

THE Believer's Magazine

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF
SCRIPTURE EXPOSITION AND BIBLE STUDY,
WITH PLAIN PAPERS ON DOCTRINAL AND
PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

EDITED BY
JOHN RITCHIE.

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The Believer's Magazine.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL OF SCRIPTURE EXPOSITION.

Ebenezer.

A NEW YEAR MEDITATION.

WILLIAM HOSTE, B.A.

THREE words may spell out the whole story of the believer's pilgrimage, EBENEZER, the record of God's past deliverances; HALLELUJAH, the acknowledgment of present mercies; and JEHOVAH-JIREH, the assurance of future provision. Though we learn from the example of the apostle Paul to "forget the things that are behind," the things of the world and of fleshly religion, which once we counted gain, and even our past service and possible spiritual attainments, such as they may have been, yet we are equally called not to "forget all His benefits," nor "all the way the Lord hath led us to humble us, to prove us, and to know what was in our heart." The past year has been for many a rough way, but faith knows it has been the "right way." It has been a pathway of tears to some, but through their tears they have learned to say "Thy will be done." Disappointments have been mingled with mercies, and have often proved deliverances. As we look back, there is much to humble us for our sins and failures, but we can testify that His faithfulness has been unchanging, His guidance unerring, His help unfailing, and the ministry of our Great High Priest in heaven and of an indwelling Comforter have been constant. Those stones that dot the pathway are

not gravestones, but "Stones of help." It might have been otherwise, for "unless the Lord had been our help, our soul had almost dwelt in silence." But God is faithful, and He has opened the way of escape, so that, like the apostle Paul, each believer can raise an Ebenezer, "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day." But how far this has been sensibly *experienced*, depends on our walk with God. "He made known His ways unto Moses." This may have begun in Midian, but it was a lesson not learnt at once. In the earlier years of his exile, the thought that he was a stranger in a strange land predominated, and he stereotyped his sad experience in the name of his eldest son, Gershom. But as years went by he learned to say, with the psalmist, "I am a stranger *with Thee*," and he raised his "Ebenezer" in the name of his second son, Eliezer, for said he, "The God of my fathers was my help," a good testimony to his home upbringing. Another condition of enjoying the help of God is separation from evil. No doubt God was always providentially the 'Help' of His people during the 20 years that the ark remained at Kirjath-jearim (see 1 Sam. vii.), but no Ebenezer was raised then, even though "the whole house of Israel lamented after the Lord." Lamentation is good when real, but, without separation from evil, will not do for God. But when the idols were put away, the advocacy of Samuel over the sacrifice prevailed, and

God gave deliverance, and the national Ebenezer was set up. "He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy." Another condition of receiving help from God, is felt weakness. "He was marvellously helped till he was strong" has been said of many a one since Uzziah. But "Heaven helps those who help themselves" is also true. How can we help ourselves? Can we not gather together, like Judah in the days of Jehoshaphat, to "find mercy and grace to help in time of need." Lack of waiting upon God in private and united prayer, is surely the secret of much help withheld at the present crisis. Dark days are ahead, perhaps darker than we have ever seen, but "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble." Shall we not then start the New Year with the words of the psalmist in our hearts, "Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings, will I rejoice."

Toward the Sunrising.

"In the wilderness . . . toward the sunrising"
(Num. xxi. 11).

THE way has been long, and rough, and drear,
But the end at last is very near;
So they pitch their tents to the glad sunrise,
And look for their home with longing eyes.

And the end is near of our desert way,
We are camped and watch for the coming day;
For the Morning Star is about to rise,
And we hail the dawn with eager eyes.

O joy, for the land that we call our own!
And the sight of Christ on the glorious throne.
The "Blessed Hope" is so bright to-day,
That we start with a "Song" on our onward way.

Our Glorious Lord.

His Dignities, Excellencies, and Glories.

IT is fitting that our searchings and studies and meditations in the Holy Word for another year, should begin with the Glorious Person of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself. For it is the Lord Himself—the dignity and excellency of His Person—that gives value to His work and virtue to all the offices He bears. In ancient time, the offices of priest and king, in which men of little worth were sometimes placed, gave to their persons a certain sacredness which was to be recognised even in the absence of moral worth. So that David would not, when he could, stretch forth his hand against King Saul, even after he had been forsaken by God and possessed by an evil spirit, because he recognised him as "the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. xxvi. 9, 11). But it is not so with the Lord. No office that he bears can add to His dignity and excellency. His Person imparts His own value to every service that He renders, and to all offices that He holds. Whatever He takes up, whoever He calls, by whomsoever His Name is confessed, on these His excellency is placed, and to them the full value of His work is reckoned. His people stand with Him in all His virtues and in the full values of His atoning work and its acceptance in heaven. To Himself, in His Glorious Person, His perfect work, and to the services He renders toward us, in the past, the present, and the future, the writers in the following symposium testify. Their subjects are varied, but their

theme is one. As we read, "To HIM give all the prophets witness" (Acts x. 43), in His person, His sufferings, and His glories, so these bear their testimony to Him. As of old He drew near to the two disciples on the Emmaus road, and "expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning HIMSELF" (Luke xxiv. 27), so now the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who is with and in His people, ever delights to take of the things of Christ as treasured in the completed Word, and "show" them to the waiting soul.

THE ETERNAL SON OF GOD.

William Hoste, B.A.

"He is before all things" (Col. i. 17). He is the Eternal One. This takes us back further than the "beginning" of Gen. i. 1, to that shoreless eternity of John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." If wisdom could say in Prov. viii., "When He prepared the heavens I was there," He could also say, "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning, before His works of old." He was independent of and outside of creation. The fundamental truth of the pre-existence of the Son is borne witness to, with signal clearness, in many Scriptures, and notably in the Gospel by John. The Forerunner, taught of God, could say of Him who, according to the flesh, was His younger cousin, "He is preferred before Me, for *He was before me*" (John i. 30). The Lord Himself could speak (and who else could possibly have done so?) of ascending to that place *where He was before* (John vi. 62), and could testify to His

enemies, "Before Abraham was I AM" (John viii. 50). And when in His sacerdotal prayer He asked to be glorified as Son of Man, He could ask no greater glory than that which He had with the Father as Son of God, "*before* the world was." Again in Col. i. 16, the Spirit of God takes us back further still, and testifies, saying, "He is before *all things*."

CHRIST, THE BRIGHTNESS OF GOD'S GLORY.

William Lincoln.

The opening words of the Epistle to the Hebrews present to us the Lord Jesus Christ in His Divine glories, as Son of God and Heir of all. He is "the brightness"—the irradiation of God's glory. As the rays of the sun in the heavens break forth and beam upon us, so the Son is the forthshining of God. Apart from Christ, we could not have known Him. But the Son who lay in His bosom, He "declares" Him, tells Him out. When we see Christ, we know God. And He is "the express image of His Person"—the impress of His substance, of His essential Being. The thought here is, that as a seal makes its exact impress on the wax it touches, so the Son represents the Father here. He who ever was God, and was with God (John i. 1), has been here, and His every work and word and act told out God. All that is to be known of God has been seen in Him. He could say, "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). I used to be afraid of God, because I thought of Him only as a God afar off, great in His might, righteous in His judgment, austere and

exacting. But when I look on the Lord Jesus, when I listen to His works, when I see Him take the babes in His arms, and lift His hands in blessing on them, when I watch His ways and see His sympathies, and at last look upon His dying form, I learn that God is Love, that His heart is toward me. And I dread Him no more.

HIS GLORY AS PERFECT MAN.

J. G. Bellett.

The blessed Lord, when He was here in our world, was always representing man to God, as God desired to have Him. As perfect Man, He gave back to God, in His person and ways, that complacency in man, which sin in Adam and his race had taken from Him. He represented Man to God as He ought to be, and God rested in Him. The Father's delight in Him, and in the moral glories displayed in His life, was constantly expressing itself during the years of the Son's sojourn here. In Jordan, at His baptism, the heavens were opened over Him, and a voice was heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Again, on the holy hill, the same voice from the excellent glory expressed the Divine complacency in Him, adding the words, "Hear ye Him," for He stands alone, above all others, without equal. And God was glorified in all this perfect display of moral glory in a world which had "grieved His heart" (Gen. vi. 6). All that was of God had been fully maintained by Him, and all the Divine attributes magnified in a measure beyond all that had ever been seen of them before. And thus it was that as the One in whom

this moral glory had been perfectly displayed throughout His life and in His obedience unto death, the Lord had the right to enter on His own personal glory, for He needed nothing to commend Him other than that which He had in Himself. And so He went "straightway" to take His seat at the right hand of the throne, in His own right. As the sheaf of first-fruits of old was reaped from the fields of Israel, and presented to God, needing nothing other than its own perfectness for its acceptance, so the Lord passed to the right hand of the Majesty on high, and was "received up into heaven" in His own excellence as glorified Man.

THE EVER-PERFECT ONE.

Henry Groves.

Luke alone, gives us those exquisite touches in the history of the childhood and youth of the blessed Lord, which shew that in Him there was nothing out of place, nothing out of time. As the babe, He was the perfect babe, and lay on the bosom of the Virgin. As the child, He comes out of Egypt with Mary and Joseph, and it is said of Him, "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him" (Luke ii. 40). He grew from day to day: in spirit He became stronger and stronger—filled with the wisdom that is from above. And grace rested on Him. How wondrous this sinless, this daily growth, this spotless display of that grace which dwelt in God. We advance a few years more. He is twelve years old, and goes to the Holy City. We see Him in the midst of the

doctors. They wonder, but He is the child still. He asks questions. He answers what questions are put to Him, but He never once gets out of the place in which His youth put Him; and yet, so had He grown in wisdom, that at the age of twelve He could have said, "Thou hast made Me wiser than all my teachers." At every step of His career, Jesus was the Perfect One, ever perfect, and ever growing up into the full stature of Manhood; and He who had been when a child the perfect child, became the perfect Man, not showing His perfections on few and great occasions of life, but in the ever-recurring little opportunities where mortals ever fail. We see Him always in harmony with Himself, and Himself ever in harmony with God. As a teacher, how perfect His lowliness and meekness! As a Friend, how perfect His friendship and sympathy! As a Sufferer, how perfect His submission! As a Son, how infinitely tender His solicitude! All was so perfect that, while the stupendous work of redemption was duly accomplished, not the minutest apparent trifle of life was left undone.

HIMSELF, THE PERFECT SACRIFICE.

W. H. Bennet.

He who came forth from the Father, to take the body prepared for Him, was in every sense from the beginning the Holy One. That "the Word *became* flesh" is one of the foundation truths of Scripture; that He was in the "likeness" only of "sinful flesh," the Holy Spirit is careful to assert. Before His birth it was said to the Virgin by the angel, "That holy

thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." As God's "holy Servant," He was so free from anything like a tendency towards what was contrary to God, that He could open the heavens to declare His good pleasure in His beloved Son, who ever walked in the full light of His countenance, and the perfect communion of the Holiest. At the appointed time "He offered Himself without spot to God," and was raised from the dead in all the value of His perfect sacrifice, the resurrection not *adding* to its perfectness, but *declaring* it.

THE EXALTED ONE.

George F. Trench.

The Philippian Epistle gives us a magnificent view of the three marvellous journeys of the Lord Jesus—(1) In the eternal past, where as God and with God He ever was, in the Father's bosom, down to Bethlehem where He was born. (2) From the manger in Bethlehem downward still, to the Cross of Calvary. (3) From the silent tomb of Joseph in the garden, to the throne of God in the highest heaven. The last of these three stages begins in the silence of the tomb, when God in vindication of His claims raised Him from the dead as First-begotten of a new family and Firstfruits of a new race. Then from the presence of His own, while in the act of blessing them, He is "received up into heaven." Passing through the ranks of angels, He ascends still upward, past all princes, powers, potentates of the heavenly host, ever ascending onward and upward, never halting till He, the crucified of Calvary, who had hung between two

robbers on a felon's cross a few weeks before, sits down at the right hand of God on the throne. And as the light of the sun increases, so the vision brightens from glory to glory, until universal supremacy passes into His hands, and every knee is bent, and the lowly Man of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and Golgotha, is owned as "Lord of all." What a glorious triumph! What a climax of wonder and glory!

Thus the blessed Lord Himself, in His personal virtues, His vicarious sacrifice, and His official glories, passes before us in the pages of the Word, ever to be the object of our hearts while here, as He will be the theme of our praises hereafter when we "see Him as He is." It has been Himself all the ages, all along the way, on which faith's far-seeing eye has gazed in adoring wonder. In the past, when dimly through types and shadows, in promise and prophecy He was seen by patriarchs, sung by psalmists, and heralded by prophets, it was Himself that was the object of their hopes. In the "days of His flesh," when here among us, it was Himself that drew and kept the little flock He had called out from the world to be "His own." And it was the attractiveness they found in Him that caused some of them to share His rejection and stand by His Cross. Still, it is Himself, "the very same Jesus"—now glorified in the heavens—for whose personal return we look and watch and pray. "Come, Lord Jesus."

The Early Church.

IN ITS PURITY, SIMPLICITY, AND POWER.

FRESH in its early beauty, in the dew of spiritual youth, as from "the womb of the morning," the "Church which was at Jerusalem" (Acts viii. 1) stood in the world amid the very scenes of her Lord's rejection and crucifixion, a living witness of His power, on that Pentecostal day. From the realms of glory into which He had entered on that day, when "a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts i. 9), the living Lord, who had promised them in these last words of His in the upper room, that He would send "Another Comforter," to be with and in them during the age of His absence from them, had fulfilled His promise, and "shed forth" that coronation gift of the Father given Him on His ascension day, when He was set down at God's right hand (Acts ii. 33). To the waiting company of a hundred and twenty praying souls in the upper room, the promised Spirit came, filling them all, causing them to know in personal experience the meaning of the words they had heard from the lips of the Lord, "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me and I in you" (John xiv. 21). Wondrous words! little understood by them when first they heard them, but now become "a living, bright reality," a glowing fire, a personal experience in them for the first time. This was Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, the dawn of a new age, not only on the chart of time, but in the innermost depths of the experience of the

disciples of the Lord. Six weeks ago, they had faltered, scattered, fled in weakness and in fear. Here, they stand united, strong, rejoicing in the realisation of a new relationship to God and Christ and each other, conscious of a new force within them, with a fresh flow of spiritual energy coursing through them. This was the cause of all that followed. They had come to know that they were one with Christ, joined to the Lord in a living bond, closer than they had ever known in the days when they walked and talked with Him in these very scenes. He was bodily absent from them, corporeally in the highest heaven, but they were no more twain but one. He, the living Head, the Sum of all fulness, they His members here, in whom His life was to be manifested, and through whom His might was to be displayed. They had not yet learned the doctrine of the "mystery" of Eph. iii. 4-6, for it had not yet been revealed, but they had the happy experience of it in their souls, which is too often lacking where the doctrine is fully known. And thus it was "that all that believed were together," drawn by spiritual instinct rather than by commandment, and kept together by their heart devotion to the one Person, while as yet there was no organisation and no official rule. And the Church was never holier, never happier, never so full of grace and power as it was in that early hour of its existence in the world. A living Christ made real to every member of His body by the indwelling Spirit, was the secret of it all. And thus it ever will be throughout the age. J. R.

Dwelling Together in Unity.

ITS RESULT TO GOD AND TO MAN.

W. J. MCCLURE, CALIFORNIA.

IN Psalm cxxxiii. we read : "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard ; that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

We have here two words, "good" and "pleasant." One is Godward, the other manward. Then there are two symbols, "the ointment" and "the dew," to illustrate them. "Brethren" are those who have a common life in Christ, "dwelling together," not scattered or divided into sects and parties, nor "unattached"—as the word is used now to describe those who are not connected with any company: those who from selfishness avoid the responsibilities of assembly life, and in this way suffer and cause loss. In early days "all that believed were together," and when in any locality saints are scattered rather than gathered, it is surely a mark of Satan's triumph. "Dwelling together in unity" is God's picture here. It was realised at the beginning. Unity is inward and of God : it is the result of the Spirit's working. Eph. iv. 2, gives us a Divine recipe for its realisation. Uniformity is manward, and may exist apart from spiritual life or the Spirit's power. There is no cheap way of attaining this

manifested unity. It makes great demands upon those who seek it. We would naturally seek to surround ourselves with kindred spirits, those who will not differ from us, or try us by their words and ways. But there would be no need for the exhibition of the graces of "long-suffering and meekness" there. Wherever God sees a company of His own "dwelling together" in grace toward each other, it is to Him a savour of Christ, whose Name is as "ointment poured forth" (Song i. 31). They may have been called out of different countries, they are found in different walks in life, they have varied temperaments, varied measures of apprehension of the truth, they may have been taught in different "schools" as we say, where certain truths are emphasised and others kept in the background. Yet here they are "dwelling together in unity." And God sees in them a manifestation of that for which His Son prayed, "that they all may be one," and finds in them a precious foretaste of that for which He died, "to gather together in one" the scattered children of God. It is something "precious" to Him, like the fragrant ointment giving forth a sweet smell. How solemn, in the light of this, it is to bring in division, where God calls for "patience and forbearance." To "sow discord" among brethren is a thing that God hates (Prov. iv. 19). Thus we learn what brethren dwelling in unity and walking in grace are to God. Next, we learn what such a company of God's people will be manward, to those around them. "As the dew of Hermon that

descended upon the mountains of Zion." It is a long cry from Hermon in the far north, to the mountains of Zion down south. But the dew that came upon Hermon, which means "devoted," whose uplifted head of 8700 feet, went far into the quiet upper regions, caused the streams of melted snow from its sides to flow down to form the dew, which fell on Zion. What a picture of what a church composed of brethren dwelling in unity should be toward the world! Of any such company, however small, the word will surely be fulfilled, "For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

An Ideal Spiritual Condition.

IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD.

1. We should NOT appear before God with an *empty* heart and an *empty* mind.
2. We should NOT come to the Lord with an *empty* heart and a *full* mind.
3. Neither should we assemble with a *full* heart and an *empty* mind.

These three stages are all more or less incomplete, and even deplorable.

4. We should not present ourselves to God even with a *full heart* and a *full* mind. What, then, is this ideal state?

5. A *FULL* heart and an *OPEN* mind is the right condition. No person should come to the worship meeting *prepared* to speak, or determined not to speak. We ought to come before God with *hearts full* of gratitude to God, and with *minds open* to receive every impression of the Spirit of God. This is the ideal state.—T. BAIRD.

What Shall the End Be?

