowledge." The husband should be the bearer of light in the domestic circle. "Giving honour unto the wife." The husband is in the place of authority; yet he is to gird himself with this spirit, and to be the informing principle of the house. So, whatever the relationship we are in, this is the spirit He girds us with. Will that be the style when Christ is on the throne of glory? We may then ungird our loins and give liberty to our affections. But now, in company with a rejected Christ, we are to behave ourselves in a holy spirit of restraint. "Finally, be ye all of one mind: love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but, contrariwise, blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." That brings us to ver. 9 of chap. iii., and there we will leave it. The Lord give us light on these things.

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DISCIPLINE.—It has always been the Lord's way to discipline His chosen servants in secret, before using them in public. Joseph in Egypt, Moses in Midian, and David by the sheepfold are examples of it. In our day, undisciplined youths rush in and attempt to become leaders among God's people, only to fail.

THE HIDDEN SPRING OF BLESSING.

THERE was real blessing with the Gospel, sinners were saved at every meeting. The people of God were revived and refreshed, rejoicing as in the days of their spiritual youth. It all came about so quietly, that many were surprised. There was no elaborate preparation, no gifted preacher, no special meetings. God simply came in, manifested His mighty power, and made use of the ordinary means and instruments to carry out His purposes of grace. There was a softness among the children of God, a spirit of unity and a pulling together in the fellowship of service, which had never been reached before. The work was deep, solid, and lasting; nearly all who were then converted being added to the company of saints gathered in the Lord's Name, and from its fellowship going forth to witness for His truth and spread His Gospel in many parts of the earth. To many of us, that season of reviving, refreshing and ingathering, was always as a miracle of grace. It came upon us like the memorable "Revival" in the days of King Hezekiah, so "suddenly" (2 Chron. xxix. 36), and when there seemed to be but little exercise of heart among the rank and file of the saints, that we wondered at the strange operation of God's gracious hand. But many years after, the hidden cause of these times of refreshing came to light, when a quiet and godly brother, whose voice in public was seldom heard, passed away to be with Christ, and left in a private Diary the record of many days and nights spent

alone with God in prayer and supplication, on behalf of the people and the place on which the blessing came. Like Daniel of old, he began by humbling himself before the Lord, confessing his sins, and the sins of his people. Then, having got a hold on God, he pleaded for blessing on the place and the people, name after name being mentioned before the throne in prayer. A list of persons prayed for, showed how fully God had answered that prayer of faith, for against one after another, the date of their conversion was recorded. The secret cause of that memorable season of rich refreshing and mighty ingathering, was thus laid open before our eyes, in the humiliation, confessions, supplications and prayers of that man of God. He never named it or alluded to it, during the days of his earthly life, but its record is on high, and in the day when the great Master of the vineyard writeth up the record of His mighty men, that honoured name will not be forgotten. There is a sphere of holy and efficient service to which all are called, but which apparently few have grace to share, within the veil, in prayer and intercession for the church of God. It is higher than preaching, as the service of the priest of old was higher than the Levite. The one had to do with the things of God, the other with God Himself. While it is true that all believers are at once both priests and Levites, worshippers and workers in regard to privilege, there are comparatively few who practise the privilege of dealing with God, closely and continuously, concerning His people and his work here on earth. Yet in this, lies the secret

springs of blessing, and of power in outward service. O that God would deepen in all of us, the desire and ability to Daniel-like confess the sins of others as if they were our own; Epaphras-like to labour fervently in prayer for fellow-saints; to lay hold upon Him Elijah-like, not letting go, until He answers prayer. This is the need of our time, and the only real remedy for the shallow and artificial work which characterise this busy day, which prides itself so in its zeal for God, and in the spread of His Gospel among the sons of men.

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LATTER TIMES AND LAST DAYS.

IT is sorrowful to have to look at departures from God and His truth. It has been said of the Lord, that His soul tasted some of its bitterest grief, when He looked on the treachery of Judas; and ours should be thus affected when we think of the corruptions of Christendom, which are as the kiss and the treason of that apostle again.

The "mystery of iniquity" had begun to work, we know, in the times of the apostles. And as the small seed cast into the ground carries with it the form and character of all that which the harvest is afterwards to manifest and yield, so the leaven that was working secretly then, to the keen eye of the Spirit in the apostles, had in it the varied evils, which, in the progress of corruptions, were to be manifested in Christendom: so that Paul guards Timothy even then against the pravity of both "the latter times" and "the last days," as though Timothy himself were in the midst of them.

But these pravities are different. In "the latter times," there was to be a departure from the Word of God, or from the religion of "the truth," which alone is "godliness." Consequently, there would be the giving heed to something beside the Word or the truth, to "seducing spirits," and to "doctrines of devils" or demons. Then there would be speaking lies "in hypocrisy," making an exhibition of religion; and all this man's religion, or what man has got up, would "sear the conscience," deaden it to God's religion, or the religion of "the truth," fortified, as it would be, by man's "forbiddings" and "abstinences," which must be complied with and practised, though so contrary to the thoughts and gifts of God (see 1 Tim. iv.).

"The last days," on the other hand, were not to be religious, but infidel. Superstitious vanities were to yield to man's will and independency. He was to be a lover of "himself," and in the train of that "heady," "high-minded," "disobedient to parents," "covetous," and such like—all qualities and characters making him as one who had broken the bands, and cast away the cords; not religious, but wilful. And in the midst of all this, there was to be the "form of godliness"—the appearing to return to that from which "the latter times" had departed, "godliness," or the religion of "the truth"; but, when looked at a little within, no "power" would be found, though so much "form" (2 Tim. iii.).

Now, here we see a great moral reaction. All the cords and bands of the latter times cast away, and man indulging and admir-

ing himself—religious vanities gone, but human independency asserted.

And these things have had their day. In the two great characteristic eras in the history of Christendom we get them—in the times before and since the Reformation. In the times before, there was man's religion, opposing itself to the "truth," having its own vanities; in the times since, there has been man's pride, asserting his independency and breaking off all bonds. These have been the characters of the two eras. Of course, something of the second was known during the time of the first, and much of the first still lives in the second; but these different pravities are the characteristics of the two eras.

And, what is a very solemn truth, I judge, that the history of corrupted Christianity will close by a kind of coalition between the two pravities. And of such a state of things we get the pattern in the time of our blessed Lord, when there were both man's religion and man's independency combined against Him—the unclean spirit who had gone out, having himself returned and brought other spirits more wicked than himself. There was Jewish religion, which would not let its votaries go into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; and there was Jewish infidelity, which would say: "We have no king but Cæsar." This is a solemn and fearful prospect. Surely there is real godliness in the midst of it all, but the sight is dreadful.

There are resources of wisdom, grace, power, and spiritual gift for the church, in Christ, for those who have faith to use them.—C. H. M.

The Bible Annotator.

WATCHWORDS FOR WORKERS.

SERVICE IN THREE ASPECTS.

WORKERS for His Name (3 John 7).

WITNESSES for His Truth (Acts i. 8).

WATCHERS for His Coming (Mark xiii. 35).

WALK AND WORK.

Walking with God (Gen. v. 24)—One Path.

Working with God (1 Sam. xiv. 45)—One Object.

CONSTANT EMPLOYMENT.

Always Praying (Phil. i. 4)—In the Spirit.

Always Rejoicing (3 Cor. vi. 10)—In the Lord.

Always Abounding (1 Cor. xv. 58)—In the Work.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

Please explain the words in Romans ix. 22, 'Vessels of wrath FITTED to destruction.' Were they thus fitted by a Divine decree, or by their own sin? The word in the passage rendered "fitted," is the same as is elsewhere translated, "perfected" and "prepared," both implying a process, but neither of them attributing the cause to God. It is rather the hardening process of continuance by personal choice in sin. Thus it was with Pharaoh, who, by long trifling with the demands of Jehovah, became fitted and ripened for the last great stroke of Divine judgment which had long before been declared against him by the word of the Lord (see Gen. xv. 14). The wrath that comes upon sinners is for their own demerit (see Col. iii. 6), and that after God has, as the passage plainly declares, "endured with much long-suffering" their sinful and grace-rejecting course.

Is it according to the will of God that a Christian vote or take public part in Municipal Elections? "The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1), and it is the commandment of the Lord that His people should be in subjection to all such, whether as king, governor, or magistrate; to yield honour to whom it is due, to pay tax or tribute as they may require. But there is nothing in the Word to guide a believer in seeking or accepting rule in any of its phases in the world, or in helping to appoint others to such a sphere. Prayer for (1 Tim. ii. 1-3) and subjection (1 Pet. ii. 13) to rulers are clearly enjoined, but to join common cause with the ungodly in their choice or election, is not the place or the work of a child of light. We have never

known any enter upon such a course without spiritual loss, and eventually sinking down to the level of those whose mandate he holds, or whose fellowship he has chosen in such a cause.

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Answers to Correspondents.

A. C.—There is no reliable record of any of the Lord's apostles having evangelised "Britannia," as these islands were then named. When Cæsar first landed, the people were mostly Druids, offering human sacrifices. Ruins of some of their "circles" still remain; notably in the islands of Orkney, Arran, and on Salisbury Plain. In the second century, there were numerous small companies of Christians found in Britain, which clearly tells that the glad tidings had been carried thus early to the ancient Britons; by whom we shall know on a coming day.

"STUDENT."—Young's Analytical Concordance, will admirably suit your purpose. It may be used by any English reader, as easily as a Cruden's, and is much fuller. You will notice it is much reduced in price at present, being offered at 12s.

E. H. L., GLAMORGAN.—God, in sovereign grace, may save sinners where there is very little of the Gospel, but it is not His usual way to do so. The apostle, who knew both the sinner's need and what could meet it, better than most, says—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). And as the Gospel is the message, so "preaching" is the means (see Rom. i. 15, x. 14), while the Spirit is the Agent in making it effective unto conversion (1 Thess. i. 5). A good grasp of these Divine principles, will enable you to discern between what is of God and what is not.

W. J. B., AYRSHIRE.—Give plenty of time and room for God to manifest what He approves of. We have never known Him to fail in vindicating the character and honour of any child or servant of His, whose aim has been to please Him and to do His will, no matter how many or how organised His enemies and traducers may be. God can deal with them far better than you, and He will, if you leave them to Him. But the danger is, that you lift your voice in your own defence, and take the whole matter out of His hand. If he tests your faith and patience, it is for your good; when His deliverance comes, it will be worthy of Him, and draw forth your wondering praise.

J. G. J., SOUTH WALES.—The dreams and visions of which the apostle speaks in Acts ii. 17, are connected with the "last days," and the outpouring of the Spirit on "all flesh." A partial fulfilment of the prophecy was witnessed on that Pentecostal Day, but the full and final fulfilment is future, and not to be looked for in this age of grace, as the most cursory glance at verses 20-21 will show. Since Israel's rejection of the testimony of the Holy Spirit (Acts vii. 51), and their consequent "casting away" (Rom. xi. 15) and judgment (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16), such signs have ceased. The claim of those who say they have them, must be tested by the Word, and when it is, we have never known it to stand that test. Mormons, Seventh Day Adventists, Christian Scientists and others who have abandoned the fundamentals of the Gospel and the Faith, claim such signs, and we need not wonder if Satan seeks to introduce the same thing in some new form, in connections which will more readily appeal to those who are evangelical. Our safeguards all along the line are, "God and the Word of His grace," not appearances, however fair, or proofs—as men reckon them—however clear.

H. B., LANARKSHIRE.—When men who profess to have renounced worldly religion and sectarianism, appear on public platforms with men in clerical garb, recognised by clerical title, accrediting them in their clerical position, you are not far wrong in assuming that they have never seen the sin of clerisy, as God depicts it in His Word, or that they have, like Samson, lost their eyes by trifling with it. A little patronage and flattery goes a long way with some, and with others, business, family and social considerations have more to do with such amalgamations than most of us think.

J. H., CUMBERLAND.—There is a class of preachers who sow discord and cause divisions in every place to which they gain an entrance. These men have never been known to open up a work in the Gospel, or to gather an assembly of believers by their own efforts; indeed, they could not do the one or the other. Their "forte" is, to get in if they can where others have wrought, and after saying some commonplace things, to gain confidence, then to bring in stealthily their pet notions, and form a party to agitate them after they have gone. Those who "watch for souls," who have the honour of the Lord and the welfare of the assembly at heart, will no doubt receive plenty of abuse and have any amount of slanderous statements made about them, if they withstand such men and refuse to give them

an entrance, guarding the saints from their withering influence. God give you grace and wisdom to act for Him, heeding not what men may do or say. There is a judgment-seat to come, where all that will be cleared up fully.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION III.—Do not the generally unsatisfactory results of what are called "Special Efforts," which commonly consist of a week or fortnight's meetings by a preacher "engaged" months before-hand, carried on at high pressure, then ended as abruptly as they began, in most cases yielding very little enduring fruit, point to a lack, or a departure from God's way? In former times, when Gospel work was carried on, on simpler lines, with less form, there were infinitely better results. Help in this will be valued. It is exercising very many at present.

ANSWER A.—The moral and spiritual condition of the preacher must always be the chief factor in determining the character and results of such efforts. Although God does sometimes use those in whom there is—as we reckon—little depth of spirituality, those converted seldom turn out satisfactory, unless it be that they are helped and taught by others. From a pretty long observation, I conclude that lack of spiritual power in the preacher, with an undue haste in numbering converts, are the chief causes of unsatisfactory results in Gospel work.—J. A.

ANSWER B.—The "mechanical" way in which such "Special Efforts" are carried on, without much recognition of God or His leading in many cases, could scarcely be expected to bear the Divine stamp in abiding fruit. I have seen evangelists "book" engagements, months ahead, hurriedly, and one after another, during the interval of a Conference, without even referring the matter to God, followed by plenty of arrangements, advertisements, and energy, but without a breath of the Spirit of God, and indeed with little of the Word, in the preaching. What is there in such efforts to produce real conversions? The "former times" referred to in the question, began with humiliation, confession, prayer, and recognition of God in all arrangements, and when He sent a servant of His, he was welcomed, and co-operated with by all, mutually dependent on God, for how, and how long the meetings should be continued. The new method of fixing or arranging, how long God is to be given to

do His work, bargaining with preachers (in some cases paying so much money for so many meetings) is completely away from the way of God as shown in the Acts, which is our pattern, how Gospel work is to be carried on. If any deny this, or say we may alter, improve, or even set aside these Divine examples there given, that is simply giving up the Word of God for men's own devices, as surely, and for the same reasons as those who practise "infant sprinkling" pervert Scriptural baptism, by saying it is not suited to these times and to our advanced ideas of propriety. What we need is, to get back to God, and to the simplicity of His Word, counting on His guidance and honouring the Holy Spirit. Then, as before, we shall see fruit in conversions that will remain.—W. J. M.

ANSWER C.—When an assembly of believers is in an unhealthy condition, nothing is more common than to get up a "special effort," bring an evangelist, and in this way try to "get right with God," but it will not do. If there is sin to be unearthed, judged, confessed to God, and put away; evil speaking, wrongdoing, strifes, and estrangements to be dealt with between fellow-believers, how can God use them as channels of blessing to others. Gospel work is not the remedy, not even if God should save sinners, which in grace He sometimes does in spite of His people's evil condition. A true Revival always begins among God's people, and until they are clean and in a right condition, it is simply trifling with holy things to talk of an effort to reach sinners, by an assembly with whom God has a controversy about unjudged sin among themselves. Where there is no assembly, God will work through His individual servants, but where He has a people who take the place of being gathered to His Name, and ordered according to His Word, they must either be helpers, acting in the fellowship of His Gospel (Phil. i. 5), or hinderers, doing the devil's work (1 Thess. ii. 18; Luke xi. 52), in a sense that the ungodly cannot. Restoration of the individual, then of the assembly to God, must come first, without which blessing cannot flow through them, but on the contrary, sooner or later, Divine judgment must come.—J. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—In times of reviving, when God is manifestly moving and working, there are amongst many godly and thoughtful Christians deep searching of heart; first, as to their own individual condition before God (Psa. cxxxix. 23, 24), and when once that is put right, next, the spiritual condition of

the assembly of which they form a part. A church, like an individual, may be backslidden (Rev. iii. 5), or carnal (1 Cor. iii. 3), yet very active in work (see Rev. ii. 3), those in the worst condition often being the busiest (see Phil. i. 15-16), in what is called "Gospel work." It is greatly to be feared that some seek to "mask" their evil condition, to hide their nakedness, to drown the voice of conscience, by keeping up a "stir" of one kind and another. As two of our correspondents remark, no satisfactory results need be expected from Gospel efforts, if there is sin unjudged and evil unrepented of, in the midst of a company of God's people. This has more to do with unreal professions of conversion than most of us are aware, as it has with the premature decay of many who are brought into the fellowship of an assembly in such a condition. Young converts cannot thrive in a disjointed, divided, or unclean assembly. They either wither up, or drift away. Then, as to the way God's work should be done. Surely this must be ordered and adjusted according to His Word. The principles and examples given there are for all seasons; like all God's things, they are abiding. We are not to adapt them to men's changing conditions, but to bring ourselves into line with them. The channels along which the power of God is to flow, are already cut out; our responsibility is to see that they are clear and clean; not to devise something new, as if God's had become effete, or may be improved upon. Then leave room for God to send and use His own workmen, neither prescribing nor defining the time or scope of their service. There is a living God in His church; it is His residence, His temple, and He is there to carry on—through human instrumentality it is true—His own work. It is ours to find out, then fall in with His plans, never to make them and then ask Him to fall in with ours. His Word, His Gospel, is the instrument He uses, and always magnifies in conversions. It requires no embellishments, it must not be darkened by man's inventions; it is perfect, absolutely so in itself, and only needs a mouthpiece through whom God will speak, an instrument subject to His will and always ready to His hand. Spiritual condition in the preacher and the assembly; God sought; His Spirit and His Word owned, are all necessary to real Gospel effort. These simple, yet fundamental principles recognised and acted upon, would go far to solve the difficulty exercising the hearts of many godly and earnest workers at the present time, in regard to false profession and unabiding fruit.

THE CARE OF YOUNG CONVERTS.

NEW life is breaking forth on every hand. The Lord, in grace, has visited His people and given "a little reviving" (Ezra ix. 8). Long days of labour and soul travail are forgotten, in the common joy of welcoming God's newborn babes to the love and care of His great family circle, and in hearing them lisp their earliest praises to their great Redeemer's Name. All this is truly blessed. It is to many "as the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deut. xi. 21). But in order to fully share the privileges and embrace the responsibilities of such a season, something more than a passing tribute of praise is called for. These newborn babes require to be nursed and fed, if they are to grow and become a standing witness to God's saving power. It is given to those who have been "in Christ before them" (Rom. xvi. 7), to act the part of nursing-mothers (1 Thess. ii. 7, R.V.), cherishing and caring for those who are born of God, at this favoured time. It is the privilege and responsibility of all who know and love the Lord to do so. And such a service, while it has its burdens and its cares, has its peculiar joys and compensations also. When the aged Naomi, welcomed to her bosom Ruth's first-born son, and "became nurse" to him, he in turn was to her a "restorer" and a "nourisher" of her old age (Ruth iv. 15-16), a blessing that many a saint and company of saints need. The Lord would seem to say at such a time to one and all, "Take this child and nurse it for Me, and I will give

thee thy wages" (Exod. ii. 9). The religious world can do nothing for these young believers, save to spoil them. Worldly-minded men away from God, even if His children, can give them no help. At a representative gathering of ministers and others in a part of Wales where great work has been done, various kinds of "entertainments" were recommended as a means of keeping the converts together. It will fare badly with newborn souls, if they get nothing better than that to feed upon. What they need is, the "pure milk of the Word" (1 Pet. ii. 2), the bread of life broken small, the grand foundation truths of the Gospel, of the believer's justification, salvation, acceptance; his place and portion in Christ; his relation to God as a Father, to the Lord as a disciple, to the Holy Ghost as a temple. "Never was there a time," as one who is in the midst of it writes, "when those who have the truth and can speak it, had a better opportunity than now, for everywhere there are young believers hungering for the bread of life." Mere scraps of ethical advice, exhortations to work and continuous testimony, will not do to develop the new life, or build up a sound spiritual constitution. The simple and healthy ministry of God's Word, leading the soul into a personal knowledge of Christ, unfolding to it under the guidance of the Spirit, His beauties and glories, alone will nourish and cherish the new heaven-born nature, and wean the heart from earthly things. Then the plain and clearly-marked path in which the children of God are to walk in separation from the world, and in

fellowship with their fellow-believers in Christ, as set forth in the Word, needs to be simply and definitely set before them. Unless they are taught these truths at the *beginning* of their Christian course, there is every chance of them being swamped in the world and captured by its religious traditions, which bring the soul into bondage and under the domination of men and their systems, which are contrary to God, and, as many know to their cost, soon cause the "fine gold to become dim." A warm spiritual atmosphere in the assembly of saints, with love and unity reigning; a full and wholesome ministry of the Word in all its parts, nothing unduly pressed, nothing kept back; older ones walking in the truth, so as to be ensamples to the flock, and a loving, helping hand held out to those who come about seeking spiritual help, are the best attraction and the true preventative against young believers wandering into associations where they will be taught error and learn worldly and unscriptural ways, which will tell badly on their after lives. May the Lord stir up His people to their responsibility and enable each in his sphere and according to his measure to shew a loving interest and give a helping hand to those who are setting forth on the journey heavenward. Love will devise many a plan, find out many a way. Homely Bible readings, informal gatherings for prayer and study of the Word; wholesome teaching leading to the Word, and words of godly counsel and cheer, wherever young believers are met with, God will bless to lead them on in His ways.

BABEL AND ITS BUILDERS.

AN ADDRESS AT A CONFERENCE OF CHRISTIANS.
BY THE EDITOR.

THE steps that led to the building of Babel, the objects the builders had in view, and the answer of God, in their confusion and scattering, all have their message to us of this present time, upon whom the ends of the age have come. There is nothing new under the sun; the same principles are at work, the same motives actuate the sons of men now, as in the days of old. And we may rest assured, the same results must follow. As is the seed, so must the harvest be.

The story is introduced to us in Genesis xi. 1, by the significant statement, that "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech." Differences of age and of character we know there were among Noah's sons, even as there were diversities in the early church in gift and grace; yet "all spake the same thing," and there was but "one heart and one soul" among them. Consequently, they could understand one another's speech, and walk in the unity of the Spirit, and in love. But apostacy soon came in. And this is the record of how it began of old:—First, "They journeyed from the east," turning their backs on the place from which the light springs forth. Next, "They found a plain," down below their first high dwelling-place, whence the ark had taken them, far above the world. Doubtless it had its attractions, for the sequel tells "they dwelt there." Ceasing to be mountain-top inhabitants and pilgrims below, and becoming settled in that low,

swampy region, they turn their thoughts to self-exaltation. Such has ever been the way of man. Never was it more prevalent than now. Where are the saints of one heart, of one soul, of one mind; all speaking the same thing? If they are to be found at all, even as a remnant, it will be on the mount of God, far from the spirit and fashions of the age, content to be as pilgrims here, with no certain dwelling, their faces toward the sunrising, looking for the coming of the Lord; the laughing stock of the worldly-wise, content to be unknown and unnoticed by the religious world. But Babel's builders are of another spirit. They are men of "common-sense" according to human calculation, men of what the world calls "sound judgment," with far-seeing eye. And so they meet and confer; they organise and co-operate, to work out their plans. "They said one to another, Go to, let us make brick." Plenty of reason, rich in proposals, full of consultation, but God is left out. Not a reference to Him, no inquiry as to what He may think, or whether He will be pleased. They adopt His words, used in creation, "Let us make," but their materials are all an imitation of His. "They had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar." Jehovah's temple is built of hewn stone made ready before it is brought thither (1 Kings vi. 7), and so "fitly joined together" that no artificial cement is needed. But Babel is built of brick, or artificial stone, made by men's hands, an imitation of the work of God. And as is the materials, so is that which keeps them together. "They had slime for mortar"—a sulphurous

compound, said to be formed of corrupting animal and vegetable substances found in the region of the Dead Sea. With this untempered mortar, Babel's walls were daubed and raised. How all this is being re-enacted in the building of the spiritual Babel, which men are rearing everywhere in these last days! Of what are the world's religious systems composed? Of what materials are its churches built? Of living stones; of sinners, brought out from Nature's quarry? Do the "members" in many cases even profess to be born of God, or are they asked when they "join the church" whether they have been converted? Or, to go further, are those who receive them, the office-bearers, the ministers, born again, separate from the world, living witnesses to the power of the Gospel? Alas, in many cases they are not. It is "brick for stone," as of old. And "slime for mortar," in the form of human brotherhoods, guilds, societies, and clubs, some for one purpose, some for another, meeting all tastes and providing for all classes, keeps the sham together. Thus the spiritual Babel, with its confusions, is raised. And let it be remembered, that whenever the heavenly calling is forgotten, the pilgrim path forsaken, separation to God made light of, then Babel building will be the sure result. Man's will, man's reason, man's word, will take the place of Christ's claims, God's Word and the Spirit's energies. "Another Gospel," watered down to suit the popular taste, made attractive by preachers who know how to catch the crowds and exalt themselves, takes the place of the Gospel of God. The "offence of the Cross" ceases,

and sham converts, light-headed professors to build Great Babel are the result. And what are the objects in view? Let God tell us. "And they said, Let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach to heaven." A "city" for society—pleasant and sociable meetings; a "tower" for a sign, a witness that they were a people of no mean standing on earth. Take the social element, the pleasant evenings, the frivolity, the love making, the Vanity Fair, from the younger, and the emoluments, the honours, and flatteries conferred upon those who support "the cause," from the seniors, and you will see how long the patrons of the world's churches will stand by them. Babel is kept together by "slime," which one day will burst out in fiery flame. "And let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad." This was a bold defiance against the power of the Almighty. They talk loftily these Babel builders. Then and now "Union is strength" and combination is power in the religious world's estimation. A union of Churches, a confederation of sects, the reunion of Christendom, under a new name, is regarded as a sign of the speedy dawn of millennial bliss, whereas the way of the Lord is, that His people gather unto the one uniting Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, neither making a name for themselves, nor adopting those which others have made, but holding fast in faith the ever precious word, "In all places where I record My Name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Exod. xx. 24). And again, "Where two or three are gathered together UNTO My Name, there am I in

the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). Thus God gathers His saints to Christ's Name alone, and to all who gather to any other centre, His word is—"He that gathereth not with Me, scattereth." Yet how many have sought under a pretence of gathering God's people together, to secure their unity, to make for themselves "a name." All such efforts are in vain, and can only result in a wider scattering. As the only remedy for the Fall is the Cross, so the only preservation from Babel is Pentecost, or in other words, the Lordship of Christ confessed and owned; the ministry of the Spirit welcomed and obeyed, and the Word of God made the standard and the final appeal in everything. A holy, lowly walk with God in separation from the world, on these principles, will keep saints from Babel-building; nothing else will.

"Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower" (ver. 5). He suffers long: He allows great Babel to reach its height of pride; then He comes down in judgment. And He spake as well as saw. "This they *begin* to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have *imagined* to do, so Jehovah scattered them." Such was the result of that first great conference and confederation, where human will and human reason magnified man and shut out God. And such too will be the character of the last great confederacy of evil, "Babylon the Great," the masterpiece of Satanic art, wrought out through the will of ungodly yet religious man. God grant that amid the shadows which are already forecasting themselves, and the ever-increasing worldliness and corruption of what professes

great honour to God and His Christ, but which is in reality a travesty of His Church and a very Babel in His sight, God's true people may be kept apart, in holy separation, walking in the narrow path of obedience to His Word, not denying His Name, content to be as strangers here, where their Lord was cast out, until that hour, when, at His call, they shall go with a bound to their native country, where all is order, harmony, and unity, because only one will is done, and one centre owned there,—the Lamb upon the throne.

Wherever human devices, arrangements, councils and deliverances take the place of the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus, in things belonging to His Church, His kingdom and his work on earth, wherever social intercourse, pleasant and pleasing gatherings, the making of a "name" and the building of a "cause" for the magnification of man, even if the "glory of God" be named upon it in vain words, take the place of a dead and risen people abiding in their high places, and owning themselves but strangers here. There you have the seed-plot, the small beginning of Babel, which is ever in opposition to, as it is a counterfeit of the work of God.

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CRAWLING OR FLYING.—Many of God's dear people are quite content, if they have the assurance that they will get to Heaven by-and-by. But it is one thing to go crawling along the road like a snail, and quite another to go flying as on eagles' wings.—*Donald Ross.*

RESTORATION : JOY AND TEARS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

BY THE LATE JAMES CAMPBELL.

WE see something very like what we read of here, among God's people in these last days; coming out from the religious denominations of the world, to gather in the Name of the Lord Jesus. As long as the people of God were in Babylon, they could not worship Him, they had to come out of Babylon and go back to Jerusalem before they could set up Jehovah's altar and keep His feasts. In Zechariah vii. 4-7 we read that all they did while in Babylon for seventy years, they did it for themselves and not for God. But when they came back to Jerusalem, they set up His altar and laid the foundation of the house of the Lord, and began to worship Him as He had commanded. Ezra shows us the way of worship; Nehemiah, work among God's people, and Esther our relation to the world. The first two our relation to God and one another, the last one our attitude toward the ungodly. In Ezra chap. ii., we read of some who came up from Babylon, who could not show their father's house, whether they were of Israel. Some may think that no unsaved would leave the sects and come out to where there is no minister to look up to, but this shows that they may. Whenever we take the place, in which we can honour God and keep His Word, the devil will be sure to seek to introduce his counterfeits, as the enemy sowed tares among the wheat. It was the same when the redeemed of Israel

came out of Egypt, a mixed multitude came up among them. When the foundations of the temple were laid, some shouted for joy and others wept. The young men who had not seen the first house shouted, while the old men who had seen it wept. Some of us remember the shout of joy that went up, when we first saw the truths of separation and worship, and began to gather in the Lord's Name. By and by when we learned something of the glory of the first house, of the church in its early days, as described in the early chapters of Acts, we might well weep. There the Lord's people were all together, all filled with the Holy Ghost, all speaking of Christ, and none counting what he possessed as his own. Where do we see this at the present time? When the ancient men, who had seen the first temple in its glory, looked on the small and miserable house that stood before them, they wept; and if we are "ancient men," we also shall mourn and weep over the low condition of assemblies of saints, which profess to take the same place and be subject to the same Lord—and this is surely what we aim at—as those churches which were in Judea (1 Thess. ii. 14). As we look around and see the low condition, the lack of power, the worldliness, we see enough to cause us to weep. But while we have enough to keep us humble, we need not be discouraged. We have "God and the Word of His grace," and in a little while we shall see the house more glorious than ever, when it is complete (Eph. ii. 21), and filled with His own presence in glory (Rev. xxi. 11). But there is another side: "The young men

shouted for joy," It was so much better than what they had been accustomed to in Babylon, where they had been born. And surely so is the fellowship of saints, in spite of all its weaknesses and troubles, than what some of us were accustomed to in our early days of Christian life, when we went to hear a dry sermon read that made us miserable, with nothing of God or Christ in it. There is much to humble us, much unfaithfulness and worldliness; yet it is better to be where we have "God and the Word of His grace" to correct and humble us, and to restore us when we fail, than to be where that Word is put to one side, and man's traditions take its place.

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RECOVERY FROM ERROR.

IT needs much grace and discernment to deal with one who has been beguiled by erroneous teaching. It is easy enough to get him to state his convictions, and then to report his condition to others and get him summarily expelled from the fellowship of saints. But that is not God's way. Those having experience and wisdom, able to recover and restore, should seek by every godly means to reach him with the Word, which has in it that which is for "correction" (2 Tim. iii. 16)—or, as the word implies, the "setting up again"—as well as instruction, and should be always freely used for the recovery of one led astray. Expulsion is a last resource, after all else has failed, and when there is a determination to cleave to error and refuse the truth.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE LORD JESUS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS. PART II.

BY THE LATE ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

THE basis of the entire subject is in these words, "For where two or three are gathered together unto My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (verse 20). Very much occurs to the mind in regard to this deeply momentous statement. First, I would point out the intimate connection between the power and authority as to binding and loosing in this passage and in the other (chapter xvi.). I think we saw distinctly in the former case that, upon Peter's confession that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, a special power and authority were declared to be attached to his words of binding and loosing. As long as Peter gave utterance to that which God had revealed to him, to all the truth that circled round the great fact that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, he might count upon his words being upheld and maintained by that Living God. All the powers of earth might be arrayed against his word; but when the day of account comes, it will be found that Peter's words, spoken in accordance with the Divine teaching, will be ratified by the eternal binding and loosing in heaven. But only so far as they agreed with that teaching, and no further. In the same way the Lord has given power to the assembly to act in His Name in carrying out His will, but He has given no power to a church to pass an arbitrary sentence of their own, and then to claim that all are bound to act upon it because they

have done it. For that reason I press the importance of the exact rendering of the words which makes the binding in heaven to precede the binding upon earth. An assembly will sometimes go altogether beyond the Word of the Lord, in order to get rid of some troublesome brother; and, having done so, they will say, "We were gathered together in the Name of the Lord, we have bound on earth, and therefore it is bound in heaven, and you must all own and submit to it." There is no warrant for such a saying as this. We need to discern the mind of the Lord, and to be guided by the Word of God alone. We must act only upon the clear and unmistakeable instructions of that Word. And more than this; we need to have one mind from God about it. It is not enough to have the united voice of the overseers of the assembly; as a matter of fact, they are not mentioned in this chapter. In saying this, however, I am not in any way suggesting that they or their judgment should be ignored. Overseers should always first take the initiative; and, having come to a united judgment themselves, they should seek to lead the whole Church according to the Word of God. But it is the Church, and not the overseers, who are to bind or loose. The Lord says, "Tell it unto *the Church*"; and, if he will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." So it is the action and sentence of the Church as a whole, to which these words are attached, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be, having been bound in heaven." Why is such tremendous

weight attached to this action? We get the answer in verse 20, which gives us the foundation upon which the whole passage, from the beginning, stands. The Lord, speaking in anticipation of the time when these disciples would be associated together as the Church of God, is leading them to see the meaning and character of this association. And what does it mean? Simply this, that all power and authority there belong to the Lord Jesus. And because this is so, therefore wherever two or three even, are gathered together unto His Name, He is in the midst of them, and will give His weight and authority to that which they do in His Name and according to His commandment. It is under these conditions, and only these, that the Lord pronounces the declaration as to their binding and loosing. What they thus bind or loose on earth "shall be," it shall stand, "having been bound or loosed in heaven." This affords no room for man to exalt himself, and talk of power and authority being given to him. The Church is not only carrying out the will of the Lord Jesus, but it is bearing witness to the fact that it is His power and His authority that alone can make effectual that which they do in His Name.

A word may be useful here as to the function of overseers in connection with the action of the assembly. They bear a considerable resemblance to the relationship which exists between a judge and a jury. After the witnesses have been heard, the judge marshals the facts together, calls attention to the salient points in the evidence, and shows the bearing of the law upon the facts. Having

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

It has sometimes been alleged that too much has been made of this section of Matthew xviii., and that verse 19 shows that it is only a coming together of one or

two for prayer that the Lord is speaking about, when, in verse 20, He declares that He is in the midst. A little more care in examining the exact words which the Lord spoke, will show that this objection is an entirely mistaken one. Verse 19, is plainly parenthetical. Verse 18, says, "Whatsoever ye shall bind," &c., and is addressed to them as a whole, in the church character of verse 17. Verse 20 again speaks of the whole company, though that company should consist of but two or three. But verse 19, is addressed to a part only of the whole. "If two of you shall agree . . . it shall be done for them." Not, "If you shall agree, it shall be done for you." This difference is significant, and leads to a most blessed truth. When once the brother who had been sinned against, has put the matter into the hands of the Church, he is debarred from taking individual action any further. At the first, it was his privilege and responsibility alike, to endeavour to win his brother, and even when he had taken the one or two more with him, he might still hope, with their help, to attain this blessed object. Now, however, the circumstances are changed, and the separate action of one or two is no longer permissible. Is there an end, then, to the special privilege and responsibility of those who had taken the earlier steps? No indeed. They may, and should, recognise that, in a very special sense, the grief of the offender's sin, and of the consequent action of the Church, is a matter for their continued prayers. And the Lord graciously interposes with a special and most encouraging

promise at this point, doubtless for the special help of those who would bear the burden of church sorrows before God. But, as has been already shown, this is quite distinct from the "whatsoever ye shall bind," which precedes it, and the where "two or three are gathered together unto My name," which follows it.

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CONFORMED TO HIS IMAGE.

Rom. viii. 28; 2 Cor. iii. 18.

FAR of, in a distant quarry,
Lay a block of marble rare;
Rough hewn, and by man unnoticed,
It had lain neglected there.

At length came the great, good Master,
He knew its intrinsic worth;
"This marble," he murmured, gently,
"Shall witness for Me on earth."

Then day after day unheeded,—
For none understood His skill,
He worked on that shapeless marble,
The plan of His wondrous will.

With instruments keen and varied,
He sculptured it hour by hour,
Till slowly its pure white lustre,
Began to attest His power.

It grew into human likeness,
A man in his best estate;
Then all who beheld it marvelled
And owned that the work was "great."

But time passed on, and the Sculptor
Continued His work so fair;
Then men saw with speechless wonder,
The Master's own image there!

And liker it grew, and liker,
As stroke after stroke was given,
Till men whispered, grave and awe-struck,
"Made meet for the courts of heaven!"

The Bible Annotator.

BIBLE STUDIES.

LIFE, LIGHT, LIBERTY.

The Word received gives **LIFE** (John v. 24).
The Word entering gives **LIGHT** (Psa. cxix. 108).
The Truth known gives **LIBERTY** (John viii. 32).

GOD'S JOY.

In His people's Salvation (Luke xv. 24).
In His People's Obedience (3 John 4).
In His People's Glorification (Jude 24).

GOSPEL SERVICE IN THREE ASPECTS.

"Trustees" (1 Thess. ii. 4)—To guard its Doctrine.
"Stewards" (1 Cor. ix. 7)—To Administer its Blessings.
"Ambassadors" (2 Cor. v. 20)—To Present its Claims.

A THREEFOLD MINISTRY.

Ministers of God (2 Cor. vi. 4; 1 Thess. iii. 2).
Ministers of Christ (2 Cor. xi. 23; Col. i. 7).
Ministers of the Word (Acts vi. 4; 2 Tim. iv. 4).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is the baptism of fire, spoken of in Matt. iii. ¹¹/₁₂ to be understood to mean spiritual fire? We often hear it so expressed in prayer and otherwise? The "fire" here, is unquestionably "judgment to come." Baptism with (or in) the Holy Ghost, is the present portion of all believers (see 1 Cor. xii. 13); the baptism with fire is the future and awful doom of the ungodly (2 Thess. i. 7-9; Rev. xx. 15). It is a strange perversion of Scripture to use such expressions as "full of Holy Ghost fire," "receiving the baptism of fire," and others even more objectionable. What is meant is, a renewal of spiritual strength, fresh zeal for God, an increase of love for and energy in His work, but the "form of sound words" should be used, and not a misapplication of Scripture, to describe it.

Answers to Correspondents.

J. N. M.—An intellectual assent to this doctrine or that verse, is not faith, as it is described in the Scriptures, nor is a profession of such a nature to be regarded as synonymous with conversion. Many who neither feel nor own their lost estate, flippantly say they "believe," but it is exactly the same kind

of belief as they have in Julius Cæsar or Napoleon as figures in history. The faith that reposes on the Son of God, receives His free gift of eternal life, and believes God's testimony because He has spoken, is of another order, and links the soul with God and Christ and heaven; it "sets to his seal that God is true" (John ii. 33). It is honoured by God setting His seal—the seal of the Holy Spirit (Eph. i. 13; 2 Cor. i. 22)—on that believing one, saying in effect "Thou art mine," purchased, possessed, and secured until the day of full redemption (Eph. v. 30).

S. E. M., CUMBERLAND.—A "creditable" profession, apart from the manifestation of Divine life, in a godly walk and righteous life, is no evidence whatever of the new birth. Under the impulse of a "profession"—which to many is just another form of turning over a new leaf in the old book, a new start on the old road—many evil habits, companions, associations may be given up, and galvanised by his new environment, the "convert" may be willing to share the path and even the persecutions of the true believer. But he only "dureth for a while" (Matt. xiii, 21); the tear and wear of life tests him, and sooner or later, if "the life of God" is not there, he will either go back to his vomit, or his wallowing in the mire (2 Pet. iii. 20-22), or (which is quite as likely) remain among the people of God to be a blight and a dishonour for years to come, too proud of his new place of influence to surrender it, yet all the time a loveless, because a lifeless professor. How many such there are, in places where few ever dare to challenge them, eternity will reveal. But you are no doubt justified in your fear that "the slipshod way in which converts are now made, and the loose way in which they are received," makes it easy for many such to creep into assemblies of God's people.

A. J., BELFAST.—There are times in the history of a child of God, when his only safe course is to "give himself to prayer" (Psa. cix. 2-4). He is "compassed" and "fought against" on every side, "without a cause," save his endeavour to be true to Christ and His Word, which, of all offences, is the greatest, in the eyes of the enemy, and of those to whom he commits the work of executing his counsels. It is a great relief to turn to God, to find in Him your "refuge," as well as your "strength" (Psa. xlii. 1) for endurance, under such circumstances. There is nothing on earth surer than this, that if your cause is with God and right in His eyes, He will "bring forth your righteousness as the light,

and your judgment as the noonday" (Psa. xxxvii. 6). If He sees fit to tarry in thus vindicating your character, then He means you to learn from this, for as we find in the case of Job, although he was accused falsely by his friends of many things, there was self-righteousness in his heart (chap. xxvii. 6), which had to be reached and judged (chap. xlii. 1-6) before "the end of the Lord" (Jas. iv. 11) was gained, and His full deliverance and blessing given. So it is oftentimes in the day of trial, and the sooner the lesson is learned the deliverance comes.

A. R., ORKNEY.—There may many things intervene, and many changes may be wrought among the Lord's people before His personal return to take them from earth to heaven, but I do not see that we are warranted from Scripture in saying that anything must happen before He comes. His church may be, as you truly say, far from "ready" (Matt. xxv. 10); many of the saints, scarce knowing one another, but all this was in progress and well known to Him, who walked amid the seven mystic lampstands of Rev. chap. ii, iii. And yet, withal, His last word, thrice repeated to His saints, in Rev. xxii. 8, 12, 20, was—"I come, quickly." May our attitude ever be that of expectancy, looking for that Blessed Hope, while love responds—"Come, Lord Jesus."

INQUIRER.—No man who denies the eternal existence of the wicked, and advocates "Annihilation," or as it is sometimes termed, in order to mask it, "Conditional Immortality," is a fit person to be received to the fellowship of an assembly of Christians, or companied with socially or privately as a servant of Christ. Evil doctrine is compared to leaven, which, when once it is deposited, works secretly but surely, until it permeates through time the whole of that amongst which it is. Persons holding fundamental error, such as you name, if knowingly welcomed, with or without the restriction that they must not "teach" their views, would certainly "defile" the church in which they are, and necessitate an investigation by others who are in the habit of intercommuning with it. Laxity in a matter of so grave importance, indicates how little the Lord's Name and honour are at heart. An outbreak of the flesh, such as drunkenness or the like, is generally promptly dealt with, as it always involves the reputation of others associated with the offender in the eyes of the world, but evil doctrine, although it robs God of His truth and invariably discredits the work and words of the

Lord Jesus, is not regarded by the world as of any importance, hence the liability to deal slackly with it, or allow it to remain unjudged. The dire effects of such a course is sadly visible in most of the denominations, where Professors of Colleges, Doctors of Divinity, and ministers who deny the Divine glory of the Lord, the necessity for, or sufficiency of His atoning death, the inspiration of the Bible and the doom of the wicked, are allowed to hold their positions with the entire approval of others who profess great reverence for all that they deny. And all this had a small beginning, hence the need of giving effect to all that the Word of the Lord has commanded. If your voice is silenced and your appeal to the Word stifled, then the only alternative is "from such withdraw thyself" (1 Tim. vi. 5), "from such turn away" (2 Tim. iii. 5).

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION IV.—Is it according to God, that Gospel Meetings be left "open" for all—including women—to take part? Can it be in "the leading of the Spirit" that such should be?

ANSWER A.—Nothing but a mistaken and utterly unscriptural idea of the "leading of the Spirit," would cause any to advocate "open" meetings for the preaching of God's Gospel to the world. There is neither precept nor example for such a thing in the Word.

W. W.

ANSWER B.—A Gospel meeting ought to be conducted by the preacher, who calls it together, or for whom it has been arranged, and he is responsible to see that it is ordered in a godly way from first to last. All the examples we have in the Word are according to this principle (Acts x. 34; xxxviii. 23). Meetings left open for any to take part, recognise a principle which is not found in the Word, but had its origin in Methodism, Mr Booth's Army, &c.

J. S.

ANSWER C.—An occasional meeting for testimony to the saving power of the Gospel, in which several—usually recent converts take part—confirms the general preaching of the Gospel and is blessed, but even this should not be left to haphazard, or so "open" as to give the opportunity for empty professors—of whom there are usually a few always ready to thrust themselves to the front—marring it by taking part.

J. L. H.

ANSWER D.—There is no iron rule in Scripture as to how a meeting for preaching the Gospel is to be conducted. The examples are as varied as the

conditions under which they were held. Meetings on Jerusalem's streets, at the Temple gate, in a private dwelling, on Mars Hill, by a riverside, in a hired house, are all recorded. The object of such a meeting is to preach Christ, to declare the Gospel, and all not distinctly in line with this should be ruled out. Displays of music, services of song and such like, are not helps but hindrances to real Gospel work, however popular or pleasing. A plain preacher, with a plain message in the Spirit's power, is what we need. J. L. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—This question doubtless arises from what has been practised in the Revival in Wales, and is being introduced from thence into other places. It is not within our province to pronounce on what has been practised there. We have not personally seen it, and those who have, differ much in their estimate of it, some regarding it as an "advance" in the direction of breaking the iron caste of clerisy, and introducing "liberty" where dead formality previously ruled supreme; while others who have been there, speak of it as "indescribable confusion," and "a travesty of the leading of the Spirit of God." One thing is sure, as soon as the Revival excitement subsides, this form of meeting will disappear, so it need not be seriously considered. The question in its wider bearing, as to whether Gospel meetings should be left "open" for any to take part, with no previous arrangement or preparation, on the same principle as the assembly meeting for worship on the morning of the Lord's Day, is a more important matter, and needs fuller consideration. Clearly, there is no point of similarity between the two meetings: their constituents, their purpose, and their mode are all different. When the assembly is gathered together in one place (1 Cor. xi. 22), to eat the Lord's Supper, it is as a company of worshippers, partaking of a common priesthood, under the guidance of the Spirit. One who leads in prayer, praise, or thanksgiving, does so as the mouthpiece of the assembly, expressing its worship Godward. If a word of teaching, exhortation, or comfort is given, it is the Spirit's ministry through His chosen channel, to meet the condition of the saints, as thus gathered at that particular time. But when the unconverted are invited to hear the Gospel, it is not the church they come to hear, but the evangelist who is God's herald, sent to publicly declare the Gospel message. There may be many Christians present (there will be, if the assembly is in a healthy state, and the preacher right with God and in the

confidence of his brethren), but they are there to "echo" (see 1 Thess. i. 8, R.V.) the preacher's message and to be his "helpers" (Phil. iv. 3), by prayer and effort, in bringing Christ to sinners and sinners to Christ. The men who occupy the platform should be those whom God has called and fitted for such a work, and who are recognised by their fellow-believers as being fitted to take the responsibility of it, while they in turn will always welcome fit and godly helpers, either from among themselves as the Lord raises them up, or sends from other parts. Younger ones will be guided wisely and encouraged to share with those of riper experience (Phil. ii. 22), according to the measure of their gift and grace; not pushed into undue prominence, to be puffed up, or "wasted" by self-importance, as, alas! many have been. The preacher's responsibility is, to have the right message, and to be in the right condition to deliver it, while Christians present are there, not as patronising listeners, less still as captious critics, but as helpers, watching for souls, and ready to help those who are impressed, convicted, or converted during the preaching. There will be a link of fellowship in labour amongst those primarily responsible for such meetings, but in order to keep "Gospel work" from perishing of isolation, or from falling into the hands of the few, to be carried on, according to what they call "individual responsibility"—which, in some cases, has degenerated into bringing sectarian preachers, introducing solo singers and organs—it should be, in common with all else belonging to the assembly, carried on with the full fellowship and approval of the overseeing brethren. In very many assemblies a hearty and continuous Gospel testimony goes on, on these lines, which God uses to conversions, and in which all in the fellowship take a common and a hearty interest.

Questions Requiring Answers.

QUESTION V.—Is there any guiding precept or principle in the Word, as to how to deal with one who refuses to pay his lawful debts, and has evidently no conscience about the matter?

QUESTION VI.—If an assembly receive one to its fellowship who has left a neighbouring assembly to evade its discipline, what steps should be taken in such a case?

QUESTION VII.—Should Christians borrow money from the world, to build halls to be used for the Lord's work and worship?

FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL.

IT was a great joy to the apostle, in writing to the Philippian saints from his Roman prison, to recall and to thank God for their "fellowship in the Gospel from the first day" (Phil. i. 5). They were essentially an evangelistic church, an assembly of God's people with warm hearts for and active energies in the spread of the Gospel. This is praiseworthy as a fruit of grace in any company of believers. It shows that they have laid hold of one of the great fundamental truths of the Book of God in connection with His Church, namely, that it exists for the purpose of spreading abroad the Gospel, by a continuous and united effort, in which all "strive together"—co-operating vigorously, wrestling side by side—"for the faith of the Gospel," while they "order their lives in a way worthy" of that Gospel (verse 27). True, there were some, even in that actively evangelistic church, who had a propaganda of their own, and preached Christ from unworthy motives (ver. 15), and there were others, whose very activities as helpers in the spreading of the Gospel had estranged them from each other for the time being (chap. iv. 3). Nevertheless, the bulk of the saints remained true-hearted and single-eyed, co-partners in the defence and progress of the good news. This they continued right along the line, from the day it first reached and saved them, ever manifesting an active, practical fellowship with the apostle in carrying it to sinners beyond their reach, in fields afar.

There is need for a revival of this genuine

Gospel spirit among the people of God everywhere in our day. We do not mean a passing wave of emotional interest, or a spirit of Gospel energy when some special occasion or effort calls it forth, but a deep, divinely-wrought conviction, a firm and settled faith, that to evangelise the world, to carry the Gospel to sinners at home and abroad, by personal effort and by their practical fellowship with those who are actively engaged (see Phil. iv. 15) in preaching that Gospel in regions beyond. When a church ceases to be evangelistic, it ceases to fulfil one of the chief objects for which it exists, and usually dies out from lack of vitality, or is eaten up of "dry rot" from within. That every local assembly of God's people has other functions which are not to be neglected, we fully own; that in days of rampant error and huckstering of the truth there is a special call to be found "*holding fast the faithful Word*" (Titus i. 9), but along with this and never in opposition to it, there is a call to be constantly "*holding forth the Word of life*" (Phil. ii. 16). There never was more need, or a better opportunity than now. The whole world is open to the heralds of the cross. In this favoured land, men's minds are exercised, their interest is aroused. Before the shadows of cold scepticism, of utter indifference, of the last Satanic delusion settle down, let us, as those who have been "put in trust with the Gospel," sound it forth and spread it abroad, "beginning at Jerusalem," and thence to the uttermost parts of the earth. And let those who tarry at home "hold the ropes" and thus have "fellowship in the Gospel".

CALLED AND SENT.

BY DR. J. NORMAN CASE, CHINA.

EVERY true servant of the Lord has experienced a double call: first, to salvation and then to service. These two calls, as with Saul of Tarsus, may blend into one (Acts xxvi. 14-18); or, as with Timothy and others, a period of time may elapse between them (Acts xvi. 1-3). To the individual himself, however, both calls are clear and distinct. It is God who calls; but His call may come in different ways; through hearing an address, reading a book, suffering bereavement or affliction, or through some great reviving of the spiritual life. And every one who contemplates giving himself wholly to Gospel work, whether at home or in a distant land, should be fully assured in his own soul that the Lord has called him to that particular service in that particular field. God has a life plan for all whom He deigns to call by His grace. And frequently the knowledge and experience acquired in a man's unconverted days, have been over-ruled by God, with a view to the spiritual course and service in which he is to be engaged later. So was it with the Apostle Paul. He, through the Spirit, understood that from his very birth, he had been by God set apart for salvation and service (Gal. i. 15). All Christians are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before prepared that they should walk in them (Eph. ii. 10). It is a great matter, then, that we should each one find out what these good works are, and where

they are to be wrought; and in those things and in that place to faithfully serve the Lord.

SENT.

In Rom. x. 13-17 several things are linked together in logical sequence. By means of a series of questions, the Apostle works back to the first step in a sinner being saved. Salvation is here connected with *calling on the Lord*; but this presupposes *faith*. Before faith can be exercised there must be *knowledge*, and this implies a *preacher*. And a preacher tells of one *being sent*. "How shall they preach," the closing question is, "except they be sent?" The words "apostle" and "missionary" have the same original meaning. The first comes to us from Greek, the other from the Latin, and both point to one who is "sent forth" to engage in a definite work. The Apostles were chosen, trained, and sent forth by the Lord, to preach His Gospel among all nations. When on earth, it was our Lord's great joy and honour that He had been "sent" into the world by the Father. Again and again He mentions it in His teaching. And in the same way, the apostles were sent forth by Christ (John xx. 21), who, as Head of the Church and Lord of the harvest, continues to commission and send His servants to do His work.

The usual order is, that "faith cometh by hearing." And the opportunity to hear and believe is "*by the Word of Christ*" (R.V.). It is literally—by "the *spoken* Word of Christ," and, as I judge, points back to the command of Christ to preach the Gospel to all men (Matt. xxviii. 18-20). It is clear, then, that in the first place, it

is Christ who sends forth His servants to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. Matt. ix. 36-38, emphasises the same truth. Does the Church feel the need for more labourers at home or abroad? The way to obtain them is clear: by *prayer to the Lord of the harvest*. It is He who must call and fit and send such labourers forth.

If, however, we carefully ponder what is recorded concerning the going forth of Paul and Barnabas on their first great missionary journey, we learn that the church also "sends forth" such labourers (see Acts xiii. 1-4). And when they had accomplished their mission, they return to the place from whence they had set forth, and "gathering the Church together, they rehearse all the things that God had done with them" (Acts xiv. 27). Even the two chief apostles, on an earlier occasion, are said to have been "sent" on a mission by their fellow-apostles (Acts viii. 14). These incidents give, for all time, important principles of action for the servants of Christ. There is, in this matter, a twofold obligation: first, on the one who believes himself called of God to a special work, to seek the fellowship of godly people in beginning and carrying it on; second, on guides and elders among the Lord's people, to cultivate a watchful and discerning spirit, so as to perceive when God is calling one of their number to special service, and to confirm that call. And this will lead not only to prayer and counsel, but also to the practical helping forward of such in the path God has marked out for them. And as long as they are faithful to the Lord and working on Scriptural lines, to continue to give to them prayerful

sympathy, counsel, and practical fellowship. Hence leaders in assemblies should interest themselves in any brother or sister who expresses a desire to go forth at the call of God, to find out the needs of the field, and whether this brother or sister is spiritually, mentally, and physically fitted, as far as they are able to judge, to work in that particular field. With the greatest possible care, mistakes may be made. But if there were more waiting on God about individual cases, and a greater exercise of spiritual discernment, there would be fewer, and less dishonour to the Lord than there have at times been. God usually works through means. While all who start forth in Gospel work are rightly taught to look to Him alone to supply all their needs, it practically comes to this: He does so through the liberality of His people. Those who go forth with the fellowship of assemblies to labour in other lands, speaking broadly, have their material needs supplied through the Christians in such assemblies. And it should not be impossible for spiritual and experienced brethren from different parts to meet together and devise a plan that, while maintaining the freedom of the servant of Christ and personal responsibility to His Master, should not facilitate the going forth or encouragement in the work of any, of whose call and fitness, spiritual and responsible brethren stand in doubt. "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say."

THE LABOURERS NEEDED.

It seems a common idea that almost anyone will do for work in "foreign lands." That is a great mistake. It is very

noticeable that of the band of prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch, one that was head and shoulders beyond his fellows in gift, grace, and grit, was chosen by the Holy Spirit for pioneer work; and probably his companion was above the average in talent, devotion, and spirituality. Different fields call for men of different gifts and qualifications. One who might do good work in Africa, might be a failure in India and China, and *vice versa*. And in the same field, there is usually room for men of varying talents and experience. But the peculiar needs and conditions of various lands should be kept in view. *Labourers* are needed, not mere preachers. One who may be a most valuable worker in a foreign land may be a comparatively poor preacher in English, though I judge all must have the gift of clear thinking, and ought to be able to put truth in such a way that a child can take it in.

Christians are morally responsible to properly support those who are encouraged to go forth from their midst to labour in far-off lands. Personally, I have never had any ground for complaint in this respect. But I fear that not a few true servants suffer want. That it should be so, is not to the credit of assemblies of the Lord's people.

MISSED AND WANTED.

On a certain occasion when I was a boy, I was writing a letter to an absent member of our family, when my father sent the following quaint message: "Tell her we miss her, but not like a turnpike gate." At that time, in most parts of the country, toll gates were common on all the main

roads. One could not drive very far, without coming to a gate at which toll had to be paid to pass through. Shortly after, they were generally abolished, and *were greatly missed*, in what way the reader will readily guess. Those who go forth to serve the Lord from a larger or smaller circle, should also be much missed. But I pity those to whom he goes, those who will be his fellow-workers, if he is missed in the same way that the toll gates were, when they were done away. Encourage those to go forth whom you think cannot be done without in connection with certain work; those who are humble, spiritual, and earnest, and who, by experience in walking and working in fellowship with others, have learned how to bear and forbear, to esteem others better than themselves, and are likely to be able to get on well with others in their future field. To encourage men of the opposite spirit is most unwise, and may lead to much sorrow and dishonour to the Lord's Name.

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CHRIST IN GLORY.

THERE is Man, a glorified Man, sitting now on the throne of God in heaven—that man is Jehovah's Fellow. To Him, God, the Holy Spirit has borne testimony in the Scriptures; to Him He calls the sinner's attention; to Him He guides the eye of faith of each believer, and there He will fix it. For He, the only begotten Son of the Father, is the sole One in whom and in whose life and work as Saviour, God, even the Father, can rest in complacency.

WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS FOR GOD.

AN ADDRESS BY W. J. M'CLURE, AT ABERDEEN.

(Read Joshua xiv. 5; xv. 13).

SOME of the Lord's people flatter themselves that they are average Christians, because they keep in line with the mass, but the mass are satisfied with very little. Caleb is a man who stands out in strong contrast to all his brethren. He is eighty-five years of age, and might well look for respite from a life of arduous toil, but, instead of this, he asks the very hardest job—"Give me Hebron"—a position on a hill! What is the secret of Caleb's valour and ambition? God often helps us by the name of His servants, and sometimes by linking with it the names of the parents. Caleb means "whole-hearted." Again and again it is said of him, that he "*wholly* followed the Lord his God." And we read that he was "the son of Jephunneh." Jephunneh, means one "regarded with favour." The "whole-hearted" man was a son of the man "regarded with favour." Now, does not favour or grace beget the spirit of fidelity and loyalty to Christ—whole-heartedness? It is blessed when what we are, is just the outcome of what God has done for us, and of what we have been led, in the power of the Holy Spirit to appropriate. The true Calebs are all sons of Jephunneh: those who have realised and enjoy what it is to be regarded with favour by God, who stand in His grace (Rom. v. 2). Caleb's name and character are in perfect harmony. Alas! with many of God's beloved people, their name and manner of life are contradictory.

There is not the evidence of living in the power of the anointing that "Christian" suggests; in the practical separation from the world that "Saint" suggests; nor in the steady, trustful character that "Believer" suggests. It is said again and again that Caleb "*wholly* followed the Lord his God." The new generation that had sprung up around him do not seem to have possessed much of his strength and spirit. When we look back twenty-five or thirty years ago and think of the freshness and the power among the people of God then, we can only contrast it with the more effeminate present generation, with little of the old Caleb spirit. The Lord help us to be like Caleb when he said "Give me Hebron."

To take Hebron he had to assault the position at a disadvantage, but he did it. "And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak" (xv. 14). Moses gave the place to Caleb, but he did not enjoy it until he dispossessed the enemies that were dwelling in it. Fellowship (of which Hebron is a picture) is our birthright: the precious blood of Christ has purchased it for us, but to know it day by day in enjoyment, the three sons of Anak—the world, the flesh, and the devil—have to be overcome. The devil with all his batteries, the world with all its seductions, and the flesh with all its treacheries, try to spoil this enjoyment. Like Esau, we may sell our birthright for very little, but when the birthright is gone, fellowship is gone. Neither the world nor the flesh can make up for its loss.

Caleb drove out the sons of Anak, and made Hebron his very own. The aged

warrior carried what he undertook to a successful issue. How did he do it? "The Lord will be with me." The man who thus trusts God, has all the power of God, and Anakims' defences fall like paper houses before the intrepid warrior. Hebron was made a base of operations. Read chap. xv. 13-15. "He went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir." He had not reached a place where he can sit down and say, "Now I think I have done very well, and I am quite sure if all do as well as I, we will have the land in possession throughout its length and breadth." But they did not all do as well. To Joshua the Lord said, "Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed" (chap. xiii. 1). The early freshness had passed, and much land remained to be possessed. Why? Because all did not like Caleb fulfil their part. Now Caleb went up from Hebron and "smote the inhabitants of Debir; the name of Debir before was Kirjath-sepher." Why change the name from Kirjath-sepher to Debir? Kirjath-sepher means "city of the book;" Debir means "the speaking place." Isn't that a wonderful change? When the child of God is not in fellowship with his Father, the Word is just the Book—just Kirjath-sepher. When we are in the presence of God, and when like Caleb we are going on with God, the Book becomes "the speaking place:" that is, when we come to it, it is not a dumb oracle, but God gives words from it that come personally to us, right home to our heart and soul. It is because we know so little of this, that we feel so little like pressing the

point, but what we need for the realisation of it is just to begin with God, and, like David, think of all the grace He has bestowed upon us, until our hearts shall glow, and until, like Caleb, there is the answer within of whole-heartedness for Him. Hebron will then be captured and held: fellowship with God will be known: the precious Book will become the speaking place where we get words from God that will strengthen and bless and help our souls, and become a means of blessing to others.

A HUMANITARIAN BROTHERHOOD.

THE sin of past ages has been, the assigning to men who had only adopted nominally a lip profession of Christianity, the privileges and responsibilities of true "born again" Christians. The sin now appearing is still worse. It is the rejection of all brotherhood save human brotherhood, and the application to men as men, of the benefits of the death of Christ, while yet they remain unregenerate. The popular preachers of our time, hand out without discrimination to all, that which God restricts to those who have been brought into the circle of His children by a new and heavenly birth. This is a grave evil, which the servants of Christ do well to be on their guard against. The only brotherhood recognised by the Word of God, is that into which those are brought who are born of God. Only such as are born again are in God's family, and only such can call Him "Father," and His children "brethren." A humanitarian brotherhood, is the devil's imitation of this.

THE WORD OF GOD:

PART III.—ITS STEWARDSHIP AND MINISTRY.
BY THE EDITOR.

THE believer is not only a learner in the school of God, a disciple of the Lord, a student of the Word, he is likewise a steward into whose care that which he has learned and values for himself, has been entrusted, that he may give it out to others. The Divine principle of this stewardship is—"The things which thou hast heard from me, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. ii. 2, R.V.). "As each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. iv. 10 R.V.). There is to be no eating of one's morsel, by himself "alone" (Job xxxi. 17), no keeping back of that which would be profitable to others (Acts xx. 20). From this stewardship there is a good return, for, as the Lord hath said—"The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Prov. xi. 25).

A "faithful and wise steward" (Luke xii. 42) will ever be on his Master's business, seeking to guard that with which he has been entrusted from danger, and to dispose of it to those for whose benefit it has been given into his hand.

The GOSPEL is a sacred trust, committed to all (in less or greater measure) who have themselves been the subjects of its saving power (2 Cor. v. 19; 1 Thess. ii. 4), and they should be always, as much as in them is, "ready to preach the Gospel" (Rom. i. 14-15), to sinners everywhere, to whom

they still are "debtors." If all, in their sphere, and according to the measure of their ability and opportunities, were making full proof of such a ministry, few parts of the great unevangelised world would be long without the Gospel's joyful sound. Some rise to their privilege and responsibility, and are blessed and made a blessing, but most console themselves that the few official and recognised preachers, will sometime and somehow reach the masses of Christendom and the millions of Heathendom, or that in some other way God will accomplish His purposes. So they take it easy, wrap their talent up decently in the napkin, which would have been more profitably used in wiping the sweat of diligent Gospel labour from their brow, while successive generations pass into the great eternity beyond, unreached, unwarned, unsaved.

The stewardship of the TRUTH, "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3, R.V.), has also become to them a deposit, a trust to be held fast and guarded (2 Tim. i. 13-17) against all its enemies, and contended earnestly for, by all the people of God. It is thus entrusted in order that it may be spread abroad, especially in the household of faith, for whose practical sanctification, healthful development, and spiritual edification it has been given; milk for babes, things easy to be understood for the lambs and weaklings of the flock, with sound words of healthful teaching and godly instruction to all. There are many ways in which this ministry may be fulfilled, "publicly and from house to house" (Acts xx. 20),

ways in which all may and ought to share, so that of none of the household of faith it may be said—"The children ask bread and no man breaketh it unto them" (Lam. iv. 4). Gifts for public exposition and ministry of the Word have been bestowed upon some, which the great Head of the Church has given to be used for the edifying of His body; not to be restricted, monopolised, or located by some faction, claiming as their special "ministry" that which belongs to and should be used toward the whole. Others, after the Priscilla and Aquila pattern, fulfil their ministry by taking unto them such of the children of God as they can reach, "expounding unto them the way of God more carefully" (Acts xviii. 26, R.V.). Under this head, fall the helpful, homely Bible Readings, in years past so frequently held in the Home Circle, to which Christian neighbours, friends, and acquaintances were invited, and by which means so many were helped along in the ways of the Lord. The Young Converts' Meeting or Bible Class, conducted in an orderly, yet "free and easy" way, in which all are encouraged to take a part, by asking questions, stating difficulties, and having doubts removed. Many true children of God held in bondage by traditions, depressed by a ministry of doubt on which they attend, possibly because they know no better, and thousands of newborn souls, continuously being saved and added to the Church which is the body of Christ, to be loved and cared for by their fellow-members of that body—the true "Church of All Saints"—these all need and should receive

such help in the Word of God, as their capacities and condition will receive, and to all such, true love—love according to the pattern of Christ's love for His Church (Eph. v. 25-26)—will find a way, consistent with faithfulness to the Lord and loyalty to all His Word, to feed the lambs of the flock, and teach the disciples of the Lord all He has commanded.

"A faithful and wise steward" (Luke xii. 42), will break the bread of life small to those who so require it, speaking the Word in season, the truth suited to meet the spiritual needs of those to whom he ministers, not keeping back anything profitable, nor giving that which they are unable to understand or receive. "Faithful" is the word which governs the former, "wise" the latter. And while in the administration of this stewardship, the servant of the Lord is not to be controlled or criticised by his brethren, he is bound by every principle of godly fellowship to so consider others in his course and service, as not to become a cause of stumbling either in the liberty he claims, or by the means he uses in the fulfilment of his ministry. Gifts of ministry do not remove the obligations common to all saints to "consider one another," to do "all things unto edifying," and to "give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Doors and spheres of Gospel service, or for ministry of the Word, when opened by the Lord for His servant, will never be such as will put him under man's rule or bondage, causing him to withhold the Lord's message, or identifying him with such principles as make it the Truth of none effect.

THE MIXED MULTITUDE.

(EXOD. XII. 38, WITH NUM. XI. 9).

THIS multitude had evidently, been induced to join the company of God's people, partly by the terrors of Egypt's desolation, and partly by the allurements of the land flowing with milk and honey. But they had never calculated upon the wilderness, so that when they had nothing to eat, day by day, but the sweet bread of heaven, and nothing to drink of but that spiritual Rock that followed them, they rebelled against God. They would have tolerated the manna as a sort of side dish, if they might have had Egypt's portion too, but their gross appetites could find nothing satisfying in "angels' food." They said it dried up their souls, whilst to the true Israelite it was sweet to the taste, like honey and fresh oil.