THE question is asked often enough in these times of appalling events and unheard of catastrophies. The world's prophets predict great and glorious things, including universal peace, prosperity and happiness. But it is a false and deceptive hope, entirely opposed to the Word of God. The prophets of what professes to be the Church, foretell a united Christendom, the ending of sectarian distinctions, a fusion of all creeds into one great national and international Church. The Word of God declares that religious corruptions will increase, and that "imposters will wax worse and worse." When the Lord comes, all His own will be removed to heaven, but the false will be left, utterly rejected. There is not the vestige of a hope that a corrupt Christendom will be purified or regenerated. Casting off the last rags of an empty profession, they, in one united mass, will believe "THE lie," and under judicial blindness sent by God, most will receive "the Antichrist", whom they will serve as their master and worship as their god (2 Thess. ii. 7-12). And this huge sham, the elements of which are preparing now, will be the world's last and greatest show of religion combined with commerce—"Babylon the Great"—which will meet its doom, first at the hand of that world it has sought to rule and control (Rev. xvii. 15), and finally from high heaven, to which its sins have reached (Rev. xviii. 5), calling for righteous retribution. Judgments, in ever-increasing severity—as described in Rev. chap. iv.

to xviii.—come upon the guilty world, *overturning its thrones and preparing it* for the last diabolical form of government, vested in a man, whose true character is described by the name of "Beast"—actually wild Beast—given him by God (Rev. xiii. 1), a man energised by the devil, and able to bring hell's legions to his aid at call, and use all the powers of Satan as deceiver, devourer, and blasphemer to accomplish his ends. Emperor of the Roman earth, whose kings are his vassals, he claims honours and worship which belong to God alone, threatening with death all who refuse to yield obedience to his demands. And this great political prodigy will have as his henchman a religious accomplice, who will exercise his authority and use Satanic powers delegated to him to deceive (Rev. xiii. 11-16). Both of these are to be caught red-handed in the height of their opposition to God and pride of their success, by the living and returning Lord, and by Him hurled, without tasting death, into the burning lake, its first and most miserable tenants, until the devil himself is cast there beside them a thousand years later (Rev. xix. 20; xx. 10). Judgment on all enemies soon clears the scene, and introduces that kingdom of which prophets have spoken and psalmists sung, in which heaven and earth will each have place and part, in which the Lord alone will be exalted, and over which He with His glorified saints will rule in righteousness. We counsel our readers to turn to the Word of God, where heaven's own light is given on these coming events. A.G.

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

THE WORK OF CHRIST.

- His SACRIFICE**, completed on the Cross (Heb. x. 12).
His PRIESTHOOD, continued in the Heavens (Heb. vii. 27).
His REIGN, consummated on the Throne (1 Cor. xv. 28).

LIFE, LIGHT, LIBERTY.

- Life** in and from Christ (John i. 4; x. 10).
Light through the written Word (Psa. cxix. 130).
Liberty by the Indwelling Spirit (Rom. viii. 2).

WHAT THE GRACE OF GOD DOES.

- It gave Christ to Die for All** (Heb. ii. 9).
It brings Salvation unto All (Tit. ii. 11).
It justifies through Redemption (Rom. iii. 24).
It saves all that Believe (Eph. ii. 8).
It suffices for all their Need (2 Cor. ix. 8).

CONCISE STUDIES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS.

THE LORD, HIS PEOPLE'S KEEPER.

- He is able to keep what is Entrusted** (2 Tim. i. 12).
He keeps His own from Evil (2 Thess. iii. 3).
He keeps them in Perfect Peace (Isa. xxvi. 3).
He keeps them from Stumbling (Jude 21, R.V.).
He keeps as the Apple of the Eye (Psa. xvii. 8).
He keeps the door of the Lips (Psa. cxli. 3).
He keeps day and night (Isa. xxvii. 3).

OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST.

- Called by God to His office** (Heb. v. 10).
Fitted for it by His experiences (Heb. ii. 17).
Actively engaged for His People (Heb. ix. 24).
Able to succour in Temptation (Heb. ii. 18).
Able to fully sympathise (Heb. iv. 15).
Able to save all the way (Heb. vii. 24).

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

The Spirit's Guidance in the Assembly's Worship.

Is the presence and guidance of the Spirit in the assembly, when gathered as such, for the worship of God and to shew forth the Lord's death, on the Lord's Day morning, to be expected now, as it was evidently manifested in the early Church? Or has the general failure caused a withdrawal of His presence in this aspect, to the extent, that we need no longer expect it? This doctrine is being taught,

and it is having its evil effects among us, where I assemble. Simple help from the Word, will be greatly valued.

The abiding presence of the Comforter was promised by the Lord in His upper room discourse, when He said, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever,"—or, as it may be rendered, "for the age" (John xiv. 16). His indwelling in the believer (1 Cor. vi. 19) and in the Church (1 Cor. iii. 17), is clearly and fully taught in the Epistles. Carnality in the individual may "grieve" (Eph. iv. 30), and disorder in the assembly may "quench" (1 Thess. v. 19) the Spirit, but He does not withdraw His presence on this account. Your question, we gather, has special reference to His guidance in worship and ministry among the saints, when gathered "in assembly." The principle and practice of His guidance and operations there, is simply set forth in 1 Cor., chap. xii.-xiv. The principle is briefly stated in the words, "As He will" (chap. xii. 4). The practice, in chap. xiv. 26, "Let all things be done unto edifying." The measure in which the Spirit's presence is realised, and His operations manifested, will be according to the spiritual state of those assembling, and their subjection to the Lord "in the midst" (Matt. xviii. 20). Believers come together "in assembly" primarily—not to preach, or teach, or hear, but to exercise the functions of their priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5); to give to God as the Father, the worship that He seeks (John iv. 23). It is "by the Spirit of God" (Phil. iii. 3) alone, that spiritual worship is possible, and if not of His creation and under His guidance, it must be by human arrangement. If those assembling, count on the guidance of the Spirit, and are prepared to go by the Word, in subjection to the living Lord, they will prove His faithfulness, even although only "a little flock." But if, while professing to own the guidance of the Spirit, they resort to human expedients and introduce human arrangements, such as are inconsistent with dependence on the Spirit to use whom He will, as He sees fit, there will be failure. Not because the Divine principle has failed, but because in practice it has been departed from. And it has to be remembered, that the flesh which is in all, is ever ready to take undue advantage of the liberty which is thus given, to mar what is of God and hinder what is of the Spirit. It was so at Corinth (1 Cor. xiv). But the apostle, while reproving disorders, did not suggest

they should appoint one man to lead the worship and exercise all the ministry, to ensure good order. God's principle and way is right, but it needs spiritual men to give it effect in practice. Where this is lacking, it will not work, which is surely a mercy, and a call to self-examination. But where the appointed "minister" does all, things go like clockwork, even when there is not a pulse of spiritual life in the man, or a breath of spiritual power in the worship or ministry.

Answers to Special Questions.

I.—What do the words, "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat" (1 Cor. xi. 28) mean? Do they concern his personal salvation, or his present spiritual condition?

ANSWER A.—They form part of an epistle written to those who are "called saints" (chap. i. 2): persons who are addressed as "in Christ Jesus," although in their actual condition, not "spiritual," but "carnal" (chap. iii. 3). In their observance of the Lord's Supper they were manifesting a careless and unjudged condition, and it is in this connection that they are told to "examine" themselves, not as to their conversion, but in their spiritual state before God. The exercise is a healthy one for all believers, and as the late Robert C. Chapman says, "Self-examination is a solemn and profitable business, and is among the best of spiritual habits." Would to God it were more generally practised by us!

G. S.

ANSWER B.—The word "examine" has in it the thought of "proving," as metals are tried by fire, to separate the precious from the worthless. By using the Word of God (Heb. iv. 12) upon ourselves, our ways, our motives, our desires and aims, we discern how we stand in relation to God, His holiness, and His claims, and are able to pass a just judgment on ourselves. The same word is used in Luke xiv. 19, where the man who had bought the oxen says, "I go to *prove* them," not to find out whether they were his property, but to put them to the test. It is an exercise in which the Christian should continuously engage, and not only just before he goes to keep the Lord's Supper. A. M.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The preaching and teaching of former years had largely as its object the driving of its hearers to the unhealthy exercise of introspection. And such passages as 1 Cor. xi. 28, were

used to incite Christians to take stock of their experiences to determine whether they were saved or not, with the result that frames and feelings became the test of assurance of salvation. And few whose consciences were keen, and whose sense of what a true Christian ought to be, survived the test. Now, the Gospel with the present blessings it brings, is more fully preached, while the believer's acceptance in Christ and His salvation, are truths better known. But the danger is, that they may be held with little exercise of heart and conscience as to what is due to the Lord, who has called those whom He has saved, to purity of motive and holiness of life. Hence the constant need for the wholesome exercise of self-judgment, the putting to the test of the condition of the inner life and the outward walk, by the perfect standard of the Word of God, used honestly and unsparingly upon ourselves in His presence. The Corinthians had evidently neglected this, with the result that they were appearing at the table of the Lord in a carnal, careless, and unjudged condition, which, where it was persisted in, called forth the judgment of the Lord (ver. 32), not for condemnation, but in chastisement. It is worthy of notice that "let a man examine himself" is followed by the words, "and so let him eat"—not stay away. But, having judged his condition and confessed his failures to the Lord, in the consciousness of forgiveness and restoration of soul, to go humbled yet happy, in the joy of restoring grace and renewed strength to "show forth the Lord's death," the value and virtues of which he freshly owns as his only title to a place among his fellow-worshippers here, as in heaven hereafter. Were there more of this among us, many lips would be opened to lead the high praises of the Lord that are usually silent, and the flow of spiritual worship would be fuller and richer than it generally is.

Answers to Correspondents.

NOTE.—In order to overtake a large arrears of questions, we make answers more brief than usual this month, and request our querists and readers to accept this explanation and to "Prove all things."

W. M., DUBLIN.—The world had no room for Christ. You do not require to "make yourself offensive" in order to be cast out. You have only to be what God has made you, and to act as God's child in all spheres, and you will soon discover that

the world—religious and social alike—has no more room for you than it had for Him.

A. H., WILTS.—The words, "walk honestly," in 1 Thess. iv. 12, include more than the paying of that which is due. They carry the meaning of decently, becomingly, worthy of the name and calling of a Christian, as contrasted with the ungodly world (Rom. xiii. 13).

JUNIOS.—In Ephesians, the Church is presented as the body of Christ, and the ministries of chap. iv. 8-14 are for its upbuilding and perfecting. In 1 Cor. the Church is shown in its local aspect in responsibility in the world, and the "helps, governments," &c., of chap. xii. 28, are for its godly order and rule. Ministry is for "all saints," but order and rule are only possible in a local assembly.

STUDENT.—There is nothing in the Bible opposed to astronomical facts. Sir John Herschell, one of the greatest astronomers, says, "Natural reason must of necessity stop short of those truths which it is the object of Revelation to make known." Keep this in mind, too: God is infinite, you are finite. Do not judge God by your imperfect apprehension of His works.

BETA.—The Christian man, if fitted by God's appointment, qualified by the Spirit's guidance, and furnished from the Word, has the right "to speak" in the church when so gathered, but "the woman," no matter how spiritual or intelligent in the Scriptures, is not "permitted" to speak there, but to "keep silence" (1 Cor. xiv. 34). It is God's own appointment, and no argument can annul it.

A National Call to Prayer.

The children of God throughout the British Dominions and in the great Republic of America, cannot fail to be thankful that a day has been set apart and a call to prayer sent forth by His Majesty the King and by the President of the United States, in connection with the long continued and awful war, in which the peoples they rule over are so deeply involved. It may be observed in much formality, and with little sense of what is due to God regarding it, by the many. But the very recognition of the Most High, who ruleth supreme over all nations, cannot be other than for good. It was so, long long ago in ancient Nineveh, heathen city as it was, when its king laid his royal robe aside, and clothing himself in sackcloth and ashes, issuing a decree that his subjects should "turn from their evil way and cry

mightily unto God," for His intervention in mercy on their behalf. "And God saw their works that they turned from their evil ways," and His mercy arrested the impending judgment (Jonah iii. 5-10). We know that Nineveh was not converted, for ere long, a later prophet was sent to pronounce its doom. Nor will a day of humiliation, confession, and prayer now, avert the final judgment pronounced upon this guilty world. But God, who is "rich in mercy," willeth not that any should perish, and He will surely hear the cry of a war-weary people for deliverance. And if the ungodly fail to own their sin and guilt before Him, it is with the people of God to humble themselves before Him on account of theirs, and to "call upon" Him in "the day of trouble" (Psa. l. 15), for His delivering arm to be made bare in the sight of all the nations. There are more of the true children of God in the British Isles and Colonies and in America, than in any part of the great world, and the Gospel of the grace of God has wrought in triumphs wonderfully among them. Let us then betake ourselves to prayer. It need not be in "national" character, for the Christian is "not of the world." It ought to be (1) IN PRIVATE, entering the closet and shutting the door, dealing personally and directly with the God whom we know as Father; (2) IN THE HOUSEHOLD, as families, for there are few indeed who have not loved ones, of their own kith and kin, somewhere, somehow, engaged in the awful strife; (3) AS ASSEMBLIES OF BELIEVERS, in concord, as "prayer was made of the church" (Acts xii. 5) in a day of distress in ancient time; and (4), where it is found to be impossible from long distance and uncertain transit to assemble in large congregations, let GROUPS of praying people come together like those in "the house of Mary," where many were gathered together "praying" (Acts xii. 12). It is not for us to dictate to God what He ought to do, or how and when the war should end. When He intervenes, it will surely be after a manner that will leave little to boast of by any. But let us "pour out our hearts before Him," and cast ourselves in confession, humiliation and trust, on His sovereign mercy, acknowledging His ability to quell the strife, to bring the counsels of the ungodly to nothing, to send deliverance as He will and by whatever means He chooses, and to speak peace amid the storm. "And unto Him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus, unto all generations, for ever and ever. Amen" (Eph. iii. 12, R.V.).

Peace in Tribulation.

THE SOLACE OF THE SAINT IN TRIAL.

THE closing words of the Divine Lord to the little group of disciples around Him, in the upper room, ere He "lifted up His eyes to heaven" to utter His last prayer for them and us to the Father, were, "These things have I spoken unto you, that IN ME ye may have peace. IN THE WORLD ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33, R.V.). "In Me . . . peace; in the world, . . . tribulation." These holy words express the two-fold position they and we are to occupy throughout the period of His absence in heaven. Earlier in His discourse He had said, "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and YE IN ME and I in you" (chap. xiv. 20). "That day" has come, and the believer is "in Christ," joined to the Lord, one spirit with Him. This is true of all, and always true, all the days, under all conditions—

"Once in Him, in Him for ever,

Thus the eternal covenant stands."

But it is one thing to read it in the Book, another to have it dwelling as a present blissful experience in the soul. The being "in Christ" is the work of God, for "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. i. 30), ever, always "in Him." But the "*abiding in Him*" (1 John ii. 28), and the "possessing our possession" as a prophet speaks (Obad. 17), is ours. That which God has given, faith lays hold on, and the Spirit seals in power and blessing in the soul. "In Me . . . peace." In Christ

abiding, from Him deriving, through faith possessing, in the Spirit retaining, it is ours in blissful enjoyment. Nothing less than this is the precious heritage of the saints of God, amid the perplexities and the storms of life. "Thou wilt keep him in PERFECT PEACE whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee" (Isa. xxvi. 4) is the promise of God. It cannot fail. Blessed be His Name! Let us then make use of Christ, abiding in Him, as branch in vine, drawing from Him that "abundance of peace" which He has and holds for all His own.

"In the world . . . tribulation," always, everywhere; it is no surprise, no accident, only what He who knew all, has told us. Sometimes it comes like a sweeping tornado, as if hell were let loose; often in less violent yet more deceitful forms to find us off our guard. But it is always "in the world," ruled by Satan, yet overruled by God. We do not fear it, we reckon on it. "Through many tribulations" we enter "into the kingdom of God" (Acts xvi. 22) in its final and glorious manifestation. "So we glory in tribulations also" (Rom. v. 3), for "we know that we are appointed thereto" (1 Thess. ii. 2). They are needed to keep us humble, dependent, trustful: allowed by God, even if administered by Satan and his instruments. And although we cannot hinder them, or free ourselves from them, and will not run in order to shirk them, we may and we ought to "endure them" (2 Thess. i. 4) joyfully, in the enjoyment of that calm and settled peace which is "IN Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 7 R.V.). J. R.

The Sanctity of the Lord's Day.

AND ITS CLAIMS ON THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

SEVENTY years ago, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, of Dundee, writing to a friend, says, "I rise early on the morning of the Lord's Day, to seek the Lord's face and to hear His voice, so as to be prepared in soul for whatever service I may be able to render to Him throughout its sacred hours. And when work is over, I like to sit up late, that I may have a long and full day with God." These heart utterances of a man who walked with God and served Him faithfully in his day, may well be taken to heart by all who know the Lord and bear His holy Name. With how many of us is the Lord's Day thus spent?

The day is sacred, set apart from the six that succeed it, by the words that describe it. It is "The Lord's Day" (Rev. i. 10)—or, as some render it, "The Lordly Day"—the day that He especially claims for His worship and service, and the day upon which "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. xi. 20) is kept—the only other passage in which the same expression occurs in the New Testament. The "day" is thus linked with the "supper," in the will of the Lord as it is—or ought to be—in the habits of those who are His. Is the Lord's Day thus honoured as He means it to be among us? Are its sanctity, its privileges, and its obligations owned in a way worthy of Him? Do we give it its rightful place as the abiding memorial of the Lord's resurrection, the witness of God's seal on His perfect work, and the day in which those saved in virtue thereof

are to assemble for the remembrance of Him in death, and the owning of Him as risen and glorified. There is no day equal to it in the present age. As one sang long ago—

"Hail holy, happy day of rest,
Of seven fair sisters, first and best."

Yes, "of rest." But not of sloth. It is a day of ungirding from daily toil indeed, but not of idleness or indolence. It is not in its honour to lie in bed, in neglect of the worship of God, and the table of the Lord and His work, or to roam the fields or travel for pleasure on the sacred day. It cannot be the will of God, or in the honour of Christ, for a Christian to offer himself for secular work, and to enrich himself with the wages he derives from his toil. There are certain things which must be done, some household duties attended to, sick ones cared for, animals fed, and "works of necessity and mercy" performed, as our fathers say. But with one who truly loves the Lord, and in M'Cheyne's language, desires to spend "a long day with God," these will be all considered in their relation to Him whose day it is. Personal prayer and meditation on the Word will have a principal place on that day. Assembling for Divine worship with fellow-saints in a right condition of soul, rested in body and free in mind, with "things below" left in their place, and the heart set on "things above," should surely be the Christian's aim on the sacred day. And where there is a true desire to honour the Lord and observe His day, the way will surely be made plain to all who fear the Lord, to do it.

R. D.

The Victory of Resurrection.

GATHERED FROM THE MINISTRY OF J. G. BELLETT.

RESURRECTION of the dead was understood by the saints of olden time. Abraham understood it, when he stood up before his dead at Machpelah (Gen. xxiii. 2-9). Jacob had something of it in view, when he charged his sons to bury him in the sepulchre of his fathers (Gen. xlix. 29-33). Martha talked in the day of her sorrow of resurrection in "the last day" (John xi. 24). But of resurrection *from* the dead, after the pattern of the Lord's own resurrection, they knew nothing. When it was first mentioned to the disciples as they came down from the Transfiguration scene on the holy hill, they then questioned among themselves what it could mean (Mark ix. 10). This surely tells us how little their minds had dwelt in the light of it. And yet it was in the Scripture. The sign of Jonah had told them that the Son of Man, after being three days and nights in the grave, should rise from among the dead as "the Firstfruits" (Col. i. 18) of a new harvest, of which His people are to be the sheaves. In resurrection He is "Firstborn *from* the dead" of a new family, and His brethren will share in His triumph. He could not be holden of death (Acts ii. 24), so He passed through its realm as a Conqueror. He had gained the victory over death, and defeated him who had its power at Calvary, and His victory is declared in resurrection. The gates of hell did not prevail against Him who is Head of His body the church (Eph. i.