It is just the same now, when the true, unmixed, simple manna is presented to the mere professor, the soul that has not the life of God. It has joined itself to the professed camp of God, and cannot, with any shew of decency, reject it altogether. But each endeavours to cook his Christianity after his own fashion; some add the garlic, some the onion, some the fish, some the cucumbers, some a little of all, to satisfy the senses. How few find they can feed on the sweet, simple manna of God's Word, and live upon Jesus, unmixed with the spicery of man's thoughts and imaginations. And yet the Lord Jesus is the True Bread, and His words are spirit and life to the believing soul. The cry for "variety" tells from whence it comes.

"THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH."

"NEVER perish!"—words of mercy,
Coming from the lips of One,
Who, though here, a homeless stranger,
Fills the high eternal throne.
Brightness of the Father's glory,
God and man in one combined,
Faithful Shepherd of the chosen,
Safe are those to Him assigned.

"Never perish!" words of sweetness,
Dissipating every fear;
Filling all with joy and gladness,
Who the Shepherd's voice can hear;
Bringing richest consolation
To the soul fatigued, oppress'd;
Sweet refreshments to the fainting,
And to weary spirits rest.

"Never perish!" words of power;
Satan, now, I can defy!
Safe my soul beyond my keeping,
Hid with Christ in God on high.
Come what will, I'm safe for ever—
'Tis the promise of my God;
Triumph in His Word unfailing—
Sealed with Jesus' precious blood.

"Never perish!" words of glory—
Heaven is mine, and all is well!
O my soul! with rapture burning,
On this precious sentence dwell;
Think not of thy faults and failings,
Nor on thy deservings brood—
What thou art in Christ, now ponder,
And the purpose of thy God.

Every setting sun is bringing us nearer and nearer to a world where suns will never set, where we shall walk together for ever in an atmosphere of light and glory.
Sir E. Denny.

The Bible Annotator.

CHRIST SET DOWN.

As Described in the Epistle to the Hebrews.
As Sin Purger (chap. i. 3)—Our Peace.
As Great High Priest (chap. viii. 1)—Our Preserver.
As Perfector of Faith (chap. xii. 2)—Our Pattern.

THE CHRISTIAN'S STANDING.

He Stands in Grace (Rom. v. 2)—His Privilege.
He Stands by Faith (2 Cor. i. 24)—His Responsibility.
He Stands Fast in Liberty (Gal. v. 1)—His Experience.
He Stands in the Armour of God (Eph. vi. 11)—His Conflict.

FOLLOWING THE LORD.

OBEDIENTLY, as a Sheep (John x. 27).
DEVOTEDLY, as a Servant (John xii. 26).
PATIENTLY, as a Sufferer (1 Pet. ii. 21).

Misinterpreted Texts.

JOHN I. 9—"That was the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The Quakers derive their doctrine of "all men having the light of the Spirit through Christ," from this passage; but verse 5 clearly negates this, as also the following and many other Scriptures, John iii. 19; 1 John ii. 9, 11. It is by the Gospel received that light enters the heart (2 Cor. iv. 6), and only at conversion is the sinner brought from "The authority of darkness" (Acts xxvi. 18), and into God's marvellous light (1 Pet. ii. 9). All the unregenerate are not only in the dark, but "darkness" (Eph. v. 8) itself.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is it according to Scripture, to speak of the Lord Jesus as having been forsaken of THE FATHER when on the Cross? No; He ever was the object of the Father's infinite delight, never more than when laying down His life (see John x. 17-18). His first and last words when on the Cross were addressed to and begin with the word "Father." But His solemn utterance, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me," tells, that He knew what it was to be forsaken of God, the Holy One, the Judge of sin, when He stood as the Substitute and Surety of His people. It is always safe to keep to the language

of the Word, never going beyond it. Such subjects are far beyond our finite understanding, and a substitution of words of ours, in place of the words inspired and recorded by the Spirit, may lead to previous error.

Answers to Correspondents.

"BETA."—The papers you refer to, appeared in the second volume of "The Christian Witness," published in 1846, edited by J. L. Harris. These volumes are long out of print. You could only procure an old copy or set, from one who has them. [Can any of our readers supply?]

STUDENT.—We are unable to recommend "Hasting's Bible Dictionary" as a help in the study of the Word of God. There are some able contributions, but it is leavened by Scepticism and the so-called "Higher Criticism." Here is an extract from page 601, on the article "Old Testament:" "Christ and the apostles or writers of the New Testament, held the current Jewish notions respecting the Divine Authority and revelation of the Old Testament." This is the author's opinion concerning Him who said—"I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him" (John viii. 26), and "I have given them the words, which Thou gavest Me" (John xvii. 8). Let the blind lead the blind, but you keep clear of such profanity.

J. B., SHROPSHIRE.—The best way to help the young believers you speak of is, to get them around the Word of God, and teach them the godly habit of reading and searching it for themselves daily, for guidance and direction in all their path: personal, social, and ecclesiastical. Once on this foundation, they will make real progress in the path of obedience.

W. M., ESSEX.—The liberty allowed and acknowledged by the Lord, in a servant of His refusing to take one brother as his fellow-labourer, and choosing another, is fully set forth in Acts xv. 36-40, where Paul would not yield to the wish of Barnabas to take John Mark, his nephew, with them in the work of visiting the churches, which together they had gathered and planted. Paul did not consider Mark's ways to be such that he would be a good pattern to these churches, and much as he doubtless esteemed the fellowship of Barnabas, the Lord's honour and the welfare of His people had a higher claim. There are some whose ways are so crooked, and conduct so unseemly, that while they have a place in the company of God's people (and there is nothing to indicate that Mark had not), yet they

are "unprofitable" for the time being, for public service. The sequel shews, that other churches were acquainted with the incident, in order that they might not, by welcoming Mark to a place denied him by Paul, undo the effect of such discipline upon him. Happily it had not to be long continued; he had so benefited by it, that the man who had been the instrument in inflicting it, was able to write that he was now to be "received" (see Col. iv. 10), because he had become "profitable" (2 Tim. iv. 11). If godly firmness in such cases were more frequent, rather than fleshly charity—the mere honey of nature having the first place—there would be many more such restorations and reunions, for all God's restraint and discipline has as its object the blessing of its subjects.

A. M., DUMFRIESSHIRE.—It is disastrous to accredit as believers, then to baptise and hurry into the fellowship of an assembly of saints, a number of lightheaded professors who, under the influence of a passing wave of emotion, without conviction of sin or any real evidence of Divine life in them, are numbered as converts by a passing preacher who has to keep up his reputation by advertising the numbers that "profess" through his instrumentality. The testimony of more than one assembly has been "swamped" for years to come by this fiasco. You—with others who seek to serve and guide the saints—are perfectly right in planting your foot firmly, and refusing to sanction or share in such ungodly procedure. You may be "tabooed" by the preacher and his confederates, for your lack of "large-heartedness," prayed for and preached at as "narrow," but if standing at the gate of the Lord's house and demanding that those who enter shall be able to show their "genealogy" (see Ezra ii. 62) is narrow, then it is a narrowness commanded by the Master of that house, and which sooner or later will have His approval, all the more if the testimony to His truth, involves reproach and suffering. Act for God, and leave the consequences in His hands.

A. S., GLASGOW.—The theory, that a Christian who holds infant sprinkling to be baptism, and that his traditional teaching is to be so respected, as that the erroneousness of it is not to be pointed out to him, or the claims of the truth of God regarding Christian baptism as set forth in the Word laid upon his conscience, but that "simply as a believer," irrespective of what he holds or where he goes, he is to be immediately received to the assembly (or as a casual visitor if he so desires), has no foundation

either in precept, principle, or example in the Word of God. It is supposed to be "acting in grace" toward one held in bondage to a wretched Romish superstition, which has done more than aught else to corrupt Christianity and deceive souls, not to say a word to him regarding it, or seek his deliverance from it, but rather by such laxity to strengthen him in the thought that it does not matter what one holds as baptism, providing he is "sincere." This paves the way for the next step—which has long ago been reached by one community, who hold baptism as an open question, a thing to please yourself about, with the same ease as you may do the selection of the shade and material of your summer dress—namely, to cease saying anything about baptism at all, for fear it disturb the existing "unity," built on a smouldering volcano, which one day will go "in eruption" and rudely awaken some from their dreams. When will God's people learn that peace, prosperity, and all real progress, are ever found "in the way of His commandments"—not in whittling them down to meet the whims of sectarian and self-willed people, who are thus confirmed in their evil condition?

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION V.—Is there any guiding precept or principle in the Word, as to how to deal with one who refuses to pay his lawful debts, and has evidently no conscience about the matter?

ANSWER A.—The precepts of the Word in regard to honesty, are surely plain and clear (Rom. xii. 17; 2 Cor. viii. 21; 1 Thess. iv. 12), and should be the rule of life to all believers. If they are ignored, and a system of dishonesty resorted to, such conduct should bring upon the evildoer that form of reproof and discipline mentioned in Titus i. 13; 2 Thess. iii. 6, 10.

H. J. M.

ANSWER B.—Extravagant living, costly dress, and keeping up a worldly style, are common causes of debt, and should be dealt with in the public ministry of the Word more frequently than they are. Where common honesty is not practised, little wonder there is a dearth of spiritual power. A person who is by habit and repute dishonest, who buys goods which he knows he has no means to pay, surely comes within the scope of the word "covetous" in 1 Cor. v. 11, and should be so dealt with by the assembly.

J. M.

ANSWER C.—If it be forbidden for a Christian to go to law before unbelievers, with one who defrauds

him (1 Cor. vi. 1), it is the responsibility of "the saints," and especially of those who are "wise men" or guides in the assembly, to judge such matters (ver. 5). It is a disgrace to the name of Christianity, that such should be allowed to go on in a course of what is little better than theft, unrepented; worse still if they are preachers or prominent men in the assembly. The whole testimony of many an "orthodox" company of Christians stinks in the nostrils of honest, worldly men, by the presence of such persons in their midst.

G. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Plain and frequent ministry of the Word, bearing on such commonplace subjects as debt and extravagant living, is the only antidote to a relaxed condition of conscience regarding them. The Word of God, wisely spoken, has in it the power of "correction" (2 Tim. iii. 16), as well as that of edification, and is the Divine instrument whereby the Lord "sanctifies" and "cleanses" His people (Eph. v. 25-27; Psa. cxix. 9). Of course, some do not like such "plain fare;" they prefer disquisitions on "charity" and whatever else leaves their conscience untouched, and permits them to continue their "plunder" in peace. If there is to be a cleansing of fraudulent debtors and religious mendicants from the company of God's people—a form of separation which few will dissent from—it must be by a return to that preaching and teaching of the "healthful doctrine" (2 Tim. iv. 3, R.V.), which will either set their conscience to work, or send them adrift, to try their hand elsewhere.

QUESTION VI.—If an assembly receives one to its fellowship who has left a neighbouring assembly to evade its discipline, what steps should be taken in such a case?

ANSWER A.—If by an error, or through lack of proper care, a meeting between leading brethren of both assemblies will readily put matters right. This should be early sought.

W. L.

ANSWER B.—If the Scriptural and simple habit of giving and asking "letters of commendation" (2 Cor. iii. 1; Acts xviii. 27) were observed, such troubles would seldom arise. When we become too self-confident, and throw overboard the safeguards which an All-wise God has provided, we find out to our cost by such cases, that our wisdom is short-sighted.

J. P.

ANSWER C.—Not cut them summarily off, but

seek to point out—what they possibly did not know—the course of the erring brother. In general, if this is graciously done, they will listen, but if from prejudice or other causes they will not, then the help of wise and godly brethren, known to, and in the confidence of both assemblies, should be sought. Arbitration by a "bench of bishops," generally pitted against each other by other causes, we have never known to help in such matters.

J. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—In days of disorder and lawlessness like the present, such cases will arise. As one of our correspondents points out, if the godly practice of using Letters of Commendation were observed, they would be less frequent. Where mutual confidence and fellowship between assemblies exists, they are easily dealt with when they do arise, and a little explanatory intercourse is all that is required to put matters straight. But where, on the one side there is a disposition to administer severe discipline, as has been sometimes done, to the extent of "cutting off" the "sinning" assembly from all fellowship, without any attempt to restore, or even give a fair hearing, and on the other a determination not to be "dictated to," or restrained from receiving whomsoever they think fit, serious, often disastrous results, follow. The primary responsibility lies with the elder brethren or guides of both assemblies, and they should come together as simply and informally as possible—not called by printed circulars, or in official and fighting form—but to seek God and confer as brethren, alike desiring the Lord's honour, the peace of their brethren and the erring one's restoration. In many cases this has been done, with the happiest results.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

QUESTION VII.—Should Christians borrow money from the world, to build halls to be used for the Lord's work and worship?

QUESTION VIII.—As a result of some recent teachings, making Believers' Baptism of little account, and insisting that those who reject it, are perfectly eligible to be received by an assembly, some, who not only reject the truth regarding it, but teach infant sprinkling to be baptism, have been received, not as "weak in the faith," but as wise and able to teach others. How far can those who fear God and seek to own His Word go with this, and in what measure are they responsible for it, by being in an assembly where such practices prevail?

WHY DO YOU MEET SEPARATE FROM OTHER CHRISTIANS ?

AN ADDRESS GIVEN IN GLASGOW. BY THE EDITOR.

DURING the progress of the meetings which have been held in this place, for the ministry of God's Word, which have been attended by many Christians belonging to the various denominations represented in this city, the question has been asked by one and another "Why do you meet separate from other Christians, and what is the ground of your thus meeting?" This is a perfectly reasonable and proper question, and those who ask it, are entitled to a definite and Scriptural answer to their inquiry. This, so far as I am able, I now desire to give, not for the purpose of raising controversy, or exalting into undue prominence any selection of Scripture doctrine, least of all to magnify the differences that exist among true children of God, or multiply the barriers by which they are kept apart, but to give a brief and concise outline of what I, and others with whom I am in fellowship, have gathered from the Scriptures, which has led us into, and is our only authority for remaining in the position we occupy, in separation from the various denominations around us.

First of all let me say, that we do not glory in being "separate from other Christians," our fellow-believers in Christ. The will of God is, that His believing people should be united, not separated. The prayer of the Lord Jesus for all His people, throughout all the age is, that they "all may be one" (John xvii. 21). This in one sense is vitally and eternally

made good, by their baptism in one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13), which all the saints in common share. The church as viewed in its entirety, consists of all the saints of this present age, all who have been born of God, wherever they are found. They are all loved with the same eternal love; possessed of the one life, indwelt by the One Spirit, members of the one body, of which Christ is Head, and destined to share the same eternal glory. These bonds are Divine and eternal; they are the work of the Triune God; they cannot be broken. The church in this aspect is severed from the world by the Cross, united to Christ by the Spirit; catholic and undivided, a body of many members, having diversity yet unity. A building of many stones, all built on the one foundation, increasing and growing by the operation of God in fulfilment of His eternal purpose, which, when it is completed, will be seen not to have failed or come short in one jot, notwithstanding all the craft of Satan and the perversity of men, which through the ages have combined to oppose the Divine working.

But there is another view of the Church presented in the Scriptures, the counter-truth of what I have just stated. And it may be profitable for us here to remember, that every truth in Scripture has these two aspects; one Divine and abiding, the work of God, which man's failure cannot mar, or Satan's power corrupt or destroy, simply because it is beyond their reach, wholly the work of the Eternal God, and not in any sense committed to, or dependent on the faithfulness of the creature. But the other is more or less the subject of

human responsibility, committed through grace to the regenerate and converted man's trust, for which he, acting with, and in obedience to God, is responsible as a steward. Of these we may mention the two aspects of Salvation—that which is the work of God, perfect and eternal, received and possessed by faith, of which the believer can speak with certainty, and say he *hath been* saved (2 Tim. i. 9), *is* saved (Eph. ii. 9), and that for ever (Heb. v. 9), at the same time owning he is being saved (Heb. vii. 25) working out his own salvation (Phil. ii. 12) and saving himself (1 Tim. 16); the former having reference to salvation in its Divine, and the other in its human aspect. Sanctification, Sonship, Holiness, and many other truths, have these two aspects, never opposed, never confounded; both true and alike needed, if the balance of the truth is to remain with us, and have its proper effect on us and on our ways. The truth regarding the Church is no exception. It has its Divine and it has its human side. There is the Church as I have already spoken of it Godward, heavenly, as seen "in Christ," and there is the Church on earth, composed of saints in mortal bodies, indwelt by the Spirit, but liable to fail; the Church as God's testimony on earth, at any given time, in any given place, in varied conditions of spiritual strength or weakness, as the case may be. Here, in this city of Glasgow, you have, let us say, thousands of the children of God, all members of the body of Christ, and members one of another, all in and of that Church of which He is Head; and the Spirit, Bond of unity. But the will of

God as set forth in His Word—and the spiritual instincts of the believer answer to that will—is, that these should be *together*—not apart, or incongruously mixed up with the unconverted in things religious. "Gather My saints together unto Me" (Psa. l. 4) is the word to us, as surely as to those of ancient time, and the New Testament Scriptures tell us how this is to be brought about. "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20) is the Lord's own statement, when speaking of His Church in its earthly and local aspect. His Name is to be its gathering point. His people are those who are thus to gather, and the pattern of their constitution, their order and functions, with the relative privileges and responsibilities of each, have all been the subjects of Divine legislation, and as such are left in the inspired Word for the guidance of God's people throughout the present age. When once we learn that God has made this provision for us, that the pattern of His Church has been given in the Word; that it is no part of our business to devise church politics, or to choose one out of the many denominations that exist as "the church" to which we "belong," but simply to come to the Word of God, and set ourselves down before it, to learn what the Lord says about these things there, just as we come to that Word as sinners to learn His way of salvation, then the path is made clear and plain before us. I confess to you, my dear brethren and sisters in Christ, that when I found out (now many years ago), that God's Word speaks with the

same simplicity, the same definiteness, regarding the way in which He desires His people to be gathered and united, as He speaks about the way in which a sinner is to be saved, it was a great revelation to me. I saw then, that it was no part of my business as a child of God, a disciple of Jesus Christ, to have my choice as to Church association ; that it had not been left to me to choose what church I should join, or with what denomination I should cast in my lot, but simply to follow where the Word led me, to *obey* what it commanded, to *do* what it said, and I would find myself with all those who are following in the same path of obedience to which all are called, but which alas, all do not follow, many because they do not know, and never were exercised before God regarding such things.

(*To be Continued.*)

AS STRANGERS HERE.

CHRIST did not come to be occupied with the ten thousand vanities filling the hearts and minds of poor sinners down here ; but He came from His Father's bosom, to tell out all His Father's love, that He might occupy their hearts with the joys of the Father's presence. "If thou knewest" was ever on His lips. It is in this spirit alone that we can rightly pass through the world ; our own hearts pre-occupied with the sense of His loveliness and grace, and so unattracted by all that glitters here, longing to attract away from these things to Him who alone is lovely.

THE GOSPEL OF COMMUNION.

BY GEORGE ADAM.

WHEN so many in these days are professing conversion, there is special need for teaching suited for babes in the family of God. Amongst the many truths such need to be taught, nothing can be of more importance than that young believers learn how they may maintain their fellowship with God, and how the enjoyment of that fellowship can be restored when it is lost.

It is well to instruct them in "the ways which be in Christ," when their hearts are young and tender, to teach them to "keep the ordinances as they were delivered" unto the saints from their very infancy. But even obedience, whilst it is essential to a disciple "abiding in the love of Christ" (John xv. 10), will not of itself ensure a continuance of communion with God, if the believer has learned no more of the Gospel of Christ than that which assures him of his eternal safety. That is one of the first truths a believing sinner learns, but many settle down on that blessed doctrine, and do not go on to learn the provision God has made in Christ, for His children with sin still, in them, to enable them to walk in fellowship with Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil" (Hab. i. 13).

There is a great lack of clear, sound teaching on this line of truth. A lack of apprehending the infinite holiness of "Him with whom we have to do ;" and as a consequence, a corresponding low conception of the hatefulness and vileness of sin, as seen by His holy eye. Out of

this state arises that irreverent familiarity with our God, and with the things of His Word, so sadly prevalent in this day.

It is a most blessed truth that our God and Father will have all His children with Himself, for ever in heaven, but He also desires their fellowship during the journey heavenward. And for this He has made complete provision in Christ and through His precious blood. In order to the enjoyment of this fellowship, it is necessary to learn the *all-embracing grandeur* of the Cross. The sins of all those who were justified before the Lord Jesus died, were "passed over," they were not "taken away," for "the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sins." But when Christ settled the question of sin, He took the debt, or account, which had long been accumulating "out of the way, nailing it to His cross" (Col. ii. 14). And His one perfect sacrifice did even more than that; it goes on to perpetuity (Heb. x. 12, see Newberry). Not only was Christ the propitiation for our sins when unconverted, but we read that "He is the propitiation for *our* sins" (I John ii. 2)—that is for the sins of the children of God as such. I do not know any truth less taught than this precious truth, that the judgment of all my sins of omission and of commission, in thought, word and deed, were included in that cup which the Lord Jesus received from the hand of His God, and which He drank to the last drop. Had it not been so, our Father and God never could be "faithful and just" (I John i. 9) in forgiving us our sins as His children. He might be *merciful* in doing so, but He is a God who can "by no means

clear the guilty" save on the ground of a perfect ransom.

Before our God, as a Father, could in righteousness forgive a single unholy thought or desire, on the part of any of His children, that unholy desire cost the Son of God His life on the cross. But blessed be His Name, He is the propitiation for our sins, as well as for the ungodly world.

This is fully typified in the Levitical ritual. When the Lord had redeemed His people Israel out of Egypt, and when His manifested presence in the cloud of glory came down and filled the tabernacle, as recorded in the last chapter of Exodus. The book of Leviticus opens with a number of various offerings and ritual, but these were all primarily designed to meet the need of a people who were already redeemed and brought to God (Exod. xix. 4). When we come to chap. xvi. we see that it was the transgressions and sins of a *redeemed people*, that the high priest confessed over, and put upon the head of the scapegoat. "The Law had a shadow of good things to come" (Heb. x. 1). Israel, under the law, had the shadow, and believers now under grace have the "good things" themselves, which were then "to come." And in the light of this, it is clearly seen, that the one sacrifice of Christ, to which all the offerings under the law pointed, must have a very definite bearing on, or relation to, the need of the redeemed of the Lord in the present age. If the "shadows" of the work of Christ upon the cross were intended primarily to meet the need of a people who had been typically redeemed—not to complete their redemption—but to maintain their

acceptance before the LORD who had come down to dwell among them, then the Scriptural and logical inference must be, that the sin-bearing of Christ on the cross occupies a vital place, not only as to a sinner's *union* with Christ but also in the maintenance of his *communion* with God. The worshippers under the law never had a perfect conscience, because they had no perfect sacrifices to look to. But now the believer has a sacrifice as perfect as the throne of God to gaze upon, and consequently he ought to have a perfect conscience; that is, he ought to "have no more conscience of sins" (Heb. x. 2). But such an experience can only be, when there is no haziness in the mind as to the all-sufficiency of the sacrifice—Christ as the propitiation for the sins of believers as such.

When the child of God grasps this great truth in the energy of faith, it will never lead him to trifle with, or to think lightly of sin, but it will become a weapon in his hand against the "fiery darts of the wicked one," when he endeavours to cast him down, and to break his soul's communion with God.

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LESSER GIFTS.—All gifts differ in measure and character; they all come from the same source. And wherever there is such a state of things, either from pre-arrangement or from strong partialities, as to shut out the lesser gifts, the Spirit is quenched, the assembly loses the benefit of the diversity of gifts, and ceases to act in accordance with the mind of God.—*Andrew Miller.*

THE EPISTLES OF PETER:

NOTES OF BIBLE READINGS.—NO. 5.

BY THE LATE J. G. BELLETT.

THIS Apostle is eminently carrying on the education of the saints. He does not take us as Paul does to heavenly places, and tell us to look around, and see the place in which God has put us; but he is educating the saints for their passage onwards, and charging them to exercise patience, wherever the pressure may come from. He opens the Epistle by speaking of the *trial of their faith*. That is the general way in which trial comes. Then in chap. ii. he begins to look at trial in the *details of life*, as in the case of servants with froward masters. In chap. iii. it is trial arising from righteousness, and in chap. iv. trial for the Name of Christ. In chap. v. it is trial arising from the immediate pressure of Satan himself. So, from beginning to end, the Apostle keeps you in company with trials. He is educating a stranger people; and a stranger people passing through the earth should count on passing from wave to wave.

But there is a form of trial that we should *not* encounter. Did not Lot incur a trial in Sodom that Abraham could look down upon? Lot fell into trials that Abraham escaped, because Lot had his eyes on Sodom; and the more you and I handle pitch, the more we shall be defiled by it. He tells us to count on trial; but there is a trial we ought to escape. Do not suffer for anything morally wrong. There is a way in which we *may* love life, and that is by not making trouble for

ourselves. Then he shows us that two things will attach to this way of loving life. The eyes of the Lord will be over us, His ears open to us ; and no one will harm us. These two things will rest on us if we avoid these self-made trials.

In ver. 14, he looks on us as *asserting righteousness*. We ought to be both practising what is good and asserting righteousness. If you only practise what is good, you will get loved and respected in the world. Who is he that will harm you if you give all your goods in charity ? But we must take care to be *righteous* as well as *good*—that is, we must stand in fidelity to Christ, and assert the rules of Christian righteousness, as well as practise the ways of Christian goodness. The Spirit here tells, that righteousness will provoke suffering. The moment we assert the peculiarities of Christianity, and stand apart for righteousness, we shall suffer.

Well, suppose you suffer, what are you to do ? “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” Do not be troubled. It only presses you a little more closely into God’s presence ; and, forth from that sanctuary, be ready to come and give an answer to every man that asks you a reason for the hope that is in you. What an exquisite attitude for a saint of God to take ! Pressure from around forces him into the sanctuary of the divine presence, and forth he comes in full peace of conscience to answer every man “with meekness and fear.” Meek in carriage, giving respect to others, and carrying all through a good conscience before God.

“For *it is better*, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for

evil-doing.” It is *well* to suffer for evil-doing. Do not you count it so ? If you go astray, would not you rather God visited you, than that He let it all pass ? It is among our privileges that He should visit us for it, but it is better to suffer for *well-doing*. There is no honour if I suffer for evil-doing, though there may be healthful discipline ; but in suffering for *well-doing* the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. Then he brings forward the Lord Jesus who is the grand prototype of suffering for well-doing. The first order and character of it is seen in Him, having this great purpose in His sufferings, “that He might bring us to God.” “Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” He died in the flesh, as thoroughly as any of us, but He was quickened because of what He was, in the Spirit. And then the Apostle directs our attention to what He was doing of old in this resurrection character. This glance back at Noah is exceedingly beautiful. Two things occupied Noah for 120 years. He was preaching to his fellow-sinners, and, in his own person, he was getting everything ready to pass into the new world. Every knock of the hammer had that in it. Could anything be finer than to see a saint of God undistractedly going on with these two businesses ? And it was the Spirit of Christ in Noah preaching righteousness. Noah in himself had no capacity. It was the Spirit of Christ that animated him, and he preached to the spirits in prison. It was an imprisoned generation—that is, it was under *sentence of death*, though the sentence was not executed for 120 years.

"The like figure whereunto, baptism, doth now save us." But there He checks. Baptism is a beautiful figure of death and resurrection; but here the Spirit puts in that check—"not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Now let me ask, have you been simply and undistractedly put into that secret—that the resurrection of Christ has given you an answer to God? What was the resurrection of Christ? It was deliverance from death. Death is the wages of sin. Would death ever have been conquered if sin had not been put away? When the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He rose as a divine witness that sin was put away and, if sin is put away, I have a good conscience. Does not guilt make cowards of us all? It is the very opposite of a good conscience. Now if I read in the resurrection of Christ that sin has been put away, I read in it my title to a good conscience before God. I can look up now without being abashed, in the blessed sense that God has settled every matter between Him and me. This is divinely magnificent, yet simple to the plainest understanding.

Then an uncommonly fine thought attaches to this. "Who is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God, angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto Him." He has your conscience *there with Him*. He has not got your *person* there yet. Paul teaches me that I shall be there by and by. Peter, in his more homely epistle, teaches me that everything that might startle me is rolling under my feet, and that my conscience is up in the highest heavens with

Christ; and there I sit, smiling at every accuser, taking up the language of Romans viii.:—"Who shall condemn"—"Who shall separate." Angels, principalities, and powers are rolling under. This is a state of *justification*. There will be a state of *glorification* by and by. There is a moral glory in the Gospel we know very little about. God comes, in the Gospel of His grace, and answers the necessity of sinners. He will come, by and by, in the kingdom of His glory, to answer the expectation of saints.

GOSSIPS.

TALEBEARING, tattle and gossip are accountable for more trouble among the children of God, than all other evils put together. And preachers are not free of it. Some, who are not particularly active in visiting among the unconverted, find plenty of time for tea-party gossip where the affairs of others are overhauled, and the results of the afternoon's talebearing is often wrought into the evening's address, for want of something more spiritual and edifying, dug by prayerful study from the Scriptures. Preachers of little gift, if they have true godliness, may often be a means of great blessing to fellow-believers alike in ministry of the Word and visitation, but gossips are an unmitigated curse and a cause of strife in every community to which they gain an entrance. The only cure is to grip them firmly, as that man did, who when one began his tale of woe, asked him to write what he had said, and sign his name to it.

NOT DENYING HIS NAME.

(REVELATION III. 8.)

PROBABLY the first enquiry suggested to many by the verse quoted would be : What does our Lord mean by "not having denied His Name?"

In the first place it will be noticed, He does not say, "denied *Me*," as He does in Luke xii. 9, but "hast not denied *My Name*."

Now, from the special mention of this fact, and His own special commendation of it, it is evident some *had* denied His Name. It appeals therefore most strongly to every true heart, and awakens the enquiry : Am *I* one who has denied His Name, or am I included in the approved company who *have not denied His Name*? So we again meet the question : What does our ascended Lord mean by that saying of His, "hast not denied *My Name*."

In Matthew xviii. 20 He had given *His Name* as the one and only Name in which His followers were to be gathered together :—"Where two or three are gathered together unto *My Name*, there am I in the midst of them"—and I believe it is in relation to *this expression of His mind* that His subsequent words we are considering, apply.

The disposition to deny His Name was early shewn in the Corinthian Church by the party cries : "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ." "Is Christ divided?" the apostle asks. "Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptised in the name of Paul?" So foreign was it to the instructed mind of the writer of the Epistle to the Corinthians, and so against the

honour which centred in *One Name alone* (see Matt. xvii. 1-8).

Now let me, on my Lord's behalf, make an earnest appeal to my fellow-Christians as to the application of His Words in Rev. iii. 8. Has His Name been superseded or not, by taking up the name of one of *His servants*, and gathering together as "Wesleyans?" Or has some distinctive *doctrine* displaced the Lord's Name, and believers gather together as "Baptists?" Or has some special form of *Church Government* led others to deny *His Name*, gathering together as Independents, or Presbyterians, or Episcopalians, not to mention others.

In the light of the address to the Church in Philadelphia, this is a matter of the first moment; and however much Christians have declined, and walked in their own ways, and after their own thoughts, it is most evident that *He* has not moved a hair's breadth from His Word in Matt. xviii. 20. And so, looking down from His place on high, on the various phases presented in the history of His Church on earth, He comes towards the end, to the Church of Philadelphia, and finds amongst them two things to commend, and *only* to commend; they had "kept His Word and *had not denied His Name*": that is, they had not allowed His Name to be displaced by *any other name* however honoured, by any *doctrine* however important, but they had held on to the truth of *His Name*, and clung to it as the centre of their gathering together—depending on His promise: "Where two or three are gathered together unto *My Name*, there am I in the midst of them."

J. P.

SAVED TO SERVE THE LORD.

THERE is a general complaint all over the fields of evangelical Christendom, how few of those converted within recent years, seem to be brought forward to fill the gaps made by the removal from service on earth, to rest in heaven, of old and honoured preachers and teachers of the Word of God. Even among those who are wont to pray for a "seed to serve" the Lord (Psa. xxii. 30), and to ask the heavenly Master to "send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matt. ix. 38), there is continual lament that so few of the Christian young men and women who have shared the privileges of sound and Scriptural teaching, seem to have much exercise of heart or mind in regard to sharing in ministry of the Word, or service for the Lord at home or abroad. There may be many causes for this. No doubt the spirit of worldliness, the desire for ease, the lack of interest in others, may each account in part for the lack of active and devoted workers which exists, but we are convinced that a one-sided Gospel—which is almost universally the kind of Gospel now proclaimed—is most of all the cause of the indifference complained of. The blessings the Gospel brings, forgiveness, salvation, peace, and heaven beyond, are fully held forth, with the pleasures, enjoyments, and mercies of the Christian life—all right and proper in their measure and place. But the other side of the Gospel, fully made known in the Word, namely, that the believing sinner is brought to Christ as His disciple (Matt. xxviii. 19), turned to God from idols to

"serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. i. 9) is less heard of. The result is, that many of those who confess themselves Christians, saved and on the way to heaven, regard themselves as guests to be served, children to be fondled, and sheep to be fed and cared for, with little sense of the great redemption truth, elementary to the Christian life, that they are bondservants of the Lord, bought with a price to glorify God not their own (1 Cor. vi. 20), saved by grace to do the "good words that God hath before ordained that they should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 9-10); in short, saved to serve the Lord Jesus "all the days" of their life (Luke i. 75), not as a pastime or by fits and starts, but constrained by "the mercies of God" to present themselves continuously to Him, a living sacrifice as their reasonable service (Rom. xii. 1). Were this great truth in its full force kept in the place that God has given it, and proclaimed as it ought to be in full measure, alongside the Gospel of God, or as part of it (see Rom. i. 1), there would be another spirit found in many who confess themselves the Lord's. And the recognition of His Lordship, with His claims upon them, would be an antidote to the natural selfishness which leads many to always consider themselves as those to be served, rather than as saved to serve and spend themselves for others.

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GOD NEEDED.—When there are great arrangements for carrying on work, there is not the recognition of that inherent blessing, which "tarrieth not for the sons of men."

The Bible Annotator.

SUBJECTS FOR WORKERS.

SPIRITUAL OUTFIT.

Shod to walk (Deut. xxxiii. 25, with Eph. vi. 15).
Girded to Serve (Psa. xviii. 32, with John xiii. 4).
Armed to Fight (Eph. vi. 10, with 1 Tim. vi. 12).

ENOCH, AN OLD TIME WITNESS.

His faith in God (Heb. xi. 5).
His walk with God (Gen. v. 24).
His testimony for God (Jude 14).

THE GOSPELLER.

Saved by the Gospel (2 Tim. i. 8-9)—His Conversion.
Separated to the Gospel (Rom. i. 1)—His Consecration.
Sent with the Gospel (Acts xiii. 4)—His Commission.

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Misinterpreted Texts.

PHILIPPIANS II. 6, "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Some who desire to do away with the Divine glory of the Lord, and thus to impugn His testimony to the value of the Old Testament Scriptures, give a meaning to this passage which makes the Lord to have "emptied" Himself, or "made Himself void," to the extent of divesting Himself of His proper Deity, condescending to be, as they say, "like unto his brethren," to the extent of being subject to the ordinary limitations of knowledge—for example, concerning the origin of the Scriptures, the history of mankind, and such incidents as that of the prophet Jonah and the whale. But the "Kenosis," or "emptying," has no such meaning. It is indeed the taking of the "form of a bondservant," but in so doing He neither gased, nor could cease to be God. When He lay asleep in the boat, He was the mighty God, as truly as when He created the worlds. Human speculation and infidel theories would deprive us of a Divine Saviour, and leave in His place an Exemplary Man, the founder of a new religion, but not God the Son, whose life was a declaration of the Father (John i. 18), with whom He claimed equality (John v. 23) and unity (John x. 30), and whose vicarious death is of infinite value, because it was the sacrifice of the Son of God.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Do the words of Hebrews i. 5, refer to the birth of the Lord Jesus in Bethlehem? No. They are written concerning His resurrection from among the dead, as is clearly shewn by a comparison of Acts xiii. 33, with Psalm ii. 7. The title given to Him in resurrection is "The First begotten of the dead" (Rev. i. 5), the "First born among many brethren" (Rom. viii. 29).

Would it be right for a Christian to read sceptical books, in order to be able to refute them? Very few are called to, or capable for such work. It is certainly not the business of the children of God generally, to occupy their minds with sceptical or unsound literature, in any way whatever. It is dangerous to spiritual life and destructive of purity of mind, to read the blasphemies of ungodly men. We can think of some who have been ensnared, and made shipwreck of their faith in so doing. Feed upon the Word; occupy yourself with that which is right. "Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, and lovely, think on these things" says the apostle (Phil. iv. 4). If God has need of any of His servants to combat error, to meet the "sons of Belial" on their own ground, He will fence that servant of His (see 2 Sam. xxiii. 7) "with iron and the staff of a spear," preserving him from harm, even in the den of lions. But it is not for the ordinary Christian pilgrim to venture in there.

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Answers to Correspondents.

"INQUIRER." The first English Bible was John Wycliffe's, completed about the year 1380. There was no printing in those days, so each copy had to be written. One copy, now in the British Museum, is supposed to have been written by Wycliffe himself.

J. S., BELFAST.—The case mentioned in Matthew xviii. 15-18, is at the outset one of personal trespass, which, if dealt with between the parties concerned, has no need to be brought before others; but this failing, the next steps taken according to God are used to reveal such a condition of self-will and lawlessness, that the man is self-convicted as unfit for the fellowship of saints. There is no sin specified; it is the man's utter perversity and insubjection to God and man for which he is to be excluded.

J. W. G., LONDON.—The "gifts of healing" (1 Cor. xii. 28), like much else, set by God in the early churches, are no longer with us, nor is there any promise or indication given in the Word that they

will ever be restored. That God answers prayer for the restoration of His people in sickness, when it is His will and way to do so, we are fully assured, but when "Faith healing" becomes a "science," and those who make it their special hobby claim special "gifts" or powers of healing, and even to exorcise demons, we have invariably found that they soon claim to be channels of greater things, as, for example, has been manifested in "Dowie," of the American Zion, who began with "Faith healing," but soon proclaimed himself "Elijah the Restorer," and lately, "The First Apostle," wearing Aaronic-like garments and uttering "great swelling words of vanity" (2 Pet. ii. 18). Let all who would venture on such a path beware, lest they fall into the same snare.

P. M., QUEENSLAND.—There has been a gracious work of genuine conversion in many parts of Wales and elsewhere during the past few months, for which we praise the Lord, but we have no confidence whatever in the statistics and numbers of converts as compiled by preachers and published by editors and others for advertising purposes. These figures are generally arrived at in somewhat the same way as foreign missionaries record their converts. They sum up the "baptised"; evangelists those who "stand up" or "profess." "Born again" converts are the only kind that survive the tear and wear of life and "go from strength to strength." They are as easily distinguished from lifeless professors, by those who have eyes to see, and whose scent is in them, as roses in the garden, in their morning freshness are, from roses "made in France," with much colour but no smell. Where God has been sought and room left for Him to work in His own way, by His own instruments, there has been real work done, but where the world's religious systems (or men who work on the same lines outside them) have taken things in hand, the less that is said about permanent results the better.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VII.—Should Christians borrow money from the world, to build halls to be used for the Lord's work and worship?

ANSWER A.—The Word says "The borrower is servant to the lender" (Prov. xxii. 7), and clearly neither the individual Christian nor the Church, should be in such a relationship to the ungodly world.

J. L.

ANSWER B.—If, in the way of honest commerce, an owner of property builds a hall, and lets it out for a given rent to a company of Christians for their worship and work, there is no "yoke" involved, then, there can be none, if the same person lends a sum of money to them, for which they pay a yearly interest.

A. M.

ANSWER C.—The contracting of debt is a fruitful source of trouble to "Churches" as it is to individuals. George Müller never built any of his Orphan Houses until the Lord sent the money, great as the need for some of them was, nor did he ever go in debt for anything connected with that great work for which God has so bountifully provided these many years. This is beyond doubt the Scriptural principle, and those who abide by it are able to count on God, and to be a testimony to His faithfulness, while they witness against the ever-increasing evils of extravagance and debt.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We consider there is a marked distinction in the two relationships as named in the above answers. In the first, those using the hall are simply tenants; in the latter, they are legal owners, and their relation to the bondholder is different from what it would be to the landlord. In the latter case, they may vacate the hall at any time; in the former they cannot. "Church property" is not a desirable acquisition; it is always a burden, often a cause of trouble. In places where halls are difficult to rent, it may be necessary to build. In such cases, it is well to have all properly and legally arranged, so that, at no future time, trouble may arise regarding title and ownership. In case of such necessity, it is surely better for one or more of those interested, or some Christian friend, to acquire or build a suitable place and rent it, or to advance the money required, than to borrow from the world or beg from all and sundry. Liberality in contributing toward building purposes does not seem to increase, nor can it be expected it will, in the light of past experiences. There is a growing tendency among some, to be up alongside the religious world in having attractive buildings for worship—the old-time barns and humble buildings with their whitewashed walls not being to the taste of the rising generation—and the next thing, of course will be, to have "Sales of Work," quietly developing into bazaars, without the name, in order to raise the necessary money. Better to worship God under the blue heavens as our fathers of honourable memories did, and preach God's Word as our Lord and Master did on the streets, than adopt the devil's pattern

for raising money to erect edifices in which human pride, under a pious name, is to be nursed, and the world's principles of debt or dishonesty exhibited.

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Questions Requiring Answers.

QUESTION VIII.—As a result of some recent teachings, making Believers' Baptism of little account, and insisting that those who reject it, are perfectly eligible to be received by an assembly, some, who not only reject the truth regarding it, but teach infant sprinkling to be baptism, have been received, not as "weak in the faith," but as wise and able to teach others. How far can those who fear God and seek to own His Word go with this, and in what measure are they responsible for it, by being in an assembly where such practices prevail?

QUESTION IX.—As the law now stands, would it be according to God that a Christian marry his deceased wife's sister, and is one who does so, eligible for fellowship in the assembly of saints, and to be regarded as fit to share in oversight and ministry?

QUESTION X.—Is there any Scripture warrant for observing the Lord's Supper in the evening of the first day of the week?

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Observations, by an Aged Disciple.

It is more than a quarter of a century since I left my native land, and since my return, on a short visit, I have been going over old fields of labour, and assembling for worship and Christian fellowship with many companies of the Lord's people among whom my earlier years were spent. I shall soon be bidding farewell to these, the scenes in which my spiritual youth were spent, and to the dear saints with whom I have had many seasons of hallowed intercourse in things "touching the King," and fellowship in the happy service of making known the Gospel. For all the grace I have seen, for help through the Word ministered and received, and for encouragement to go on in the ways of the Lord, by the bright example and faithful testimony of some whom I have long known and loved in the Lord, I give unceasing thanks to my God. But there are certain tendencies which I have observed, and teachings which I have heard among believers meeting simply in the Lord's Name, the remembrance of which I shall carry with me as a burden on my heart, back to the land of my pilgrimage, to weep and pray over before God, while my days are continued here below.

I cannot help observing that in many assemblies the "fine gold has become dim," the early dew and freshness has gone, and the attractive power of true spirituality which drew me toward those who thus gather has, in large measure, faded away. Worldliness in dress, style, and modes of living have greatly increased. Separation from the world, in social, commercial, and political life has greatly declined. The healthful, sound, and searching ministry to which we were accustomed thirty years ago, to which I owe all that I enjoy and seek to hold fast, is scarcely heard, and I have been told would not be tolerated in certain places. The tone of spiritual worship in the assemblies is not what it was, nor is the guidance of the Spirit among the assembled worshippers owned so fully; haste is betrayed, rather than quiet waiting upon God, and ministry of a desultory character fills up too much of the time. Simple, edifying teaching, on all aspects of Christian life is less heard, and what is, is more theoretic than practical. At Conferences which I have attended, I have been especially struck by the lack of elder brethren of grace, experience, and gift, the speakers being, in most cases, manifestly inexperienced, the same too at meetings in all places, and the lines of teaching (or rather exhortation) much of a kind, and not that which goes to develop godly living or maintain the distinctive testimony God has called us as a handful of His people to bear to the Lordship of Christ and the supremacy of His Word in assembly, as well as in individual life. Unless these truths which form and order the Christian assembly are clearly and definitely taught to young disciples, there will presently be a generation who neither know nor are exercised in the truth which separates believers from the world and its religious sects, which leads and keeps them outside the camp, and teaches them their mutual privileges and responsibilities as assemblies of saints. Last of all, I have hardly heard "the blessed hope" of our Lord's return spoken of, which was once the joy and delight of the heart. I am not a pessimist; God will not fail to maintain His honour, or find those into whose hands He will commit the care of His testimony to the Lordship of His Son, but He may have to teach some that as He can do without them, and raise up others to do that in which they have failed. To brethren who have bought the truth and love it, I would say in all affection, Hold it fast with a firm grasp, and deal it out with an unsparing hand, God will own it, and fully reward you.

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.

BY THE LATE ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

SATAN is presented to us in the Scripture as a usurper; he holds authority in this world to which he has no right or title. When God at first created the world there was no ruler but Himself, but when Adam was formed and set on the earth, he was put in authority, he had "dominion" (Gen. i. 26) given unto him. When Adam fell by disobeying God, he lost this authority; it fell into the hands of his deceiver to whom he had yielded, and Satan became "the prince of this world" (John xvi. 36), "the prince (or ruler) of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2). It is needful to keep this solemn fact before us, while seeking to learn from the Word of God the present place of authority which has been given to the Lord Jesus, so that we may own and honour Him as Lord. Satan holds authority, a real and powerful dominion over men and things, but it is the authority of a usurper, it is not his by right but by robbery. At the Cross, the Lord Jesus triumphed over the usurper, and won back that authority which Satan had so wickedly stolen. Let us turn to two Scriptures which speak to us of this. First in Gen. iii. 15, we hear God speaking to Satan, at the very time he had obtained his authority by causing Adam and Eve to rebel against the will of God and yield obedience to him, telling him in the hour of what seemed to be his victory, that the Woman's Seed would bruise his head, and rob him of his authority. This was fulfilled at the Cross. There the Lord Jesus not only yielded

Himself up to God, becoming perfectly obedient even unto death, putting away sin by His sacrifice, but through death that He "might destroy him that had the power of death that is the devil" (Heb. ii. 14). The word here rendered "destroy" means "to take away the power" of, and is elsewhere translated "loosed" (Rom. vii. 2), so that its bonds no longer hold its captives, because their power is taken away. Thus by the Cross, the usurper had his authority taken from him, and restored to God. Then we are told in Matthew xviii. 19, that when the Lord Jesus had risen from the dead, he claimed that "All authority in heaven and on earth" had been committed unto Him. He is not yet exercising all this authority, or claiming all the dominion which by right belongs to Him (Psa. ii. 8), and which He will one day exercise (Psa. lxxii. 8-11). Throughout this dispensation of grace, He is patiently waiting, until a people has been called out from the world by the preaching of the Gospel, to own His Lordship and to become His disciples.

SAVED TO OWN HIS LORDSHIP.

Salvation, as it is presented in the Word, therefore, is not only a deliverance from hell and from the penalty and power of sin, but from the authority of Satan (Acts xxvi. 16) to God, and from the dominion of the ruler of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God's love (Col. i. 13). We have a type of this in the redemption and deliverance of Israel, set free from Pharaoh's bondage to own the rule and do the will of Jehovah (Exod. xix. 4-6; Psa. cxiv. 1-2). And in their

case, as in ours, the Deliverer became the Ruler, who spake to them with authority from God (see Acts vii. 35-37). This side of the Gospel is often forgotten, yet it is clearly taught in the Word. At the close of Mark's Gospel, in which the Lord is presented as the Servant, the commission is that the Gospel be preached to every creature, and the result to those believing, is salvation; while in Matthew's Gospel, in which He is presented as King and Ruler, with "all authority" given unto Him, the commission is to "make disciples," baptising and "teaching them to observe all things" whatsoever the Lord has commanded. They are saved to own His Lordship and obey His will in all things. Not in some things, or in such as they approve of and choose from among the others, but in "all things" whatsoever He has commanded. This is how we are to own His Lordship. Not by saying "Lord, Lord" with our lips, yet refusing to do the things He bids us (Luke vi. 46). What is true of the saved individual, must also of necessity be true of such in their assembled capacity, when gathered together to own His claims as set over the House of God down here (Heb. iii. 1-6). In giving effect to this, we need to be exercised before God, lest we give countenance to or have fellowship with anything that would disown His authority, or set aside His commandments. The "all authority" of the Lord Jesus is expressed in the "all things whatsoever He has commanded." There must be no compromise, no leaving out of some of these, because we do not like them, or think them applicable to us, or because some of

those with whom we wish to maintain friendship, would be offended at our obedience to them. This brings to mind a word which we sometimes hear used regarding those who become misled by error—that is the word "heretic." Its meaning in the Greek language is the common every day word for one who "chooses," who makes choice for himself, and takes his own way. It has no reference to one who abandons "the faith" and drifts into open, palpable error, but is used to describe one who picks and chooses for himself, such parts of the Lord's commandments as he thinks fit, associating others with him in his choice. This is how sects are formed, and how all divisions originated. To do only such things as we approve of, because we like to do them, is not obedience, it is self-will, and practically is a disowning of the "all authority" which God has given to His Son. But some may ask—Do you take the place of saying you know and keep all the Lord's commandments? No, we do not say so, for we only know in part. There may be things in the Word of God which we have not yet learned, and therefore do not obey, but if any one comes to us with an open Bible and shows us such things, we would welcome his help and seek at once to give effect to that which the Lord has commanded to be done. This is what the denominations will not permit. They have their Creeds, their Confessions of Faith, and their Church Standards. You may do whatever they have included in them of the commandments of the Lord, but you must not go beyond that. This is why it is so serious

a thing to be openly identified with any system which sets aside those commandments of the Lord, which are the expression of His supreme authority, to the acknowledgment of which all who have become His disciples are called.

"NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF SINS."

BY GEORGE ADAM.

IT will be needful to point out at the outset, the distinction between a believer having "no more conscience of sins," as in Heb. x. 2; and one saying he has no consciousness of sin, as in 1 John i. 8. There is no such doctrine found in the Scriptures as an experience of sinlessness: that is, the sinful nature, or the root of indwelling sin being eradicated from the believer's heart. Many a young Christian, after the first flow of new found joy begins to subside, is brought into great darkness and perplexity by the evil thoughts and desires which he thought were all gone, still rising up within. When one thus loses the "joy of salvation," he is apt to think that he has lost salvation itself, and thus he is brought into deep soul trouble. But such an experience is no cause for discouragement; it is rather a token that a genuine new birth has taken place. Only where such is the case, does the flesh or the "old man" rise up or "lust against Spirit," and oppose the "new man," which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph. iv. 24).

In professed conversions, where there has been no Divine quickening, no new life imparted by the Spirit of God, but

merely a certain *religious fervour* created, or excitement stirred up through what are called "Revival Meetings," no painful conflict follows such a profession. The reason for this is, it is only the "old man" that has been acted upon, and the change consists in the "old man" having for the time being *become religious*. The devil gives such "converts" no trouble, he need not, for he is surer of his prey than he was before. But where a *new creation* has taken place in the soul, there is sure to be sooner or later, a struggle for the mastery between the two "laws," as in Romans vii., or the two natures spoken of in Eph. iv. 22-24, and in Col. iii. 9-10. Yet the painful experience caused by the presence of indwelling sin in a believer's heart, need not and ought not to defile the conscience, so as to mar communion with God, and bring the soul into darkness. It will not do so, if the believer has been taught to see how in the reckoning of God, all this evil was fully met and dealt with on the Cross. That not only were all our sins borne away by Christ in His own body on the tree (1 Pet. ii. 24), but the very nature from which all the evil practices spring, has been judged, condemned, and crucified in the crucifixion of Christ. Thus a believer with a tender conscience may be led to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death" (Rom. vii. 24). But one believing look at the Cross as meeting all, both SIN and SINS, will dispel the gloom from the conscience, and produce that experience called "no more conscience of sins" (Heb. x. 2).

Such a conscience as this is not easily maintained. Not only is it essential to have a clear apprehension of the Cross of Christ, as meeting all the claims of God regarding both sin and sins, it is necessary to walk in the light with God, watching unto prayer. There must be no trifling with evil in any form. No indulgence to the "old man" must be allowed in thought, word, or deed. Every conscious rising of the flesh within, must be immediately judged and confessed, as well as every manifestation of nature in the life. If anything that is grieving to the Holy Spirit is allowed to lie on the conscience, it will at once lose its tender sensitiveness to the hatefulness of sin, and be prepared to allow its owner to go more deeply into sin and further away from God. There must be no rejection of "the light." Many a young believer has lost a perfect conscience, by refusing to bow to the truth of God, because of the reproach which obedience to the revealed will of the Lord Jesus would entail. "Lord, what wilt THOU have me to do?" (Acts ix. 6), must be the one important question, all the Christian's journey to the end, and the Lord's response to that question—as far as one has grace to discern His will—must settle everything, if one is to maintain a walk of communion with God in the light of His love. This lawless world is a "foreign country" to a soul that has been "born from above." The moral atmosphere of this scene is polluted, and if the heaven-born soul is to maintain a healthy condition, there is a moral necessity for such to form the habit in their early Christian life, of regularly turning

aside to breathe the "native air" of the regenerated soul in the presence of the Living God. I repeat that this is essentially necessary, if the heavenly pilgrim is not to become like unto one going "down to the pit" (Psa. cxliii. 7).

Another thing is needful, if the "new man" in the believer is to thrive and grow, that is, the new life which has been imparted at the new birth must be nourished. We all know how needful it is to physical health and growth, especially in early days, that the child be supplied with wholesome nourishment. The foundation of a good bodily constitution is to a great extent laid in *nursing* days. So it is with the lambs of Christ's flock. And the "sincere milk of the Word" (1 Pet. ii. 2) is the only spiritual food which is free from adulteration. I am not undervaluing other helps; but there is so much religious literature abroad nowadays, and much of it of a kind which tends to hurt, if not to destroy, a healthy appetite for the inspired Word of God. So that the books or leaflets which are put into the hands of young believers, need to be carefully selected. It will prove a lifelong blessing for a young convert to have a healthy "desire" for the Word of God formed in the early days and years of their Christian life. Another thing still I must notice, which will have an effect on the conscience for good or evil, that is the company one keeps. If one is to cultivate the habit of walking with God, then there must be habitual separation—as to *companionship*—from those who are living in a state of alienation from Him.

God has made abundant provision for

His children walking "in the light as He is in the light" (1 John i. 7), but if that provision is to be enjoyed and experienced, then those who are to do so, must be prepared to live lives of practical holiness, and of separation to God.

IN CHRIST.

CHILD of the eternal Father,
 Bride of God the Son,
 Dwelling-place of God the Spirit,
 Thus with Christ made one.
 Dowered with joy beyond the angels,
 Nearest to His throne,
 Granted all my heart's desires,
 All things made my own;
 Feared by all the powers of evil,
 Fearing God alone;
 Walking with the Lord in glory
 Through the courts divine.
 Queen within my royal palace,
 Christ for ever mine.
 Say poor worldling, can it be
 That my heart should envy thee?

NOT POPULAR.

YOU may speak of religion in a general way; of preachers, of churches, of missions to the heathen, of societies for doing good, and be popular; but speak of the Lord Himself, of His precious blood, of the full assurance of salvation, of oneness with Him in heaven, or separation from the world, of standing apart from all its shows and entertainments, and you will rapidly reduce the number of your friends.—*Andrew Miller.*

WHY DO YOU MEET SEPARATE FROM OTHER CHRISTIANS?

AN ADDRESS GIVEN IN GLASGOW. BY THE EDITOR.

PART II.

IN the beginning "all that believed were together" (Acts ii. 45). There were no rival churches then, no separate denominations having different names, each having a policy and a constitution of its own. The apostles never countenanced the spirit of division, but warned against and forbade it (1 Cor. i. 10-14; Rom. xv. 17). But as time went on, the church stooped down to embrace the world, and the world ceased to persecute and began to caress the church, and presently they became united. The world overran the church; the church became merged in the world, and thus they are at the present hour. Where is the Church? In the world. Where is the world? In the church. Take the National Church—the Church of England (or the Church of Scotland), established and endowed as the State Church of the Nation. The King appoints its bishops, and its ministers are supported from the national revenue. Who are its members? Parishioners, without question of their spiritual condition! Can that be the church as described in Scripture? Certainly not. Consequently it has no claim upon my adhesion. More; if I am to obey the Word which says—"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers" but "Come out from among them and be ye separate" (2 Cor. vi. 14-18), I dare not become a member of such a church. If I am one already, I

must cease to be. There may be true children of God there, but I cannot remain in a system where the world is knowingly admitted, and where its rulers have power to make the Word of God of none effect. The so-called "Free Churches" have each its Principal or President, as Rome has its Pope, and Episcopacy its Primate. They include in their membership the world; those who are known to be unregenerate, and confess themselves so. Clerisy prevents those who are Christians from fulfilling the functions of their priesthood or ministry, one man monopolising in himself the whole. This is spiritual bondage, to which no believer taught in the Word will submit. The liberty and leading of the Spirit is denied; the supremacy and authority of the Word is rendered void by Confessions and traditions. You may appeal to Scripture, but the laws of "the Church" forbid it being heard, or to operate. In nearly all of these churches some fundamental error is now taught or defended; the Inspiration of the Bible, the Divinity of the Lord, the Atonement, and the Punishment of the Wicked are denied. Without these there is no Gospel. To be "a member" of such Churches is to be a "partaker" (3 John 9) of their deeds. A single share in a fraudulent Company makes you a partaker of its dishonesty. It was the sense of this, that compelled the late Charles H. Spurgeon to separate from "The Baptist Union," because it harboured within its pale those who taught and fostered error. This is what every godly Christian guided by the Scriptures of Truth will do, when he learns therefrom

that association with evil and fellowship with evildoers—albeit many good people may be mixed up amongst it—is forbidden by the Lord. It is not a question of separation from believers, but primarily from unscriptural systems and erroneous or traditional teachings, in short from *the world*, for most religious bodies as they exist to-day are nothing else. The same people who worship there on Sunday, are found the same week at the theatre and the racecourse. To recognise such as "brethren in Christ," and eat the Lord's Supper with them, is a sin and an outrage against the throne of God. No child of God who continues in such unholy alliance, can surely expect to have the companionship of his God, or the communion of the Holy Ghost. But it may be asked, "Where shall we go? What shall we do?" The Word of the Lord supplies the answer—"Cease to do evil; learn to do well" (Isa. i. 16-17). One step at the time is God's way. Light arises as it is followed. Although the church in its original unity, purity, and beauty is gone, and will never be restored on earth, the principles of the Word according to which it was constituted remain. They have not been revoked, but abide for faith and obedience to follow. Wherever "two or three" of the scattered sheep of Christ are drawn together in simple obedience to His Word, gathered unto His Name (Matt. xviii. 20), owning His Lordship, seeking to obey His Word, to follow the leading of His Spirit, leaving room for the exercise of such gifts as He is pleased to give and set for their edification (1st Cor. xii. 18), there He is "in the midst." They

may be few in number, without outward attraction, and by the world despised and disowned ; yet there the Lord commands the blessing and gives the sense of His presence, as many of us here joyfully, yet humbly confess. There is nothing to boast of, plenty to grieve over, many things to learn, and much to humble in thus gathering, with the pain of being sundered from many whom personally we love in the Lord, whose lives adorn His doctrine, and whose devoted service puts many of us to shame. Yet we do most firmly believe, that our position in being thus in separation from the corruptions of the world's religion, and seeking to assemble in the Lord's Name alone, where we may welcome all His people who are sound in faith, godly in walk, and willing to own His Word as their only rule and standard, is where He would have His redeemed ones be, and where they will through grace, be able to give a true, if feeble testimony to His Lordship and His Truth on the earth in these last days.

It is a path where faith will have its trials, and in which there will be much to endure, and it may be many to disappoint, but the Lord's ways are always trying to the flesh, and meant to be. Nothing but a sense of it being the call of God through His Word, will induce any to go forth in such a path, and nothing short of dependence upon a present living God, will sustain any in it. If you come out to earnest Christians, happy meetings, helpful ministry, or attracted by any other object than Christ, you will be disappointed ; but if through grace you hear the voice of the Good Shepherd of

the flock, who when He putteth forth His own sheep goeth before them (John x. 4), and go forth "Unto Him without the camp" (Heb. xiii. 13), you will find others who have got there before you, with whom your lot will be cast, some to be your helpers, others testing your forbearance, and all needing your love, your sympathy, and your prayers ; failing men and women like yourself, with whom God has much to bear, but "in the midst" as the One unto whom you gather, the centre, and the source of all blessing, the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone is worthy, to whom be glory in the Church, now, and evermore. AMEN.

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DEALING WITH ANXIOUS SOULS.

WE have found by experience, that it is not given to all who are themselves believers in Christ, to deal wisely with a soul in deep and true anxiety, in leading that soul to the Saviour. We have long been convinced, that it is by unscriptural and unwise dealing, especially in "After-meetings," that so many are led unto a false profession of conversion. There is no department of Christian work, in which the definite guidance of the Spirit of God is more needed, than when dealing with a soul more or less convicted of sin and in anxiety about eternal things. Human wisdom can benefit nothing in such a crisis ; it needs God. The worker may be the instrument, the channel ; the text he quotes, or reads, may be the message, but it is "the Lord" who works (see Mark xvi. 20 ; Acts xi. 21). And unless the Lord does the work, it is not

done. If a confession is extorted, a decision pressed, arguments, illustrations, or reasonings used, before the soul is brought to "repentance toward God," then there will be no "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21), therefore no life, no new birth, but a spurious profession, which may continue longer or shorter time, according to its surroundings, but some time must wither up seeing it has "no root" (Luke viii. 13). In a recently developed form of "After-meeting," there is no attempt made to discover where, or in what condition the people are, whether or not they know their lost condition, or God's way of salvation. They are simply asked to "stand up" and declare themselves "on the Lord's side," most, it is to be feared, without the least conception of what that means, or how it is to be obtained. It is simply regarded as a vow, a new start, or a decision in the way of religion. How different it is with the soul who, under the guidance of the Spirit, and the preaching or presentation of Christ through the Word (see Acts viii. 29, 35), is led to place reliance on Him to whom the Spirit ever guides the weary heart, and in whose finished work the burdened soul finds its rest.

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POWER.—All power arises from the direct authoritative energy of the Holy Ghost in the individual.

INDIVIDUALITY.—In every age the blessing has been from individual agency, and the moment it has ceased to be this, it has declined into the world. It is humbling, but it makes us feel that all comes immediately from God.

SECTARIAN CONDITION AND POSITION.

WE saw it in print lately, that there are "many" believers while yet "held in the bondage of a sectarian position," who are quite unsectarian in their "condition," so much so, that the writer can "praise God" for it. We had always thought that where any sin had been confessed and overcome within, it was then renounced and forsaken *without*. This, at least, is the Lord's will and way (Prov. xxviii. 13, with 1 John i. 9). We gravely question the soundness of any profession of *inward* sanctity, or an unsectarian spirit, which does not appear in outward *walk* and *conduct* among men. The words of the Lord Jesus, "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 20), can never be annulled by the plausible theories of men. If the "fruits" are, that they cling to and abide in, or as the writer has it, are "held in the bondage of sectarian position," it is surely a fair and honest inference that the "roots" of that sectarian condition are cherished within.

The most specious form of sectarianism in our day is All-sectarianism—in other words, the recognition and exaltation of all kinds of splits, divisions, and departures from God's truth, as if each were a virtue, and all combined, the perfection of catholicity and unity. But these are not the thoughts of God, nor of any who stand in His counsel, and tremble at His Word. If the sin of sectarianism is judged within, and dealt with before God, cleansing from, and victory over it, will assuredly be the result, followed by separation from it without.

"NOT MUCH IN IT."

DURING a recent united and all-sectarian mission in a denominational church, the minister of which is a disciple of the "Higher Critic" Professors, a number of "leading brethren" belonging to a company of believers, who professedly have come out from all sects, to gather in the Name of the Lord alone, made themselves very conspicuous by attending the meetings every night as "workers." Their ostensible object was to show their large-heartedness, and remove from the minds of sectarian Christians the idea that they were "narrow," as some others of former times had been. Meeting one of them on the street, an "elder" belonging to the "church" in which the meetings were held, expressed his surprise at seeing "so many of the brethren from — Hall in the church," remarking that he had understood they were "outside of all denominations," to which the "worker" made a rather lame and awkward answer. "Well," said the elder, "I do not know much about your position, but this at least is clear to me, there cannot be much of principle in it, if you can forsake it so easily as some of you seem to be able to do." That closed the incident, but it provides matter for honest minds to think on, and shows at least how a level-headed "elder" and a Christian at ease in his denomination looks at such things. The ostensible reason given by those who attend "missions" in denominations is, that they may attract others toward a Scriptural position. But the result is all the other way.

A GODLY EXAMPLE.

A DYING Christian mother, giving her last counsels to her son and daughter, who were believers in the Lord Jesus, and had taken their place in fellowship with a little company of the Lord's people gathered in His Name and seeking to be guided by His Word, amongst whom her departed husband had long laboured, said, "You have the Word of God, and you have your parents' example, and God expects you to hold fast what you have been taught, and to imitate what of grace you have seen. Your father and I have been kept amid many trials of faith, restful and happy, and God has been all that He promised to us, thus walking in the paths of His Word. When you are tempted to forsake the path of obedience for something more attractive, with less need for faith in God, let your parents' testimony to the real blessedness of walking in the truth come to your remembrance." The dying apostle, in giving counsel to Timothy, not only casts him on the unchanging Word of inspiration, exhorting him to "continue in the things" which he had learned, but he calls to his remembrance also of "whom" he had learned them (2 Tim. iii. 14), and connects his "manner of life" with his "doctrine," his teaching with his example. In a day when almost every truth is contested, and every path marked out in the Word for the saints of God to tread in separation from the world sneered at, as "out of date," it is good to remember the lives of some who have gone before, whose foot-prints are with us on the sands of time.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF BIBLE STUDIES.

THREE STAGES IN CHRIST'S PATH.

Philippians chap. ii. 6-11.

From the Father's Bosom to Bethlehem (ver. 6-7).

From the Manger to the Cross (ver. 7-8).

From the Grave to the Throne (ver. 9-11).

A TRIPLE GLORY OF CHRIST.

Revelation i. 5.

The Faithful Witness ; Incarnate on Earth—Past

The First Begotten ; Glorified in Heaven—Present

The Prince of Kings ; Reigning over all—Future.

THREE GREAT FACTS.

In Ephesians, chapter i.—True of all Believers.

Chosen by God the Father (verse 4).

Redeemed by God the Son (verse 7).

Sealed by God the Spirit (verse 13).

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Answers to Correspondents

J. S., GREENOCK.—Early traditions regarding the things of God are not reliable ; most of them were manufactured by monks and priests to magnify their calling. It is, however, tolerably certain that the Gospel was preached in Britain in the first century, by the immediate companions of the apostles, but the silver line of grace can only be traced with certainty from the fourth century, when Bran, a British king, preached Christ in Wales, and Succat, afterwards named St. Patrick, in Ireland. It was the sixth century before Ninian and Columba evangelised Scotland.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION VIII.—As a result of some recent teachings, making Believers' Baptism of little account, and insisting that those who reject it, are perfectly eligible to be received by an assembly, some, who not only reject the truth regarding it, but teach infant sprinkling to be baptism, have been received, not as "weak in the faith," but as wise and able to teach others. How far can those who fear God and seek to own His Word go with this, and in what measure are they responsible for it, by being in an assembly where such practices prevail ?

ANSWER A.—The neglect of believers' baptism can only be met by the wise and faithful ministry of God's Word regarding it, thus keeping the consciences of saints in lively exercise. In the event of any assembly making light of it, this will bring out the cause, and manifest those who are responsible for such a state of things.

T. R.

ANSWER B.—To minimise believer's baptism, so fully and clearly taught in the Word, prepares the way for its neglect and presently for its rejection. If an assembly of believers take one into its fellowship who rejects this truth, or clings to its counterfeit of infant sprinkling, they will soon find to their cost that he will be equally self-willed in other matters. One knowing little, but willing to learn, and do the Lord's will, is to be welcomed to God's assembly (Rom. xiv. 1), but an heretic or "self-choosing man" (Titus iii. 10)—one who takes what coincides with his ideas and refuses the rest, is different from one "weak in the faith," and an entirely different course is to be pursued regarding him.