20-22), nor shall they prevail against the least or feeblest of His members. The life of the living Son of God victorious over death, is in them. They share in His triumph, although it was all His own. Resurrection was everything to Jesus amid the sorrows and griefs of the world. The cold indifference of those whom He came to bless, did not turn Him aside from the darkness of the path that lay before Him. His joy was found in the prospect of resurrection (Psa. xvi. 8-11). And in the certainty of this, He went on to the death of the Cross. He entered the realm of death in the prospect of resurrection. That prospect was the sunshine in which He walked through the dark shadows of earth. O for more of the same mind in us, beloved! How it would elevate and calm the soul, amid the passing conditions of life! How it would enable us to know the force of that word of the Lord, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit," and to hear the word of Paul to profit, "I die daily," giving up all in view of resurrection. Not expecting full return of his sowing, until then. Everything given up for God at His bidding, and all loss sustained in the service of the Lord, will have due recognition and reward on the resurrection morn. Then will it be seen that nothing spent in the interests of the Lord and in service to His church, has been thrown away. All shall have its full answer and reward in resurrection. To spend one's strength in anything short of this, will end in vanity.

The Early Church :

IN ITS SEPARATION, GROWTH AND UNITY.

THE closing words of Peter's testimony to the "men of Israel" as recorded in Acts ii. 40 were, "Save yourselves from the untoward—this crooked—generation." This was its sum. The actual message was given, we are told, "in many other words," in which witness and exhortation mingled. It was a call from the living Lord in heaven to those who had asked, "What shall we do?" Their repentance and confession of the Name of Jesus Christ, was to be accompanied by separation from the unbelieving multitude. This was THE CHURCH'S SEPARATION. From that hour, a people separate from the crucifiers of the Christ of God, a chosen generation, a new community appeared in the city of Jerusalem, and this people became known as "the Church which was at Jerusalem" (chap. iii. 3). The word which is rendered "church" means a select and called out people, severed from the mass for a special purpose. "The multitude" might come together to hear them speak of the "mighty works of God" (ver. 6); "all the people" might in this, the day of their early grace and power, hold them "in favour" (ver. 47), and, in presence of the works of power wrought by the apostles, might "magnify them" (chap. v. 13), but the Church stood clear and separate, and "of the rest durst no man join himself to them" (chap. v. 14). The Lord, who, as "the glory" was in the midst, was also "a wall of fire round about," as the

prophet speaks (Zech. ii. 5). And by no other means, may the purity of any local church be secured. For the same power that attracts the godly and brings true seekers after the Lord (Exod. xxxiii. 7) outside the camp "unto Him" (Heb. xiii. 13), repels the unsaved. It is when spirituality declines, and the manifested power of God ceases in the midst of any church, that privily "false brethren" (Gal. ii. 4) are "brought in" by those who have lost their spiritual discernment, and that "ungodly men" privily "creep in" (Jude 4), and find a ready sphere for doing the work of the devil in that which bears the Lord's Name. Any Church's true safeguard is, the presence of the Lord in its midst, and a right spiritual condition among those that compose it. Separation from the world and the manifested presence of God in their midst, ever mark out a people who are owned of God (Exod. xxxiii. 16). This lacking, no church, no community, however large, however influential, as men reckon, is worth the space it occupies in the place where it is.

THE CHURCH'S GROWTH is expressed in such words as "The Lord added . . . day by day those that were being saved" (ver. 47). The words, "to the church," of the A.V. have been altered in the R.V., in the words "to them." But it is very doubtful if either phrase has any place in the original text. The word "added" means "to place alongside" those or that already there, for increase. This, the Lord alone can do. So it is written "the Lord added," and conversely "believers were added to the Lord" (chap. v. 14).

The hundred and twenty disciples in the upper room, upon whom the Spirit came at the beginning, were by the living Lord in heaven (see the words of John i. 38), baptised in one Spirit into one body (1 Cor. xii. 13). And the same process, by the same means, continues through the present dispensation. In the deep and vital sense of the word, believers are "joined unto the Lord" and "one spirit" with Him (1 Cor. vii. 17) and His. And thus the Church increases actually by the operation of the Spirit, instrumentally through the witness of its members (John xv. 26). And the increase is never fuller or richer, than when the Church in any locality is in a right condition, at peace, being edified, and "walking in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Ghost" (Acts ix. 31), for then it is "multiplied."

THE CHURCH'S UNITY is described in such words as, "All that believed were *together*" (Chap. ii. 44): "the multitude of them that believed were of *one heart* and soul" (chap. v. 32); "they lifted up their voice to God with *one accord*" (chap. v. 24). There were no rival "denominations then," no opposing "sects" with their distinctive tenets, no "parties" led by teachers of divers and strange doctrines. These appeared later, doing their deadly work, but here, in the dew of its youth, the Church had none of them. All hearts were beating true to the living Lord on the throne, all were controlled by the indwelling Spirit, all in subjection to the Word, so far as they had it then. And we have it all now.

J. R.

The Epistle of Jude.

I.—THE BEGINNINGS OF APOSTASY.

BY ALEXANDER MATTHEWS, WASHINGTON, U.S.A.

THE epistle of Jude tells of the beginnings of departure from God and His Word. It shows the development of corruptions, and tells the way of preservation for the saints along the whole course, until the coming of the Lord. They are greeted as "beloved of God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ" (ver. 1, R.V.). These were their safeguards. They are bidden to "earnestly" contend for the faith which was "once for all delivered unto the saints"—that is the whole truth of God as given us in the Book. It is all from God, and all needed by us. No part is obsolete, none non-essential. This is to be maintained inviolate at as cost. It is to be loved by the saints, as it is hated by the devil, who uses his emissaries to corrupt it. While saints sleep, the enemy sows tares. Through a slavish fear of being considered "contentious," many let go their grip of truths they once learned from God, and others, who become carnal, cease to see their value. When men of mixed principles get into a company of God's saints walking in the truth, they soon by word and way introduce lawlessness, under the specious names of "large-heartedness" and "forbearance," while the "mixed multitudes" go a lusting after Egypt's fare. These men are said to have "crept in unawares," and evidently found a place. In 1 John ii. 19 they "went out," because there was as much of God among

the saints as prevented them having their way. But where the spiritual thermometer is low they settle down, and proceed with their evil work, loosening the bonds of Scripture, and watering down its authority over the consciences of the saints. God's holy and abiding Word set aside, is soon spoken of as "differences of judgment," which are to be borne with. And the authority of the Lord in and over His own house, as expressed in "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv. 37), is frittered away as matters for "individual conscience," to be taken or left at pleasure, as if they were on the same level as "meats and drinks" (1 Cor. xiv. 5). The evil results of these pernicious teachings are seen everywhere around us, and as the years go by, they grow. May God awake the consciences of His own to their true character, and give them grace to firmly resist them. The first effect of such teachings noticed by Jude is, that the grace of God is denied—not in word, but in act. Rein is given to man's will, and God's grace is turned into occasions for indulging lawlessness and lust. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation," teaches the saved to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (Tit. ii. 11-13). But these men, by their latitudinarian teachings, set the will of man free from every obligation to Christ as Lord, that would bridle it. This was how the beginnings of corruption came in, small at the first, allowed to pass unchallenged by those whose business it was to "watch for souls"

and guard the faith committed to their care. It was not so with Paul. He "kept the faith" (2 Tim. iv. 8), not only by practising what he had received, but in guarding it against the evil teachings of those—and many of them there were—who, in the places where he had laboured, and where there were churches he had planted, were corrupting, "making merchandise" (R.V.) of the Word of God. Jude therefore exhorts us to "earnestly contend" for that which is from God, "delivered once for all"—which means that nothing is to be taken from it, or added to it—to be kept and guarded and taught, throughout the whole period of the church's testimony here. This is what all "the saints" are called to do, and especially such as stand before the flock as teachers and leaders. It is not a popular service, but the Lord values it, and will reward it in due time.

NOTE.—These valuable Expository Notes, by an aged and esteemed servant of Christ, lately gone to his rest, will be continued in our next three issues.

At Hand.

"A God at hand . . . not a God afar off" (Jer. xxiii. 23). "The Lord is at hand" (Phil. iv. 5)

"A T hand" to HEAR, as prayer to Him upriseth,
As need doth call for grace to be supplied;
As love doth crave for blessings on her dear ones,
And draws for counsel, to her Master's side.

"At hand" to GUIDE, when darkness veils the pathway,
And doubt doth conjure up a thousand ills;
When human aid seems worse than unavailing,
And "mystery" alone the vision fills.

"At hand" to GLORIFY the glorious Bridegroom,
Who comes to claim His watching, waiting Bride,
That she at last may be for ever "with Him,"
And in His presence ever satisfied,

Christian Baptism,

AND ITS PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

THIRD PAPER. W. R. LEWIS, BATH.

THE Lord Jesus entered by baptism.

In His case as the Sinless One in fulfilment of all righteousness. In ours, as the expression of repentance and the confession of sin. In His case, He identified Himself with His people. He went beneath in figure then, and in reality on the Cross, the waves and billows of God's wrath for them. Thus He entered His Kingdom, and through His death His subjects enter it too, and publicly in their baptism. We can only become subjects of this Kingdom, then, by death. The very event which, in the case of earthly kingdoms, robs one of all nationality—for a dead man belongs to no nation—is the very means which introduces us into the Kingdom of the heavens. It is by death—actually by the death of Christ—with which, in the reckoning of faith, the believer is identified, and *confessedly* in baptism.

Let us then remember this. In our baptism we profess publicly to have died with Christ. As having died we have therefore ended our old nationality. We no longer belong to that sphere where Satan rules and governs. We reject His authority. We have become subjects of Another, the Lord Jesus Christ. Will it be an easy path?

"Our Lord is now rejected, and by the world disowned;

By the many still neglected, and by the few enthroned."

We are in a country at war with our

Sovereign, and, depend upon it, if we are loyal to Him, we shall be looked upon with disfavour and enmity, and our path, though a happy one indeed, may be anything but a pleasant one. We may have experienced little of this before our baptism. Until after His baptism by John, the Lord—though always a Stranger here—did not, that we read of, experience the enmity of the world. But in His baptism there was a public challenge from heaven to earth and hell, and in our little measure, our baptism is the public throwing in of our lot with the rejected One. It may mean trouble, but never mind. We are on the winning side. "Soon He'll come in glory," and then what a recompense for any little scorn and persecution we may have had to endure for His sake.

The Lord is looking down upon this scene. He knows each one who truly enters His kingdom in this public way. And what joy it gives Him when He sees one and another coming forward to confess their loyalty to Him. The Kingdom is very precious to Him. He has likened it to Treasure and to a Pearl of great price. Notwithstanding all it has become outwardly before men, like a tarefield, a tree, and leaven, a mixture forming a huge widespreading system, powerful outwardly but inwardly corrupt, co-extensive with Christendom (the Christened), yet to faith there is an inner or Divine sphere, comprising those who are truly born again. And this kingdom is very precious in His sight. He gave all that He had to obtain it. He went and sold all that He had, to have you and me as part of this Kingdom.

The Heavenly and Earthly, Kingdoms.

AND THE CHRISTIAN'S RELATION TO BOTH.

ANDREW MELVILLE, one of the old Scots Worthies of Covenanting times, was summoned in 1596 to Falkland Palace before King James VI. to answer a charge of sedition based on his polite but firm refusal to allow the authority of the Lord Jesus to be set at nought in his ministry, by a decree of the king. The servant of Christ becomingly addressed His Majesty in the following words:—"Sire, I must tell you, that there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James, the head of the Commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, whose subject King James VI. is, and of whose kingdom he is not head or lord." These ringing words it is said had a wonderful impression on those that heard them, and their candour and truth enabled some who knew and loved the heavenly Lord, while they were loyal subjects of their earthly king, to walk in a plain path, rendering to each that obedience which the Word of God demands (1 Pet. ii. 17) of His people. In the earthly kingdom, over which its earthly ruler as "the minister of God" (Rom. xiii. 1-4) has authority and honour, subjection and the rendering of all dues is clearly enjoined. And there is to be no resistance offered or lawlessness manifested on the part of the Christian, inasmuch as the ruler—whether emperor, king, or president—is the appointment of God. And

this subjection is equally due to him whether heathen, atheist, or Christian. It is not the man's personality but his office that is "of God," and to be held in honour. For it was probably during the reign of Nero, the most wicked and cruel of all the Roman emperors, that these words were dictated by Paul, and written by Tertius, his amanuensis (Rom. xvi. 22), to the saints "in Rome" (chap. i. 7) of that time. But beyond those things that "belonged" to Cæsar (Matt. xxii. 21), there was nothing due to the State or its ruler, as the Lord had aforetime taught His own. When the Roman power commanded the Christians to burn incense to their gods, and to take part in their conquests, they refused, simply because the secular power had no claim on their worship and service, which belonged to God alone. As His people, redeemed and severed from the world, they were to yield themselves as "living sacrifices" to Himself, as their "reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). Unholy demands have happily been unknown in the experience of most of the people of God in our time. But they were known to our forefathers, who were driven to the heather-clad hills and glens, and hunted like partridges on the mountains before the soldiers of the king, because they refused to disobey the higher claims of the living Lord in heaven, in their worship and allegiance to His Word. None can tell how soon such demands may be made on the people of God, for their shadows are already casting themselves on our path. Should they be made, our duty is clear and our path marked

out, even unto bonds and martyrdom. That which belongs to God alone, must never be allowed to go to man. The claims of "the kingdom of God" are in the right of our Divine and heavenly Lord, and to Him they are due. None should court martyrdom or share in lawlessness with those who neither fear God nor own their subjection to earthly rulers, but that which is due to God and Christ, and to the Word that makes known and sanctions their holy claims, must not at any cost be surrendered to man. The path of full and unhesitating obedience to the claims of the Most High, have always entailed loss on those who through grace tread that path. To Paul it meant the "loss of all things" (Phil. iii. 31) upon which the natural hearts of men are set. In our time it will assuredly mean misunderstanding by friends and ridicule by foes. But the present "gain" is abundantly full in a life of communion with God and the inward consciousness that they are "pleasing God" (Heb xi. 5), in a path of faithful service and the seal of the Lord on His servants *toil*, whether others see it or not. And in the day of Christ's judgment-seat when His awards for obedience and faithfulness are bestowed, He will justify His way in claiming from His own their full devotion to Himself and to His written Word.

The Coming Great War.

THE present struggle between opposing great powers may well awaken the thoughts of God's people anew, to the

character and extent of the last great war which will bring the present evil age to a speedy close, in the day that the Lord with all His saints descends from heaven and His feet touch the Mount of Olives (Zech. xiv. 4) to find Jerusalem invested and the whole chivalry of Europe gathered there under the personal leadership of its last wicked emperor. Around him will be gathered men of all the "powers" whose peoples he is leading on in their last assault of the Jewish people now in their land with their eyes turned to God for deliverance. The answer to their cries is the return in person of their glorified Messiah with all His saints (Jude 14) to "fight" against His foes. Their ringleaders the Beast and his false prophet, are caught red-handed and cast alive into the lake of fire, and their followers utterly perish. This is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ"—His unveiling to the world. How different from His coming *for* us is this His coming *with* us! Of the former, there will be no sign given, and for it no date is fixed. But of His appearing to the world there will be many indications and signs (Luke xxi. 25-27; Matt. xxiv. 15-30). Not one of the dates in Daniel and Revelation refer to His coming *for* us to fetch us home, nor can any one of them begin to be fulfilled until the calling of the church is complete, the Lord's heavenly people with Himself, and the broken link of God's relations with His earthly people is restored. The Hope of the believer and the Church is, the personal return of Christ. And it is for this, we wait and pray.

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

SUGGESTIVE OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

GOD'S BELOVED SON.

Sent to Earth from Heaven (Luke xx. 13).
 Ever the Father's Delight (Matt. iii. 17).
 Cast out and Slain (Matt. xx. 37, 39).
 Glorified now in Heaven (Acts iii. 13).
 Believers translated to His Kingdom (Col. i. 13).
 Accepted in the Beloved (Eph. i. 6).

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

In various aspects.

The Word of the Gospel (Acts xv. 7)—Good News.
 The Word of Salvation (Acts xiii. 26)—To the Lost.
 The Word of Reconciliation (2 Cor. v. 18)—To Enemies.
 The Word of Life (Phil. ii. 16)—To those Dead in Sin.

SEVEN POINTS IN SALVATION.

Its Origin is in the Mercy of God (Tit. iii. 5).
 Itself the Free Gift of God (Eph. ii. 8).
 Brought to us by the Grace of God (Tit. ii. 11).
 Made known in the Gospel of God (Rom. i. 2).
 Accomplished by the Power of God (Rom. i. 16).
 Assured by the Word of God (1 Cor. xv. 2).
 Sealed in Believers by the Spirit of God (Eph. i. 13).

Concise Scripture Studies for Bible Lovers.

Conversion to God.—The word "*Epistrephe*" means a turning, consequent on a deliberate choice (see 2 Cor. iii. 16), and is used in the New Testament of that "turning to God" (Acts ix. 35; 1 Thess. i. 9), which is the visible result of believing the Gospel and receiving Christ as Saviour and Lord (Acts xv. 3), followed by owning His Shepherd role (1 Pet. ii. 25). In a secondary sense, it is used of the restoration of a believer who has been led away from the Lord in practice (Luke xxii. 32), or from the truth into error (Gal. iv. 9), who in response to the advocacy of Christ (1 John ii. 1), and the action of the Word directly applied by the Spirit (Heb. iv. 12, 13), or through the ministry of God's servants (Luke i. 16), or by the godly efforts of a fellow-believer (Jas. v. 19), turns again to the Lord, His Word, and His way. But it is always the personal and voluntary act of the sinner to whom the Gospel comes in saving power and is welcomed, or to the saint who, while never losing the place of a child, has for the time, lost the experience and enjoyment of that relationship.

Children of God is a relationship upon which all who receive Christ and believe in His Name (John i. 12) enter by a birth from above (John iii. 3), which birth is by the operation of the Spirit (John iii. 3) and the instrumentality of the Word (1 Pet. ii. 23). "Children of God"—as John i. 12; 1 John iii. 2, and kindred texts are given in R.V.—expresses spiritual relationship and similarity of nature, while "sons of God" emphasises the new position in which believers are placed (Gal. iii. 26, R.V.), and the character and conduct which befits them in it (Matt. v. 45, R.V.).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

In the public works where I am employed, there is being circulated extracts from a Sunday newspaper in which Christians with whom I am associated are misrepresented and held up to ridicule, because they do not take part with the ungodly in their doings. Would I be justified in openly disavowing these imputations, and stating what the truth actually is, regarding our relation to these things?

While a Christian should be "ready always to give answer to every man that asketh a reason concerning the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. iii. 15, R.V.), and like his Lord and Master ever furnished so as to be able to bring the Word of God to bear on the cavils and evil counsels of all enemies of the truth (see Matt. xxii. 15-46), it accomplishes no good to engage in wordy controversy, or enter on a newspaper war with the ungodly, concerning things which the unregenerate cannot understand, or be expected to sympathise with. And to give countenance to a Sunday newspaper by using its pages—even were they open to you—would be a dishonour to God and a blot upon your Christian testimony. Desecration of the Lord's Day is one of the growing evils of our time, and no man who fears the Lord and reverences the Day He claims for His worship and service, will ever encourage godless and greedy men to issue, or tempt Christian people to buy or read Sunday newspapers, for which all the special "tit-bits" of scorn and scoffing against God, His work, and His people, seem to be reserved. They must be in a bad way who have to resort to such means for self-vindication. You have no right to involve your fellow-believers by speaking for them or confessing their faith. They are no doubt quite able to look after themselves and their interests.

Answers to Correspondents.

ELDER.—You cannot make such changes as you propose without consulting and having the full fellowship of the assembly. Leaders do not act FOR, and certainly never AGAINST those whom they stand before. They simply counsel and guide their fellow-saints in such matters.

VERA.—Neither worldly position nor the control of money, gives a man the right to rule in the Church of God. Spiritual qualities and a blameless walk which commend the doctrine of the Word (Tit. i. 7-9), are the essentials of a true overseer.

A. G., GRETNA.—The special character of the present disposition is that of grace, and this ought to surely characterise the attitude of the children of God toward the world, as the Lord sets forth in principle in Matt. v. 43-48. It will not do to get rid of this by saying, it does not apply to the present time. If not for the present, to what period do these principles apply? In the past age, Law exacted its demands (Matt. v. 38-43): In the coming age, Righteousness will reign (Psa. lxxii. 1), and the King on the throne will administer just judgment on all oppressors (Psa. lxxii. 4). But in this age, "grace reigns," and the righteous suffer (1 Pet. iii. 14), and they are to suffer "joyfully" (1 Pet. iv. 13), not vindictively.

G. L., DUNDEE.—The destruction of Jerusalem, begun by Titus and completed by Adrian (A.D. 70), extinguished the last hope of the nation of the Jew, and so it has continued until now. But the time is probably near, when a section of the Jewish people will return to their city and land in unbelief, and be recognised nationally there. Then the thread of prophecy will again be resumed, and events named in the Word will rapidly receive fulfilment. But until Jerusalem again becomes "a city of the Jews," all fulfilment of prophecy is suspended.

S. H., BELFAST.—The Lord uttered on the Cross the one word, "*Tetelestai*," which is translated "It is finished." It is elsewhere rendered in the N.T. performed, fulfilled, accomplished, made an end, words which clearly express its meaning. And He Himself had previously said to the Father, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John xvii. 4). Beware of inductive theories, on so great a subject as the sufferings of our Divine Lord. The Word tells all that God sees fit to let us know now. The rest we may learn hereafter.

P. M., LANARKSHIRE.—No company of Christians—large or small—may arrogate to themselves the claim of being "THE Church of God" in any locality, unless they are absolutely sure—which they cannot easily be—that there is no other. But as small a company as "two or three," who have by the Spirit through the Word been gathered in (or into) the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, may think and speak of themselves as God's Church (or assembly) in that house, or hall, or place. For if not that, what is it? Or where is the authority for its existence, and the pattern for its guidance? The Word provides for no form of church, but that which is God's.

W. L.—There is a fine moral order in the words given concerning the Lord Jesus in Acts i. 1: "He began to *do* and *teach*," and again in Luke xxiv. 19, where it is said that He was "mighty in *deed* and *word* before God and all the people." And the same order of things is given concerning the saints. They are to be established "in every good work and word" (see R.V., where the words are so given). For precept to be of any value, should be preceded by practice. If one does not practice what he preaches, he had better hold his tongue.

A. D.—The popular custom of appointing one—or more—to "take charge" of the assembly's Gospel work, with liberty to invite whatever preachers he thinks fit, may secure those who can "speak," but it does not ensure either God-sent or God-approved preachers with a message from Him in season for the people. Nor does a continuous stream of stranger preachers tend to help the development of local gift, but rather to cripple and quench it, and to send those really fitted to preach and teach, to seek other spheres of service. They were better times, when those manifesting gift and grace to use it, were led on and encouraged to take what part they were able. Most of our ablest preachers began in this way. But the "ministerial appointment" system, develops nothing, but rather fosters clerical self-importance and other arrogant dominations.

T. G., GLASGOW.—The words in 2 Thess. iii. 14, "Note that man," do not infer his excision from the assembly, but rather a careful watch over his ways, and a withdrawal from free intercourse with him, in order to cause him to consider his ways and become ashamed of his conduct. But if sympathisers cause him to think of himself as a martyr, the effect may be the opposite.

J. M. B., NEW YORK.—The entire time and energies of the apostles—and indeed of early evangelists and teachers also—was given to “prayer and the ministry of the Word” (Acts vi. 4): prayer, dealing with God for men, and ministry dealing with men for God. Were there more of this, and less gossip and tea-partying among preachers, there would be greater grip in preaching and more lasting results from it.

Character of Lord's Day Morning Meeting.

Observations by an Aged Minister of the Word.—I.

Although no longer able for active service in visiting assemblies of the Lord's people as in former years, I still retain a very tender interest in their welfare. And the remembrance of many arduous yet happy years spent in Gospel ministry, followed by instruction in the truth of God when a goodly number of these assemblies were begun, in the county in which I reside and far beyond, causes me to have a “godly jealousy” over them, lest they be “corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Cor. xi. 1, 2), as they knew it in the past, or seduced from that path of separation unto God and from the religions of the world, in which they have walked with much of God's approval and increase, throughout the years. As I see it, there is a retrograde influence actively at work at present, which combines to threaten a return to the world's religion, and to bring a blight on a testimony which, however feeble, I have never had a doubt has been raised up by the Spirit for the Name of the Lord Jesus, in these last days.

First, I see a determined effort being made to range the simple assemblies of believers, gathering unto the Name of the Lord alone, as one of the many denominations, giving them such names as “Churches of Brethren” and other designations equally non-Scriptural, which men invent, to meet the demand of the world's religion for a distinctive name. Our position has hitherto been, that we disallowed all denominational names, and confessed ourselves to be simply and only a few of the great family of faith who had sought our way back to the first principles of the Church of God, seeking to own the living Lord alone as Head over us, and the Divine Spirit as Administrator in our midst (1 Cor. xii. 5). A departure from this was made, when certain appointed themselves to say who are

to minister, and in so doing shut out much that the Spirit, who “divideth to every man severally as HE WILL” (1 Cor. xii. 11), sees needful for edification and comfort. A further stage of this depravity is now being manifested in the appointment and announcement of certain to minister at the Lord's Day morning assembling of the Church for worship and the showing forth of the Lord's death. And the latest is, a serious proposal to introduce incipient “clerisy,” as a system, in the form that “one or more addresses” shall precede the breaking of bread, which the writer thinks necessary to bring those present into a right condition. This is exactly what is done in the sects, the “sacrament” being placed last, and crushed into the smallest compass to make way for “the sermon.” But in the records of the early churches, when the saints were assembled “in ecclesia,” it was not primarily to hear “addresses,” but to “break bread” (Acts xxi. 7), and for the whole to exercise the functions of their spiritual priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5), which is their very highest privilege, inasmuch as it is “more blessed to give to God in worship than to receive FROM God in ministry, even were it always fresh from Him which, under clerical conditions, it certainly is not. The Lord's Day morning meeting is, as one well designated it long ago, “The Great Open Meeting of Christianity,” in which no prearrangement is allowed, but where all is under the special direction of the Spirit, who is there in His character as Indweller and Administrator of God's temple (Eph. ii. 22; 1 Cor. iii. 16). Should He give a word of ministry to any, its effect will be to increase the flow of spiritual worship. But where men come there with their prepared addresses, determined to deal them out, they rob God of His due, and absorb the time that ought to be given to the higher exercise of united and Spirit-led worship. The failure of saints to always own His guidance, is surely to be deplored and confessed. But while there is room for the truth of God to be brought to bear on all disorder, by wholesome ministry of the truth, and government by those fitted to exercise it, there is the promise of the Spirit's guidance. But the interference of men with Divine principles, and the appointment by men of those or that which renders such Divine guidance impossible, alters the character of that meeting entirely, and leaves it no claim at all to be regarded as God's assembly, in which His will is law and His Word the final appeal.

The Secret of His Presence :

THE PLACE OF SECURITY FOR THE SAINT.

THE charming imagery in the opening words of Psalm xci., of "dwelling in the secret place of the Most High," "abiding under the shadow of the Almighty," the being "covered with His feathers," and confiding "under the shadow of His wings," in its primary application belongs to the Lord Jesus, when He was here, amid the dangers of that world in which Satan's "arrows" flew "by day," and his "terrors" spread themselves "by night." But the Psalm and its securities surely belong to the redeemed, who are "in Christ Jesus" now, "hid in God," in the innermost secret of His habitation. And it is for the comfort of those who "trust in Him before the sons of men," in a world still—and never more than now—infested by Satanic dangers and devices, that the word is given, "Thou shalt hide them in the secret of Thy presence. Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion" (Psa. xxxi. 20). Into that secret place, that pavilion of safety, God has already brought His own, "in Christ Jesus." They are already in the innermost circle of His favour, nearer than which they cannot be. This is true, in fact, of all believers, always, however feeble their experience of it may be. The measure of faith's grasp of the great reality, already existing, will be the line and measure of the soul's enjoyment of it, for experience is just the appropriation, the taking possession in personal faith of that which

God has given us "in Christ." In the true and beautiful words of another: "We are brought into the Most Holy Place, but our present experience is, as it were, bounded by a line. We can be brought no nearer to the presence of the Lord, for to the centre we are brought. Beyond that line our experience will go one day, but it can never bring us in absolute fact into any nearer place. The day that is to come, will but make us fully conscious of the enjoyment of that which *now* we have in Christ by faith. He has gone to prepare a place for us by taking that place Himself, as the Glorified Man, the risen and ascended Head of His body the Church. And when He comes again to receive us to Himself, we enter into full possession of that which even *now* is ours in Christ." Thus it is that even now, while our actual bodily presence is in a world in which the devices of the adversary are hurled in all directions against the redeemed of the Lord, and Satanic craft is used in thousands of forms to beguile them from their allegiance to Christ their Lord, the saints "in Christ" are far beyond the reach of all the enemy's power, hid "in Him" in that pavilion on high, in the secret of God's presence, in that innermost circle of His favour, where the foot of man as such has never trod, in the place which belongs by right alone to the Son in the bosom of the Father, yet now in grace to those for whom He made request ere He went to the Cross for their redemption, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am" (John

xvii. 24). That request has had its fulfilment in part, and "His own" are with Him where He is, in the secret sanctuary, "under the wings of the Almighty." They will be there actually and bodily, all at home and all together, soon, but they are already there "in Christ," and their bodily presence, while it will immensely increase the measure and enjoyment of the grace so richly bestowed, will bring them no nearer and make them no dearer than they already are. They have already been brought to "the Holiest," and are already in "the secret of His presence." O to have it all and always as a living, glowing, bright reality in the soul, and to walk in its enjoyment as we pass on through the enemy's country to the land that we call our own. Here, alone, is our security, and here our comfort, in a world where all is against us.

J. R.

The Man at God's Right Hand.

BY faith I look where Christ has gone,
And see, upon His Father's throne,
A Man with glory crowned :
His brow is marred, and in His side—
Whence flowed the cleansing crimson tide—
And hands, and feet—a wound.

Here is the record of the past,
Fruit of my sins that bound Him fast
To that degrading tree ;
In every wound I read my guilt,
And thank Him that His blood was spilt
To set my conscience free.

I look again, and now I see
That blessed Man engaged for me—
His hands uplifted high :
Upon the throne of God He pleads,
God's great High Priest, He intercedes,
And so preserves me nigh.

The Lord's Supper.

A MEMORIAL AND A PROCLAMATION.

W. H. HUNTER.

THERE may be those who are discouraged by the fewness of those of the Lord's people who come together habitually to keep the Lord's memorial in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the wine, as He appointed. But let us remember that numbers are of little account with God, who reckons rather according to the degree of training undergone by those who come into his presence to do His will, as expressed in His Word. An example of this is given in the case of "Abram the Hebrew" (Gen. xiv. 13-20) who, with a small band of "trained servants," instructed in the way of the Lord, prevailed against the armies of four victorious kings. The feast and the blessing followed. With regard to the Supper of the Lord, no further instruction should be required than that which is plainly given us in the Word (see Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., Luke xxii., 1 Cor. xi. 23). These passages should be carefully read.

It is interesting to observe, that at the time of our Lord's observance of the Passover, there were additions to the instructions given in Exodus, in practice, such as reclining at the table, cups of wine passed around among the guests, and certain Psalms sung, closing with the "Hallelujah" Psalm (Matt. xxvi. 30 ; Mark xiv. 26, R.V.). In the original institution of the Lord's Supper we may note the following :—

THE BREAD (Matt. xxvi. 26). The word signifies a whole loaf, unbroken and perfect as it comes from the fire, not a piece broken off, whatever proportion of the loaf it may be. "The loaf" (1 Cor. x. 11, R.V.) is the emblem of the completeness of the sacrifice, the offered "body of Christ." In the account as given in Matthew and Mark, nothing is said of "giving thanks" *for the bread*. In Luke's account (chap. xx. 19), which we may infer was derived from Paul, his companion in labour—the Lord "took a loaf," and "when He had given thanks, He brake it." In 1 Cor. xi. 23, the full and final pattern is "delivered," as "received of the Lord" in heaven. There is a dreadful thought conveyed in the words, "the same night in which He was betrayed." The words may be rendered "was being betrayed"—the traitor being actually engaged in the dark deed that moment.

There is a distinction made between the references to "the bread" and "the cup," expressing the difference of these two symbols. In Matthew and Mark "He blessed"—God; in Luke and 1 Cor. xi. "He gave thanks" for what He was doing and about to do, although He knew it would involve the hiding of God's face, and bring the cry from His lips, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Both the "blessing" God and the "giving of thanks" would be short, and surely whatever is uttered by us on such occasions, should be concentrated on the object before us. Rambling thoughts and general prayers at such a time, are wholly out of place.

THE CUP has a different significance, though the one is a complement of the other. "The Bread" carries us back to the Calvary side of the work, "the Cup" speaks of Calvary past, the work finished, the outpoured wine telling of the Divine joy flowing from the crushing of the fruit of the vine, which "maketh glad the heart" (Psa. civ. 15). The sense of death and darkness, with their unfathomed sorrow, broods over the Bread: eternal joy flows from the Cup. The name of "Eucharest"—which means thanksgiving—was in common use among the early saints, but "the Lord's Supper" (1 Cor. xi. 21) is the word which most fully expresses the true significance of the Feast.

THE DAY on which the saints gathered for its observance is said by Luke to have been "the first day of the week"—elsewhere called "the Lord's Day" (Rev. i. 10)—the day that celebrates His Resurrection and proclaims His Lordship. The gathering was for a specific purpose, "to break bread," distinguishing it from other assemblings, and the keeping of the feast was followed by ministry (Acts xx).

THE OBJECT of this assembling is, as the Lord very distinctly said when on earth and again from heaven, "for a remembrance of Me"—for a memorial, for a proclamation of Me. The thought of remembrance reminds us of His absence, that of proclamation of exaltation, and that we are raised to the rank of "royal priesthood," for who else can worthily engage in such a service? And all this is to be done without cessation or alteration, "TILL HE COME."

"The Precious and the Vile."

THE question asked by the servants of the householder in Matt. xiii. 27, might seem as if it implied that "God is the Author of confusion." "Did'st not Thou sow good seed in Thy field." A right understanding of this is very necessary. In "the field" there is found a mixture of false and true, so in that which takes the Name of Christ, because of the enemy's work. In this parable "the field" is said to be "the world." The Master says, "Let them both grow together there meantime; the end is coming, when an eternal separation will take place" (Matt. xiii. 30).

But there is another sphere of smaller dimensions in which human responsibility has to be exercised, namely, the professed assembly of God, in which present judgment has to be applied (1 Cor. v. 12). Even here, the mixture may be found of the precious and the vile also. Heb. xiii. 8, 16, speaks of "bastards" and "profane persons" who bear the Christian name. Phil. iii. 19 tells of those "whose god is their belly," who "mind earthly things." Jude 12 of "spots in your feasts of charity," whose doom is "the blackness of darkness." In 2 Tim. iii. 5 we read of "those who have a form of godliness denying the power thereof." 2 Pet. ii. 1 speaks of "false teachers" (not in the world), but "*among you.*" Here surely is seen "the vile" among "the precious."

Are we to apply these terrible facts to a past or a future day? Are we to take for granted that our lot is cast in the happy

days when all who believe and are baptised, and claim fellowship with a Church, are all true members of God's assembly—His own called-out people?

God's true assembly is composed of those only who are born again (Rom. viii. 9). Only such are baptised in the Spirit into the one body (1 Cor. xiii. 13). One may easily now make the "Christian profession" referred to above, and yet not be in God's assembly at all, yet at the same time become a member of good standing in some ecclesiastical gathering (see John xiii. 21; Heb. vi. 4).

Real fellowship can only be enjoyed where there is life and obedience. And the test of spiritual reality is "works" (Jas. ii. 20), for which alone the Lord's reward will be given (2 Cor. v. 10). Indifference to the claims of the Redeemer is quite easily distinguished from devotedness to God. "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and *do* not the things which I say?" (Luke vi. 46). Jeremiah's task was to separate "the precious from the vile," with the present reward of being as God's "mouth." The Word faithfully ministered in the Holy Ghost, is the means God uses to effect this separation, and it never fails. If this Word is not used, the mixture will continue and increase.

Even in true believers there is that which answers to "the precious and the vile"; that which is of the FLESH and that which is of the SPIRIT (see 1 Cor. vi. 9; 1 Cor. ix. 27).

Because Christ has passed through all the condemnation which our sins and sinful nature deserve, the responsibility

lies with all who believe in and confess His Name, to reckon themselves "crucified with Christ," and thus to "put off" the old man and "put on the new man," which is in the sight of God "precious" (1 Pet. ii. 7). And the same applies to association. God's counsel to us in 2 Tim. ii. 19 is the same in character as was given to Jeremiah in his time.

The present reward of this discrimination and separation was to him the honour of ministry from God. He was to be as God's mouth. To be used of God in ministry either to sinner or saint, young or old, implies personal and collective separation from that which is "vile" in God's sight, and also a full and thorough identification in heart and association with what is precious, "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii. 22). These are truths little heard in general ministry, and little thought of among the people of God. Their neglect permits principles to be received which are not of God but from man, and practices to abound unchallenged which are not according to the Word, and which hinder blessing among God's people.

Js. Fs.

The Rejoicing Saint.

"Yet I will rejoice in THE LORD" (Hab. iii. 18).

THOUGH the fig tree shall not blossom,
Neither fruit be in the vine,
Though the stalls be void of oxen,
Failing corn and oil and wine:
Passing through great tribulation,
"In the Lord" our hearts rejoice,
Waiting for His full salvation,
Sing we still, with cheerful voice.

The Epistle of Jude.

II.—DENYING THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.

By ALEXANDER MATTHEWS, TACOMA, WASH., U.S.A.

THE special character of the apostasy which Jude warns us against in his short Epistle, is indicated in the words, "denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (ver. 4, R.V.). They did not deny His Lordship in words, but in deeds. With their lips they said, "Lord, Lord," but in their hearts they were lawless and in their ways wilful. It is of all such that the Lord asks the question, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and *do* not the things which I say?" (Luke vii. 46). His "commandments" are the expression of His supreme authority, and the only way that is of any account in the sight of God in owning the Lordship of Christ is, to "do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word" (Psa. ciii. 20). These include all that He has given for our individual and our church life. The daily life is to be lived as "unto the Lord," and this can only be done as the Word is allowed to dominate us in everything. We need to realise its searching power in the conscience and the heart, and to own its commanding authority over all departments of the life. The more that Word is honoured, the more Christ is owned as Lord. It is this that is so sadly lacking in our time. Christians talk of "the right of private judgment." We have no rights at all. We are "not our own." Christ is our Owner and He is our "Master" also. He has given us His all-sufficient Word, and He

has given us His Spirit to enable us to understand it, for His anointing "teacheth us all things" (1 John ii. 2), so that we have no excuse for being ignorant of what "the will of the Lord is."