H. A. M.

ANSWER C.—It is written in Acts i. 2, that our Lord, "through the Holy Ghost," gave "commandments unto the apostles." One of these commandments was that they should "make disciples, baptising them" (Matt. xviii. 19). How can any claim that they are keeping "the unity of the Spirit"—as has been recently done—by welcoming those in their self-will who positively reject the commandment given by the Lord through that Spirit. A believer taught and guided by the Spirit, will never make light of any part of the Lord's will, nor set up "unity" as a reason for rejecting any of the Lord's commandments. One led of the Spirit will not neglect "baptism" in order to reach "breaking of bread" which comes after it in Acts ii. 41, 42.

A. M.

ANSWER D.—Believers' baptism should be fully and clearly set before all who seek to be received to an assembly of believers, and its place and order pointed out by those who care for and guide the saints. Divine wisdom has put it where it is (see Matt. xviii. 19), and there the apostles and early Christians observed it (Acts x. 48). It is one of the signs of the times that it should be ignored or made little of, and a sacred halo cast around the devil's counterfeit of the Lord's institution, by recognising infant sprinkling as "baptism," which it is not, and never will be, no matter how "godly" the persons may be who practice it. When this or any other truth is trifled with, it soon loses its hold on the

conscience. We have known a leading brother in an assembly make light of baptism in order to get his wife, who opposed it, into the assembly unbaptised, and this and such like cases has more to do with the surrender of the truth, than most are aware of.

J. P.

ANSWER E.—Baptism has been displaced, and its teachings made light of in many well known cases, in order to make it easy for so-called "Exclusives," Presbyterians, and others who hold erroneous theories regarding it, to come into the fellowship of certain assemblies. If they were left alone where they are, until God so deals with them, that they will be willing to give up their traditions regarding baptism and other things, they would be less troublesome and opinionative when they do come. A company of believers may so depart from God's truth, or gradually give it up, that they cease to have any claim to be regarded as God's assembly, owning Christ as Lord and the Word as the rule of faith. Then what remains but for those who fear God to be where they can give effect to all "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv. 37), and where no human barrier hinders yielding obedience thereto.

R. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above are selected (and much curtailed) from among many communications on this subject, which is evidently of much interest and exercise to many at the present time. Personally, we have nothing new to teach regarding it, other than what we gathered from the Word over thirty years ago, which may be summarised as follows: That Scriptural Baptism is the immersion of believers in water; its order is after believing, and before adding to the assembly of God's people. It is not the door of admission into the assembly, nor the bond or test of fellowship, else all the baptised, however disqualified otherwise, would be received, and bodily weak or otherwise disabled believers, with the will but lacking the ability to be baptised, would be refused, neither of which is according to God. It is placed doctrinally alongside "One Lord, one faith" in Eph. iv. 5, and must not be exiled to a place of non-importance or left to "individual conscience," as most of the so-called "Exclusives" have apportioned it, leaving each to choose sprinkling infants, pouring on households, or immersing believers, but accepting and acknowledging ALL or either as baptism. We most firmly resist all such attempts to degrade a Divine institution, to the level of its Romish counterfeit, which alike obscures its meaning and perverts its purpose.

Baptism, rightly understood and intelligently obeyed, not only as a command, but as a confession of the believer's identification with Christ in death, burial, resurrection, and rejection, means the acknowledgment that Jesus is his Lord, that he is separate from the world, dead to its ways, and alive unto God in Christ. Satan hates and opposes it, always did, ever will, and when he can get some of God's children to take sides with him, he scores, for this is one of the jobs his own people cannot do with much effect. A desire to be known as "broad" and "charitable," leads some to lower the standard in order to make it easy for ignorant or self-willed believers—whose "ignorance" is oft condoned or exalted as if it were a virtue, or as if God's Word, in which His will has been clearly given, had been inaccessible to them all their days—to come into God's assembly generally not to learn, but to teach if not to pity others, who have some regard for God's truth, and humbly but firmly seek to give it effect. It is a well known fact that some, because of traditional bias and a good deal of sectarian pride, first got into assemblies without being baptised, then spread their theories of "infant" and "household" sprinkling until they had to be "brought to book," then they left and took a following with them. Where the gain was in such cases, it is hard to see. We know many large, godly, and active companies of saints, where baptism gets its place, is fully taught, yet does not drive away from, but draws godly believers into the path of obedience, to God, where such are continuously being baptised and added, to "continue steadfastly," and become a blessing to others. God's way is always sore on the flesh, but health to the soul, and the only real way of blessing to saints.

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ASSEMBLY EXPERIENCES—I.

BY AN OLD BELIEVER.

I have read "OBSERVATIONS: BY AN AGED DISCIPLE," in last month's "Believers' Magazine" with much interest, and find myself much in agreement with him in the estimate he forms of the condition of many assemblies and of the general trend of things at this time. During a fairly long experience of over thirty years of spiritual life, most of which have been in fellowship with Christians assembling in the Lord's Name, outside of all denominations, I have sought to profit by the varied experiences through which we have passed in our

assembly life, and have the desire to make a few observations regarding some of these, for the consideration of my younger brethren, who are coming on to bear the burdens and share the service, which we older ones will soon be leaving for the rest above.

First, and by far the most important thing I have observed is, that A RIGHT SPIRITUAL CONDITION, in the individual and the assembly, is the secret of all real blessing and success. To maintain this, and to restore it when absent or failing, should be the prime object of all ministry, whether of the Word in public, or by visitation, shepherd work, oversight, and private dealing. Nothing can take the place of a right condition, and all attempts to drag along, or keep up appearances by special efforts, or a round of meetings, while souls are away from God, and broken bonds exist among saints, is like working a strained or broken limb in order to bring it to its normal condition, or like putting on extra steam on an engine off the rails, to bring it to its proper place. When an assembly of Christians gets into a low spiritual condition, and troubles of various kinds begin to show themselves, there must be, there is, unjudged sin somewhere, and for this there is only one effectual remedy, that is heart-searching, humiliation, and confession before God. When saints can be brought together for this, I have never known it to fail, but always to issue in restoration and renewal, followed by reviving and refreshing from the Lord. Artificial remedies are worse than useless, and as time shows, only make things worse.

WHOLESOME MINISTRY OF THE WORD, in the midst of God's people, continuously, and according to their need, is another matter of chief importance in an assembly of saints. Apart from this, no company of believers will long maintain a true testimony for God, be at peace among themselves, or hold fast the truth of which God's assembly is said to be the "pillar and ground" (or "stay," R.V.) in the world (1 Tim. iii. 16). Visits of ministering brethren, conferences, and other such helps, are—when after a godly sort—valuable to stir up and exhort, but they do not and cannot make up for the lack of that sound and wholesome ministry, which God has set in the local assembly for its edification (Acts xiii. 1), and which, by reason of being in close touch with its condition, those who are in its midst, alone can supply. A church sustained by a haphazard or an extraneous ministry, or kept supplied by different preachers every week, whose teachings are often diverse, sometimes contradictory, can scarcely be a church "compactly

built together," of one mind, "perfectly joined together" (1 Cor. i. 19), in the same mind and judgment.

GODLY RULE is another great blessing to an assembly. Not necessarily men of great gift, but godly and wise, devoted to the care of the flock, seeking not their own, but Christ's glory in His Church, doing the work without saying anything about it, and waiting their reward till that day. Whether few or many, always seeking to be of one mind in the Lord, never acting apart from or without the fellowship of one another. When inexperienced or unspiritual men, seeking place, or using domination, act apart from others, or form cliques of those likeminded with themselves, and begin to force certain lines of action which they approve of, but which they do not wait till others see schisms occur. What is still more common in later years is, when certain who have little sympathy with the fundamental principles of the Word, which separate God's assembly from the world, and keep it apart from all its religious and political associations, and who, for that and other reasons, are quite disqualified from "taking care of the church of God," or assuming the place of leaders, when such men press themselves into prominence and force principles and practices upon God's people which are at variance with the Word, if they are not resisted firmly and steadfastly, they soon sow the seeds of discord, or reduce the character of God's assembly to a voluntary "mission" in which things are arranged by committee, or by vote and majority—as if there were no living Lord and Head in heaven, and no indwelling Spirit in God's house on earth. By the gradual intrusion of these and such like worldly principles and methods, I have seen more than one assembly, once a testimony for God and a centre of blessing to men, wither up, and eventually fall to pieces from internal decay, and others gradually decline to unnamed but not the less real sects, trying to keep pace with the rankest worldly denominations, from which those who preceded them were brought out by the power of the Truth of God. Such principles are at work all around, secretly at first like the leaven hid in the meal, but soon openly, with the distinct aim of nullifying all clear testimony to God and His truth in the earth. Let those who fear His Name, watch and pray lest they be overcome of the temptation to lower God's standard and abandon His truth, in a day when it is increasingly unpopular to hold it fast among men.

A VIGOROUS GOSPEL TESTIMONY.

BY THE EDITOR.

THERE is no happier, no healthier condition for an assembly of God's people, than to be "striving together" in the spread of the Gospel, among the people in the city, the town, or the village in which their lot is cast. Of course they need to be in a right condition with God, and at peace and harmony among themselves, in order to be of any use in seeking the salvation of others. But given that these conditions are at least in measure as they ought to be, and that all are seeking to co-operate heartily and vigorously in the great and honourable work of making known the Gospel's joyful sound to sinners sad and weary, with the earnest desire and the definite object of seeing them saved, then assuredly if they work on God's lines, and preach His Word in dependence on the Spirit of God to make it effectual in the arousing of the careless, the stripping of the formal, the conviction of the hardened, and the enlightenment of those who sit in darkness, they will find God to be faithful in the accomplishment of His own purposes of grace through their service. It is one of the chief functions for which churches exist, that they be "holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. ii. 16) to the perishing, and no church can be regarded as in a healthy or prosperous condition, if this great business which has been entrusted to it by God, is being neglected or carried on in a formal or half-hearted way. A godly, vigorous Gospel testimony, in which all have their burden and their share, some as preachers, and all as

"labourers together" (1 Cor. iii. 9), true "fellow-workers whose names are in the Book of Life" (Phil. iv. 3), all on the one job, although in different departments, co-operating for the same object and striving together to the same end, is a sight which gladdens the heart of God. These are happy conditions, less enjoyed perhaps than they ought to be, yet not impossible, or beyond the reach of even the smallest company of the Lord's people, who desire to see His work appear in their midst, and are willing to go on along the good old path of simple, unpretentious but diligent Gospel effort. On this the blessing of the Lord came down in rich effusion in years gone by, when there was less machinery, but infinitely more heart and soul than many can boast of now. In view of the approaching season for indoor work, let us appear before the Lord our God for His inspection, and searching ourselves with the lighted candle of His Word, put away from us whatever we discover in ourselves or our ways, in our motives or modes of service, which would hinder God the Spirit from using us individually in our varied spheres, and collectively in our united testimony in "the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God," as we sound it forth in all its fulness, fresh and free, among the needy sons of men. There is nothing on earth can ease the burdens or satisfy the souls of men, save the glad tidings of salvation as made known in the Gospel of the grace of God, and there is no more effective way of spreading it abroad, than by the continuous efforts of assemblies of God's people right with God and "striving together" as one man.

DEPARTURE FROM GOD AND ITS RESULTS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS AT ABERDEEN CONFERENCE.

By H. B. THOMPSON.

Read 1 Kings x. 26-29; Deut. xvii. 14-20.

WHAT a solemn contrast there is between what we have just heard regarding Caleb, who "wholly followed the Lord," and his victories, and the words of 1 Kings xi. 6—"Solomon went not fully after the Lord." These, and all other things concerning the kingdom of Israel under law, are written as lessons to us, God's people, in this, His day of grace.

Israel's enemies were flesh and blood, but ours are spiritual hosts of wickedness, whose purpose is to keep us from enjoying all the spiritual blessings which have been bestowed upon us by God our Father.

The Scriptures read, give us one of the most solemn incidents found in the range of Old Testament history. Solomon began his life under favourable circumstances. Preparation had been made for the building of the Lord's house, and so long as he was engaged in its erection he got on very well, but when idle he did disastrously. Martin Luther was not far wrong when he said—"An idle soul is the devil's workshop." It is sometimes difficult to know how to profitably employ our leisure time. Do we understand for what purpose we have been saved? Is it not that we should "shew forth the praises of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light," and that through reading the Word of God, especially the four Gospels—the only "Life of Christ" I want to read—we may grow

increasingly in the likeness of the Lord Jesus, the One Who was meek and lowly in heart? How eager we are for the enjoyment of our privileges! But, if these are great—and they undoubtedly are—equally so are our accountabilities. Solomon did not occupy his time as he ought to have done. When busy, he appears to have established himself upon the throne; but when idle to have become careless and remiss in carrying out the Word of God.

Three things are mentioned in Deut. xvii. 16, 17, that the king of Israel was not to do, namely, multiply horses, multiply wives; and multiply riches. On one occasion David caused the horses which he had taken as spoil from his enemies to be ham-strung, knowing that to trust in these carnal objects, would hinder God from showing Himself strong on behalf of Israel. "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember and trust in the Name of the Lord our God" (see also Isa. xxxi. 1). Further, the king was himself to write out a copy of the law—the five books of Moses—not to be put with the records of the kingdom, or laid on the shelf, but to be read and meditated upon day and night, so that he might put into practice God's holy precepts, and thus prolong his days and establish his posterity upon the throne.

Are *we* really growing in love with our Bibles? Are we reading them increasingly in the fear of God? Or, are we getting remiss in this, resting upon our oars, thinking we are familiar with such and such a portion and need not to study

it? If so, depend upon it, we are upon slippery ground. Some can look back to a time when the Word was very sweet to them; when the unsearchable riches of Christ were from it unfolded to them; when they made it "the man of their counsel;" but now they no longer find it to be food for the soul and delight to the heart. Is there not a cause?

In the First Psalm, the man who kept apart from ungodly companionship was in a condition of soul to delight himself in the law of his God; but, if there had not been abstention from the fellowship of the ungodly, there could not have been true meditation in the Scriptures. Side by side with this, put 1 Peter ii. 1-2, where first there is the "*laying aside*" before there can be the appetite for "the sincere milk of the Word." God does not mean us to be spiritual dwarfs, but that, by receiving "the engrafted Word," we should grow unto salvation. Samuel, you will remember, when left before the Lord, grew, and thus required a new coat every year. How disappointed Hannah would have been, if, on the occasion of her yearly visit, she had not seen that he was growing. Are we growing, not merely in knowledge, which, if unaccompanied by grace, is dangerous; but, like the cedars of Lebanon, downward as well as upward, becoming more and more meek and lowly in heart, and growing in favour with God and man?

It is very solemn to find in 1 Kings x. that Solomon is guilty of the three things specifically forbidden in Deut. xvii. Probably afterwards the very horses and chariots which he brought to Canaan

were used by Israel's enemies against them. Then, his many wives led Solomon in amongst the very people from whom God had commanded separation. Do we understand the tactics of Satan in seeking to obliterate the line of distinction between God's people and those who are still the servants of sin? This line is clearly marked in the Scriptures. In Gen. i. 4, it is beautifully rendered by Mr. Newberry—"And God hath placed a permanent division between the light and between the darkness." As it was, and still is, in the material, so it should be in the spiritual, Satan strives to efface the division; but God is going to triumph, and the line of separation will be maintained throughout all eternity. The sons of light will be with the Father of light, and the sons of darkness with the prince of darkness. There is a system of false reasoning, perhaps with a view to salve the conscience, that we must go among the people in order to reach them with the Truth, etc. But one thing is sure, we may not with impunity despise the Word of God, and we need never expect His blessing if we act in flat contradiction to His Word. If you have a basket of twelve apples, one decayed and eleven sound, will the eleven sound ones make the decayed one right? No; but the decayed one will in due course make the eleven unsound. So will it be, if we go into forbidden paths. Like Solomon, we need not expect to come out without a scar. Solomon's wives turned away his heart from the Lord!

In the days of Moses, Balak tried to induce Balaam to curse the people of God,

and Balaam would gladly have done it for the sake of the reward offered, but God would not allow him. He had instead to pronounce their blessedness and the doom of all their enemies. Balaam, however, knew that, if he could not turn God against His Israel, he could turn Israel against their God. The daughters of the Moabites, by his counsel, were sent among the children of Israel, and Satan's hellish work was done. God means us to be a separated people unto Himself, while in this world.

Solomon is recorded as being an "old" man when he was only 49 (1 Kings xi. 4), and it was disobedience to God's Word that made him so. What a contrast to Caleb, of whom we have just been reminded, that he "followed the Lord fully," and was as strong and able to go out to war at 85 as at 40. There is a peculiarly pathetic word in Ecclesiastes iv. 13, "Better is a poor and wise child, than an *old* and *foolish* king, who will no more be admonished." No doubt Solomon in writing this refers to himself. I believe he was ultimately restored before he died, at 59, but what a record of damage done in the interval while away from God!

What a solemn warning as to neglecting the Word of God Solomon's history affords! The shrines which he built for his heathen wives, stood for 360 years in Jerusalem, to be a snare to the succeeding generations, until removed by godly king Josiah, who went out and destroyed them (see 2 Kings xxiii. 13).

Is there not in this a lesson to us that we should seek by the grace of God to do justice to the Word of God? Let us read

it as we have never done before, praying that God may make it "a speaking Book" (as we have just been reminded) to our hearts, and that by His grace we may seek to fulfil His object in saving us, while living here below.

"ENDURING HARDNESS."

[T must not be supposed that the path and service of the Gospel pioneer, who seeks to open up new territory, to reach sinners hither to unevangelised, when among the "heathen at home" or in lands afar, has a path of ease or of continuous encouragement. There will be very little romance about it. He will have the continuous opposition of the great adversary of his Master and his message—an opposition which, whatever form it takes, is always hostile to sinners being saved by means of the Gospel message. He may encounter the hatred and open opposition of the world, and what is still worse to bear, the cold criticism of some who profess to be the saints of God. He may find his motives suspected, his methods derided, his aims misunderstood and even his character traduced, but he must not flee from the field because of these or other forms of opposition. They are no more than he was promised, and told to prepare himself to meet. He is to "endure hardness." His place is on the field of battle, not the bed of roses, and although to all who fight bravely and finish their course, the crown is sure, their path lies right through the enemy's lines, and each step of it will be contested. This must always be in the reckoning of the Lord's true servants.

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.—II.

BY THE LATE ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

IT is a matter of surprise with many, that the New Testament Scriptures do not contain a more elaborate scheme of "Church Government" than they find there. The very absence of what they would expect to find, is pleaded as a justification for introducing all sorts of arrangements suggested by human prudence and wisdom. But all this only betrays that the place God has given to His Son is very little understood. When the Apostle Paul is about to enter upon the question of spiritual gifts and their exercise in the church, his starting-point is, that we must have right thoughts about the place and authority of the Lord Jesus (see 1 Cor. xii. 1-3). Do we put Him in the place of the Accursed One, or do we own Him as THE LORD. On the cross He was the accursed One, for He bore our sins and all the curse that belonged to them. But, raised from the dead, God has declared Him to be "both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). And He Himself claims all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 18-20 R.V.). It seems startling to be asked—"Do you call Jesus 'anathema' (accursed) or do you call Him LORD?" We should feel inclined to answer, with something like indignation, that, of course, we call Him "Lord." But while we say so in words, and think we know what we are saying, we are bidden to pause and consider that no man can say so in reality, "but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3). This twelfth chapter, tells us much of the character of

the various gifts, and how they are set in the body, all being made mutually needful to one another. Chapter xiii. reminds us of the love in which they must needs be exercised, if they are not to become utterly worthless; while chapter xiv. goes on to show us these gifts in active relation to ministry in the assembly. But as it all started with the absolute need of owning Jesus as the Lord, so it concludes with this solemn appeal—"What! came the Word of God *out from* you, or came it *unto you* only?" (chap. xiv. 36). If you were the authors of it, of course you are at liberty to alter it or set it aside for something better. But, if it came *to* you, and not *from* you, then your place is that of unquestioning obedience. "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (verse 37). And yet, sad to say, these are the very things that the professing denominations of Christendom have, with one consent, set aside as unsuitable for this day. The idea of voting for, or choosing ministers by majorities, or having them appointed by men, is entirely foreign to the Word of God, and virtually a denial of that place to which the Lord Jesus has been raised at the right hand of God, from which He gives gifts to men for the spread of the Gospel in the world, and for the shepherding and teaching of His saints all through the ages. The Giver of all these gifts of ministry is the Lord Jesus, and there is no room for man or for the Church to intervene. Yet both have done so, and continue to rob the Lord of

that honour which has been given to Him alone. It does not matter whether it is the Pope, claiming infallibility, or the Primate or Bishop exercising clerical domination over saints of God, or the Church choosing by vote its own ministers, the whole is a denial of the supreme authority of the Lord Jesus, and the all-sufficiency of His power to provide all that His people need throughout the entire period of their earthly course. It was when the Church ceased to count upon the Lord to supply all that was needed in ministry, when unbelief limited His power to raise up and furnish those whom He saw needful to shepherd and teach His people, and when men became self-willed and wise in their own conceits, that they turned from the Divine pattern as given in the Word, and began to order things according to their own desires and inclinations. Baptism was made a sacrament, requiring a minister to perform it, although not a word is said in Scripture of such a practice; not even the name of the baptiser has been given in any case except one, that is the case of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch when only two were present (Acts viii. 38). The Lord's Supper was soon altered from the simple gathering together of the assembly to "break bread" (Acts xx. 7) to a "Eucharist" or an "Ordinance," which required the presence of a priest or clergyman to "celebrate" or "administer" it, bringing in that which is entirely foreign to the Word of God, and which sets aside the authority of the Lord as set over "the House of God." The order of the assembly, as given in 1 Corinthians

xiv., is by common consent of all the denominations set aside, as being no longer suitable for this enlightened age, each having adopted its own alterations or improvements, until scarcely a trace of the original pattern remains. Yet these very instructions, as given by the apostle, are here said to have all the authority of being "the COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD" (1 Cor. xiv. 37). For any to set them aside, or to be openly identified with any system in which they are ignored or rendered inoperative is to take sides with those who deny to the Lord the place of Lordship to which God has called Him.

But it may be asked—How are we to carry out these instructions now that there are no apostles, and no miraculous gifts as there were in the early church? The answer is the Lord Himself who gives these commandments to His gathered people is Himself "in the midst," and has promised to give His people power to give effect to all that He has commanded them to do. The beginning of all the grievous departure which we see around us in Christendom to-day was unbelief, and the way of restoration must be in a return to the Lord Himself, and faith in His love and faithfulness in supplying all that He has promised to His obedient people.

When an anxious soul is afraid to believe the wondrous good news of the Gospel that we are setting before him, for fear he should not be able to hold on afterwards, do we not tell him that the Lord Jesus is a living Person, with power to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him? Christ crucified is a

stumbling-block to the would-be religious ones, and foolishness to the would-be wise ones, but to those who believe, He is the power of God and the wisdom of God. And it is just the same with regard to the exalted Christ, and His place in His Church. Unless we are taught by the Holy Spirit to own Him as Lord, and to count upon Him for everything we need, we are sure to be looking to some human device to supply the place that God intends to be filled by His Son. The one place, therefore, for those who have thus learned of God to honour His Son is, where two or three are gathered unto His Name. They may be very ignorant ; they may be making many mistakes ; but they are gathered around Himself that He may teach them, shepherd them, guide them, correct them, and be their all in all. But there cannot be real dependence unless there is equally real subjection. Faith and obedience ever go hand in hand, and each helps to increase the other. Faith never says, "Oh, that will not do now-a-days ; things are so different now," for it hears the Lord Jesus saying, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age." And as long as He keeps His promise, there should be no difficulty about our observing "all things whatsoever He has commanded." Unconsciously, we allow our unbelief to rob Christ of His place, because we dare not trust Him to fulfil what He has promised. The next step is to turn to some human expedient, which can be wrought out in man's wisdom and strength, apart from dependence on and subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE LORD JESUS.

BY GEORGE ADAM.

IN a former paper we endeavoured to show, how perfectly God has settled the question of sin, and sins, by the death of Christ on the Cross. Also, how Christ bore away all the sins of those who believe on Him ; their sins after conversion, as well as their sins before conversion. Also how all believers—as children of the "first Adam"—were in the reckoning of God put to death in the crucifixion of Christ, so that when a child of God apprehends and rests upon this complete atonement, the conscience is kept free from any sense of guilt. And this perfection is by that one sacrifice which Christ offered up to God *once for all*, on the cross. But whilst all this is blessedly true, the consciousness that we are still weak and erring beings, will to a large extent hinder our communion with God, unless we learn the provision He has made to meet this weakness, and how He has made provision for restoring us when we are overcome by sin. This leads us to look at the present work of the Lord Jesus now in heaven : that is His priesthood. This priesthood has two sides. A Godward side and a manward. Here again the Levitical types will help us. When Aaron—as a type of Christ—came in between Jehovah and the people on the "day of atonement" (see Lev. xvi.), he met the claims of Jehovah first, before he came out to meet the peoples' need (verse 16). He made atonement for the holy place. Not because it was unclean in itself, but, as we read, "because of the

uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins ; and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness."

Jehovah had a *character*, and if He was to DWELL in the midst of unclean, transgressing people, His character had to be guarded from dishonour. After the Israelites had been as careful as it was possible for them to be, in confessing every sin that came to their knowledge, by bringing an atonement for the sin they had been guilty of, there was much uncleanness, and even sin, which Jehovah could discern, but which was known only to His all-seeing eye. And if the "Holy One" was to dwell amongst them, all this evil, as known only to Him, must be atoned for by blood. This was the work of the high priest on the day of atonement. He went alone "once every year into the most holy place not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors (*ignorances*, see Newberry) of the people" (Heb. ix. 7). The Lord could thus dwell in the midst of the camp, consistent with His infinite holiness. This entering into the most holy place by the high priest on the day of atonement, is said to be a "figure" of the Lord Jesus having gone into the holy place "once for all" by His own blood (Heb. ix. 12). What is called the "holy place" in verse 12, and the "holiest" in chap. x. 19, is called "heaven itself" in the antitype (Heb. ix. 24). "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into HEAVEN ITSELF, now to appear in the

presence of God for us." Almost all things connected with God's dwelling-place on earth needed to be "purged with blood," on account of the holiness of God, and the uncleanness of the people amongst whom He dwelt. The place of worship for God's earthly people Israel, was upon the earth. It was where the priest was (see Deut. xxvi. 1-10). So the place of worship in this day for God's heavenly people is where the High Priest is, and that we are told is "in" heaven itself ; in the immediate presence of God "without a veil between." But if as believers with defilement still within, and nature often more active than we are conscious of, we are to have liberty to draw near into the presence of God, called the "holiest" (Heb. x. 19), then His holiness has to be maintained as well as the need of the believer's conscience provided for. And that is what Christ as the Great High Priest is doing now. He is there before God for us ; there as Man by virtue of His own blood (Heb. ix. 12). And it is by virtue of that same blood that the believer has liberty to enter into the holiest (chap. x. 19). So that the ground on which the Lord Jesus AS MAN is now in the presence of God, is the ground on which any and every believer may "draw near." Christ is there before us. He is there also on our behalf, and more, He is there—as already noticed—on behalf of the character of God, so that there is no presumption in a believer drawing near to our God either to *get all* we need, as in Heb. iv. 14, or to *give* of our hearts adoration as in chap. x. 19-25. We may, and many do essay to draw near to God with a familiarity which

savours of presumption, but "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Psa. li. 17). Our God can, on principles of infinite holiness, receive such into the very bosom of His love, solely on the ground of what Christ finished when He was upon earth, and also on the ground of where He is and what He is now doing in heaven. It is all in, and through the Lord Jesus that any believer can draw near to God, and this not only now and again on special occasions, but there is such an infinite worthiness in Christ, that faith in Him can draw near and walk in the light as our God is in the light (1 John i. 7), and our God and Father can allow us to do so, and delights to have us there.

But the Lord Jesus is not only an all-prevailing Intercessor, an all-sufficient High Priest, He has also a sympathising heart. He fully understands and can hear with human infirmity. Although His disciples were so unfaithful in the time of His deepest suffering, He could excuse them when they were overcome by human weakness. When they wist not what to say, He said, "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak" (Mark xiv. 38). In spite of their boasted courage, when danger came near, "they all forsook Him and fled;" but when He met them on resurrection ground, He had no word of upbraiding, but said again and again, "Peace be unto you." He is the same now as then. We change, but He never changes, and nothing can be more pleasing to Him, than for those whom He loves to draw largely on His loving sympathy as

well as on His power. He is not only a compassionate High Priest, on whom we can lean and draw upon to keep us from *falling*, but He is also our "Advocate with the Father," to lift us up when we do fall (1 John ii. 1), and can, and does restore the broken communion with the Father, when we judge ourselves and confess of our sins. Verily, "Christ is the first, Christ is the last, and Christ is all in all." To maintain a clear conscience before God this is a continual necessity, and then it is that we prove the value of the advocacy of Him who is there to lift us unto the enjoyment of the Father's love.

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KEEP RIGHT WITH GOD.

LOVE thou the Book of God,
 Prize every holy line;
 Steep in its truth thy thirsty soul,
 And claim each hope as thine.
 Take thou the side of God
 In things both great and small;
 So shall He ever take thy side
 And bear thee safe through all.
 Quail not before the bad,
 Be brave for truth and right.
 Fear God alone, and ever walk
 As in His holy sight.

Bonar.

LIVING FOR GOD.

It is a mean thing for a child of God to be living as a worldling, for his meat and his drink; God has set something infinitely higher than that before His people. Let us make it the first thing to live for Him, and He will see to it that we will have everything we need.

The Bible Annotator.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

DIVINE LOVE.

Love Manifested (1 John iv. 9)—In Christ's Life.
Love Commended Rom. v. 8)—By Christ's Death.
Love Bestowed (1 John iii. 1)—In Christ Risen.

THREE FUNDAMENTAL GOSPEL TRUTHS.

In Ephesians, Chapter i.

Chosen by God (ver. 4)—The Eternal Purpose.
Redeemed by Christ (ver. 7)—The Procuring Cause.
Sealed by the Spirit (ver. 13)—The Preserving Power.

DIVINE WRATH.

Wrath Predicted for the Sinner (Job. xx. 23).
Wrath Endured by the Saviour (Psa. lxxxviii. 7).
Wrath Warned of by the Preacher (Matt. iii. 7).
Wrath Escaped by the Believer (1 Thess. i. 10).

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Misinterpreted Texts.

2 Peter i. 20-21—"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This passage has generally been taken to refer to the interpretation of Scripture, and is one of the strongholds of Romanism in its contention that the "Church" alone has authority to expound or give the interpretation of the sacred Word. It has no such meaning. The subject of the passage is, the origin and source of the prophetic Scriptures, which the apostle says was not of the prophet's own unfolding or sending out, but that they came into existence by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, by whom the messenger was moved or "carried along" from God. This Scripture is a full answer to all the theories and vagaries of the "Higher Criticism" or Rationalism, as it is to the boastful claims of priestcraft or Romanism.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

We read in 1 Cor. x. 16 of "The cup which we bless." In what way do we bless it? The meaning of the word "bless" here is, to "speak well of." It is no sacramental or priestly act, but the whole company of saints uniting to "speak well of" that before God, of which the cup is the appointed symbol.

Do the words of Acts xvii. 29, quoted from a heathen poet, sanction the habit of reciting the words of unconverted men in preaching or teaching the Word? No. In speaking to a heathen audience the apostle begins where all who seek to reach the heathen must begin, by bringing home to them the claims of God as Creator (see also Acts xiv. 15-17). In support of his teaching, and to show the folly of their making images of the great Creator God, he quotes the witness of "certain of their own poets," who admit that men are "his offspring," that is, man as such derives his being from God. It would have had no weight with these philosophers to quote from the prophets, as the apostle invariably did when speaking to those who had the "oracles of God," but the same apostle, writing to Timothy, in view of his testimony in the midst of abounding departure from the truth, says—"Preach the Word" (2 Tim. iv. 2). Illustration or quotation may be used to elucidate or clinch the truth, but the Word itself is the seed that generates life and the bread that sustains it. The preacher who continually recites "The Poets," is very likely better acquainted with them than with his Bible, and they doubtless give more scope for his "elocutionary" powers, than the true sayings of God.

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Answers to Correspondents

E. A. G., BOURNEMOUTH.—The narrative entitled "Christine, or Broken Communion," was written by the late Anna Shipton, and issued in a booklet by Morgan & Scott, London.

J. M. L. SOUTH KENSINGTON.—Election is as clearly taught in Scripture (see Eph. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 2) as salvation for "whosoever will," but not as Calvin and the Creeds have it. "Salvation is of the Lord," but nowhere is He said to be the cause of the reprobation of the wicked. The idea that because God hath chosen some "in Christ," He must have necessarily reprobated others, is a fallacy and an error of man's reasoning.

W. J. M'K., EDINBURGH.—There is nothing in Acts ii. or subsequent chapters, or indeed anywhere else in the New Testament, to warrant the assertion which you say is made, that all kinds of meetings should be "open" for any who wish to take part, according to the pattern of the recent "Revival" meetings in Wales and copied elsewhere. There were some at least, of whom the apostle wrote that "their mouths must be stopped," and others were

to "learn in silence," while the rule for all was that their speaking was to be for "edification" (1 Cor. xiv. 17-26). "Open ministry" should never be opportunity for those who have neither gift nor message to occupy time, but simply that no human arrangement may hinder God's messenger from giving what would be appreciated by and blessed to God's people. Liberty for God to use His own messengers is quite different from license to the flesh in men who like to hear their own voices, but whom nobody else is a bit the wiser of listening to. Godly order and rule never curtail true liberty; their object is to preserve it, while keeping watch on the flesh, like as a policeman does on a "hooligan," in order that law-abiding citizens may walk the king's highway in peace.