And this Lordship of Christ is to be owned in all things that concern the Church as gathered unto His Name, and in the world as His witness among men. The apostle, in setting before "the Church of God which was at Corinth" the proper order of things says, "I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you" (1 Cor. x. 23). He did not frame these instructions in His own authority, apostle though he was. He "received" them direct from the Lord in heaven, and "delivered" them as he had got them to His saints on earth, to be owned and acknowledged as "the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv. 27). To alter them in the smallest is to dishonour the Lord, and practically to deny His Lordship. This is very solemn, in the light of what we see transpiring around us. In the religious world, man rules everything according to his own will and taste. "The commandments of the Lord" are set aside for the will of the people. Things must be done as the people vote, and as the self-chosen rulers dictate. Is it any wonder that He leaves them to their self-willed way? There is imminent danger of those who have professedly returned to the Word of God as their only guide, being led into this same path of lawlessness, by listening to the counsel of men who assume the place of teachers and leaders, who have never

known in their inmost souls the supreme authority of the Word, searching, penetrating, and humbling them in the presence of God, causing them to say with the Psalmist, "My heart standeth in awe of Thy Word" (Psa. cxix. 161). This is not bondage, but it is that "reverence and godly fear" (Heb. xii. 28) which is the safeguard of God's people in the midst of the lawlessness and latitudinarianism that abound everywhere. This is what we all need, and we cannot but feel, and that deeply, that it is such ministry as leads to such a condition, that is especially needed in the assemblies of God's people at the present time, if they are to be kept from being swept into the current of lawlessness flowing all around them, and maintained true to the Lordship of Christ. The Word hid in the heart, and its authority owned in the life, is the only security from backsliding, and apostasy.

Faith's Dwelling Place.

SAVED by grace, and soon in glory
 With the Lamb to stand,
 We are passing to our country—
 Fair and promised land!
 There, "in Christ" Himself abiding,
 We already dwell,
 In God's secret presence hiding,
 Balk the powers of hell.

Brought to God's eternal Centre,
 Clean through Jesus' blood,
 Faith delights its rest to enter,
 Hides itself in God:
 Finds in Him its present dwelling—
 Safe and happy place!
 There the praises ever telling
 Of His wondrous grace.

The Early Church :

ITS FELLOWSHIP AND ITS ASSEMBLINGS.

BY THE EDITOR.

OF those who received Peter's testimony to Christ crucified, risen, and glorified, as the result of that first plain and powerful witness of the Spirit through human lips, it is recorded in Acts ii. 41-42, R.V., "They then having received his word were baptised, and there were added in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching, and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and the prayers."

Baptism is seen here, as elsewhere throughout the Acts, in its proper place. It was here receivers of the Word, in chap. viii. believers in the Name of Jesus Christ, and in chap. x. 57, those who had received the Holy Ghost (chap. x. 47) that were baptised. And believers' baptism is not strictly "a Church ordinance"—as men speak—but a personal confession of faith on the part of the individual who, at his own desire, thus claims to be identified with Christ in death and resurrection, to own Him as Lord, and to be of and with those who are already His (chap. x. 26), in the place where they reside. Those thus "added" to the Lord and to His assembly, "continued stedfastly"—that is, they adhered continuously and departed not from the things that follow. First, in

THE APOSTLE'S TEACHING, listening to what they taught, abiding in the doctrine, and practising what they learned. "The apostles' doctrine" is preserved in its entirety to us in the Word, and we are to

receive it not as the words of men, "but as it is in truth the Word of God," to "*work effectually in them that believe*" (1 Thess. ii. 13), so as to bring and keep them in the way of obedience to the Divine will. Even in times of departure and apostasy, it is by means of "the words of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 17), that the saints are to be preserved from departure, and recalled from it when they err from the way. It is by such ministry that the spiritual life of the saints and the godly order of the assembly are maintained. Apart from this, and without continuous and wholesome well-balanced ministry of the Word in all its fulness, no community, no Church can rightly exercise the functions it has been called by God to fulfil. For the living and abiding Word has in it, not only that which yields profit in its healthful teaching, and instruction in its righteousness, to keep God's people in the way, but it has the power of "reproof" toward those who are wilful, and of "correction" to such as have turned to crooked ways, and need restoration to straight paths (2 Tim. iii. 17). No assembly need be expected to "continue in the faith, grounded and stedfast" (Col. i. 23, R.V.), where such teaching is lacking, or lightly esteemed. And the tendency of the time is largely in this direction. "Light bread" and "tit-bits," of little value for godly edification, seem to be in chief demand.

THE FELLOWSHIP, is the second ordinance in which those composing this "church which was at Jerusalem" continued stedfastly. The word has been

explained as "holding and using things in common." It surely includes mutual sharing, giving and getting, and here it specially indicates definite habits and experiences common among the saints who composed the assembly in Jerusalem, when they were assembled together. "They had all things common," on the spiritual plane first. They shared together and spoke of what they knew, told out what they enjoyed, communicated what they had received of the things of God and Christ, for the benefit and blessing of the rest. They talked together continuously of the things that were of eternal interest to them, of things heavenly, things eternal, things connected with their spiritual life and calling and destiny, so supplementing and enforcing the oral and public teaching of those called and fitted to give it, by social, personal, daily converse on "things touching the King"—to use the language of the Old Testament (Psa. xlv. 1), of "things concerning the kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ" (Acts viii. 12), in the language of the New. And this, not by fits and starts, at stated seasons and special "fellowship meetings," but in it they "continued stedfastly"—day by day (ver. 46) publicly in the temple courts, socially "at home" and "from house to house." Were there more of this among us, there would be more of that "fellowship" which is so often prayed for, yet so little known; more, too, of mutual help in the truth of God so richly enjoyed by a generation past, when believers ministered to each other's

spiritual edification in godly converse and by mutual intercourse in each other's houses, around an open Bible. This was "fellowship" indeed, of the same character as that recorded in Malachi's days, when "they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it" (Mal. iv. 16).

THE BREAKING OF BREAD refers to the assembling of the saints as the Lord had desired, in remembrance of Him (Luke xxiii. 19). This He repeated from heaven (1 Cor. xi. 23), and the early disciples (Acts xx. 7) gave it the place of prominence claimed for it by the Lord. The keeping of the Feast of Remembrance was the prominent event in the assemblies of the early churches on "the first day of the week," worship with thanksgiving having a place of pre-eminence above ministry, inasmuch as that which arises to God, by Christ, in the Spirit from the saints, is due to God, whereas that which comes from God, through Christ, by the Spirit, in the words of those who minister, is for the saints. And yet, alas! worship among saints in general is relegated to a second place, while "the minister" and "the sermon" are largely to the front, with the result that Christians assemble to *get* rather than to *GIVE*, to be served as babes or invalids, rather than as strong and fit spiritual men to exercise the functions of their holy priesthood (1 Pet. ii. 5).

THE PRAYERS here are united. The church gathered to pray (chap. xii. 5, 12), an ordinance of power indeed, which, wherever neglected, brings feebleness and barrenness.

A Day of Opportunity.

THE preacher, "who was king in Jerusalem in ancient time, says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven : (Eccl. iii 1, 6). In a very special sense his words apply to this season of the grace of God, and to this accepted time of the Gospel's saving power among the sons of men. While this accepted time is with us, it is the business of every saint and servant of God to spread abroad the joyful tidings and to make the very best use of the present opportunity of laying hold of sinners, old and young, with the message of mercy, while the day of salvation lasts. Not only on special occasions when numbers come together to hear the Word, but everywhere and always as opportunity is given, to speak a word for the Master, and testify to sinners individually and personally the eternal realities of the love and grace of God.. The present awful crisis, in which the dark shadow of death seems to be hovering over the nations, in which many have lost their loved and best of earth, is especially "a time to speak" of God's salvation, and to lift the warning voice in testimony to His coming judgment. Many hearts are tender, many proud wills subdued, and there is an open ear to the Gospel. The words of the aged apostle to Timothy, on the eve of his martyrdom, regarding his path of service, include the striking words—"Be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. iv. 2) : that is, not only at such times as may be considered

"seasonable" by men of the world, but even at other times which may appear to be "out of season." These are to be "bought up," by the servant of God, and made use of. How often a passing word on the street, in a railway train, at a funeral ; a text quoted, a warning given, or a simple remark made, has been winged to the conscience and the heart, as the arrow of conviction, or the word of peace. But in order to do this kind of work effectually, the servant of God must be ever on his watch, and waiting on his Master for the right word, and the proper opportunity to speak it. He may often have to overstep what the religious world calls the "line of prudence" in his service. But if he has in his own soul the assurance that he is in the current of the Spirit's leading, he can well afford to be sneered at by those who are guided by the world's opinion of things.

There is a present opportunity and "a great door and effectual" (1 Cor. xvi. 9) open to the Gospel among tens of thousands who do not go to hear it, by means of systematic and continuous distribution of the Gospel message in print : in booklets, magazines, and tracts, bearing clean, clear, and simple truths in a form to be well received, wholly read, and well retained. In the coming months this mode of evangelising the hamlets and villages in which no clear Gospel is preached, should be taken up earnestly and persevered in continuously. The opportunity may soon pass, and the time is short. Let us then be up and doing, for the night cometh, when no man can work.

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

FOUR ANGELIC MESSAGES.

At Christ's Birth (Luke ii. 10)—Incarnation.
 At Christ's Resurrection (Luke xxiv. 4-6)—Victory.
 The True Bride Revealed (Rev. xxi. 9)—Glory.
 The False Church Exposed (Rev. xvii. 17)—Judgment.

SALVATION FROM WRATH.

Sinners are Subjects of it (Col. iii. 6).
 Believers are Delivered out of it (1 Thess. i. 10).
 Christians will be Preserved from it (Rom. v. 9).
 God has not Appointed them to it (1 Thess. v. 9).
 Unbelievers have it Abiding on them (John iii. 36).

PEACE PROCURED AND POSSESSED.

Christ made Peace (Col. i. 20)—At the Cross.
 His Work Procured it (Isa. liii. 5)—He Paid for it.
 His Word Proclaims it (Acts x. 36)—In the Gospel.
 His own Possess it (Rom. v. 1)—Through Believing.

Concise Scripture Studies for Bible Lovers.

Saints.—A common designation of all Christians (Rom. i. 7), all who are Christ's, dead and living (1 Thess. iii. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 23). The word "*hagioi*" means "holy ones," or "those set apart to God." They are saints by God's call, "called saints" (Rom. i. 7), not by attainment. This is a relation or state, into which God in grace brings all the saved. The word applies to all believers, not only to those of great grace and exceptional devotedness. Having become saints by God's call, they are to live "as becometh saints" (Eph. v. 3). The Lord keeps their feet (1 Sam. ii. 9); the Spirit makes intercession for them (Rom. viii. 27); and the Lord will bring them all with Him (1 Thess. iii. 13).

Sanctification, from "*hagiasmos*," is frequently translated holiness, sanctification, and means separation, setting apart to God. It is used of the setting apart of the Lord Jesus to His work as Redeemer (John x. 36), and Representative of His people (John xvii. 19); of the believer's setting apart to God (Acts xx. 32), his separation from the world (John xvii. 17-19), and his separation from known evil doctrine and practice (2 Tim. ii. 21). It is effected by the death of Christ (Heb. xiii. 12) vicariously, through the Word instrumentally (Eph. v. 26) by the Spirit actually (1 Pet. i. 2; Rom. viii. 8; Rom. xv. 16). Christ is his sanctification, as

He is his righteousness (1 Cor. i. 30). He is sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. i. 2), who is the Sanctifier, as he is the sanctified (Heb. ii. 11). There are no degrees in sanctification thus viewed, but in practice there ought to be progress in learning the truth and yielding obedience thereto (John xvii. 17), in walking according to his calling which is holy (1 Pet. i. 15), in being separate from evil (2 Tim. ii. 15), unspotted from the world (Jas. i. 27), and without rebuke (Phil. ii. 12) before men.

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The Young Believer's Question Box.

What do the words, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp" (Heb. xiii. 13) mean? At a recent Conference of Christians at which I was present, one teacher used them to teach separation from the world's religious systems, and identification with Christ rejected by the world, and displaced by man's arrangements in what professes to be the Church. A second speaker contradicted that exposition of the passage, but did not inform us what it does teach. Young Christians like myself are perplexed by such contrary teachings, and we want to know what the text really teaches and to whom it applies?

Sir Robert Anderson, commenting on the passage, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp," says, "This figurative language is derived from Israel's history. After the apostasy of the golden calf, Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it 'without the camp.' And 'every one which sought the Lord went out unto the tabernacle' (Exod. xxxiii. 7)." We believe this to be the true exposition. Whatever displaces the Lord whose place "in the midst" of His own as Head and Lord, is to be departed from. Not, however, to join some new denomination or attach oneself to some coterie of their particular way of thinking. Certainly not to form a new denomination, with or without a name, but to "go forth" in separation from what is known from the Word to be false, not as a wanderer in quest of a perfect church where everything is to his liking, where no forbearance will be necessary, and no longsuffering required; but "forth unto Him," to Christ the Lord, to own and honour Him in the place that God has given Him. There you will not be alone, for as one who knew well what this going forth meant, said, "I went out to the Lord Himself, attracted to His

Person, and when I got there, I found others who had reached Him before me. These are my companions, with whom I have happy fellowship. But it was not to them but 'unto Him' that I went forth. Should they disappoint me, or cease to be what they now are, I have still 'Him,' and with Him I would still remain." "Contradictory" teachings on such portions of the Word there must surely be, for some who are neither "without the camp" themselves, (and they have nothing to offer in its place) nor want others to be, will oppose the plain truth when taught. But they cannot deny it.

Answers to Correspondents.

R. D., AYRSHIRE.—"The oversight" exceeds its functions when it puts a "damper" on young men desiring to carry on Gospel work in cottages or in any other sphere, in a simple and Scriptural manner. A better way would be to go and encourage them in it.

T. P., STAFFS.—"Lording it over the charge allotted to you" (1 Pet. v. 3, R.V.) may be manifested in many ways, chiefly in that form of domination which is a contrast to "tending the flock" in lowly shepherd devotion and care. A false shepherd and his doings is described in Ezek. xxxiv. 4, a true shepherd and his work in ver. 16.

J. G., BLACKWOOD.—The widespread notion that "meekness" means that form of "softness" which puts up with anything, and never lifts its voice to vindicate the Lord's honour or the claims of His Word, is surely shown to be a fallacy, by the case of Moses. Of him God said. "The man Moses was very meek above all men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. xii. 3). Yet this was the man who would not yield an inch of Jehovah's claims to Pharaoh, when he wanted him to tone down the Divine demand, and leave the little ones and flocks in his hand (Exod. x. 9, 25). When it was Moses himself that was assailed, he showed his meekness by being silent, and leaving God to "hear" and "speak" for him, which we are told, immediately after the statement as to Moses being meek, He did "suddenly." But when God and His Word was involved, Moses, we are told, was 'faithful' in all God's house.

VERITAS.—The Word of God is all equally valuable, but things which are equally true are not equally vital. You would have no fellowship with

a man who denies the Deity of the Son of God, but the same severance is not called for from a believer, who has not yet learned his privilege of being "buried with Christ" in baptism by immersion. You would own him as a saint, and seek to help him on in the ways of the Lord. Such distinctions are surely to be observed.

J. R. P.—There is no rigid rule as to how the contribution or freewill offerings of an assembly should be taken. But if your motive in changing from a box conveniently placed where all may reach it, to a bag passed around, is to extort more money, THAT is a wrong motive and not what God would have. He "loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix. 7), and neither receives or regards with favour that which is given with a grudge. And God would not shame such as may have nothing to give, by pushing a bag in front of them.

A. M., GLASGOW.—There is no such person known to Scripture as "THE minister of a church." Nor is there any limitation to a church of one gifted to preach or teach. He may necessarily be more frequently in the assembly where he resides than in any other, but his gift and his ministry are not to be confined to that assembly. And it is seldom to their profit if it is. For God's people need all the varied ministries which the living Lord gives to His church, the small as well as the great.

H. B., CRAIGMORE.—Christianity is not Socialism. It recognises no distinctions "in Christ," for in spiritual relations "Christ is all" and He also "is in all" (Col. iii. 11). But in earthly relations the man has his place of rule, the woman that of subjection. "In Christ" Philemon and Onesimus were "one," but in Philemon's household he was head and master, while Onesimus was servant and subject.

A. G., PARTICK.—"The Present distress" is testing how far the Word of God is really owned as the Divine rule in all aspects of Christian life, and how far its power has authority over those who profess to own it as their guide. The ease with which its plain commandments are set at nought, too clearly tells how little its supreme authority holds sway in many aspects of life, personal, collective, and national, which surely ought to humble us all. The only remedy known to us is, a wise, wholesome, continuous, and well-balanced ministry of that Word, which is God's own provision for "teaching, for reproof, for correction, and instruction which

is in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16, R.V.) in the grace and power of the Spirit of God. But how little there is of it!

Some Practical Points Concerning Ministry. Observations by an Aged Minister of the Word.—II.

Those that minister the Word should ever remember, that one of the chief objects of all true ministry is, "the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering" (Eph. iv. 12, R.V.)—not to preach to and surfeit an indolent people who are willing to sit in their cushioned pews and "enjoy" the delectable things they hear; but never to be stirred to take any active part in serving or ministering to others. The ascended Lord does not give His gifts for any such purpose. We are told they are given for the "fitting" and furnishing of the whole rank and file of the saints to "serve"—as the word is. And where this is not attained, any ministry, no matter how much "appreciated" or sought after, is a failure, inasmuch as it does not fulfil the purpose of God. Those companies—and they are increasing—that require to pay "a ministering brother" for attending to their wants in ministering, and others who require to "engage" a succession of "monthly preachers" all the year round, and cannot do without them—as no gift is developed or can be, under such conditions in their midst—should take to heart the words of the apostle, written to the Philippians in chap. ii. 12, in which he records that they not only got on well in the way of obedience when he was with them, but when he had gone, they continued to advance "much more" in that way in his absence. And no better proof of the efficiency and success of any man's ministry in any assembly can be given than that, when the time comes for him to depart, he can be done without, and things get along better after he is gone, than when he was among them, simply because he did not make them to be dependent on him or his ministry, but stirred them up to their responsibility, while his sound and wholesome ministry fitted others to discharge it. There was far more of this in earlier years, and there will be again, when God's way is returned to, and the fashion of the "world's religion" left to those who want it. It is common knowledge that most of those companies who have long practised the "monthly minister" system, eventually settle

down under a "one man" paid pastor, and the men who habitually "book their services" in such places, finally seek a resting place in some sect—with or without a name—as "THE pastor." These are hard facts, and it is no use disregarding them, no matter who gives their sanction and support to the false system. Any assembly taking God's Word as their guide, and looking to Him to raise up those in their midst as preachers and teachers, ready to welcome and make room for those whom God gives, will never require to resort to worldly makeshifts such as are becoming too common. "Ministry" is a comprehensive term, and includes "the five words" (1 Cor. xiv. 19) of those with lesser gifts, as surely as the "able address" of the man who speaks for an hour. And those who would shut out the man of smaller measure are—it may be ignorantly, nevertheless actually—rejecting what God has given. Opportunities for ministry in the assembly, after the breaking of bread or on other occasions, must have in them place for the exercise of those lesser gifts, and room for "exhortation, edification, and comfort" through those to whom God may give His message. Only let it be kept in mind, that one with a small measure of gift and grace to use it, is not to assume that he is equally capable of speaking to profit to a thousand gathered at a Conference, as one whom the Lord has called and fitted, and whom the Spirit and the Word has furnished for such a ministry. It was to check a tendency in some toward this, that the "chairman" was brought in, in answer to the demand of some whose patience had been strained and perhaps their pride humbled, by some exceeding their measure, or taking undue advantage of the liberty given. But God has His own way of conserving true liberty and restraining license, by godly rule, and this is not expressed in a chairman calling on Mr. So and So to "address us." Nor has the "chairman" system, and the restricted list of speakers, always secured either edifying ministry or godly order. We need all true ministry, all that the Lord gives, and in which the Spirit guides, and it is our wisdom to welcome it. For in the wisdom of God there is diversity, yet unity, and what one lacks another supplies; grace and truth, the soft south wind, with its balmy breeze, and the sharp northern blast to awake the dormant fruit-bearers—both being needed to cause the spices of the Lord's vineyard to flow and "His pleasant fruits" to ripen, and give Him joy (Song iv. 16).