A. M'B., AYRSKIRE.—As a principle, the individual recognition of a person who professes to be a Christian, is not sufficient warrant for his immediate reception to the fellowship of an assembly. If God has set in the church some to whom He has given discernment and wisdom, who, by reason of long experience in the Christian life, and in shepherding and guiding the flock, have learned the need for caution in accepting a mere lip testimony apart from knowledge of the life, it would not be according to the word—"Know them which labour among you, that are over you in the Lord" (1 Thess. v. 12), to set them all on one side, and act on the "testimony" of some ardent young female who "knows" some acquaintance, but possibly has never asked when, where, or how that person was born again, yet thinks she has the same "right" to bring her "friend" to God's assembly as to her own tea-table. The root of this whole matter is the spirit of "Socialism" with which many minds are impregnated, and which works itself out into every channel of their lives, personal, domestic, social, commercial, religious. Wherever it is allowed to work, it produces anarchy, and when this is met by a counterblast of autocratic or clerical domination, a disruption or a division is the result. What keeps the mean and the balance is, the remembrance that God's assembly is His house, in which He dwells, and over which Christ is set as Lord. That no man, or company of men, has "authority" or "rights" there, but that the business of all is, to give effect to what He has commanded, as He has said it is to be done. For this the Spirit of God indwells the church and the believer, but He never helps any to do other than that which the Lord has commanded. All the rest

is done in the strength and wisdom of man, and a pretty job he usually makes of it.

Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION IX.—As the law now stands, would it be according to God that a Christian marry his deceased wife's sister, and is one who does so, eligible for fellowship in the assembly of saints, and to be regarded as fit to share in oversight and ministry?

ANSWER A.—The prohibitions of the Levitical law, which have been used as applicable to such a case, give no light on the subject whatever. These are all clearly applicable only to a living wife's relatives, not to those of a wife deceased. A. W.

ANSWER B.—There is nothing, so far as is known to me in Scripture, prohibiting a widower from marrying his deceased wife's sister, providing all else is in harmony, and worthy of the Lord. J. S.

ANSWER C.—The law of this land, to which we, as Christians, ought to be in subjection (Rom. xiii. 1-5) forbids (at least does not sanction) such a relationship, regarding such a marriage as irregular and the children of it as illegitimate. Whether the Christian church should sanction such a union by admitting to its fellowship those who set aside the law of the country, is a matter for grave consideration. In regard to one in such a position taking public part in ministry or oversight, 1 Tim. iii. 7; Titus i. 7, seem to shew, he ought not, seeing he appears before "them that are without," in a position which, to say the least of it, is not "blameless" in their estimation. W. E.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—We insert the whole of the communications sent us on this subject, which can scarcely be said to be exhaustive. Probably the lack of light accounts for the diffidence in dealing with it. In view of its importance, and the trouble resulting from having to deal with it, when it arises in assembly experience, we shall welcome fuller help on the subject, from any of our readers who are able to give it, either in a separate paper, or as supplementary answers to the question as given.

Questions Requiring Answers.

QUESTION XI.—What is the Scriptural way for an Assembly to deal with one who has been proved to be a secret slave of intoxicating drink?

QUESTION XII.—Is it true that there are assemblies of Christians, gathered unto the Lord's

Name, in which those who are known to hold and teach the noneternal punishment of the wicked, are received or retained ?

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ASSEMBLY EXPERIENCES—II.

BY AN OLD BELIEVER.

I have observed that the TONE OF THE ASSEMBLY'S GATHERING on the morning of the Lord's Day—that unique assembling to the Lord Himself, than which there is no other of equal importance—is a very good indication of the spiritual condition of those who compose it. If the flow of worship is full and rich, many, it may be, taking part, yet all in the harmony of the Spirit's leading, the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus—rather than the experiences, shortcomings, or graces of the saints—occupying the thoughts, while a sense of the presence of the Lord begets that godly fear which is due unto Him in the assembly of the saints, in which He is "held in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Psa. lxxxix. 7), there is usually freshness, energy, and blessing in all the other gatherings and functions of that assembly. But if the principal assembling on the Lord's Day morning is sluggish and formal, one and another taking part in a desultory fashion, either from habit or to keep things going, hymn followed by prayer and exhortation in rapid succession, or with long pauses of listlessness or poverty between, it is the clear indication of a low spiritual condition, often of the lack of sound and spiritual ministry through which such a condition is maintained. Godly order is perfectly consistent with a right spiritual condition, but rigid cast-iron rules, especially in things external, concerning which there is no direct commandment of the Lord, are more generally a sign of its lack than a proof of the spirituality of those assembled. When souls are right, God's ways are found pleasant and His burdens light, but always intolerable to the flesh.

A SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY, whether large or small in numbers, is a real testimony for God where it exists, whether the effects be immediately seen or not; but a church which has left its first love and cast off its first faith, no matter how "influential" or "attractive" it makes itself, is only a lampstand from which the lamp has fallen, or the light of which become darkness.

I have observed that when YOUNG BELIEVERS—or old Christians who have been led out from unscriptural associations—are added to an assembly

in a warm and healthy condition, they grow in grace quickly, and develop spiritual gifts which, under different conditions, would never have been seen or heard of, but when they come into a circle of cold, cantankerous Christians, among whom there are jealousies, bickerings, and a spirit of division reigning, they get discouraged, sometimes stumbled, and go away speaking evil of the truth, being unable to distinguish between the doctrine of the Lord and the failing practices of His people.

I have known assemblies in which there was little gift, but much grace, to be a power for God, and a true attraction to spiritually-minded believers, calling their attention to truths not generally known or by most neglected, and by commendation of the position by a godly walk and life, be the means of leading many fellow-believers into a closer walk with God and a fuller obedience to His Word. I have known others in which there were gifted but unspiritual men, whose testimony repelled godly Christians and hindered them from seeking after the truth regarding the church of God and its way of gathering, while their "success" lay in attracting others who like themselves had either fallen out with those amongst whom they had previously been, or saw a likely chance of getting a place in which they could exercise their "gift" and carry out their own will, and in keeping up appearances by building in light and poor material, which they either could not discern to be only "brick for stone" or were indifferent, so long as "the roll" was kept full, and the credit of it put to their account.

I have noticed that sinners converted and saints restored, revived, and helped on in their heavenly life, in a season of true spiritual power, carry the stamp and savour of it along with them, like fully ripened fruits grown on south walls, in full sunshine, or as children reared in healthy mountain homes where they breathed Heavens fresh air and fed on thick milk direct from the cow; whereas those who come into existence and spend their earliest days of spiritual life in a cold, swawpy region, amid the fogs of a worldly Christianity, seldom grow up to be of any use for God or blessing to their fellows, but need to be tended and carried all their days. This, perhaps, more than anything else, accounts for the lack of young men, warm blooded and energetic, ready to give themselves to the Lord for His service, at home or abroad, and likewise for the scarcity of godly, able helpers in assemblies, to fill the vacant places of those who after serving their generation, by the will of God, have fallen on sleep.

“PLAY THE MAN”

(2 SAM. X. 12).

BY A. LAWES, NORTHAMPTON.

THESE words, part of Joab's pertinent speech just before the battle with the allied armies of the Syrians and Ammonites, are specially applicable to the present time, when the adversary, with all his combined forces, is seeking to undermine the truth, and set aside the authority of the Word of God in the minds of men. Evil doctrines, the mention of which a few years ago would have caused a shudder, are now unblushingly taught, while worldly practices among thousands of professing Christians are sapping the vitality of spiritual life out of many. This calls for earnest, believing prayer, that the Spirit of the Lord may lift up a standard against the mighty rushing tide of evil. We would not be unmindful of all God's gracious workings in these closing days. The condescension of Divine power is being mightily manifested in the midst of human weakness. God is pleased to put His treasure in earthen vessels, and to use such as are fully consecrated to His service wherever He finds them. Yet, with all this, we feel constrained to enquire, Where are the standard-bearers? And what has become of the many who once fearlessly and unflinchingly “played the man,” by “earnestly contending for the faith, once delivered to the saints.” That there still are a few left of the faithful in the land (Psa. ci. 6) we gladly acknowledge; yet, alas! we fear their number is greatly diminishing. How is this to be accounted for? Have they been seduced by the subtlety of human

reasoning into erring from the truth, or has the fear of man, the love of popularity, gain, or self-indulgence, caused them to forsake the old paths? Whatever the cause, the fact remains, that many have forfeited any claim they may once have had, as accredited teachers, or trusted guides of the flock of God. Surely such a condition calls for deep heart-searching before the Lord. When Joab saw the battle was both before and behind, he did not for a moment contemplate surrender to the enemy, but at once animated his brother and his army to conspicuous bravery, stimulating them with the words, “Be of good courage; let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God, and the Lord do what seemeth Him good.” Thus with an edge upon his own courage, he seeks to put an edge upon the courage of others, the effect of which was soon apparent by the triumph of Israel, and the complete rout of the enemy.

“PLAY THE MAN.” Such words still strongly appeal to all Christians, especially so to the more public servants and messengers of God; for, if through him, the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle (1 Cor. xiv. 8). If such waver and display timidity, and lack the holy inspiration and courage, which shall carry the battle into the enemy's ranks, what can reasonably be expected of the rank and file (if we may so speak) of the people of God? Not that we would for a moment on that account condone failure in any. God forbid. The privilege and responsibility of every believer is, to learn by an in-

dwelling Holy Spirit, and the Word of God so to live, as to be an example to others (1 Tim. iv. 12). At the same time we cannot ignore the fact, that solemn and weighty instruction is given to those who take a fore-front position. Yea, to all, the forcible injunction applies—"Stand fast in the faith, quit you like men; be strong" (1 Cor. xvi. 13). The words, "Play the man," may be applied to believers in their relationship to the *household*, the *assembly*, and the *world*.

To begin with the household. We would earnestly exhort Christian fathers to "Play the man" in that sphere, ruling in the fear and love of the Lord. Were this more general, there might not be the marked disobedience and self-will so persistently manifested in the rising generation, or the broken and sorrowing hearts in the domestic circle. The solemn contrast between Abraham and Eli in this relation is so well known, that reference here needs but few words. One point worthy of notice in Abraham's character is, that given us in Gen. xviii. 19, "He should *command his children* and his household after him." And surely Isaac's passive obedience on Mount Moriah, clearly demonstrates the fulfilment of what God said and expected of His servant. He "played the man" in his household. In contrast with this the great wickedness of Eli's sons was connived at and strengthened through lack of parental firmness, resulting in the forfeiture of the symbol of God's presence, the profane triumph of the Philistines, and his own tragic end. One of the saddest characteristics of the last days is "disobedience

to parents" (2 Tim. iii. 2). The increasingly strong tendency in children to break through their obligations of duty and gratitude, is truly lamentable. If this obtains in households where the parents are Christians—and, alas! we fear it is so, in very many cases—it calls for deep exercise and humbling of heart on the part of the parents before God, as well as examination of the life and conduct in the family. The great duty enjoined upon Christian parents is to "train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. xxii. 6), and let it be *child-training* from its earliest infancy, by godly example as well as by precept. The combination of firmness and kindness, with a carefully considered Yea, or Nay, to children, will not fail to bear good fruit. And let not children, of Christian parents especially, forget the injunction "To obey their parents in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 1).

We turn again to Joab's words. "Let us play the man for our people," &c. Joab had a high sense of duty, remarkable insight and foresight, a mighty general, with many daring deeds to his credit. His estimation of Israel was as high as a natural man's could well be, hence he thinks and speaks of Israel as "Our people." They were, however, God's people, dear to His heart, though signally failing as His witnesses. And thus it is with the Church of God to-day. That which is most precious to the Lord on earth, is His redeemed people. His heart yearns over them, they are His special treasure; He knows His sheep, and is known of them. To them He is ever faithful, and deeply concerned in all their

welfare. If their affections are as they should be, fixed upon Himself, He is delighted; if walking worthy of Him, He is glorified. Oh, how He loves the people of His choice! In the joy of possession He said "All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them." While with His few disciples He kept them, commending them ere He departed from this scene to His Father's keeping; expressing the deep longing of His heart to have them with Him in glory, and this notwithstanding all their weakness and wavering. They did not "play the man," for one denied Him, and ultimately all forsook Him and fled. Let us "play the man" for the Lord's people, by true, loyal-hearted devotedness to Christ; by unquestioning faith in the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures; by unswerving steadfastness to the principles of separation to God, so clearly taught therein. "Play the man" by doing and teaching as far as in us lies, the whole revealed will of God. It may be costly—it is sure to be. It may cost us friendships held dear; bitter contempt, such as David experienced in his attempt to give the ark its true place, from one relatively nearer than all beside (1 Chron. xv. 29). Like Hanan, we may incur the wrath of an Asa (2 Chron. xvi. 10), or such indignity, suffering, or deprivation, as that inflicted upon faithful Micaiah (2 Chron. xviii. 13-29); yet, undauntedly, they played the man. Severe as was the testing, they would not be coaxed into falsehood or compromise, but were fully prepared to suffer for the truth's sake, any persecution that ambitious, proud worldlings might

force them to endure. Their happy portion was a good conscience, and the great peace of those who love God's law (Psa. cxix. 165). Who that has once known the will of God and departed from it, can by any means retain peace of conscience? On the contrary, the experience of such is remorse, and the punishment "many stripes." How vast the influence of men who, with Daniel-like determination of purpose, fearlessly and uncompromisingly stand as God's witnesses! Have not multitudes of God's people received a stimulus to purpose of heart through the record of their wonderful example of steadfastness? In that most awful and trying period of Daniel's history, God was sufficient. His night of suffering was followed by a morning of glorious deliverance.

(To be Continued.)

LIFTING UP THE HANDS TO GOD.

THERE are some of the Lord's hidden ones of these times, whose voices are never heard in public, who yet are of the "honoured" servants of the Lord who "by night stand in the house of the Lord" lifting up their hands "in the sanctuary" (Psa. cxxxiv. 1-2), in godly intercession and supplication. Their's is an honourable service: let them continue steadfastly therein. How many battles gained in the open field, in defence of the truth and furtherance of the Gospel, is due to their service in the sanctuary, the day of Christ alone will declare. The Church in all ages has had its men and women "labouring fervently in prayer" (Col. iv. 12), and they never were more needed than at present.

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, IN THE BELIEVER.

BY GEORGE ADAM.

AS these papers are designed to help young believers, I will be as elementary as I can.

We have already considered several aspects of the perfection of the work which Christ "finished" when He was on earth, and also the all-sufficiency of the work which He is now carrying on in heaven. What Christ has done, and is doing, is all done *outside* of the believer. It is *for* the believer but it is *not* in the believer. Consequently it has to be received and enjoyed *by faith*. But the work of the Spirit is not only *for* but *in* the believer.

In Eph. i. 16-23, Paul prays that the saints might know the power by which God "wrought IN CHRIST." In chap. iii. 14, He prays that the saints may *experience* the power by which God works IN THEM. It is concerning this, I wish to write a few things. And first, I would point out, that the Lord Jesus is the gift of God to sinners as such. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" (John iii. 16). God is not now *offering* the gift of His Son to men. He is a gift already bestowed on the world of sinners as such, and it is by receiving this priceless gift, that the sinner passes out of the condemnation of the first creation, into the safety and liberty of the new creation. By the reception of Jesus Christ, the condemned sinner is justified and becomes a child of God (see John i. 12-13). But after one is thus born into

the family of God, there is bestowed upon him another gift, because he is God's *child*. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). The unsaved sinner cannot receive this gift. In speaking to His disciples of the promise of the Spirit, the Lord Jesus said, "whom the world cannot receive" (John xiv. 17). No one can receive this *second* gift of the Spirit, until he has accepted God's first gift of His Son. The very first step towards sonship and heaven, is taken by the sinner, when he accepts of Jesus Christ, resting in Himself and in what He has done. Immediately this takes place, God bestows the gift of His Holy Spirit to dwell in the believer, there to begin and carry on an all-important work in him (Phil. i. 6). God, the Holy Spirit, is called "the Comforter"—a very sweet and precious name. And the first part of His work is to "teach all things, and bring all things to remembrance" (John xiv. 26). In chap. xvi. 13-14, we read, "He shall guide you into all truth;" "He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." Whilst there is all in Christ which meets the sinner's *ruin*, and all in the fulness of Christ that meets the believer's *need*, yet the heart of man is so dark regarding divine truth, that he needs the eyes of his understanding opened, to know the things which are freely given to him of God (1 Cor. ii. 12). And he needs the heart opened to receive these things so as to appropriate and enjoy them. And this the believer needs all along the path. It was the Spirit's work to quicken him at first by imparting a new life henever

had before ; and it is his work to nourish this divine life in the soul, all the journey on to the end. And this He does by receiving of the things which are Christ's, and shewing them unto those who belong to Him. The Lord Jesus is God's treasure-house of blessing. "In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. ii. 3). "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. iii. 9). All believers have already been "blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph. i. 3). It is the Spirit's work to unlock these treasures, and to enable the believer to apprehend and appropriate them, to the strengthening of the divine life in his soul. When Paul, by the Spirit, prayed that the saints at Ephesus might be strengthened in the inner man, it was by "the Spirit" (Eph. iii. 16) that this was to be done. And as we have already noticed, the Holy Spirit uses the Word in feeding the new life and strengthening "the inner man." Hence the injunction which is applicable to all saints, but especially to those who are young in the faith, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2). The inner man can no more grow without a regular supply of wholesome food, than the outer man can. Mark it is the "sincere" or pure "milk of the Word," which makes the new man grow, and not the Word of God diluted with man's thoughts and reasonings, mixed up with that Word. Nothing is more important to the young believer, than the cultivation of a *desire* for the milk of the Word, feeding on it constantly from the day of his conversion. The Holy

Spirit delights to instruct and lead on those who persevere in the diligent study of their Bibles.

Another part of the Spirit's work is, to *submerge* "the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. iv. 22). We find this truth in Gal. v. 17, R.V., "For the flesh lusteth against the the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh ; and these are contrary the one to the other, that ye may not do the things that ye would." Here it is not that the believer cannot do the good which he desires to do, as in Rom. vii. 19, but the Holy Spirit, in the believer, being stronger than the flesh, He prevents the believer from doing the evil things which the flesh would do. Here again the responsibility of the believer comes in, to be careful not to make provision for, or gratify the flesh (Rom. xiii. 14). This may be done in various ways. One common way is by indulging in reading unhealthy literature, especially of the semi-religious character. Pamphlets and papers with as much that is right in them as to throw the unwary off their guard, and as much of the sensational and impure in them as will poison spiritual life, and kill the desire for the pure Word of God, and other healthy books. Then, there is fellowship with the unsaved, by taking part in their amusements and sharing their company. A thoughtless way of using the tongue is another common evil, and hurts spiritual life. The injunction, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God," is given between the sins of the tongue, in Eph. iv. 29, and the sins of the heart in verses 31-32. Where the Spirit of God came down and rested

on the Lord Jesus, He was seen in the form of a dove, telling of His gentleness, and how easily He may be grieved. He will never leave the child of God, for He abides as God's seal upon him till "the day of redemption," but if He is grieved by our unholy ways, or if He is "quenched" by our refusal to obey His inward monitions, He will not be able to carry on His blessed ministry in us, but may have to leave us to our own resources, until by bitter experience we learn what an evil and a bitter thing it is to "depart from the living God."

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A GODLY HOME LIFE.

NOTHING has such a far-reaching influence for God as a godly home life. However humble it may be, the fear of God is there. The Word of God is loved and honoured, the things of God are the subject of daily conversation, and the aim of those who guide that home is to acknowledge God in everything. There is no legality, no severity, yet a godly restraint, which the inmates come to own and honour, and even the world can never fail to observe, however ignorant it may be of the cause.

The lack of such a home life tells badly on the young folks of the present time, and no amount of public instruction can make up for it. God has given Christian parents and Christian householders a stewardship all their own, an honoured and a responsible place to fill, and if they fail there, they need not expect God to bless them in any other or wider circle.

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.—II.

BY THE LATE ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

SOME time since, when travelling by rail, we were thrown into the company of a clergyman of the Establishment. We soon found him to be a simple child of God, and we enjoyed some happy intercourse together. In the course of conversation, he made the following remark: "I never try to drive people to church. I often say to my parishioners, that they should do about spiritual things as they do about their groceries—go where they get the best served. If the Methodist parson does them more good than I do, let them go to him by all means." We replied that while that was certainly very liberal from his point of view, yet it appeared to us to be very wrong. "If what you are doing at church," we said, "is what the Lord has commanded, then they ought all to be there, if they are God's children. But if it is contrary to Scripture, then, however much they might like it, neither you nor they have any business there." "Oh," he said, "I do not think God has given us any direct instructions as to such things. I believe He leaves us considerable liberty to follow what we find most suitable to our own particular case, and that we are quite justified in choosing accordingly." We told him that, on the contrary, we found the Word of God just as explicit about these things as it is with regard to the way a sinner must be saved. "I should like you very much to show me where" was his answer; and most willingly we took out our Bible and

turned from passage to passage. We saw how those who gladly received the Gospel were baptised, and how they continued stedfastly in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers (Acts ii. 41, 42); how the disciples came together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts xx. 7); how, when the saints were gathered together, all might prophecy one by one, that all might learn and all might be comforted, and yet that all must be subject one to another (1 Cor. xiv. 31, 32); how elder ones in each assembly were to feed the flock and take the oversight thereof, looking for their reward when the Chief Shepherd shall appear (1 Peter v. 1-4), and much more. At last, as our journey was drawing to a close, he said, "I have been deeply interested in all that you have been saying. It is very beautiful; indeed, as a theory, it looks perfect, but it seems to me in practice it would need some sort of supernatural power to make it work." "Undoubtedly," we replied, "that is just what it does want; and what do you suppose the Holy Ghost was given for?" "Oh," he replied in astonishment, "I never thought of that." This incident made a deep impression on us at the time, and that impression has never been weakened since. We are persuaded that all the variety of systems which divide the professing church, can be traced to the fact that Jesus, as the Lord in the midst, with authority and power, is not discerned. His Word is not allowed to govern that. The presence of the Holy Spirit down here, "dividing to every man

severally as He will" (1 Cor. xii. 11), is the direct consequence of the exalting of the Lord Jesus (Acts ii. 33; Eph. iv. 8, etc.). We own Him as the Lord, when we are willing to gather in simplicity around Himself, and to count on Him, by the Holy Spirit, to minister to all our needs. When we adopt some other plan, we practically put Him back into the place of the curse; for, in refusing to own the consequences of His ascending up, far above all things, we, in effect, deny Him His place, for "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."

THE SPIRIT INDWELLING AND OWNED.

In regard to the order of God's house, of the assemblies of His saints, God's way is a perfect way, but our carrying out of the way of God may be imperfect, and it is these two things that are so often confounded. Perhaps the difference is more readily understood in connection with the individual believer. Each believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?" (1 Cor. vi. 19). And the indwelling Spirit teaches and guides those in whom He dwells. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14). "When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" (John xvi. 13). That is God's perfect way for each of His redeemed ones. But what should we think of a Christian who said, "I cannot do wrong or make a mistake. What I say is the utterance of the Holy Spirit, for He dwells in me, and leads me into

all truth?" We find no difficulty here in distinguishing between the perfection of God's provision, and the imperfect use we make of it. And it is exactly the same whether we consider the individual saint or the assembly. If a believer is giving way to jesting and unseemly conversation, we do not say that, because the Spirit of God dwells in him, this foolish talking is dictated by the Spirit; neither do we say that it is evidently untrue that God's Spirit dwells in him, or he could not speak thus. But we do point out to him, that just because the Spirit dwells in him, such ways are wholly unbecoming, and we exhort him to walk worthy of the calling he is called with. Apply all this to the assembly of saints. In 1 Cor. xii. the apostle is speaking to the Corinthian believers as to spiritual gifts and their exercises, and he says (ver. 7), "The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." And again, after mentioning various gifts of the Spirit (ver. 11), "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." In Eph. iv. we are carried back a little further, and are taught, that when the Lord Jesus went back to the right hand of God, He bestowed, and ever since, continues to bestow, gifts upon His church. In the twelfth and following verses, we learn what the object of these gifts is: "For the perfecting of the saints *unto* the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (see Rev. Ver.). This is God's perfect way, and just casts us upon Himself for everything. The Lord Jesus will indeed

rule where He is truly owned, and His place is given to Him. The Holy Spirit will speak by one and another to the help and blessing of all, when He is ungrieved. When failure is manifest, do not let us blame God's way, and proclaim it to be an exploded theory; but let us rather humbly cast ourselves upon God Himself, who alone can make His own way work effectually.

—o— EVENINGS OVER THE WORD.

WHEN I was a very young believer, it was a common custom among the Christians with whom my lot was cast, to have little informal Bible Readings around the fireside in their houses in the evenings. Wherever a few of the Lord's people came together, "the Book" was brought out, and some line of truth, or it might be some point of difficulty dealt with, for the help and edification of the whole, especially the younger believers who were there. There were few gifted as teachers at whose feet we could sit and hear "wonderful things" out of God's Word, but I thankfully confess that these simple and homely Bible Readings, were a greater help to me in the things of God, than any ministry I have ever listened to since. We were led to the Word itself, rather than to men's opinions about it, and I believe the Great Teacher, whose office it is to guide the saints into "all the truth," and to teach even the little children "of all things" (John xiv. 13; 1 John ii. 27), even the Comforter, gave the Word such a place in many, that it will never lose its hold. Never was there more need for such

dealing with the Word of God among young believers than now. Error stalks abroad in open day. The leading preachers and teachers of Christendom boastfully proclaim it as truth. What is to preserve the children of God from its meshes, and strengthen the coming generation for warfare and testimony, unless the Word of God is intimately known, owned, and loved? Not merely as a text book from which to give addresses, but as the bread on which the life of God in the saints is to be fed (1 Pet. ii. 2), the water by means of which their ways are to be cleansed (Psa. cxix. 9-10), and the light in which their steps are to be guided (Psa. cxix. 105). If the Word of God is unused or neglected, they must sink down to the level of the worldly Christianity around them, as alas! many are doing, just because they have nothing in them to resist it. Let the Word of God be honoured and freely used in the Christian home, as it was in days of old (Deut. vi. 6-9 : xi. 18-21). Instead of the worldly, gossipy tea parties and social gatherings which are so prevalent in circles which bear the Christian name, let the Book of God have the place and the use which its Author claims for it among His own. No doubt this may reduce the numbers, and winnow out the light material from such gatherings. Those who attend them for frivolity, or to show their "talent" in solo-singing and such like, dressed up in gay apparel, will find no attraction there, but such evenings over the Word will be an untold blessing and a means of real spiritual profit and progress to the true Children of God.

HE LEADETH ME.

"When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them" (John x. 4).

LEAD Thou on, and we shall follow ;
Safe Thy path must ever be :
We have heard Thee, Saviour, calling,
And, Thine own, would follow Thee :
We will follow where Thou ledest,
Be it o'er the crested wave ;
Though the tempest rage around us,
Able, Lord, art Thou to save.

Lead Thou on : we trace Thy footsteps
Marking the appointed way ;
Deeply hast Thou left them printed,
Lest Thy loved ones go astray.
We can follow as we see Thee
Tread the arid waste, *alone* ;
Sure, if Thou art gone before us,
Smoothed must be the sharpest stone.

Lead Thou on, and we shall follow ;
Suited strength Thou wilt supply.
Closer draw us, ever closer,
For the guidance of Thine eye ;
Closer still, O holy Saviour !
Would we follow in the way ;
Thine the path, where'er it lead us,
Shining to the perfect day.

Lead Thou on, Thou chosen Shepherd :
Thine the voice we list to hear :
Pressing on, 'mid hostile legions ;
Fearing nought, for Thou art near.
Onward, onward, would we follow,
Nevermore, through grace, to roam ;
Past the stranger scenes of sorrow,
We have Guidance, Rest, and Home !

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There is a meaning, a needs be, and a message from God in every trouble of life.

The Bible Annotator.

BIBLE SUBJECTS FOR PERSONAL STUDY.

FOLLOWERS OR "IMITATORS."

1 Thess. Chap. i. 6: ii. 14.

Followers of us and of the Lord (chap. i. 6)—
Individual.

Followers of the Churches of God (chap. ii. 14)—
Corporate.

The Gospel believed, produced the former (i. 4).

The Word obeyed, effected the latter (ii. 13).

THE CHURCH IN THREE ASPECTS.

A Building (chap. ii. 20-21)—Christ the Foundation.

A Body (chap. iv. 15-16)—Christ the Head.

A Bride (chap. v. 25-32)—Christ the Bridegroom.

THE POWER OF LOVE.

Drawn by Love (Jer. xxxi. 3)—At Conversion.

Satisfied by Love (Song ii. 4)—In Communion.

Constrained by Love (2 Cor. v. 14)—In Consecration.

Energised by Love (Phil. i. 17)—In Confession.

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Misinterpreted Texts.

"Lay hands suddenly on no man" (1 Tim. ^{v.} 5. 22). This has been applied by some to the practice of ordaining men to "the ministry," and by others to the act of absolution of penitents and their re-admission to church fellowship. But to neither of these—of which Scripture says nothing—do the words apply. "Laying on of hands" was a sign of fellowship in commending to the Lord for special service, (see Acts xiii. 1-4) where Barnabas and Saul, already recognised as able servants of the Lord in the church, were sent forth on a special mission for which they had been separated, and in which the fellowship of saints was thus expressed. The appointment of elders by the apostles and their delegates (Acts xiv. 23; Titus i. 5) was attended by imposition of hands, but this power is nowhere said to be continued to others, or possessed by any at this time. So that ordination ceremonies, so far as conferring either gifts or powers, are a farce and a fraud, handed down from Popery. The obvious application of the passage to our own time is, that haste in according the sign of fellowship is to be avoided, lest unspiritual and unfit men be accredited as preachers and labourers of God, and thus helped on in a path to which they gave no call from God.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Is it right for a young Christian to join a Football Club? We have never known any one in a right condition of soul think of such a step. It would involve an "unequal yoke" with unbelievers, which is forbidden in the Word (2 Cor. vi. 14), and in most instances a violation of God's command in Eph. v. 11. There are many ways in which a Christian youth may get the "bodily exercise" he needs, without exposing himself to the spiritual dangers of football clubs and their surroundings. Many find all the exercise they need, in a two or three mile walk, or cycle ride, to share in telling out the "old, old story" to those who would never "come" to hear it.

What is the meaning of the words "a pattern to them which should hereafter believe" (1 Tim. i. 16)? Is it the manner of Paul's conversion that is referred to? To the Jew by and by, to whom like Saul of Tarsus, after long and determined opposition to, and blasphemy of His blessed Name, Christ will appear in glory, and they, by that sight, shall be immediately awakened and convicted as they "look upon Him" whom they pierced (Zech. xii. 10). Of this, Paul's conversion was the pattern or "outline sketch." In a general way, to sinners now and everywhere, the marvellous long-suffering of God, outliving and exhausting the bitterest and most persistent antagonism ever seen on earth, against God and His Christ, in religious zeal and blind unbelief, is a delineation or standing pattern of that grace of God, which reached the "chief" of sinners, after which none, however vile, need despair. For none, either Jew or Gentile, then or now, exceeded Saul of Tarsus in rebellion against God. When the Holy Ghost calls him "chief" or "first of sinners," it is no exaggeration. He means actually and literally that Saul was the very worst. And when we remember that what he did, he did "ignorantly," believing he was "doing God service" (John xvi. 2), we shall all the more admire the mercy that reached him in that awful condition.

To what sort of "gift" does the apostle refer in Rom. i. 11? Was it some gift of ministry he was to impart to some of the saints at Rome (as he had to Timothy, see 1 Tim. iv. 14) or what? The word *Charisma* is used in the latter sense undoubtedly in the New Testament, as in 1 Cor. xii. 4, but not exclusively so. In a wider sense the "gift of grace" is used in Rom. xi. 29, for God's gifts of grace and blessing in Christ. The context here

indicates, that the apostle was looking forward to his ministry among the saints at Rome, through which he might impart some fuller and further measure of the riches of God's grace, as would be for their "establishment" and for the encouragement of the "mutual faith" of both ministrant and hearers, waterer and watered alike being blessed through such a ministry.

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Answers to Correspondents

"BETA," S.—The author of the hymn, "Rise my soul thy God directs thee," which you value so highly, was the late J. N. Darby. It is slightly altered as it now appears in most hymn books, from the original.

"QUARTUS."—We have never known professing Christians who frequent bowling-greens, tennis courts, and golf courses, making common cause with the ungodly, to have much of God about them. No wonder you find their teaching rather "thin." We sincerely pity the church who has such teachers to feed it, and such overseers to rule it.

A. L., DUNDEE.—Liberality among the children of God is regulated very much by their spiritual condition. If little is given for the spread of the Gospel, or for the poor of the flock, it is generally an indication of the narrow sympathies of the heart. In regard to contributing for certain persons and special purposes, if these do not commend themselves to the saints, they must not be too hastily judged as being illiberal. To give wisely and for proper objects, is quite as necessary as to give largely. Some are able to keep themselves and their work in evidence, and are well looked after, while others, not less worthy but more modest, are apt to be forgotten or neglected. To enable all to give intelligently and according to their purpose of heart, the object for which the assembly's bounty is to be used, should be made known to, and approved of by the assembly beforehand.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION X.—Is there any Scripture warrant for observing the Lord's Supper in the evening of the first day of the week?

ANSWER A.—It was evidently so observed in early days, as we gather from Acts xx. 7-9. The words of John xx. 19, 26, would imply that assemblies of the Lord's disciples were frequent in the evening, because of the persecution they had to

endure. This is confirmed by historians and others, who give account of the practices of the early Christians. J. A.

ANSWER B.—The Jewish day began after sunset, or about 6 p.m., consequently "the evening" would be the earliest hours of the first day of the week: whereas in these lands the day begins in the morning, and the Lord's Supper is rightly observed in the morning of the Lord's Day. M. J. M.

ANSWER C.—There is no definite time specified in the Word, but inasmuch as "the Breaking of Bread" was the chief purpose for which the disciples "came together" (Acts xx. 7), and its object to "shew forth," or celebrate "the Lord's death," it is proper that it should be first in order, before preaching or service. The tendency has always been to allow the Lord's Supper to fall into a secondary place, and to exalt "preaching." This is an evil which should be jealously guarded against. Afternoon and evening celebrations, are usually in this connection, or to suit those who do not get up in time to attend the early assembling of God's people around the Lord's table. J. L. S.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—It is not wise to dogmatise on points which are open to different interpretations; but this much seems clear from the Word, regarding the practice of the early Christians in their keeping of the Lord's Supper. It was the primary object for which the disciples came together (Acts xx. 7). The order in which the Lord's commandments concerning it are given (see 1 Cor. xi. 23-34), is before the instructions and principles for ministry in the assembly (1 Cor. xiv.). The day upon which it was to be observed, and the meaning and object of its celebration, all combine to show how unique is the place the Lord intended it to fill in the church, "till He come." All endeavours to put it into a secondary or non-important place, must therefore be resisted, as a dishonour to the memorial feast, and a displacement from the place of pre-eminence to which He appointed it as the fitting emblem of His death. If the "evening" keeping of the feast is to make way for morning preaching, or individual efforts in service, or if "the sermon" or address is the principle object which brings the saints together, and "the breaking of bread" a hurried and secondary thing in the rear, that would be plainly a setting aside of the Lord's will regarding it. We do not say that an afternoon or evening observance of the Lord's Supper is unscriptural, but unless there is some very special and satisfactory reason for departing from the example and precedent

set forth in the Word, then the Lord's Supper should be the first and chief occasion of the church's assembling on the Lord's Day, and all who surround the table should come in such a condition of soul, the object of their gathering so filling their thoughts, that they would be ready to break the bread and drink the cup soon after assembling, rather than after a series of discourses, supposed to be of a "preparatory" character, but often actually a using up of time, which leaves very little for the worthy and reverent observance of the great weekly memorial feast of the Christian dispensation.