The Glories of the Son of God.

IT is the business of the Spirit throughout the entire Word of God, to set before us the glories of the Son. As it was the ministry of the living Lord Himself, on that first resurrection day, to "expound in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke xxiv. 27) to the disciples in whose company He walked the Emmaus road, so now the "other Comforter" who has come to abide in and with the redeemed all through the long age of the Lord's personal absence, delights to take of the things of Christ, and show them to the saints, for, said the Lord concerning Him, "He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you" (John xvi. 14). In one great passage of the Word—Hebrews ii. 6-8—the Spirit presents us with a four-fold view of the glories of the Son, past, present, and future, which the inquiring soul of the saint turns to with delight, while the heart breathes forth the ancient prayer of Moses, the man of God—"Shew me thy glory" (Exod. xxxiii. 18). His glories as Son and Man are here described in successive stages, from the Bethlehem manger to the Sovereignty of the Throne in the heavens and the Eternal State.

First—"Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels"—not in station but in time. This has reference to the glory of the Incarnation, the pathway of His service and of suffering, the perfect display of His moral glory in a world where sin and Satan had left their marks on everything. The Son has passed through

the whole scene unstained, and in all the perfection of His unsullied Manhood, as in the excellency of His Godhead. He at last, gave Himself up a sacrifice for man's redemption. This was glory indeed, such as this world had never seen. Men of faith had served and suffered, each in his day and according to his measure, overcoming here and failing there; but the Son was perfect throughout, everywhere and in all things perfect, without an equal "We beheld His glory," says John the apostle, "full of grace and truth" (John i. 14), as "the Word who became flesh and tabernacled among us" in these wondrous years in which His glory shone amid our ruins, and has left its traces for our study and admonition in the Gospels.

Second—"Thou crownedst Him with glory and honour," as now glorified in heaven, on the Father's throne, with a Name given Him above every name. This refers to the present place of the Son while yet rejected by earth, and denied His rightful place as Israel's King.

Third—"Thou didst set Him over the works of Thy hands." This is already true of the Son in the purpose of God, but in actual manifestation it will begin in that coming hour, when the sovereignty of the earth passes into the hands of Christ (Rev. xi. 15-17), and He takes unto Him His power and reigns. This will bring in the Millennium.

Fourth—"Thou didst put all things in subjection under His feet," which surely points still further onward to the time when, having subdued all things to God, He will reign alone, God's one and only

King, bearing the glory of King and Priest in His own Person, the true Melchizedec who, having fulfilled His trust—which no other ruler ever did—hands over the reigns of delegated authority to God, all at last according to His thoughts, everything standing then in the power of redemption, secured by the values of the Cross and glorious in the virtues of His Person. And it is on these glories that faith now fixes its delighted gaze, and love delights to dwell.

"We *beheld* His glory" as it travelled through our world from Bethlehem to Calvary. That is past. "We *see* Jesus crowned with glory" within the heavens, accepted, exalted, and waiting. This is present. "We *shall* see Him as He is." Not as He was, nor as He shall be, but "as He is," the glorified Son of God, in the fulness of His unveiled glory. This is future. It will be ours on the morn of resurrection and glorification, when He gathers His own from earth and sea, to be with Him in heaven, while He prepares His path to the kingdom and then leads them forth to share it with Him in manifested power and glory.

"*Having* the glory of God" (Rev. xxi. 11) is the last word spoken of the city New Jerusalem—the appointed symbol of the glorified saints. But the glory that she bears is not her own, it is derived. And the light of the fair city is the Lamb, for, as our own Samuel Rutherford sang, in the joy of his Spirit-filled heart—

"The Lamb is all the glory,
Of Immanuel's Land."

J. R.

Receiving Christ as Lord.

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B.

IN the Epistle to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul puts the Christian position in a single sentence: "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord"—or, to give the words more accurately, "As ye received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Col. ii. 6). With the Jew, the divinity of the Christ could never be in doubt. In his case, therefore, the burden of the Gospel testimony was that "Jesus was the Christ." But the Gentile, to whom "Jesus Christ" was a mere name which meant no more than Pontius Pilate, nor half so much as Julius Cæsar, it was necessary to unfold the meaning of the Christ, and to enforce that He was Lord. Hence the apostle's words to the Corinthians: "We preach Christ Jesus as Lord" (2 Cor. iv. 5, R.V.). To the Jew the emphasis was upon "the Christ;" to the Gentile on "the Lord."

An attempt to limit the use of the word "Christian" would be mere pedantry. But yet, in its highest sense, the title belongs only to those who are of "The Way," or, in other words, to those who combine Christian doctrine with Christian life, or who, in the language of the Epistle, "have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord," and are walking in Him. There is much to be learned from Greek tenses. The word is, "As ye received the Christ," pointing back to a definite event or crisis in the life. And the apostle adds, "so walk in Him," a present tense, implying not an act, but a course of living. "Walk

about" is the literal rendering, signifying the whole tenor of the life. But how can we walk about in a person? Though the phrase is quite un-English, its significance in Greek is clear and simple. It means that the whole life is to be characterised by all that is implied in receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. As some one has sung:—

From various cares my soul retires :
Though deep and boundless its desires,
I've now to please but ONE.

Heaping metaphors together, the apostle proceeds, "Rooted and being continually builded up in Him." "Rooted" is in the perfect tense, signifying a past event, continuous in its effect. A baby's idea of gardening is to plant a thing one week and to pull it up the next, to see if it is growing. And the Christian experience of some people is very like a baby's gardening. But those who have really received the Lord Jesus Christ *are* rooted in Him once for all. And what is needed now is to be continually "builded up in Him," and continually established in the faith. "Even as ye were taught," the apostle adds, again adverting to the *aorist* tense, and thus pointing back to the time when they received the Lord Jesus Christ. And so he goes on to warn them "lest any man should make spoil of them through his philosophy and empty deceit." For a heretic is always a cheat. He defrauds his dupes into bartering the gold of Divine truth for the tinsel that is his stock-in-trade. Then follows, "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily, and in Him ye are made full."

The Present Period, AND THE EVENTS THAT WILL FOLLOW IT. COL. W. BEERS, TORONTO.

THIS time in which we live has been variously spoken of as "the dispensation of the Church" and "the day of the ministration of the Spirit." It is a dateless, timeless period. We know it began at the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 1), ten days after the Lord's ascension to heaven. Then all believers then alive, were "baptised in one Spirit into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13), of which Christ is the Head. But we have nothing to tell us when the dispensation will close, since its end depends on the completion of the work then begun, the formation of the Church, the body of Christ. God only knows when the last member is to be added, the body completed, and the Father's purpose fulfilled. Then the Lord will come for His own, the Master of the house will rise up and shut the door of grace, as now made known in the Gospel, and will reject by spueing out of His mouth the false church, including all who are not His own of whatever creed. When the Lord Jesus expired on the Cross, all the Old Testament types concerning His death were fulfilled, for Christ is "the end of the law." He is the substance of all its shadows. From that moment, the prophetic clock as it were, stopped, and God, at the time of the descent of the Holy Ghost, began His new work of gathering out from amongst Jews and Gentiles a people for His Name. Except in type and symbol, His present

time has no place in the Old Testament Scriptures, for the Church was a "mystery kept in silence" (Rom. xvi. 25), until the time came for its revelation (Eph. iii. 5). In this unique dispensation of the Church, Israel as a nation is as it were "side-tracked," and the Church is brought in to the main line of God's purposes and dealings. When these are completed, and all who are Christ's removed to heaven at our Lord's coming, then God will resume His dealings with His covenant people of Israel. Their present position is, that they are "without a king, without a prince, without sacrifice" (Hosea iii. 3), but the time is coming when "they shall return and seek the Lord their God and David their king, and shall come with fear to the Lord" (vers. 4, 5, R.V.). "Blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. xi. 25). All kingly and imperial power has been in the hands of the Gentiles since God handed that power over to His servant Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxv. 9), and this must continue so, till He comes whose right it is, shall reign (Ezek. xxi. 27; Rev. xi. 15-19). He is the Stone "cut out without hands" (Dan. ii. 45) that shall smite the image and grind it to powder. All the promises of earthly blessing and prosperity will then be fulfilled to Israel, under the one thousand years' reign of Messiah their King, they One whom they pierced (Zech. xii. 10). Previous to this, however, Judah will be dealt with by God in judgment (Ezek. xxii. 19-22) for their purification, and judged for their part in the murder of His

Son. Wrath has already come upon them as a people to "the uttermost" (1 Thess. ii. 16). Jerusalem has been trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and the Holy City will yet be again trodden under foot forty and two months by the last Gentile oppressor (Rev. xi. 2) AFTER the Church has been removed from earth, and during the 1260 days' testimony of God's two earthly witnesses in Jerusalem.

The temple will be rebuilt, and "the Man of Sin," the Son of perdition, the Antichrist, will take his seat in it (2 Thess. ii. 4), and will set up his image thereon to be worshipped. This is "the abomination of desolation" spoken of by Daniel the prophet (Dan. xii. 11; Matt. xxiv. 15). This, when it is seen, will be the signal for the faithful of Israel in Judea, "to flee to the mountains." Then follows "the great tribulation" out of which a great multitude will be brought to "stand *before* the throne" (Rev. vii. 15)—not to sit *with* Him who is on it, which is the place of the glorified Church alone (Rev. iii. 21).

The individual believer and the Church now "waits for the Son of God from heaven," for it is as such He will come for her (1 Thess. i. 10). As "Son of Man" He will come to earth accompanied by His saints for judgment (Matt. xxiv. 29; xxv. 21). Were this distinction observed, much that seems contradictory would be plain. Between these two events a period of at least seven years comes in. The 70th week of years of Daniel's prophecy yet unfulfilled, will then be filled in. During this interval, between the Lord's coming *for* and *with* His saints, God will

deal with the world in judgment, and especially with that part of it known as "Christendom." The seven trumpets and the seven seals of Rev. chap. i.-xvi., are symbolic of these judgments, as they advance. Since these things are so, and are most surely believed among us as "at hand" (2 Pet. iii. 11, R.V.), "What sort of persons ought we to be in all holy living and godliness"? And what a life and walk of separation to God, from the world and all that is of it, should be ours, while we look and wait in ardent expectation for the coming of our Lord from heaven, and our removal from earth in an eye-twinkle, to be "for ever with the Lord." These are great and glorious things, and not one of them will fail. Let us "watch, and be sober," so as to be "found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless."

The Saint Falling Asleep.

WHY do you weep? I am falling asleep,
And the eye of the Shepherd is over His sheep,
His arm is sustaining, His hand leading on
To the rest that remains for His loved and His own.

With His blood He redeemed me, and cleansed me
from sin,
By His Spirit renewed, for His dwelling within;
In His pastures so sweet, by still waters He led,
Now in life's eventide He is making my bed.

I dread not the grave, if in it I am found—
He lay in its precincts and hallowed the ground;
My spirit "with Christ" in His presence shall rest
"At home with the Lord," in the land of the blest.

The hour is at hand, when the trumpet shall sound,
And then all the flock shall "together" be found
Around the Great Shepherd, in glory to dwell,
And so, for a little, my loved ones, Farewell.

The Early Church.

IV.—ITS SPIRITUALITY AND ITS LIBERALITY.

THE early Church, in its first blush of spiritual freshness, had "all things" belonging to its calling as Christ's body "in common," or, as we would say, "in fellowship." The new community of over three thousand heaven-born men and women, one with Christ in heaven and with each other as His members on earth, shared together, gave to, and received from each other of the new and heavenly things of which they had become "fellow-heirs" and partners through their union with Christ, and their baptism in one Spirit into one body. This was the great, the chief thing. They enjoyed in a common fellowship, "things" which the Cross had procured, those "spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. i. 3), which the Spirit had come to reveal, to make good and cause them to enjoy, in fulfilment of the promise, "He shall take of Mine and shall declare it unto you" (John xiv. 14, R.V.). This was "the things" they had in common, of which they spake, in which they communed. The outcome of this fellowship in spiritual and eternal things, is recorded in verse 45 (R.V.), where we are told that they sold their possessions and goods and parted the proceeds to all, "according as any man had need." There was no "commandment of the Lord" bidding them do this. No demand was made by the apostles on their property. It was an act of their own volition, the motive power of which was a spiritual apprehension of

their new possessions in Christ, and the common interests they had in Him and His. This fruit of grace in the early Church is further described in chap. iv. 34, "For neither was there among them any that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things and laid them at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." Too much has been made of this by some, too little by others. Too much, by those who say it is a pattern for all saints, in all ages, under all conditions to copy. These assert that the Church is to have a common purse and a common store, that "equality" in temporalities, as well as in spiritualities, is to be the Golden Rule. Too little, by those who aver that this outburst of liberality was all a mistake, an impulse arising from a false estimate of earthly things, in view of the personal return of Christ which they expected immediately. The simple record, divested of all that has been read into it and squeezed out from it is, that there was among the Christians in Jerusalem in these wonderful Pentecostal times, a practical exhibition of what Dr. Chalmers called "the expulsive power of a new affection." The love of Christ and the power of heavenly things filled all hearts, so that "the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and soul." And the rest followed. For we are immediately told, "and not one of them *said* that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." That they still *were* his own, chap. v. 4 informs us, yet none said

so, "but they had all things common." This second use of these words clearly shows the cause of this unheard of unselfishness. They were "of one heart." Christ had His place, heaven its power, love its rule there, and earthly things were estimated at their true value. The selling of their lands and houses, to provide life's necessities to those that lacked, was one of many witnesses to the dominating power of eternal things, and the actuality of their realisation of their oneness in Christ. There would have been none of it but for the right spiritual condition that bloomed and fruited for a brief, bright season in that garden of the Lord. If we ever see it after this manner, it will come by way of a Revival of spiritual life, and a fresh inflowing of the power of heavenly things. But it was not Socialism—not even Christian Socialism—as it is named. Jerusalem and its mixed inhabitants did not benefit by it; it was a movement solely within the Church, and limited to those who had shared in the baptism of the one Spirit. Most of these were probably poor, and their conversion may have bereft some of home and employment. And the "spoiling of their goods" (Heb. x. 34) was a common experience among the early disciples. So there were those who "had need" in the young community, and others who had what they did *not* need, and they gladly gave it up to supply the lack of their poorer brethren. It was a lovely sight, but, like Eden bliss, only for a passing season, for the early love subsided, and the expression of it in "deed" (1 John iii. 18) soon became the

exception rather than the rule. Only where "great grace" is found among the Lord's people does the selfish hand relax its hold, and then the abiding exhortation of the Word, "distributing to the necessity of saints" (Rom. xii. 13) receives due honour. We have seen a list of jewellery, pictures, unnecessary furnishing, &c., sent by a company of Christians to be sold in an auction mart, the proceeds to be used for relief of the needy and the spread of the Gospel. And this was the result of a revived condition of soul and an enlargement of heart, resulting from a fresh enjoyment of the truth of their heavenly calling and separation from the world. Nothing else will produce it. For when spiritually declines and worldliness advances, funds decrease, and then ungodly means has to be adopted to "raise the wind" and get the money.

The TESTIMONY of this first company of assembled saints, this "*church* which was at Jerusalem," is recorded in such terms as "with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus" (chap. iv. 33). It could not be otherwise, with a company witnessing in their lives and deeds, to the fact, that they were a people "risen with Christ," living the heavenly life on earth, controlled by the Spirit. The preacher who has to witness with his lips to truths denied in the lives of those who stand behind him has a different story to tell, and one of the hardest fields any servant of the Lord can testify in is, where high profession and low living among Christians militate against his message. "Hav-

ing favour with all the people" (chap. ii. 47) describes the effect of the testimony generally, for it was not "the people" but their prejudiced leaders who persecuted the workers, and opposed the work of the Lord. And the grand ultimate results of the testimony are recorded in the words, "Many of them that heard the Word believed, and the number of the men came to be about five thousand" (chap. iv. 4). In one aspect there will never be a second Pentecost. There is no need for it, for the work begun then continues, and will, until the Church is complete. For the living Lord is still on high, Head of His body and Cause of all its increase. And the Divine Comforter is still on earth in and with the Church, to do the work and guide the workers. Even in these last days, amid increasing corruptions, there is a path of blessing clearly marked out in the Word, and those who walk in it humbly yet firmly with God, will prove that "He faileth not." But the want of the time is a recovery and revival of all this in the souls of the saints in such power, that it will sweep all before it from the scene, that is contrary to it, and leave the members of Christ, where they were on that memorable day, and where they should be now, separate from the world, all together with souls aglow in the power of the Christ-life which they in common possess, enjoying it and witnessing to it in the Spirit's power. This was Pentecost, and wherever there is a genuine revival of these things there and then in their measure will the happy conditions and fruits thereof be seen.

The Epistle of Jude.

III.—DIVINE WARNINGS AND EXAMPLES.

ALEX. MATTHEWS, TACOMA, WASH., U.S.A.

THREE solemn examples of apostasy are given in verses 5-7. Israel's judgment in the wilderness for their unbelief, want of confidence in God, and practical denial of His Word,—“I will bring you in” (Exod. vi. 8). “Angels which kept not their principality,” rebelling against Divine authority, and seeking a place which belonged not to them, in self-will. Sodom and its sister cities which on account of their pride (Ezek. xvi. 46), immorality, and corruption, are set forth as an example of Divine vengeance. Those who follow in the same lawless path are called “dreamers,” men who ignore the authority and Word of God, following their own will and the idle dreams of their own corrupt imaginations, refusing restraint, spurning with contempt all authority of God and man alike, “railing at the things they know not,” and refusing to own any authority above their own. Surely these are common enough to-day. In pronouncing His “woe” upon all such, three examples from Scripture history are then cited. “The way of Cain,” ignoring human depravity, refusing redemption by the death of Christ. How common is this, it is the religion of fallen man, the first development of depravity after the Fall. And this is accompanied by hatred of those who own, as did Abel, their need of atonement and confess their faith in Christ for salvation. “The error of Balaam for reward,” knowing the truth,

yet rejecting it, using their knowledge for self-advancement. Such men beguile the people of God into unhallowed union with the world, all for their own selfish ends, loving the wages of unrighteousness.” “The gainsaying of Core,” who led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron, God's prophet and priest, whose place Korah sought, and “perished” in the futile attempt. So shall “sudden destruction” come upon all who usurp Divine prerogatives, displace the Lordship of Christ, rebel against the Word of God, and claim place and power which belong to Christ alone. Such is in brief the progressive character of the present apostasy, revealing the principles that underlie it. It points to the unsparing judgment of God which awaits it in connection with God's full and final revelation as given for this age of grace and of the heavenly calling, to spiritual worship, separate position, and character of the Church, called out from the world to be “a people for God's own possession,” and His witness in it. Such warnings are surely needed by us, for the same corruptions abound in our own time, and unless God's own people watch their spirits and “sanctify in the heart Christ as Lord” (1 Pet. iii. 15, R.V.), owning the authority of His Word in every department of their lives, they will be swept into that current of laxity and lawlessness, which will yet carry everything that bears Christ's Name without power on its bosom into the kingdom of Antichrist. Our safety, as surely as our spirituality and power in testimony, is found in close cleaving to the Lord and His abiding Word.