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ASSEMBLY EXPERIENCES—III.

BY AN OLD BELIEVER.

It has been often remarked that an Assembly of believers will be found very much the same in spiritual condition and faithfulness to the Lord, as those who are ITS RECOGNISED LEADERS. If those who feed and stand before the flock are godly and faithful men, of Christlike character and unworldly life, consistent in their path among the saints, and of good report in the world, the testimony of the assembly will bear more or less the same character. But if the leaders of an assembly are vacillating in their testimony and teaching, one thing to-day and another to-morrow, worldly-minded and mixed up with unscriptural associations, others, especially younger ones, will follow the same path. If they are simply men in "office," who have scrambled into that position by a determination to be in the front, irrespective of spiritual fitness, and without the esteem of their fellow-saints, ruling with an iron rod and pushing everybody down who dares to question their doings, things will be very disjointed, and spiritual power and freshness will be sadly lacking there.

A MINISTRY OF THE SPIRIT, however limited in its measure, will always yield spiritual profit to God's people, building them up on their most holy faith, keeping their consciences in healthy exercise, and their hearts occupied with Christ. Wherever such a ministry has free scope for its exercise, there will be freshness and blessing. Saints will be instructed in the truth, others attracted by its power, and true increase from God enjoyed. But when this is superseded by an "up to date" ministry of novelties, to "catch" and entertain, rather than to sanctify and edify, there will soon be barrenness and decline, notwithstanding great exertions, according to man's wisdom, to keep up appear-

ances and reckon results. But those who know God and have their "scent" in them, to discern what is "from above," the true work of God's Spirit, are not beguiled by the imitation. We know the difference between flowers freshly cut in their morning dew, filling the house with their fragrance, and showy imitations "made in France," doing duty in empty vases when the others are awaiting.

I have observed that there is generally a few "CAMP FOLLOWERS" in almost every assembly, who, like the "mixed multitude" in Israel, are always ready to go astray, and who, when any trouble arises, always take sides with that which is against God and His truth. At ordinary times their voices are never heard. They are never to be found, when there is a season of deep heartsearching, humiliation, confession, and prayer; these are not much in their line. But let a difference of judgment arise on the most trivial point; a chance to have a discussion, or take part in a debate, and they are there in force, ready for the fray. I have noticed that such "strange children" get into assemblies, usually at times when things are at "low ebb" spiritually, and when carnal rather than spiritual attractions are to the front. Godly ones are added under different conditions, and drawn by the power of the Word "working effectually" (1 Thes. ii. 13), even in times of opposition, and thus brought in by the force of the truth, they remain, under all conditions, and do not migrate like the swallows, when stormy seasons come, as they must in all departments of human life, assembly life included. People who come for what they get, and are never instructed in the truth which separates believers from the world and gathers them to Christ as Head and Lord, melt away like snow on the hills, and assemblies who make it easy for such to come, leave it equally easy for them to go, which they usually do, "speaking evil of the way," and hindering others from learning and obeying the truth.

I have observed that where the way of the Lord is honoured, and the Divine order of the Word observed in reception, each case being dealt with in a godly way and due care exercised, that such assemblies increase in numbers, notwithstanding the cry against their "narrowness," and that in others where what is called "the open door" is practised, while many come and go as casual visitors, the actual numbers do not increase; the "casuals" being chiefly discontented persons who roam about, and like to have great "variety" in their religion.

SERVICE IN THE SPIRIT'S POWER.

THE Psalmist of Israel sang in ancient days—"I shall be anointed with fresh oil" (Psa. xcii. 10). In this age of the presence of the Comforter, the "anointing" which all believers have received "abideth" in them (1 John ii. 27), and there is no such thing as a new anointing or baptism of the Spirit needed or given. Yet those who seek in any sphere to serve the Lord Jesus, whether in making known His Gospel to sinners, or in seeking to minister God's Word to His saints, in order to do so effectually, must know a fresh filling in the Spirit's power (Eph. v. 18).

It is recorded of the Perfect Servant, that after His anointing for service by the Spirit, and His temptation by the devil, "He returned in the power of the Spirit" (Luke iv. 14) to serve. Again and again we read in the Acts—that great record of evangelistic and church service—that the disciples were "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii. 4; iv. 31; xiii. 52), and this is especially recorded in connection with each fresh testimony borne to the Name of the Lord Jesus. It was in the power of this fresh filling, that they stood in boldness and Divinely-given strength before the world, calm and confident, bearing witness to their Lord, and what was accomplished in result, was not of man, but acknowledged by the workers themselves to be "by the power of the Spirit of God" (Rom. xv. 19).

This filling of the Spirit for service is needed still, and, thank God, is within reach of all. It is not so much connected with gift or knowledge, as with a right

condition before God. Where there is practised or unjudged sin, such a condition is impossible. The Spirit is then grieved, and His work is in the way of conviction, leading the sinning saint to confession and repentance, rather than in imparting fresh strength for service. Indeed, acceptable service of any kind whatever, is out of the question, while there is sin unconfessed, sin on the conscience, and a grieved Spirit in the heart. Whatever is attempted under such conditions, can only bring chastisement on the one serving, and have barren or unreal results. No doubt, much of the light work, which is such an incubus and a curse in the present time, and most of the sham conversions which are brought in among God's people, only to become a scandal when they depart, and a dead weight while they remain, are the results of preaching and dealing by those who are away from God through sin, and whose energies consequently are in the flesh, and only fit for the devil's use, to carry on his work of deception and corruption. Only that which is of the Spirit of God will stand, and only such service as is the result of His working "mightily" in the servant, is acceptable to God (Col. i. 29). This fresh filling and fulness of the Spirit's power in service is connected with *faith* and *character*. Of Stephen it is recorded, that he was "full of faith and power" (Acts vi. 8), and of Barnabas, that "he was a good man, and "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," with the result that "much people was added unto the Lord" (Acts xi. 24). Such are the men needed, to stand in the breach for God to-day.

SEPARATION FROM WORLDLY RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS, NOT SCHISM.

AN ADDRESS GIVEN IN GLASGOW. BY THE EDITOR.

A GIFTED and popular preacher in one of the larger denominations in this city, recently preached a sermon to his congregation, the subject of which was—"The Sin of Schism, in separating from the Church." The occasion of this discourse was, that several office-bearers and members of the congregation, over which he presides, had withdrawn from the communion of that denomination, giving as their reason, that they had "found in the Word of the Lord, that it is forbidden for believers in Christ to be associated in Church fellowship with those who on their own confession are unbelievers," that they had earnestly sought to bring the sin of knowingly admitting such before those who were primarily responsible for it, but were answered that it was "the custom of the Church," and could not be altered. Being assured that they, as members of that church, were in their measure responsible before God for its principles and practices as confessed before the world, they found that they could no longer continue in the membership thereof. This withdrawal of a few of the "best of his flock"—as the pastor graciously admitted—caused him to prepare and preach this special sermon, warning against the sin of "Schism," its object evidently being to hinder others from following in the same path. As this has been done elsewhere, and will likely be done again for the same purpose, it becomes needful to examine the principles

contended for in the light of the Word of God, and to test them by the unerring standard of "Thus saith the Lord." The Word of God is, or ought to be, for all His believing people the final appeal. The test of love is obedience; the line of that obedience is plainly marked out in the written Word, and the confession of all who fear God and seek to own and honour His Name is, "I esteem all Thy commandments concerning all things to be right, and I HATE EVERY FALSE WAY" (Psa. cxix. 128).

The word "schism," as found in the Scriptures, is the translation of the Greek word *skisma*, and is variously rendered, "schism" (1 Cor. xii. 25), "rent" (Matt. ix. 16), "division" (John vii. 43, x. 19). It is a word used to describe a rupture or breach among persons or things, where formerly unity subsisted. In order to understand its force, we must know what that unity was in its first estate, and who they were who were thus united. The First Epistle to the Corinthians is addressed to "the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them which are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints" (1 Cor. i. 2). Of those who composed this church the Spirit could write—"Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11), words which can have no application whatever to the unregenerate. The Church of God at Corinth was composed of those who were "sanctified in Christ Jesus," set apart from the world, and made "saints" by the call of God. It is concerning this company that the apostle exhorts with

all the authority of the "Name of the Lord Jesus Christ," that there be "no divisions"—no schisms, no rents—"among you" (1 Cor. i. 10). And this includes very much more than no outward division or separation, among those who were thus found together, as God's Church in Corinth. The tendency among them was not as yet toward open division, or defection from the faith, but in ranging themselves under party leaders and favourite teachers, thereby endangering the common bond, that unity of the spirit, which all are earnestly exhorted to give diligence in keeping, in the uniting bond of peace (Eph. iv. 3). To aid or abet such schism is undoubtedly evil, and a step toward that more fully developed form of iniquity described in 1 Cor. xvi. 17, which is named "divisions," elsewhere translated "seditions" (Gal. v. 20), a work of the flesh the perpetrators of which are to be eschewed according to the commandment "from such turn away." To foster "schism," to cause "division," to become factions or sectarian (which is the meaning of the word "heretic" in Titus iii. 8), are all clearly forbidden in the Scriptures. To separate from a company of Christians, gathered and constituted according to God with the Lord Jesus in their midst, His Word acknowledged as their standard, the Spirit as their guide; where the supreme authority of the Lord is owned, His gifts and ministries welcomed and room left for their exercise, with no doctrine or practice allowed to render His Word inoperative, would certainly be "schism." It would be schism and worse than

schism, to separate from such a church.

But the principles which apply to a church composed of believers, constituted according to the Word, must not be applied to worldly religious systems, whose members are for the most part unregenerate; whose constitution and government are according to man's device, and where there is no attempt to build according to that which is set forth in the Word as the Divine and abiding pattern of what God's Church is to be throughout the entire course of its testimony here below; a pattern which He has neither recalled nor modified, but which, in His unerring wisdom, He, who saw the end from the beginning, knew would, under the guidance and strength of the Spirit who indwells it as His temple, be the only one that would fulfil His purposes, for the edification, growth, and spiritual blessing of His people in all ages, and under all possible conditions.

If it were possible for one who had stood in the church as it originally existed, to be set down in the midst of the congregation of which the Rev. Mr. — is the presiding pastor, he would scarcely recognise a vestige of the pattern which God has given in the Word, but would, on the contrary, see a perversion of its constitution, its ministry, its ordinances, and its practices, above all of its members—a perversion so fundamental and radical, that no word addressed to God's churches in early times as such, has any application to the world's great churches as they now exist. Individual believers who may be there, are dear to God as His children,

members of the body of Christ, to be glorified together with Him, but in their church association they are in an unhallowed alliance with the world; in short, in a church which is framed, whatever its profession theoretically—practically to include the world within its pale. Such a church has no claim whatever on the adhesion or support of a child of light. For one who loves the Lord, and makes His Word his guide in all things, there is but one course open, and that is to “come out” and “be separate” from such an organisation. And such separation is not schism, for a system thus built up is only THE WORLD, although there may be some of the children of God connected with it. The clear and unmistakable duty of a Christian is “keep thyself pure” (1 Tim. v. 22). His relation to the religious world is expressed in the prohibition, “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with righteousness.” If he find himself already there, the commandment of the Lord is—“Come out from among them and be ye separate” (2 Cor. vi. 14-16). If the form of godliness be there, but its vitality wanting, and its power denied, the word is, “From such turn away” (2 Tim. iii. 5). And it is no “schism” to obey God; it is the imperative duty of all who fear His holy Name, to give heed to “all things whatsoever He has commanded.”

It has been said by apologists for this condition of things, and the continuance of believers in it—“Whatever be the corruptions of a church, it is the duty of

those who are the Lord's to stay where they are, and seek to reform it.” If this argument has any weight, it would teach that we all ought to be in the bosom of the church of Rome; that it was “schism” for the Reformers to leave it; that each successive exodus that has been made by godly men, who were hindered from giving effect to the light they were receiving from the Lord, was likewise “schism,” and ought never to have happened. Will any Christian with the Word of God before him contend for that? To continue in a position which the light of the Word has shown to be forbidden to a child of God, is to trifle with holy things, and bring judicial blindness on the soul—a condition from which it is to be feared many are suffering in this day of compromise. To remain in a worldly religious system, which has become a shelter for all sorts of people, irrespective of what they believe, whose ministers in many cases have no spiritual life or ability to feed the souls of God's true “born again” people, whose theological Professors, to whose care the training of the rising generation or ministers is committed, not secretly, but openly acknowledge, in direct violation of their ordination vows, their disbelief in the Divine inspiration and accuracy of the Holy Scriptures, and abandon almost every vital and fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. What claim, again we ask, has such a church to the support, or even nominal adherence of any Christian who fears and loves the Lord, whose Name and Word has been so disgracefully dishonoured in its midst? The fact that in most of such

churches there is a sprinkling of Christian men and women, whose lives individually adorn the doctrine of the Lord, whose zeal in spreading the Gospel and other good works is commendable, does not, in the least degree, mitigate the evils of the systems in which they are found, or form any godly excuse for others continuing in them. They will have to give account to God in the day of manifestation for their position there, and for the share they had in helping to uphold a corrupt system under the shadow of which, God alone knows, how many have been deceived to think themselves Christians, because others accredited them as such. There was a "just Lot," with a righteous soul vexed from day to day in Sodom (2 Pet. ii. 7), but his presence in that vile city, did not make it holy, nor save it from the judgment of high heaven. No more does the presence of a few great and good men, in any corrupt and apostate system of worldly religion, make it a Church of God, or sanction the continuance in it of any who belong to Christ, who, having heard the voice of the Great Shepherd, who calleth forth His own sheep to follow along the path of rejection which He trod before them, "go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. xiii. 13). May the Lord who loves His people, give each grace to yield obedience to His will, and not be deterred from following fully in the path, which, whatever its trials, its sorrows, and its reproaches, is for those who tread it a path of blessing—such blessing as those who tarry in a Babel of worldly religion with the ungodly, know nothing of.

"PLAY THE MAN"

(2 SAM. X. 12).

PART II.—BY A. LAWES, NORTHAMPTON.

LET the Word come to us also to "Play the man," for God's people in the assemblies of saints gathered according to His Word. In that sphere the need is great. What spiritual decline! What sad departure from divine principles! What inconsistency of life and conduct tolerated where righteousness and true holiness should obtain! Godly discipline is sadly at a discount, and that in the face of those solemn words, "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever" (Psa. xciii. 8). Then, again, the playing fast and loose with God's principles of gathering to the One peerless Name, is humbling indeed. Some act as though they could be taken up or laid aside at will, and be practised when pleasing or convenient, without a word of protest, warning, or exhortation to steadfastly continuance in the apostles' teaching and fellowship. Such things by many have come to be regarded as antiquated and not abreast of the times, as though the times were to guide us rather than the Word of the Lord. Not only so, but to a great extent, divine order in the matter of rule is reversed. The characteristics of Rehoboam's days and conduct are much in evidence. In many cases counsel is not only despised, but not even sought. In other cases, a yielding consent to questionable methods of conducting the Lord's work, which is truly humiliating, frequently ending in sorrow, and confusion. Surely in not a few cases the situation might have been saved,

and the assembly steered in a right course, had those at the helm only fulfilled what was expected of them, playing the man for the honour and the truth of God. Very solemn are the words of Isaiah ix. 16, "The leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed." The lack of teaching on these matters, the needed godly restraint, the refusal to sanction or condemn modern innovations, which gratify the craving of the unspiritual, have done irreparable damage to the spirituality, divine order, and simple testimony of many assemblies of God. The Apostle Paul had the tenderest of hearts. He could beseech with tears, and weep over the sin and failure of saints, but when occasion demanded, he could solemnly warn and rebuke. He withstood Peter to the face, and brought down his apostolic anathema upon those who perverted the Gospel of Christ by preaching another Gospel. It is false tenderness and disloyalty to Christ, which allows for the sake of peace, the introduction and continuance of evil. "The wisdom that cometh from above, is first pure, then peaceable" (Jas. iii. 17). True peace depends upon purity. The beginning of evil is often very small, but its progress is like the letting out of water, devastating in its course, disastrous in its results. There is an old, but true proverb, "Prevention is better than cure." Let us then "play the man," and it may be, by a firm stand in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, we shall, if watchful and prayerful, be able in a few brief moments to prevent what otherwise takes years to remedy, if, indeed, it is ever

remedied. Experience rather proves to the contrary in many cases.

A notable deed was that of Shammah, as recorded in 2 Sam. xxiii. 11. He set himself in "the midst of a parcel of lentiles" and defended it against a party of foraging Philistines. A parcel of lentiles was not of much value, but it was God's, and with all the present weakness and failure characterising assemblies gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, there is yet that belonging to God, which we should seek earnestly and diligently to maintain, prayerfully labouring for increase in the knowledge and ways of God. And provided we seek in communion with God to act with and for Him, there is no reason to question the result. It is said in connection with Shammah's service, "The Lord wrought a great victory." Feeble may be the instrument; the power alone is of God. The glory His, "that no flesh should glory in His presence." In all that we engage in, on behalf of God's assemblies, let us ever keep in mind the relationship in which those composing them stand to God. This will endear them to our hearts, and better enable us to render them such service, as will be for their good, and for God's glory.

"Let us play the man for the cities of our God." The church has not the same relationship with earth and its cities as Israel had. Its calling and hope is heavenly, but the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. The dwellers on it He loves. Calvary declares that blessed fact, and is the foundation of the glorious message He sends to it. But "playing the man for the cities," &c., may suggest to

us our conduct in relation to the world, and our efforts to bring blessing to it. We are in it, though not of it. "No man liveth to himself." The Christian life should be lived in the interest of the world's spiritual and moral welfare, never losing sight of its first great need—salvation by the Lord Jesus, regeneration through the operation of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. The world is not the exponent of Christianity, but it has keen sight and clear perception as to what a Christian ought to be, especially in business and commercial transactions. And let us here say, that none more need our prayers, or should command our sympathy, than Christian business men.

The deteriorated condition of society, the keen competition, the race to get rich regardless of principle, the system of misrepresentation, daily increase the difficulties of godly business life. In this great struggle many are by God's help seeking to keep a conscience "void of offence toward God and man," and with some measure of success, finding God all-sufficient. Seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, acknowledging Him in their ways, and being honoured, because honouring Him. The sure word of promise can never fail, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19). But alas! not satisfied with having their need met, and having become discontented in the sphere in which God placed them, some have embarked on a course which has led to a violation of conscience, and shipwreck of faith, ending in calamity to themselves and their

dependents. Not a few have courted disaster, by persistently proceeding in a questionable course, though repeatedly warned as to its consequences. The ambition to emulate others, and to make a fair show, has led from bad to worse. The crisis came, but pride of position did not permit the necessary and timely retrenchment, which would have helped to "provide things honest in the sight of all men," and commended the truth to their consciences. It surely betokens a sad condition of soul, when a Christian, to foster pride, recklessly incurs liabilities which he has not the slightest prospect of discharging. The Word of God declares, "Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right" (Prov. xvi. 8). God gives both the "upper and nether springs" to His children, but the motive in acquiring riches, and the purpose to which they are applied, are alike known to Him. Temporal and spiritual prosperity are not incompatible. If God grants the former, let us seek to make it subservient to His glory. It may then be continued with blessing to ourselves and others, but if called to suffer adversity, or overtaken by calamity, let us "play the man," by a holy submission to circumstances, coupled with a determination to act righteously, and live honestly in the sight of God and men. "Righteousness exalteth a nation." This may be applied to the individual. There is evil enough in this poor world without professing Christians contributing to it, especially in the aspect dwelt upon here, which brings such dishonour upon the worthy Name by which we are called. Few things bring

down the world's condemnation more quickly than lack of business integrity. There may be extenuating circumstances, and cases where disaster is unavoidable, but even then, let us not only remember that the Lord looketh on the heart, and seeth not as man seeth, but that even in the eyes of men, sincerity dreads no scrutiny.

Humbling as the ordeal may be, it is better to "play the man," by honestly facing whatever difficulties may come in our path. It is the only consistent and creditable course for a Christian to take, though involving as it must, the taking a low place, and very great self-denial, but, "Before honour is humility." It is truly appalling to see the conduct of some, whose consciences seem not sufficiently sensitive or exercised to fulfil moral obligations. Let us not overlook that part of Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 3), which expresses God's unerring justice—"By Him actions are weighed." He holds the balances of the sanctuary. Everything is naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, and He will render to every man according to his work.

We cannot close without a reference to Christians other than business men, in relation to the important matter of practical righteousness. Those in a more private sphere, who are not subject to the same temptations, nor their incomes (being fixed) to the same fluctuation; they may neither have ability, nor even the sordid desire to acquire wealth, but who in this age of pride and pleasure may be tempted to overstep the bounds of their income. Others there are who,

through lack of forethought, wise planning or prudence in using what they have to the best advantage, disregard the rules of even common honesty, by getting thoughtlessly and needlessly into debt, afflicting themselves with heavy burdens, which not only constitutes a grave danger to themselves, but to the assembly in which they are, and a fatal hindrance to Gospel testimony in the place. Such need to give more earnest heed to the solemn injunction, "Owe no man anything." Strictly speaking, our real needs are comparatively small; our wants of course are legion. How often we find that it is the craving for something not really needed that involves in difficulties, which need not have burdened us at all. Oh for heavenly wisdom and grace to "hold faith and a good conscience!" How much we all need to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation, and to take heed lest we fall. The desire and aim of every child of God should be to "follow after righteousness" (1 Tim. vi. 11).

The Lord give us grace, prayerfully, faithfully, and courageously to "Play the man," in whatever sphere He places us, that He may be more abundantly glorified in and by us, for His Name's sake.

CHRIST, THE SOUL'S OBJECT.

IN the proportion that Christ is before the soul; in the proportion that He commands it; in that proportion will be our faithfulness and our sufferings; It may not be bodily suffering or even worldly loss, but a very narrow path will be left for such to walk in, and a wide path of rejection.—*Andrew Miller.*

OBEDIENCE OR OPPORTUNISM.

THERE are those in church circles, as in politics, who may be called "opportunists." They have no settled convictions or principles, but go with whatever is pleasing or popular for the time being. You will find such persons equally at home in opposing camps, with one to-day and with the other to-morrow. They regard this as "largeness of heart," but others think of it as laxity of conscience. If this vacillating conduct were in things temporal, they would soon find themselves brought to book, for the world has a quick eye to such inconsistencies. But in the things of God, and in what concerns the honour of Christ Jesus the Lord, the world does not trouble itself. If a politician attempted to play Conservative and Liberal alternately, or to advocate "Protection" in one town and "Free Trade" in another, catering to the tastes of his constituents, his inconsistencies would be trumped throughout the kingdom in the daily newspapers. But if a man, who, professing to own the God of heaven as His God, who advocates Bible Christianity and pledges himself to be its minister, is found secretly demolishing the foundations of that faith he thus subscribes and in many cases is paid to propagate, or becomes the companion and ardent supporter of those who do, he is considered a good "all round man" of "broad sympathies." But what saith the Scriptures?

In other circles there are to be found those who, when they know it will be acceptable, can talk of being "outside the

camp," and speak freely of separation from sects, gathering in the Lord's Name and such like. Yet the next day, you will find these men equally at home in a chapel, a sectarian mission, or "Pleasant Sunday Afternoon" alongside men in clerical garb, where the ungodly are asked to give their "collection," while an unconverted organist, or it may be a Brass Band, contributes to the entertainment of the company. These "Facing-both-ways" kind of men exist with considerable ease, and enjoy a certain popularity, while conscience in others slumbers, and the claims of Christ Jesus as Lord are ignored, or treated as if they meant everybody may choose "what they like" and do what will bring them most pleasure, or popularity, or profit. But those who fear God and seek to weigh such doings in the balances of God's sanctuary, and view them in the light of that throne on which Christ sits as Lord, having all authority, can only regard them as lawlessness, which sooner or later will reap its due reward. To cleave to the Lord and hold fast all that He has taught us of His truth, will cost those who through grace seek to do so something, and cause their name to be held in evil repute by time-servers and others who are at ease in Zion, but the Lord will amply reward and vindicate their character in the presence of those who have traduced them, in the coming day of His judgment seat, according to His Word, "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. ii. 30), and that will amply repay whatever "loss" or reproach they may have borne for His Name here.

The Bible Annotator.

BIBLE STUDIES.

THE CHRISTIAN'S RACE.

The Start (Heb. xii. 1)—Conversion and Stripping.
The Course (1 Cor. ix. 24)—From the Cross to Glory.
The Goal (Phil. iii. 12)—Christ on the Throne.
The Reward (2 Tim. iv. 9; 1 Cor. ix. 25)—A Crown.

A THREEFOLD EXHORTATION.

Hebrews x. 19-24.

"Let us draw near" (ver. 22)—Faith's Exercise.
"Let us hold fast" (ver. 23)—Hope's Grasp.
"Let us consider" (ver. 24)—Love's Labour.

THINGS FOR BELIEVERS TO "HOLD."

"Holding faith and a good conscience" (1 Tim. i. 19).
"Holding fast the faithful Word" (Titus i. 9).
"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. ii. 15).



Misinterpreted Texts.

Rom. viii. 11—"But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by (or because of) His Spirit that dwelleth in you." This gives no sanction to the doctrine of a present "quickenings" of the believer's body, securing it against illness and retarding its decay. If the text had any such meaning, then why not have exemption from death altogether? What it does teach is, that the believer's body, already purchased and owned by Christ, and indwelt by the Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20) to be used to "glorify God," shall, in the case of all who having fallen asleep and are now "absent from the body," be raised incorruptible, a "spiritual body," and those who are alive and remain in mortal bodies at the coming of the Lord—to whom this verse has special reference—shall be "changed" by the "working" (Phil. iii. 21), which has already quickened them with Christ (Eph. i. 19-20, ii. 1, 5), and still works in them, strengthening and fitting them in heart to be an abiding dwelling for Christ (Eph. iii. 17), even that of the Spirit, because of which, and by which as Efficient Cause, the "redemption of the body" in actual realisation shall be known.

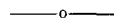


The Young Believer's Question Box.

What do the words, "Who hath made us meet" (Col. i. 12) mean? The same verb occurs in 2 Cor. iii. 6, "Who hath made us able"—made us competent,

or qualified us. The reference is rather to the fitness or competency of the believer for the enjoyment of his spiritual inheritance, than to his title. Both are his in Christ.

Would it be pleasing to the Lord, for a Christian to go into a situation in which her duties would habitually hinder her from sharing in the united worship of the Lord's people, and in keeping the Lord's Supper? We believe not. If the Lord Jesus says "This do in remembrance of Me," it cannot be pleasing to Him for any of His loved ones to habitually neglect that request. When the Word says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is" (Heb. x. 25), it evidently is not the will of the Lord that any of His should willingly and by their deliberate choice, put themselves in a position, where, by mutual arrangement, they are hindered from thus assembling. Of course there are times, such as on a voyage, in a strange land, or where duties or unforeseen circumstances hinder, when it is impossible. But while making full allowance for all such, it is clearly the will of the Lord, that His own should be at His table and sharing the fellowship of saints "as often" as is possible. And when they make it their first concern to please the Lord, it is truly wonderful how He opens the way to do it.



Answers to Correspondents

"INQUIRER,"—The hymn beginning "We are citizens of heaven," with its proper tune, is found in THE PRAISE BOOK (No. 422), edited by the late Wm. Reid. It is, no longer in use, although it was one of the best worship Hymn Books ever issued, full of deep-toned spiritual hymns, such as are little in demand in this day of shallows.

"YOUNG GOSPELLER,"—If you do not get an audience to hear the Gospel in your hall, go out into the streets and visit the people in their houses, inviting and compelling them to "come in." Do not on any account turn your Sunday evening meeting into a "Reading" or "Exposition" for believers. Keep to the Gospel, inside or outside, all the year round. If the people do not come to you, go to them. And see that what you give them is not "stones" or "scorpions," but the "bread of life."

E. A. G., GLASGOW.—The stated discourse on Lord's Day morning—frequently having no connection whatever with the special object for which believers are gathered together at that time—

becomes agreeable to those who by reason of spiritual poverty and lack of exercise before God have nothing to give in worship. This goes on until it becomes a habit, and by and by a man has to be found (and they can be got without much trouble) who will be there for the purpose of giving the "sermonette." This is simply "clerisy" in its earliest form. We have heard of one going as the "speaker" at 11 a.m., in a hall where Christians are supposed to gather in the Name of the Lord to shew forth His death. If "coming events cast their shadows before them" this will soon be the fashion. But it is a departure from the fundamental principle of the church's assembling, as set forth in the Word. It robs God of His worship, and the saint of his liberty. Let those who have the truth hold it fast, teach it to others, and resist the intrusion of clerisy, where it thus quietly seeks to instal itself in God's assembly.

T. M'L., AYRSHIRE.—Preachers who can give "Trothy" and "funny" addresses, may do to draw a certain class of hearers to your meeting room, and entertain them while there, but they certainly will never attract godly ones seeking after the Lord or His ways. Nor will the permanent results in sound conversions and revived believers, such as you say were known in years gone by, be known from such preaching. Time has proved this, and however unwilling some may be to own it, others who have gone far along the lines you describe, are seeing the shallowness of the work they have produced, and are seeking back to their first faith, and the simple, godly lines of earlier and happier days.

A. G., GLASGOW.—Expulsion of one from an assembly for sin, should be the last resource, and then with a view to his humiliation and restoration (see 1 Cor. v. 11; 2 Cor. ii. 6-8). To eject a troublesome brother, simply to get rid of him, is a sin and a shame, such as no godly man would either share, or allow to be done in his name, without a solemn and definite protest.

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Answers to Special Questions.

QUESTION XI.—What is the Scriptural way for an Assembly to deal with one who has been proved to be a secret slave of intoxicating drink?

ANSWER A.—If it were a case of one being "overtaken," as Gal. vi. 1, and he repentent, there would be no need for further dealing save in warning and pastoral care.

J. L.

ANSWER B.—To fall under the power of intoxicating drink, to the extent of becoming its "slave," points to a long continued course of trifling with it, which, sooner or later, will break out into open drunkenness. If it has not yet reached this stage, there is often difficulty in "proving" the guilt, so as to take assembly action. But the suspected person should be visited, and if those who do so are spiritual men, they will readily find out his true condition, and whether the charge brought against him is true or false. Undue haste in such a case should be avoided.

D. E. G.

ANSWER C.—Proof of such a condition would require to be according to 1 Tim. v. 19; 2 Cor. xiii. 1, with Deut. xvii. 5-7, and not a mere hearsay. If the person accused admits, or is convicted of his guilt, then the word in 1 Cor. v. 11 applies, and must be carried out. It is no question whether the sin has been continued secretly or openly, if he is guilty of it and confirmed in it as before God.

W. J. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above answers seem to present this solemn matter fully, and Answer C. the only open course to pursue consistent with the Word of God toward one who, from long-continued habit, has become a slave to drink. When such a solemn act becomes necessary, it should be a searching and a humbling time for those who are called upon to share in it, and, as the Lord intends by all such experiences, a warning to all. By far the largest number of those who have to be "put away" from the fellowship of assemblies of believers, fall through strong drink, a fact which should surely weigh heavily with those who minister the Word in warning against its use, and be a solemn consideration for all who trifle with it.

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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.

QUESTION XII.—Is it true that there are assemblies of Christians, gathered unto the Lord's Name, in which those who are known to hold and teach the non-eternal punishment of the wicked, are received or retained?

QUESTION XIII.—Would it be according to the spirit and principles of the Word, for a Christian tradesman to sue a debtor at law, for the recovery of his account.

Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister.

We have received a large number of long, in several cases, well-reasoned papers on this subject, which space forbids us to print in full. We give, however, the salient points of each, which our readers must weigh for themselves. It is a subject concerning which there is considerable diversity of judgment among well-taught and godly men. And being a matter concerning which the principles of the Word have to determine (in the absence of any direct commandment of the Lord), there is need for care and discretion in arriving at conclusions.

1. "Any relation which gives rise to scandal, or might produce unhappy results, should be avoided. It is not prohibited by Levitical law; the rite is capable of being performed by English law, but deception must be practised in the process."

2. "There is a legal maxim that 'common error is law.' Not all that human law sanctions therefore is morally right, nor, on the other hand, is everything morally wrong which it refuses to sanction. Marriage with a deceased wife's sister, by a man whose domicile is in the United Kingdom is not recognised by English law. In some lands, on the other hand, more wives than one are allowed, which is distinctly contrary to the Divine will. Human law therefore is no infallible guide to moral conduct."

"The only standard that Christians should have is the revealed will of God. As judged by this, marriage with a deceased wife's sister does not appear to be wrong, looked at in the abstract. Other things have to be taken into consideration. Christians have to obey human law where it does not clash with the will of God. The marriage laws of this land are of this character, and as such they ought to be observed and honoured. Since, therefore, these laws do not sanction marriage with a deceased wife's sister, it is clearly wrong to contract such a marriage, for in thus withholding its sanction, the law of the land does not contradict any commandment or prohibition of God."

3. "What applies in countries where human law does not sanction such a marriage, would not, of course, apply in lands where no such sanction is withheld. In the Channel Isles, France, America, &c., such a marriage is regarded as quite proper. If God does not prohibit it, and the law of the land in which one's domicile is for the time being, sanctions it, then, on the ground of being a law-breaker at least, there is no charge against the

parties so married. This seems the chief difficulty.

4. "As the law now stands, it is inexpedient for a Christian living in Great Britain to enter into such a relationship. One of the strongest reasons for its inexpediency is, that in the event of there being children given them, these are being regarded by the law of his domicile as illegitimate. There is no greater heritage in temporal things, than the right to the name of a father who has feared God and been honourable in his dealings with men (Prov. xxii. 1; Job xxx. 81). This the law denies the children of such a marriage."

5. "There are sins enumerated in God's Word, which one even if 'called a brother' is brought under the power of, would thereby forfeit his place in the assembly of God's people. There are other shortcomings which, while they ought to call into exercise godly instruction, remonstrance, and rule, are not visited with the same measure of judgment (see 1 John v. 16) as others. Difference in regard to persons (Jude 22) and offences (2 Thess. iii. 6, 14) are also recognised, and no judgment beyond that which is sanctioned in the Word meted out. There is nothing to warrant the rejection of one in such a relationship from fellowship in an assembly of believers, or to cause his expulsion from it."

6. "As is known to most, a Bill to 'legalise marriage with a deceased wife's sister' was passed by the House of Lords in 1896, and in April, 1905, a Bill was read a second time in the House of Commons but has evidently been crushed out by other Government measures, and as such a Bill requires to be passed by both Houses during one Session in order to become law, it is consequently still unsanctioned. The progress made shows the trend of things, and what is likely soon to be, in which case the legal disability would be removed, although doubtless many would still be opposed to such marriages.

7. "One thing at least must be clear to all who have considered the matter, namely, that in view of possible objections and consequent troubles, any contemplating such a marriage, should let it be known beforehand to those seeking to shepherd and guide the saints of which they form part, and their counsel and fellowship sought in the matter. All who love peace and value godly fellowship will see the desirability of this, and the pride or self-will which refuses such a course, only reveals the condition of those who so act."

8. "If any conscientiously object to one in such a relation ministering or ruling, he should desist, as such service cannot be for godly edification."

THE CLOSING YEAR.

THE flight of time, the close of another period of earthly life and service, the passing of another milestone on the heavenly pathway, call for reflection and the remembrance of "all the way" along which the Lord hath led His people (Deut. viii. 2), with a wider survey of "the work of the Lord" and "the operation of His hands" (Psa. xxviii. 5) among the sons of men. Great events are taking place among the nations of the earth: wars and revolutions, treaties and pledges of friendship, each filling up its part in hastening the crisis of the world's preparation for the last great Revolution, which, as God's Word declares, will precede the peaceful reign of its rightful but still rejected King. Meanwhile, though they talk of peace, exchange courtesies, and fraternise, the nations of Europe, full of distrust of each other, are armed to the teeth, and watch each other, as a lion for his prey. The world is still the empire of Satan, and the enemy of God. Happy for the saints, if content to fill the place to which the Cross has brought them, as "strangers and pilgrims" they pass along "the King's highway" (Num. xxi. 22), turning not aside to meddle in its politics, or to strive in its contests, but "holding forth the word of life" to all, as the Lord has commanded, they seek to save some out of it for God. The Lord, in grace, is hastening His work, and sending forth His Gospel to every land. In these most favoured Isles, in which the light of His Truth has so long continued to shine, there has been

an unprecedented energy amongst the servants of Christ in reaching sinners with the Gospel, as if the shadows of the coming night were already falling on these fair fields, from which so many of God's precious sheaves have been gathered. Gracious awakenings of the lost and revivings of the saved, have been given in many places; a spirit of prayer has prevailed, and in a renewed spiritual condition some have been drawn closer to the Lord, to His Word, and to each other as His people. But there is no remedy for Christendom as such, no reviving or renewing of a dead and stagnant religion, as it exists in the great world systems. Judgment must sweep the scene, and it will, as surely as God has said it. The place for the true children of God is apart from, and outside these systems, with a rejected Christ, owning His claims as Lord, and the supreme authority of His Word. This maintained in godly simplicity, cleaving to the Lord and His Word, is the true, the only path of abiding blessing. Of this we are absolutely certain, as God's sure promise can make us, while departure from it, or compromising God's truth for the sake of popularity or apparent success, by those who know better, is the sure precursor of barrenness and of blighted testimony. During the year, many of the Lord's true and tried servants and standard-bearers have been called to their rest. Very few of the coming generation, seem to have either grace or grit to fill the places thus being emptied. Unless younger men are godly, given to prayer, the study of God's Word, and cultivation of the inner life.

they will neither have heart nor strength to serve the God of their fathers, but will soon slip back to the world's religion. This is the *root* cause of the retrograde movement of recent years, whatever its ostensible defence may be, and in no way is this more apparent than in the lack of godly ministers of the Word to feed the flock of God, and expound the Truth solidly, seasonably, and continuously, to God's people. Mere tit-bits, and scraps of ethical exhortation do not, cannot sustain spiritual life, or long maintain godly testimony in any church. The decay of vital godliness, the lowering of the standard of conversion, make it increasingly easy for mere professors, who have been intellectually enlightened by clear reasoning, but neither convicted of sin nor genuinely converted, to creep or come in among God's people undetected, and there to remain as an incubus and a drag, with little hope of being unmasked under the kind of preaching that generally obtains. In the midst of all this failure, there are hungry souls everywhere yearning for the bread of life, and wherever it is broken in simplicity and freshness, thither they are drawn, while in many a hidden corner, godly souls are praying, Hannah-like, for God's deliverance, and seeking a godly seed to raise the banner of His truth which has fallen in the streets. May all who fear His Name be found much in this, the place of their mightiest influence, dealing with God about that which is dear to Him, and thus possessed of His mind and strengthened by His might, go forth to witness and act for God fearlessly and faithfully.

"WITHIN THE VEIL."

THE word "veil" occurs six times in the New Testament, always meaning the veil separating the Holiest of all from the Holy Place of the Tabernacle or Temple. In Hebrews x. 20 we are told that the meaning in the Divine mind of this wonderful piece of woven work was the "flesh" of Jesus. Whether in a rent or unrent condition, we must regard this beautiful veil as representing the Son of God in incarnation.

But if unrent, as it had hung for ages, we must see Jesus incarnate to be the impassable barrier between God and man. To the spiritually-minded Israelite receiving instruction from the types and shadows under the law, no other lesson could be arrived at than this: "If this is the Man who alone can come into the hill of the Lord, and enter His Holy Place, on the ground of what He is in Himself (Psa. xxiv.), then I am, even by that very pattern Man, entirely and eternally excluded."

Around us the odious theology of the twentieth century professes much admiration for the character of Jesus, and proposes to get to God by an imitation of that character. Love to Himself because of what He is to God, and is of God made to us, finds no place in the charnel-house system of revival of dead philosophies. But we are certain that it must be destruction to every man who attempts to enter within the Holiest upon such ground, whilst we are equally certain that to those who have entered in God's way, the deepest and holiest desire is to walk as Christ

walked. God's standard of holiness and righteousness can never be altered. He sets not forth His Son for guilty men to admire, as they do pictures, but to atone for sin, for without shedding of blood is no remission; for sin demanded death, and after death the judgment, at the hands of the living God.

I see adoringly, how God Himself rends in twain that lovely veil. Through the rent veil He bids me enter, which, had it stood in its woven wondrous integrity, *must have barred my entrance*. And by it He opens to me an entrance, not only into the kingdom of heaven, with all true believers, but an access to Himself now, with all faithful worshippers.

I would observe that this wonderful type of the Lord, was not a piece of mere tapestry; it has been described as such, but this is exactly what it was not. Mere tapestry only gives you a picture on one side, the other appears but a confused mixture of threads and colours. The veil had both sides alike, the only difference being, that the glory from off the mercy-seat shone on the inner side, while the candlestick lighted the other; but in itself it was the same throughout. Nor was there any diversity in its pattern from the top to the bottom. Through this rent veil entering, we "draw near" to God: loved, pardoned, and washed, we appear before the "throne of grace" **BOLDLY**. And that is a great word for God to teach His saints to use.

If through the measure of my conformity to Christ I had acceptance, boldness could never be mine. Conformity to Him is indeed the longing of my heart,

and I know I shall attain to that, for we shall be like Him: "we shall see Him as He is." But it can never be the basis of my acceptance; and wonderful as this conformity is, it is not the primary song of heaven, for that is, "Unto Him who hath loved us, and washed us *from our sins in His own blood*, to Him be glory and dominion for ever."

I would here observe, that the worshipper within the veil sees God as He is, revealed in His Son, and tells God what He is; and this is true, eternal worship.

Within the veil, the favoured soul finds itself shut in to eternal blessing, and shut out from the noise and contentions of this present evil world. There could have been no quieter place in the last age for a harassed spirit than this, if he could have found access; for all the hubbub of the camp, and even the noise of the priests in their outward services, would have been excluded from his ear. *Oh the quietness* of the presence of God!

In the past age, what must have struck an observer would be, the *silence* of the service of the Holy Place, and of course of the Holiest. If I have said all noise was excluded from this blessed retreat, of an outward kind, the silence could not be described as the silence of inaction. For such an observer would have seen the priests entering the first tabernacle, ordering the shewbread, trimming the lamps, and in many ways accomplishing the service; but he would have heard no word pass their lips. It was not a place where man's lips could as yet be opened. But now, the place of service, as well as the inner shrine of worship, are places

where man not only has been brought nigh, but speaks in the fulness of his heart to God. "*By Him therefore let us offer continually the sacrifice of praise.*" In this sense the Holiest is filled with our utterances, who, but for the blood of Jesus, must have been silent. But now He hath opened our lips, and our mouths do show forth His praise.

However gloriously provided the Tabernacle was, when upreared in the midst of the people of God, it was all built upon the bare ground of the wilderness. So that the worshipper might behold above him every precious thing, and before him there was shining the mercy-seat, to which he had thus access; yet beneath him was nothing but what told of humiliation—no covering up of the sand of the wilderness from the eye of God, neither would He have it hidden from the eyes of men. Neither pavement nor carpet was allowed in the Tabernacle. Whatever was there, stood based upon the humiliation unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ. On that we stand, and know no other ground, or resting-place for ever.

J.J.P.

COMMENDING THE GOSPEL.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY H. B. THOMPSON.

I HOPE that in our own measure we all preach the Gospel—not that I advocate the public ministry of women, which the Word of God condemns, but there is no sister in Christ who may not do what the woman of Samaria did—invite others to the One Who has saved her.

In the work of the building of the wall in the days of Nehemiah, there was one man, Shallum, who had no sons but

daughters only, and we are told that those daughters helped their father in the building of the wall (Neh. iii. 12). There were also wise-hearted and willing-hearted women who had a hand in the preparation of the material for the tabernacle (Exod. xxxv. 25-29).

Remember, that to sisters is given this unspeakable privilege of working towards one end—the ingathering, by the Gospel, of the lost and the perishing to the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Philippians, said—"I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the Gospel;" Help them, that is, with a view to their reconciliation—to be of the same mind in the Lord. Some little difference had got in between them, and similar differences, small at first, do not always end there. Frequently sides are taken, and division may ensue from what was a very small matter at the beginning, just as a spark may fire a mighty building. Those women appear to have been instrumental in God's hand in furthering the Gospel, when Paul was down at Philippi. They probably went among those of their own sex, and spoke to them individually, or brought them to hear the Gospel as preached by the apostle.

I trust that in our respective spheres, and according to our various capacities, each one preaches the Gospel, not merely by lip, but most of all by our lives. I have been deeply impressed with the fact that the Holy Spirit, through the apostle Peter, in the first epistle, places little emphasis on lip testimony. I am not

disparaging that ; it is essential, but the emphasis all through this epistle is placed upon the value of actual living. For instance, in chap. iii. 1, to the godly living wives, the gracious promise respecting their unregenerate husbands is given—“ They also shall without a word be won by the conversation of the wives . . . while they behold (scrutinise) your chaste conversation coupled with fear ” (see the Greek). The eyes of the world are resting upon us ; the unregenerate do not care what our creed is, it may be orthodox or otherwise. but they do take cognisance of the lives we live, and by which we commend or hinder the Gospel. When David spoke of his enemies in Psalm xxvii. 11, you will notice it is put in the margin—“ mine observers.” Depend upon it, the world expects great things from those who testify that the Lord Jesus Christ has saved them. If we say that we are saved, we are bound to manifest it in our lives. I repeat that in the Epistle of Peter, the emphasis is placed entirely upon the value of godly living, and it is not till the middle of the third chapter (verse 15), where the apostle contemplates the suffering believers being asked by the people round about them what sustains them under the trying circumstances, that the verse comes in—“ Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

I have read of a Prussian Baron who was led to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, but who was not called to preach the Gospel publicly. Near his

castle was a Divinity College, to which the Baron went and volunteered to defray the expenses of some of the poor students. One was recommended to him as an exceptionally brilliant youth, but who was an utter unbeliever. Him the Baron took to his castle and treated him as if he were his heir. The young man behaved badly, but the Baron, in the meekest, humblest manner, showed him only kindness, performing menial offices for him, such as sitting up at night to receive him, taking off his boots, and bringing his slippers. One night the young man enquired of the Baron—“ How can you do all these things for me, seeing I despise you ?” The Baron simply answered, “ I have learned of the Lord Jesus Christ. Go and read John’s Gospel.” The young man complied, and in his reading, God opened his eyes to behold Christ as his Saviour. The result was, that the student became one of the brightest witnesses in that part of Prussia to the saving grace of God. Was the young man led to Christ through the preaching of the Baron, or through his powerful reasoning of the truth ? No ! but through the exceptional humility of mind in the actual life of that beloved child of God, in most trying circumstances. And so we all, in our varied spheres, may by our lives commend the Gospel.

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COMPROMISE.—In the things of God, compromise is always wrong, and can never result in lasting good, whatever its apparent success may be. To honour God and hold fast that which is His, will sooner or later be found to be the path of true blessing.

DECLINE IN THE CHURCH.

IN these days of gradual defection from the truth, and abandonment of the Divine principles of the Word, which have severed believers from the world and gathered them in simplicity to the Name of the Lord, it is frequently asked—"What is the relation of one who desires to honour the Lord and yield obedience to His Word, to an assembly in which there is manifestly a withdrawal from the ways of the Lord, as they have been taught and practised by godly men through whose service such assemblies were gathered, and for long maintained a testimony for God and His truth? Is the giving up of God's truth, and the introduction of many manifestly unscriptural practices, sufficient warrant for separating from such companies." This is a serious question, which so far as we have light, we shall seek to answer.

Feebleness in testimony, carnality in condition, and even defection from the faith, call not, in the first instance, for separation, but for faithful and diligent ministry of the Word (see 1 Cor. iii. 1-3, xvi. 10-12), which is for "correction" as well as for "instruction" (2 Tim. iii. 16). By such means, restoration to God and to His ways has often been effected, in churches which had sunk into a backslidden and gravely doubtful condition (2 Cor. vii. 8-12), alike in morals and in doctrine. Even where the evil had grown to such an alarming extent, that the power to exclude faithful servants of the Lord, or silence their testimony to His truth, was retained

in the hands of one man, who dominated the church, and by his clerical assumption brought it for the time being into bondage to his will (see what is said of Diotrephes in 3 John, 9, 10), there is no call from God for the faithful at that stage of the evil to separation, simply because that company, notwithstanding its evil condition, still could be owned by the apostle as "the church," and might still, as he hoped, be reached with the truth when he came to it, and the deeds of the evildoer remembered against him, and dealt with according to God. No doubt a condition may be reached—in some cases has been reached—even in a company who are all professedly the children of God, but who have so disowned the Lord and defiantly and persistently set aside His Word in their midst, generally led on in such a path under the influence of worldly-minded or sectarian leaders, as to alter the very foundations of their association, from an assembly of Christians seeking to own and give effect to the Lord's will, to that of a sect, and so force those who fear the Lord and humbly desire to honour His Word, outside their circle, to be where they can give effect to what they have learned of His truth, unhindered by the laws and commandments of men. But such a solemn crisis should never be hastened, or such a course taken, until every effort has failed to arouse the consciences of those who are immediately concerned, and the help of others sought to assist in bringing God's Word to bear upon them. The experiences of past years may well teach all who fear God, the wrong of precipitate action in

such matters, and the sad consequences of unscriptural and unwarrantable separation. Godly protest against wrong-doing, based on the authority of the Word, given by those whose course has been even, and against whose personal character no just charge can be made, will certainly have weight with some, and carry conviction to all; and even if it does not cause wrong-doing to cease, it discharges the conscience of the man who makes it from complicity with the evil, and separates him from it, so far as he is called upon by God to be at that stage of its progress. But there may come a time—unless repentance is wrought and the dishonoured Truth of God restored to its place—that the light which once shone there for God will be quenched (Rev. ii. 5), the Assembly character abandoned, the Lord denied His place, while men arrogate to themselves such lordship and rule as belong to Christ the Lord alone. Then separation becomes a necessity to the godly, while continuance under such conditions can only be regarded as participation in and sanction of the evil.

But there is an opposite danger, more subtle, yet none the less disastrous, where it gains the victory. Love of ease, the fear of being considered factious, or lacking in grace, may cause one whose conscience, enlightened by the Word, is exercised before God, to compromise with evil, and silently acquiesce in many things which he knows to be dishonouring to the Lord and opposed to His Word. This long continued, the light which once enabled him to discern the evil becomes gradually less, until it is eventu-

ally lost altogether, and the conscience once sensitive becomes so sluggish or seared, that it ceases to trouble, leaving its owner like Eli the priest, with dimmed eyes, as one with whom the Lord has no further communication, but raises up a Samuel to pronounce the judgment of God on the evil, and to continue the testimony which had failed in Eli's hands. The evil of unwarrantable separation has often been pointed out, but this more common, yet no less God-dishonouring course, is by many held in honour. It suits the spirit of the age, which even among Christians is manifest in their desire to please and be counted pleasant, to stand high in the estimation of their fellows, rather than to honour God and yield strict, unhesitating obedience to His holy will, as clearly set forth in His eternally abiding Word.

BARREN PREACHING.

PREACHING may be earnest and clear; it may have plenty of warning and much of entreaty; the feelings may be moved and the intelligence enlightened, but if the sharp edge of God's truth, in the power of the Spirit, has not laid open the conscience to the light of God, in such a way as to bring conviction, resulting in confession, Godward, there will be no Divine life begotten, and consequently no abiding fruit of the preacher's labour. Professions of conversion apart from this inward working of the Spirit through the Word, are dangerous in the extreme to souls, and should be jealously watched against by all who preach and teach Jesus Christ. Never was there more need than there is to-day.

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.—IV.

BY THE LATE ALFRED J. HOLIDAY.

We learned a valuable lesson from a Christian blacksmith lately. "My master," said he, "had given me detail drawings of some iron work he wanted made. The drawings showed all dimensions and other particulars; and I carefully looked over them before I began. Now, I reckon to understand my trade pretty well, and I saw two or three points where I thought I could improve on the drawings, and accordingly, instead of working exactly to the instructions, I carried out my own thoughts, and expected to get praised for what I had done. Presently the master came, and looked first at my work and then at the drawings. 'What is the meaning of these alterations?' said he, and of course I explained my ideas to him. 'But that will not do at all,' was his answer. 'When you get drawings you must work exactly to them, or else your work is no use.' 'I shall not forget the lesson in a hurry," added the brother; "it has set me thinking how the Lord will judge all our works by the same rule." Now may the Lord help every one of us to apply the lesson in like manner. The longer the time since the Lord first gave His instructions, the greater the danger that His servants will begin to think they need not keep so very close to them. On all sides we hear it said, "O yes, but things are very different now. Circumstances are so changed since the apostles' days; and we could not carry things out now just as they commanded." Is this an argument we ought

to listen to? Or does the lapse of time make no difference as to the obedience He expects from us? Notice particularly what He puts before and after the instructions. He gives in Matt. xviii. 20, two precious words about Himself. First He says, "*All authority* hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth." All the time He occupied the servant's place, He never spoke His own words, or did His own works, but was obedient in all things to the Father who had sent Him. But now He is declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead; and He claims the authority that the Father has given to Him. And then He finishes with the blessed promise, "And lo, I am with you *always*, even unto the end of the world (age)." Now we want to look upon all His commandments as shut in between these two declarations about Himself. We need to see that we cannot tamper with one of them, we cannot alter or set aside the least part of what He taught those eleven to teach us, without lessening His authority. And when we are inclined to talk about "altered circumstances" as a reason for not carefully carrying out all His commandments, we need to be reminded that we are robbing ourselves of the power of His promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end." If His authority is unchanged, and He Himself remains with us to the end, surely He looks for the same obedience now as at the first. And, if every day is taking us further from the time when He gave us His commandments, do not let us forget, that every day is bringing us nearer to His coming back

again. Our every-day obedience, just like our eating of the bread and drinking of the cup, should show the Lord's death "till He come." So when we are tempted to let this thing slip or alter that, the answer of our hearts should ever be ; " He came to die for me ; He is coming again to take me to Himself ;" and the simplicity of our obedience would declare how reverently we own His authority, and how joyfully we wait for His appearing.

THE POWER OF GODLINESS.

LITTLE preaching is required to bring forth fruit in conversion, where there is the godly testimony of a people whose lives adorn the doctrine of the Lord. This has been the experience of servants of Christ all along the line. A godly assembly of saints, whose life testimony commends the Gospel preached by the evangelist, is the most effective kind of "fellowship in the Gospel," that can be given. If, on the other hand, the worldly ways, the uneven walk, the unlovely lives of those who stand in the front as "helpers in the Gospel" alongside the evangelist who preaches it, give an ill-savour to the message, then they are the greatest hinderers to its progress. Better have half a dozen true helpers, who are respected by their neighbours, and regarded as true Christians, than a crowd of professors, whose testimony in life and walk is worthless. This is a form of hindrance to the Gospel's progress little heard of in public ministry. It cuts too keen to be relished by worldly professors and backsliden believers.

THE REJOICING SAINT.

I can but sing !

Reprove me, wealthy worldling, if thou wilt :

My two-mite tribute to my Lord I bring,
His blood for me was spilt !

In Him I dwell,
Rejoicing in His love from day to day,
I sit beside this one deep-springing Well
Dug in the desert way.

No ! not alone !

He talks with me, I listen to His voice.
My Lord hath claim'd me, I am all His
own,

How can I but rejoice ?

O Thou my Friend !
Did they but know Thee, could they turn
away ?

Would they not hours in Thy sweet presence
spend ?

In Thine own sunlight stay ?

'Tis perfect joy
Amid the turmoil of this nether earth ;
'Tis golden bliss, unsullied with alloy,
O Christ, to learn Thy worth.

Here I abide,
Taught of Thyself the better part to
choose.

There's nought to gain, if parted from Thy
side ;

Ah no ! but all to lose.

I can but sing !
I sing of Him whose precious blood was
spilt.
Yes, Heaven above shall with His praises
ring.

Come ! join me if thou wilt.

The Bible Annotator.

BIBLE STUDIES AND MEDITATIONS.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BELIEVER.

On His Person (Eph. i. 13)—As a Seal.

In His Heart (Gal. iv. 6)—As a Son.

In His Body (1 Cor. vi. 19)—As a Temple.

The First secures him FOR God.

The Second establishes communion WITH God.

The Third sets him apart TO God.

TRUE WITNESSES IN TRYING PLACES.

NOAH in a godless world (2 Pet. ii. 5).

JOSEPH in an Officer's House (Gen. xxxix. 2-9).

DAVID in a King's Palace (1 Sam. xvi. 14-23).

DANIEL in a Heathen Court (Dan. i. 8).

MORDECAI in an Enemy's Presence (Esther iii. 1-6).

GOD'S LITTLE THINGS.

A Little Flock (Luke xii. 32)—To Shepherd.

A Little Strength (Rev. iii. 8)—To Serve.

A Little While (Heb. x. 37)—To Wait.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

Why is the Authorised Version of the Bible commonly used in public reading and ministry, in preference to the Revised Version, which is the work of the ablest scholars of our time? It is universally acknowledged that as an aid to Bible study, the Revised Version has its value. The Revisers had many resources—especially the more recently discovered Hebrew and Greek MSS.—which the translators of 1611 had not the benefit of. But beyond all doubt these were men of God, whose hearts were sound in His statutes, and who were marvellously helped in giving a true rendering of God's inspired utterances, which no measure of human learning would have enabled them to do. There were no doubt godly men among the Revisers, but there are certain blemishes in the Revision, especially in the marginal readings, which indicate the hand of Socinians and so-called "Higher Critics" being uppermost, and their votes in the majority. Some of these where received, tend to obscure the great fundamentals of the faith. We regard it as a cause for unceasing thankfulness, that the old and ever fragrant Version, which generations of God's people have loved and lived by, holds the honoured place, as we fully expect it will, the newer Version being simply used as a book of reference.

Answers to Correspondents

"YOUNG BELIEVER."—Seventh Day Adventists are very active in circulating their literature, and selling it from house to house. Their doctrine is fundamentally erroneous, and should be shunned. We hope to deal with it in a short series of papers on "Prevalent Errors," including Mormonism, Spiritualism, &c., in next year's "Magazine," if the Lord will.

D. C., SHEFFIELD.—There is only one personal "devil" mentioned in Scripture—"The Devil" (see Matt. iv. 1). The word is never used in the plural except in three cases, where the characteristics of that one devil are seen in human beings, who are called "slanderers" (1 Tim. iii. 11), "false accusers" (2 Tim. iii. 3; Titus ii. 3). There are many demons, which is the word used, most frequently translated "devils" in the A.V., but rightly "demons" in the R.V. They are doubtless emissaries for and subjects of the devil (see Rev. xvi. 13-14; Matt. xii. R.V.).

E. A. T., DUBLIN.—Timothy was not an apostle, yet he filled a place which no one can now claim to occupy, as an apostle's delegate (1 Tim. i. 3), in a place of special trust which had been assigned him, to guard the doctrine of the Lord and defend it against the assaults of error, with authority. All are no doubt called to this (Jude 3), but in a different fashion, not by apostolic authority, but by bringing the written Word, which is now complete and all-sufficient (2 Tim. iii. 15-16) to bear on all that may arise, either in doctrine or practice. Apostolic succession is a Romish figment, but apostolic example and teaching remain to the end (Jude 17).

T. N., LIVERPOOL.—Young believers should be guarded as far as is possible from controversy, especially when it is a matter of mere "word fighting." Older Christians—especially such as care for and shepherd the flock—may have to meet and grapple with those who arise "speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them," but the lambs of the flock and such as are "weak and feeble," should be preserved from the arena of controversy, and kept in a warm and godly atmosphere, occupied only with that which is right and profitable. As in a godly home, the father and mother will never allow their children to hear of things that would defile their minds or hurt them, although they themselves may have to hear and deal with such; so in the Christian assembly, true

shepherds who watch for souls, will shield the young and inexperienced among the saints, from all that would be unprofitable to them, notwithstanding the demand of some, that every little trouble should be made the subject of public debate in the assembly.

A. L. B., SOUTHAMPTON.—The tendency of the times is certainly not toward modesty either in dress or speech amongst worldly females. It may fairly be questioned whether in certain circles of professing Christians there is a much better condition of things. Frivolity and light conversation, frequently lacking delicacy and propriety, are not uncommon in such gatherings as you describe. We have never known any real spiritual profit to result from them. Young people are apt to think their parents unreasonable, in the restraint put upon them in regard to their presence at such gatherings, but it must not on that account be relaxed. Some day, they will know its meaning, and fully approve of it.

J. M., RENFREWSHIRE.—If you are not of one mind in the assembly, regarding the reception of the individual who has been proposed for fellowship, you must wait until God gives oneness of mind. Majorities cannot act in the things of God, nor can the consciences of fellow-believers be over-ridden by those who think they see what others do not, yet are honestly desiring to know that they may do the Lord's will. It is easy enough to write and talk of "patience" and "grace," but in such cases as you describe, where the exercise of both is called for, it is wonderful how little of either is to be found. If a "majority" are determined to force one upon the assembly, whom others do not believe to be morally fit for its fellowship, they must be held responsible for whatever consequences of such an unscriptural and ungodly action may follow. Tell them so, and leave it there with God.

A. M'B., LANCASHIRE.—The Gospel work of an assembly should be a matter of common interest to all, and conducted in such a way by those who actively control and arrange it, that all may heartily share in it. We know many assemblies where to a man all turn out to the assembly's Gospel meetings, and diligently help in getting the people, sing in the open air, deal with anxious ones, and such like. But where a self-chosen few, have assumed the rights of doing what they like, and bringing whom they will to preach, without the fellowship or sympathy of the assembly, Gospel work soon dies from decay, or drifts into a semi-Gospel, semi-pleasant Sunday entertainment, with its organ, solo singers, and

successive crops of converts, duly numbered, accredited, and advertised, by arrangement, to keep up the show, often when there is not a breath of Divine power, or a trace of Divine working in the whole thing. Any company of Christians who, either from indifference, or because they have lost the sense of what is of God and according to His Word, lets their Gospel work drift into such channels, will awake sooner or later, like Samson, to find their power—if they ever had any—gone, and themselves the sport of the enemies of God and His truth.

Questions Requiring Answers.

We acknowledge with gratitude, the help given in this department by esteemed brethren and servants of Christ during the year, and would earnestly seek a fuller measure of fellowship in this deeply responsible and important ministry. There are many honest and inquiring children of God, who greatly value the help given in this way, and we have very many grateful testimonies to timely aid given in trying seasons and in perplexing paths received through these answers.

QUESTION I.—It is alleged that there are assemblies of Christians, gathered unto the Lord's Name, in which those who are known to hold and teach the non-eternal punishment of the wicked, are received or retained? Is this so?

QUESTION II.—Would it be according to the spirit and principles of the Word, for a Christian tradesman to sue a debtor at law, for the recovery of his account.

QUESTION III.—What is the difference in character between the assembly gathered for worship on the Lord's Day morning, and say at a Conference on Monday. And what Scriptural principle of ministry is applicable to the latter?

QUESTION IV.—Is there any Scriptural, united method of recognising and welcoming a newly-formed assembly, or is this to be left to individual discernment?

QUESTION V.—Where it is feared that a number of unregenerate professors have been hurried into the fellowship of an assembly, and continue there, while manifesting no signs of spiritual life, what is the Scriptural way to deal with them?

QUESTION VI.—Should evangelists and others who move about preaching, take to do with assembly matters, especially difficulties, in places to which they go?

QUESTION VII.—Who is primarily responsible for the rent and expenses of halls in which assemblies of believers gather? Is it the individuals whose names are on the lease, or the assembly as a whole?

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS AND READERS.

THE present issue completes the Fifteenth Year of "The Believer's Magazine." We are deeply grateful for the hearty fellowship manifested by thousands of the Lord's people, in all parts of the world throughout these years, in the preparation, publication, and circulation of these pages, first in their smaller and more especially in their enlarged and present form. Since the Magazine was enlarged it has doubled its circulation, and we are happy to say, for the encouragement of all its friends and helpers, it continues to steadily find its way among those who value and are helped by its teachings, and who seek to spread them among fellow-saints. During the year, several of our earliest and warmest friends and helpers have gone to their rest with Christ. We especially miss our esteemed and devoted helper, the late Mr. ALFRED J. HOLIDAY, whose practical interest and counsel were invaluable, and whose spiritual and always instructive ministry so often filled these pages. We are thankful to be able to say, that a number of very valuable and hitherto unpublished Expositions of the Word, Bible Studies, and Notes on Scripture Subjects found among Mr. Holiday's papers, have been sent us, which will appear in these pages from time to time. We have a number of articles by other writers, which we hoped to find space for during the present year, these (God willing) will appear during 1906, with fresh papers by many contributors and articles by old and valued writers well known to our readers.

The need of wholesome, solid, Scriptural teaching, only proportioned, and rightly divided, is more than ever felt, while less of it seems to be available as the years go by. Young believers are to be found everywhere hungering for the Bread of Life. Many are being brought into Assemblies of Christians who scarcely know why they are there, or what they are there for. Need it be wondered if the spiritual tone is lowered, if the spirit of true intelligent worship declines, or if untaught believers are fickle, light, and easily led astray. The Truth alone, in the Spirit's power, maintains a right condition and restores it when it fails. It shall be our aim, as much as in us is, to set forth in plain and simple words through these pages, the Truth that bears an individual and collective responsibility, and to minister that which with the blessing of God, will help toward godly living and God honouring testimony. "Fundamental Truths," now everywhere being called in question; "Prevalent Errors" abounding, to waylay and entrap the ignorant and unwary, and "Paths of Blessing" for young believers, will all be dealt with simply, pointedly, and plainly in the Magazine during 1906. We shall be grateful, if in each assembly of believers a brother who is in sympathy with these teachings, will kindly mention "The Believer's Magazine," and take orders for it during December, and if others will name and recommend it to Christian friends who do not get it. Specimen copies for this purpose will be cheerfully sent to any address

During 1906 the following amongst other articles will appear in "The Believer's Magazine":—
Gospel Work, its Power, its Progress, and its Hindrances; with an Examination of some Present Day Movements and their Results. By an Old Evangelist.

The Present Truth.—A Series of most Valuable Expositions of the Word. By the late Alfred J. Holiday.

Fundamental Truths of the Faith. The Triune God—The Divinity of Christ—The Inspiration of the Word—The Atonement—The Eternal Future. Expositional and Simple. A Series of Bible Readings given in Marble Hall, Glasgow. By the Editor.

Bible Readings, by Donald Munro, Toronto, on The Word of God; the Church, its Worship, Ministry, Rule, and Relation to Christendom. Searching and Practical.

Service for Christ.—By Franklin Ferguson, New Zealand.

Christ's Messages to the Seven Churches, Rev. ii., iii. Solemn, Searching, and Seasonable Ministry. By the late Alfred J. Holiday.

Separation to God.—Practical Lectures on Godly Living, translated from the French.

Prevalent Errors and Latter Day Delusions.—Plain Papers on Spiritualism, Mormonism, Mesmerism, Palmistry, &c. The Dangers of Romanism, Rationalism, Seventh Day Adventism, Socialism, &c.

The Father's Welcome and the Wanderer's Return.—A Series of Papers on Luke xv., on Backsliding and Restoration. By James Murray.

The Christian's Stewardship.—By Dr. J. Norman Case, China.

Reported Addresses.—By W. H. Hunter, W. J. McClure, H. B. Thompson, John Smith, T. D. W. Muir.

Original Poems.—By the late Mrs. Strong, William Luff, and others.

A Visit Among Some Assemblies, and the Lessons it Taught Me.—By an Aged Pastor.

Questions and Answers, Bible Annotations, Difficult Passages, Misinterpreted Texts. Correspondence.

Tidings of the Lord's Work, Forthcoming Meetings, Visits of Evangelists, Revival News and Work.