Things Hard to be Understood.

PETER says there are "some things" in Paul's Epistles which are "hard to be understood" (2 Pet. iii. 16). If he lived now, he would perhaps find "some things" in the lives and ways of those who claim to be the "Epistle of Christ" (2 Cor. iii. 3) still harder to be understood in the light of what they profess and frequently confess with their lips. Here are a few things that baffle some of us: they are truly "hard to be understood."

Mr. A. delights to speak of the "heavenly calling:" it is a common theme of his ministry; he luxuriates in it. But he is chairman of a Political Association, convener of a Bowling Club committee, and was lately made a Justice of Peace. Do you "understand" that?

Mrs. L. was saying she "greatly enjoyed" the last Conference she attended, there was much "Higher Life" teaching in it, and some "charming addresses on Holiness." But she was in a Picture Palace a night or two after, while on a visit to her married daughter in a town where she is not so well known, and was telling her little grandchildren that the "movies" were "grand" and they would "enjoy it." Can you explain that?

The Rev. Dr. M. is very evangelical in his preaching. He preached on a recent Sunday from "Ye must be born again" with great plainness. At the close, he christened two babies and, reciting a prayer from the Prayer Book, thanked God that the babies had in their baptism been regenerated, become children of

God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. If they grow up, he will preach to them, "Ye must be born again." Something seems to be out of joint here. It is a thing "hard to be understood."

Brother S. is "strong" on separation from evil. He would not go to a Bible Reading in a fellow-believer's house because he is "not with us." But at the Co-operative Society quarterly meeting, where he is an office-bearer, he meets and works and shares "dividends" with men of all religions, and of no religion, and it does not seem to "exercise" him a bit. Strange, isn't it! How do you "understand" that?

Sister R. believes if there were "more love" among the Christians with whom she meets, there would be "greater blessing" among the unsaved, and Christians who are in false positions would be "attracted" to "our place of worship." She was at tea the other night in a fellow-believer's house, and for a full hour her tongue went, declaiming against first one, then another. Very likely she thought the Christian woman would "take knowledge of her that she had been with Jesus," but the truth is, she was glad when she went away, and said to her husband when he came home, "I could never endure evil speaking like that, it repels me." And the maid that brought in the tea, heard enough to cause her to refuse an invitation to go to "The Room," in which Sister B. meets for worship, to a Gospel meeting. This "explains" a good deal of what is called "prejudice against the truth."

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

OUTLINES OF GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

GOD'S ABUNDANT MERCIES.

Abundant Mercy (1 Pet. i. 3)—To the Needy.
 Abundant Pardon (Isa. lv. 7)—To the Guilty.
 Abundant Peace (Psa. xxxvii. 1)—To the Troubled.
 Abundant Grace (2 Cor. ix. 10)—To the Believer.

GREAT REDEMPTION.

Redemption's Price (1 Pet. i. 19)—At the Cross.
 Redemption's Perfection (Heb. ix. 12)—In Resurrection.
 Redemption's Power (Rom. iii. 24)—In Salvation.
 Redemption's Prospect (Eph. iv. 30)—In Glorification.

CONVERSION TO GOD.

Conversion Demanded (Matt. xviii. 3).
 Conversion Explained (Acts xi. 21).
 Conversion Exemplified (1 Thess. i. 9).
 Conversion Refused (Acts xxviii. 27).

Concise Scripture Studies for Bible Lovers.

Prayer—*Proseuchomai*—a drawing near to God, a making request to God, in the spirit of worship of God. The Word includes all forms of reverent approach to God and of the soul's personal, direct dealing with Him. "Supplication" (Eph. vi. 18), in which the Christian expresses his conscious need, and "Intercession" (1 Tim. ii. 1), in which the need of others occupies the thoughts, are often connected with it, and "Thanksgiving" (Phil. iv. 6), in which the supply of need already met is acknowledged, are words clearly associated (see Col. i. 3; 1 Thess. i. 2; v. 17, 18) in the Word as they are in the experiences of the saint. Prayer is to be addressed to God (Eph. i. 3) and the Father (John xvi. 23; Eph. iii. 14), in the Name of the Lord Jesus (John xiv. 13), as begotten in the heart by the Spirit (Rom. viii. 26). Prayer is to be in faith (Matt' xi. 24; Jas. i. 6) for things according to the will of God (1 John v. 14). Prayer is in season "everywhere" (1 Tim. i. 8), and "always" (Luke xviii. 1), for "everything" (Phil. iv. 6), "without ceasing" (1 Thess. v. 17), and should be accompanied with "watching" (Col. iv. 2) for the answer. Steadfastness in prayer (Rom. xii. 12), unceasingly (1 Thess. v. 17) in all seasons, under all conditions, is an evidence of dependence upon God, and is always owned by Him (Acts x. 2). True, inwrought, fervent prayer, "availeth much" (Jas. v. 16), and

when the people of God pray unitedly and unceasingly (Acts xii. 5, 12), great deliverance is wrought. When the Church is great in prayer, her blessing and her fruitfulness abound.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

I have been invited to take common part with the villagers, in whose midst I for the present time reside, in Prohibition and other meetings for purposes of arousing public interest and taking votes, with the object of getting measures passed in Parliament for the repression of various evils, and the general welfare of mankind. I do not see from the Word that as a Christian I am called to share in such movements. But several Christian men who are in the assembly in which I am, insist, that it is a responsibility laid upon all who bear the Christian name to take an active part in such efforts, especially in a time of crisis like the present. Can you give Scriptural counsel on the point? I believe it would be welcomed by very many.

The whole question of the Christian's association with the world, and his being "unequally yoked" and making common cause with the unconverted, is involved in this question. And this is distinctly forbidden to the Christian in 2 Cor. vi. 14-17. Alliance with the world, in its schemes for repressing evils, obtaining decisions in Parliament, and sharing in common with the ungodly in protests against laws and orders from those who are in authority, form no part of that "manner of life" (Phil. i. 27, R.V.) to which God's people are called. They know that the world will never be reformed or cleansed from its evils until God Himself takes the matter in hand, which He will in His own time, not by philanthropy but in judgment stern and awful. They also know, that the only "uplift" for mankind that is of any permanent value is conversion to God, and that this comes through belief of the Gospel and a birth from above. Everything short of this leaves the sinner in his sins (John viii. 24), and still of the world under judgment (John xii. 31). This does not mean that we are to be indifferent to human need and unmoved with compassion toward human sorrow. The Word teaches, "Let us do good to all" (1 Thess. v. 10), but this is to be done according to the principles and commandments of the Lord, as laid down in other parts of the Word. To seek to obtain spiritual results by carnal means is not according

to God, and cannot have His sanction or blessing. To make common cause with the ungodly, to join associations in which spiritual conditions are not reckoned, to commit oneself to the actions of others with whom we are in alliance, is what the Word regards as an "unequal yoke." And this is never to be worn by those who are the Lord's freemen, ready to act at His call, without the consent or in spite of the opposition of others. A good object is not to be sought in an evil way, and common action with the unconverted is evil for the children of God. Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, for the restitution of a City of Refuge that belonged by right to Israel (2 Chron. xviii. 3), clearly shows that not even in "a good work" can God's child become associated with the ungodly without unholy compromise and at the expense of denying his calling. For the words, "I am as thou art," which Jehoshaphat uttered in response to Ahab's invitation, denied his position as God's witness against Israel's idolatries, and nullified his own earlier testimony when he "strengthened himself against Israel" (ver. 1). And when God's prophet told out the Divine reckoning of the whole matter, it was no flattering terms that he used, but a direct and personal question for his conscience to answer, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly and love them that hate the Lord?" (2 Chron. xix. 2). This evidently reached and humbled him. A former generation, and some still with us, who learned the truths of the heavenly calling of believers, their separation from the world and their place of witnessing for a rejected Christ on earth, direct from God in a power that dominates the life and controls the conduct, had no calls to attend "Prohibition" meetings, or take part in political agitations. They were marked as "strangers" here. But some who now put themselves forward as instructors and guides in spiritual things, claim to have "advanced" to a wider vision, and are doing their utmost to lead the untaught and unwary into the same path. The business of the man who knows, and has, and values the truth is, to ring it out with no uncertain sound, and so give a chance to those whose desire is to please God, to learn and obey His Word.

Answers to Correspondents.

BETA.—In 1 Tim. iv. 1, the warning is against a special activity of demons in "latter times," which is evidently of a religious character and would

prove a snare to true believers in "seducing" them from the faith.

OBED.—The words of Matt. xxii. 32, teach conclusively that the patriarchs of Genesis are not dead, but living, and that the doctrine of the "sleep of the soul" between death and resurrection is false.

D. J. R.—The "fault" (or "trespass" R.V.) in which the man of Gal. vi. 1 was "overtaken," is not a deliberate and continued course of evil-doing, but rather a surprise temptation, sprung upon him at a time of unwatchfulness, to which he yielded. It was something demanding pastoral care and spiritual restoration, with readjustment and mending of what had been marred through his fall. It is not a case for "church" discipline—certainly not for expulsion—but for "spiritual" doctoring and nursing back to health and wholeness. Would that there were more of such ministry in exercise!

W. S., WANDSWORTH.—The brother who has been wronged is—in the Lord's instructions dealing with such a case as you describe (Matt. xviii. 15)—to make the first move, and "go" to the one who has done the wrong, with the object—not of scolding or proving him wrong—but of "gaining" the offender. This is not the world's way, but it is God's, and should be ours.

H. M. L., MIDLOTHIAN.—If you find it difficult to reach the people in your village with the Gospel as preached in the hall used by the assembly, try another. There is no need to stick to the place in which you meet for worship, for the preaching of the Gospel. But if you are to retain the hearty and practical fellowship of your fellow-saints in any such effort, it will have to be arranged in a manner calculated to gain their sympathy, not to alienate or divide it.

G. E. T., DUBLIN.—The presence of professed Protestants and confessed Christians at "Requiem Mass" in a Romish Cathedral, is surely a sign of the times. To show respect to one who serves his country is a duty, but it surely may be done without giving insult to God and His Christ, in patronising a system which denies the sufficiency of the Cross, and appropriates to itself the functions of the Mediatorship and Priesthood of the Son of God. Neither patriotic feeling, nor the civilities of life should compel a Christian to compromise that which is God's due, or to dishonour that Name which is above every name.

T. M'G., GLASGOW.—There is nothing in the Word of God to warrant the statement that “the evangelist” (Acts xxi. 8) is chosen by a church—or by any group of churches—or that he is its servant, under its control. A true evangelist is the gift of Christ (Eph. iv. 11); his work is the preaching of the Gospel, his sphere is the world, and he is to be at the disposal of the Divine Spirit (Acts xvii. 2; xvi. 6, 7), when, where, and how to preach. He looks direct to the Lord, who is his Employer, for his support, and if he is a true servant, it will not fail. The saints individually and assemblies collectively have a responsibility toward him, to “communicate” (Gal. vi. 6), not only when labouring with or near them, but especially when in places where there is no assembly to welcome him (Phil. iv. 15). Those evangelists who preach only in large and well-to-do assemblies, where everything is ready to their hand, know nothing of what it is to pioneer in fields where nothing is provided, but where the labourer has to find and pay for halls, lodgings, and to do everything himself, often in the face of opposition. Such workers should surely have the first consideration in administering the assembly's gifts.

A Healthy and a Growing Assembly.

Observations by an Aged Minister of the Word.—III.

I have observed throughout a fairly long and varied experience, that it is not where spasmodic Gospel efforts are made on new-fangled lines, where large number of converts are hurriedly brought into assemblies, and there left untaught in the truths that are given by God to order His people's worship and service in His Church, it is not, I say, under such conditions that real increase, even in numbers, is found. For those who are brought in with little care, usually go with little conscience, either back to the world, never having been born of God, or into some sect, never having been taught the Word which severs and keeps separate those who “walk in truth” (3 John 4). The assembly that is spiritually healthy, having all its functions in exercise, each doing the part for which he is fitted, in the place in which he has been “set” (1 Cor. xii. 28), seeking to give place and opportunity for all to exercise the ministry committed to them for the profit of all (1 Cor. xii. 7-12), where not one for all, but all in their measure and according to their gift and opportunities, “echo forth”

(1 Thess. i. 8), and spread the Gospel (Acts viii. 4; xi. 19), is where I have seen steady, godly, increase and growth, and well ordered, happy assembly life. And a beautiful sight it is too, of a sweet savour Godward and refreshing manward (see Psa. cxxxiii. 1-4). Where the guides are godly, walking in the truth, and losing no fitting opportunity to make it known (1 Tim. iv. 17), the assembly is usually found well taught and intelligent in the things of God, knowing why they are where they are, and able to give to every man that asketh a Scriptural answer (1 Pet. iii. 15), for why they are outside the camp of the world's religion, and apart from denominationalism, simply owning the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ as their centre of assembling, and His Word as their rule in acting when so assembled. I have observed that where this Scriptural order is practiced, there is a continuous adding of Christians who have been brought out from false associations by means of the Word they have heard and the subjection to it they have seen among those who own its power. But where the leaders “repudiate” what their fathers recovered at much cost, and go and come with the corrupt systems that they left in obedience to the truths they learned, it is only a matter of time when disintegration will follow. The numbers will dwindle, or, if artificially kept up, cease to fulfil the functions of a Scriptural assembly, finally disappearing. Then the Divine PRINCIPLES are blamed, whereas, as a matter of fact, it was the PRACTICE that was at fault, and the giving up of God's truth for man's will and way the cause of the whole decline, inward and outward. For it cannot be too well remembered, that God's way, as it is taught in His Word, cannot be trifled with at will, and His blessing retained. Nor can the ways of the world be brought into God's assembly without bringing with them decline in spiritual freshness, and “dry rot” to spiritual prosperity. There are witnesses to this all around, which it will be the wisdom of those venturing out on the path that leads to the same end to hear and heed, while recovery is possible. The Lord bears with our ignorance and teaches patiently, but where light is misused and truths once learned to be obeyed given up, to make room for the world's religion and the ways of men, He signifies His displeasure by allowing troubles to arise and divisions to come, with no spiritual power to resist and no wisdom to guide through them.

The Way of God's Deliverance.

IN the history of God's dealings with men, especially affecting those who are in relation with Him, it has again and again been witnessed that the darkest hour of their sufferings precedes the dawn, and the time of their deepest trial is the eve of their deliverance, by the hand of God.

In the long and weary years of Israel's captivity in Egypt, under Pharaoh, the oppression was never so full or the burden so heavy, as when the Lord had "looked on their affliction," and was sending Moses to be their Deliverer.

The condition of the exiled Jews of the captivity in Persia was never more bitter, or their extinction as a people so near from the efforts of Haman, their Amalekite enemy, as when Esther received the king's favour, and the golden sceptre that secured their deliverance and restoration to royal favour was outstretched toward her who pleaded their cause. The deepest, darkest hour of their history, preceded the dawn of deliverance. When the enemy had all but succeeded in their overthrow, God caused it to be felt that He was on their side and against their enemies. And such is the story of the ages. When the devil has done his worst, God intervenes. When the powers of evil have reached their zenith, and seem to be within easy grasp of their prey, God frustrates their purpose and overthrows their counsels. But this is always in response to the exercises of the hearts of His own people, and in answer to their

calls upon Him for deliverance. These manifestations of the Divine power do not come to a self-sufficient or prayerless people. "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee" (Psa. l. 15), is God's own promise, and it cannot fail. But it has to be operated on in faith, and not held in empty form. "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James v. 16), but a few formal, heartless words, are not the same. When God's people are in dead earnest, when their prayers are real layings hold on God, they must prevail, and whether early or late, God's answer will come. But let none lose confidence in their God if He should seem to tarry, for let it be ever remembered that, while

"God never is before His time,
He never is behind."

Unbelief among His people may hinder Him from manifesting His power as it did of old, when the Lord could not do "many mighty works" because of the unbelieving condition of the people. And the retaining of things forbidden in the Word, or disobedience to its plain commandments regarding Christian life and conduct, may render the condition of His people such as to hinder real prayer among them. But to all who to seek His face and call upon Him in truth, God is a Refuge, and He will prove Himself a true Deliverer, in His own time and way. Let the prayer of faith, and the expectancy of the soul, therefore, be unto Him, and sure it is, He will not fail us. For "the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him" (Psa. xxxiii. 18).

The Sacrifice of Christ.

ITS EXCELLENCIES AND ITS VIRTUES.

THE sacrifices of Old Testament time were foreshadowings of the one great sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. They were appointed by God as His expressions of the excellencies and virtues of His own Lamb, "foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world" (1 Pet. i. 20), and manifested in God's own "due time," to die "for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). The full value of His atoning death, and of the sacrifice He offered when "He gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell" (Eph. v. 2, R.V.), has been estimated in heaven, and its virtues are reckoned to the account of all who by a personal faith appropriate its worth for their salvation. There is "no more sacrifice for sins," because there is no need for it. There is no "altar" in the church, no sacrificing priest, no offering to God, in Mass or Eucharist. All was completed, finished, accomplished, and accepted "once for all," at Calvary. This has to be held fast in an active faith: it is the Rock upon which the redeemed are set. But it is denied, openly by many, covertly by more. False views of Christ's atonement abound. Even among those who own and desire to honour it, imperfect and unscriptural statements are frequently heard respecting it. Ritualism denies its sufficiency, for as Calvin truly says, "The Cross of Christ is overthrown the moment an altar is erected." On a subject so solemn, so vital, and so transcendent to

human thought, it surely behoves us to acquaint ourselves with the very words in which God has revealed all that we need to know concerning it. And it is with this object that the following expository remarks by Christian men and able ministers of the Word are here given, to lead our readers to a fuller and richer appreciation of its varied aspects as, they are presented to us in the Sacred Word.

CHRIST'S ACCOMPLISHED DECEASE.

On the holy mount, the heavenly visitors spake of Christ's decease which He was about "to *accomplish* at Jerusalem." This is a word of sweet and precious import. For it tells the full and perfected character of the death He was to die. All was accomplished in due order, from first to last. As in the fulness of time He was born, so when His hour was come—but not till then—He died. His enemies would have fain laid hands on Him before, but they could not, until the appointed hour. Then He yielded Himself to their power, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled. And all was accomplished as God would have it, in calm and measured fulness, as the counsels of God required. The death of God's holy Lamb is wonderful in the form of its accomplishment, as it is precious beyond all price in its value, its efficiency, and its virtues — *J. G. Bellett.*

CHRIST AS SINBEARER.

We are not to regard the Cross of Christ as a mere circumstance in a life of sin-bearing. It was the grand and only scene of sin-bearing. "His own self bare our

sins in His own body on the tree " (1 Pet. ii. 24). He did not bear them anywhere else. He did not bear them in the manger, nor in the wilderness, nor in the garden ; but only "on the tree."—*C. H. Mackintosh.*

CHRIST FORSAKEN OF GOD.

The cry, " My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me " (Psa. xxii. 1), uttered by the Lord Jesus while on the Cross, was the expression of His heart, while He was bearing the judgment of sin. Recorded by the Spirit hundreds of years before, it came from His lips in that awful hour when, with deep darkness all around, He stood as our sinbearer, bearing the judgment of sin. Never at any previous time had He known what it was to be forsaken by God. His whole path had been one of unbroken communion with God, until then. In the time of His rejection by men He could say, " I am not alone, because the Father is with Me " (John xvi. 32). But now He is " left alone." Why? The answer comes from His own lips, " Thou art holy." The Holy One could not look upon sin, while He was bearing it. And so truly did the Holy One of God stand in our place, being " made sin for us," that God had to turn away His face from Him, leaving Him alone in that hour as the mighty Bearer of sin.—*J. R. Caldwell.*

EXCELLENCY OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE.

The dignity and glory of the eternal Person of the Son of God gives to His obedience and sacrifice a value and an excellency all its own. And while it is written that God " made Him to be sin

for us," when He stood as an expiatory Sacrifice, it is equally true that He was personally unstained by the sins that He bore. And let it ever be remembered, that at the very time He was bearing our sins in His own body on the tree, He was also giving Himself up to God as an offering and a sacrifice of a " sweet smelling savour " (Eph. v. 2). If this be forgotten, our views of Christ's atoning work, and the value thereof, will be defective, if not erroneous.—*J. Howard.*

ACCEPTED IN THE SACRIFICE.

The burnt offering of Levitical times was a type of Christ, as offering Himself an offering and a sacrifice to God of a " sweet-smelling savour " (Eph. v. 2). All of it ascended to God. It was an offering wholly for Him. Yet its value became good to the offerer, who, laying his hand on its head, became identified with it. This identification plainly sets forth the believing sinner's identification with Christ in death, resurrection, ascension, and acceptance. He is one with Christ in all the value of His sacrifice, and stands before God " accepted in the Beloved."—*Andrew Muller.*

SACRIFICE AND EXAMPLE.

The Holy Ghost never presents Christ in the moral glory of His life for imitation, until the sinner knows the value of His death and resurrection for salvation and peace ; in other words, the Spirit never presents Christ as a *Pattern* until He has been received by faith as a *Personal* Saviour. Then it is that we see His *Path*, and " follow His steps."—*Henry Heath.*

GLORYING IN THE CROSS.

Paul gloried in the Cross. To the Cross of Christ he traces a double crucifixion. The world was crucified to Paul, and Paul, one with Christ, was crucified to the world. Here is indeed a test for us as to how much we know of the Cross. There is no desire for the world in the heart of him who truly embraces "Christ and Him crucified," for he sees "all that is in the world" as Satan's counter-attraction to the Cross, to the Father's great gift of His Son. And on the other hand, the world has no more desire for such an one than it had for Him whom it cast out and crucified.—*W. H. Bennet.*

In days when many *deny* the vicarious character of Christ's death, and when among those who claim to trust it for their salvation, there are meagre and shallow thoughts regarding its values and its virtues, let it be ours to reverently gather from the Word all that is there revealed regarding it, and feed thereon in the presence of God—as the priests of old fed on the offerings whose blood had atoned for sin and made peace—for sustenance and strength, so that we may be able everywhere and always to give a full Gospel to those who need it, and to manifest in a joyous and godly life, the saving virtues of that Cross in which we glory. And while glorying in the Cross as the cause of our salvation, we shall see it also as the instrument of our separation from the world to God.

I glory in the Cross!

There, with the Son of God, the death I died.

By it this evil world is crucified to me,

And I unto this evil world am crucified.

Christ and the Scriptures :

THEIR RELATIONS AND PERFECTIONS.

E. ADAM.

THE expression "Word of God," is used both of the living and the written Word, and this suggests to us certain resemblances between Christ and the Scriptures.

We have, first of all, certain verbal resemblances. "I am the *Bread* of Life," said the Saviour, "if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever" (John vi. 35, 51). "Man shall not live by *bread* alone, but by every Word of God," was spoken by Him of the written Word (Luke iv. 4). Again, He said, "I am the *Light* of the world" (John viii. 12); and we put alongside of this the words of the Psalmist, "Thy Word is a *light* unto my path" (Psa. cxix. 105). Again, Christ the living Word "is *able* to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. vii. 25); and we are exhorted to "receive with meekness the engrafted Word which is *able to save* our souls" (Jas. i. 21). And many other verbal resemblances might be traced, between the living and the written Word.

Further, Christ and the Bible are both *Divine* and *Human*. In what a remarkable manner is the Deity and humanity of our Lord displayed at Sychar's well. The Son of Man, wearied with His journey, asks for a drink of water from the woman, and afterwards offers her living water! And how human are the stories of the Bible, of Boaz and Ruth, of Jacob and Rachel, yet what wondrous and unfathom-

able revelations are contained in such a portion as the Epistle to the Ephesians !

The living and written Word resemble each other in that, while both are *Jewish*, both are *Universal*. Our Lord was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the royal line ; but He is also " the Saviour of the world." The Bible on its human side, is an Eastern book, written in the East by Jewish penmen, and having an intensely Jewish outlook ; while at the same time its message is universal in its application to all men of all nations.

Lastly, the Holy Spirit is needed to understand both the Person and the Book. " No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost " (1 Cor. xii. 3) ; and the same Divine Interpreter is needed to enable us to understand the spiritual truths of the Bible.

The Bible is the Book of Christ. He is its centre and circumference, its heart, its life, its glory. Take Christ from the Bible and what have we left ? All through, the Old Testament, our attention is drawn to a coming King and a coming Sacrifice. In promise and prophecy and picture, we are pointed to this Coming One, whose sufferings and death and subsequent glory are depicted in minute detail. When we reach the Gospels, we see that this Coming One has come ; we are face to face with the wondrous Person of the Christ of God. We see Him in life, in death, and in resurrection. Passing on to the Acts, we behold the power of this same Person exhibited in and through His disciples on earth. The Book of the Acts may fittingly be called " the Acts of

the Risen and Glorified Saviour by the Holy Spirit, through His servants." In the Epistles, we have our Lord's revelations and precepts, while the Apocalypse gives us the programme of events that will take place at the Revelation of Jesus Christ and far beyond it.

Thus we have a Divine Person and a Divine Word, a Saviour, Redeemer, and Lord set forth in the Book we call the Bible. And that Book is authenticated, acknowledged, and commended as the very Word of the living God. To discredit the written Word is to cast dishonour on the living Word whose Book it is. And all those who to-day own and honour and love the Person, will reverence and use and esteem the Book which testifies to us of Him.

—o—

" The Faithful Watchman."

Psalm cxxi.

THE watchman of Israel ne'er slumbers or sleeps,
Though day dawn in sorrow, His vigil He keeps,
His eye on His people, their sorrow He knows,
And, strong to deliver, He meets all their foes.

The Shepherd of Israel, His sheep safely tends,
Though compassed by foemen, death's arrow He bends,
His arm bears His people, His heart feels their woes,
His tender compassion in loving care shows.

Lord Jesus, our Saviour, our Shepherd art Thou,—
Though death's darkest shadow our spirits may cow,
Thy face shines upon us in unsullied grace,
And in trust we draw nearer, Thy love to embrace.

Lord Jesus, our Saviour, our Watchman indeed,
With eye swift to pity in direst of need.
The heart of a Shepherd with Watchman's keen eye,
We've found Thee, Lord Jesus, a Helper so nigh.

A. PAYNE.

The Church in its Worship.

By THE EDITOR.

A HYMN of our Sunday School years begins with the lines—

“ Lord, how delightful 'tis to see,
A whole assembly worship Thee.”

But the sight is not so common as it was in the days of the early churches, whose habit it was to assemble at stated times, in the exercise of the common priesthood of all believers, to worship God through Jesus Christ, as led by the Spirit, who was in them as individuals (1 Cor. vi. 19), and also in the local church (Eph. ii. 22), of which each formed a part. It is such an assembly that we have the constituent principles of, described in 1 Cor. chap. xiv. That is not a meeting convened by or for an evangelist, for the preaching of the Gospel to the unconverted, as in Acts x. 24, 33; xiii. 42; nor is it a gathering of believers to hear the Word of God ministered by one or more fitted to do it, as in Acts xiii. 1, 2; xviii. 11. It is the coming together of God's ecclesia—His assembly of that place, “in church”—or as we would say, in their assembly capacity, as distinguished from such service as individuals may render, and from such assemblings as ministers of the Word and missionaries returned from work in other fields of service may convene on their own responsibility and under their own guidance, as in Acts xiv. 27, where it is said, “THEY gathered the church together.” It is in such a gathering, that we are taught in the Word to expect, and in faith to count on the special guidance of

the Divine Spirit, who divideth “to every man severally as He will” (1 Cor. xii. 11). In such an assembly there is no chairman, no leader, no programme. All these would be out of character in such a gathering, and a denial of the Spirit's presence and His operations through the saints in whom He dwells. They do not come together as suppliants to pray, or as penitents to confess their sins. These are exercises which should have already occupied them in their closets alone with God. They are not for public edification, and should not be dragged in there. Nor do they come as empty to be filled, or as hungry to be fed through the ministry of the Word from the lips of those whom God has gifted and spiritually furnished to give it. At other times this would be seasonable, and ought to be valued. But when the whole church (1 Cor. xiv. 23) is assembled as a “spiritual priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices” (1 Pet. ii. 5), the minister for the time being exercises the higher functions of a worshipper, and stands on common ground with fellow-saints who have equal access to the presence of God in virtue of the all-cleansing blood of Christ Jesus (Heb. x. 19), and the common anointing of the Spirit (1 Cor. i. 21; Eph. ii. 18), which give title and fitness to draw near to God. It is in this unique assembly of the church that the Spirit guides, presenting Christ to the hearts of the saints, and drawing forth from them that worship which the Father seeks (John iv. 23) and the Spirit produces (Phil. iii. 3, R.V.). Whatever words of Scripture may be read or of

ministry are given on such occasions—and they are not to be excluded—will be in keeping with the character and object of the gathering, its purpose ever being to increase true worship, never to curtail it by occupying the time given for its exercise. For ministry of a discursive and general character—being calculated to occupy the worshippers with other objects than Christ, His peerless Person, and perfect Work—is not in season at such a time. No prearrangement can be according to God as to how or by whom such a gathering is to be ordered, or who will take public part in its exercises. It is to meet the Lord, His people have come. And the Lord Himself is their Host. He is “in the midst” to be owned and honoured there. To come with a “prepared” address, or a “selected” hymn, and watch for the opportunity to “give out” either, is an evidence of ignorance of the sacred character of that assembling, or of a determination to intrude upon what belongs to the Lord alone. For none can tell what may be in season, and of the Spirit’s guiding, until the assembly has “come together,” and that particular form of the Spirit’s collective guidance and ministry—as distinguished from that which is individual—has come into exercise. Were this remembered and respected, we should hear no such preliminaries to a chapter read, or excuse for a dissertation given, that it had occupied the speaker’s “mind” during the week, or had been “on his heart” before coming there. For what may be for one’s own help, is not always in season for God’s assembly.

Unholy Alliances,

AND THEIR EFFECTS ON GOD’S PEOPLE.

THE alliance of children of God with the ungodly, always brings spiritual disaster in its train. No matter what fair appearances say to the contrary, or what apparent “good results” may claim in support of such alliances, the end of all such must be in disaster, for God has declared it. The warnings against this form of departure from God are so abundant in the Word and so solemn in their results, the wonder is how any who claim to be God’s people, should disregard or slight them. Yet they do, and there is more spiritual wreckage upon this very rock than by most of the devil’s devices put together. And to great and good men too, who once were mighty in the kingdom of God and chosen vessels for His use, such disaster has come.

SOLOMON was the wisest of men. He received his wisdom from God (1 Kings iii. 12), and used it well for God in his earlier years (2 Chron. i. 10; 1 Kings x. 6). But the tempter knew his weakness, and he spread his net to ensnare him. Solomon married strange wives (1 Kings xi. 1), contrary to the express commandment of the Lord (Deut. vii. 3, 4; 1 Kings xi. 2), and the result was, that his wives “turned away his heart” from the God whom he had loved and served. And then we are told, “Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians” and the other idols of his strange wives. And it is always so. The Christian who becomes allied to an uncon-

verted partner, is always dragged down. He has lost his strength to resist, and left the place where God can help him. Watch the beginnings of this path! Do not let the tempter deceive you by suggesting you may be "a blessing" to an unconverted lover, and such like. No child of God out of the path, and living in open disobedience to God and His will, can be a channel of blessing to anybody: he is more likely to become a stumbling block leading to their eternal ruin. Flee from an unhallowed union in marriage, with a child of the devil!

JEHOSAPHAT was a man of faith, and began his reign by an entire separation from Ahab and his kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel, "strengthening himself" (2 Chron. xvii. 1) against it. But the serpent sought to beguile him, and he succeeded. How? By "joining affinity with Ahab" (2 Chron. xviii. 1). This was the beginning of his downfall. All the rest came from it. Had this first link not been made, the sad story of his compromise, his guilty silence when his ally spoke against the Lord's true witness in his presence, and his appearance on the battlefield alongside the man who had murdered Naboth, sought the life of Elijah, and persecuted the prophets of the Lord, would never have had to be written. What company for a child of God to be found in! There are plenty of such alliances to-day, and they are quite popular too. Many who assume to be leaders in the church are in such harness, openly declared partners in societies, corporations, and brotherhoods, where haters

of God, deniers of Christ, and blasphemers of the truth are in high places. They sit with them around their altars, taking common part in their godless deliberations, sharing alike in their gains—and these in most instances are the chief attraction—yet expect to be regarded as "saints," men separated to God, not of the world, soon to be out of it and in God's holy heaven, while their erstwhile companions and friends are in the outer darkness. Can anything be a great incongruity in the sight of heaven? Is anything less consistent with personal holiness, than such guilty alliance with the ungodly?

THE RETURNED CAPTIVES who left Babylon to return to Jerusalem, the place in which Jehovah had placed His Name, began well in their worship and service. They refused the fellowship of the mixed and mongrel peoples who wanted to ally themselves to them in the building of the wall. This was right: it was according to God. But before a generation had passed, the standard of their separation had been lowered, and we learn that they had become allied to "the people of the land" (Ezra ix. 2), and their leaders and rulers were "chief in this trespass." It would not be difficult to find a counterpart to this in our own time, or to hear or read the defence of it in public teaching.

THE SOCIAL CIRCLE gives it place, in fraternal gatherings of Christians with worldlings, in which eternal things are rigidly excluded, and the COMMERCIAL CIRCLE is rich in alliances between the children of God and men of the world, because of the profit they yield.

The Epistle of Jude.

IV.—GOD'S WAY OF PRESERVATION.

HAVING shown the dangers and warned against the effects of the last stages of corrupt Christianity, the Divine Spirit now points to the way of preservation which God has provided for His own, whose desire is to walk with Him and do His will while waiting for their deliverance at the coming of the Lord from heaven. The reference to Enoch in ver. 14, reminds us how that saint, in times of apostacy of old, "walked habitually with God" (Gen. v. 22, Newberry), and had the testimony that he pleased God (Heb. xi. 5), although he may have pleased no other. And this is possible still. It is the path of honour to be sought after. Not great results, but a true testimony *for* God and *to* His truth, which brings the testimony *from* God that our walk and work have His approval. Then we are cast upon the written Word, that Word which abideth for ever, and which man's defections and corruptions cannot alter. "Remember the words which were spoken before of the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ." We have them in our Bibles, and they are to be kept steadily in remembrance. They warn of "mockers in the last time," who deny these wholesome words, sneer at them, and seek to twist and turn them to their own account. Not that they believe the things they teach, but they seek some excuse for the ways in which they walk, "after their own ungodly lusts." It is one of the characteristics of the time, that men who want

to live lawlessly, "wrest the Scriptures" to give sanction to their ways. And when God's people leave the path of separation for that of compromise, they soon begin to tone down the plain commandments of the Lord, and speak of them as matters for "individual conscience," and their neglect as mere "differences of judgment." The result of this sort of reasoning comes to be, that you may read any meaning into the Word of God you like, and make it say what you wish. But God will deal in solemn chastisement with all who treat His Word in such a manner; indeed, He is doing so before our eyes. The closing words of this brief Epistle are full of comfort to all who fear God. They tell us of God's way of preservation in the midst of evil, and point out the path of service which is according to His will. "Building up yourselves on your most holy faith" (ver. 20). To be right with God, right with His Word, right in soul, and right in doctrine, is first and chief. "Praying in the Holy Ghost" tells of dependence and subjection to the Spirit, who leads ever and only along the way of the Word. "Keep yourselves in the love of God." And the Lord Jesus tells us how. "If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My love, even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John xv. 20). To abide in the love of God is not a mere sentiment or a happy feeling: it is the saint abidingly enjoying the confidence of God, while he seeks to learn and do His will, and thus he is preserved from the spirit of lawlessness all around him.

A. M.

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

NATURE'S WITNESSES AT CALVARY.

Emblematic of Great Gospel Truths.

- The Darkened Sun (ver. 45)—Sin Judged.
 The Rent Vail (ver. 51)—Access Obtained.
 The Quaking Earth (ver. 51)—Satan Defeated.
 The Opened Graves (ver. 52)—Resurrection Pledged.

CHRIST'S DIRECT DEALING WITH SINNERS.

John v. 38-40.

- A Plain Statement: "Ye have not His Word."
 A Patent Fact: "Him ye believe not."
 A Personal Responsibility: "Search the Scriptures."
 A Persistent Refusal: "Ye will not come."

SIMEON A PATTERN

To all who hear the Gospel (Luke ii. 25-32).

- He received Christ (ver. 28, with John i. 12).
 He Blessed God (ver. 28, with 2 Cor. ix. 15).
 He had Salvation (ver. 30, with 2 Tim. i. 8, 9).
 He was at Peace (ver. 29, with Rom. v. 1).
 He was ready to go (ver. 29, with Phil. i. 23).

BRIEF STUDIES OF BIBLE CHARACTERS.

ANNA OF JERUSALEM.

A Pattern Saint (Luke ii. 36-38).

- A Devout Waiter (ver 37)—"Departed not."
 A Diligent Worker (ver 37)—"Served God."
 A Daily Watcher (ver. 37)—"Night and Day."
 A Delighted Worshipper (ver 38)—"Gave Thanks."
 A Decided Witness (ver. 38)—"Spake of Him."

BARNABAS OF CYPRUS.

- A Devoted Saint (Acts iv. 36).
 A Good Man (Acts xi. 23).
 A Ready Co-worker (Acts xi. 23).
 A Gifted Minister (Acts xiii. 1).
 A Sent Evangelist (Acts xiii. 2).
 A Trusted Companion (Acts xv. 12).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

The Rights of a Christian Servant.

I am employed by a commercial firm in a manufacturing town. My masters are professing Christians and church members, but for reasons they do not disclose, they object to me attending and taking part in open-air meetings in the market place, where the Christians with whom I am associated

have continued a fruitful Gospel testimony for thirty years. Am I required by the commandments of Col. iii. 22; Eph. vi. 5, to cease my fellowship in this effort, or am I justified in the light of Acts iv. 18-20, in refusing to yield submission to this demand, even should it be necessary to relinquish my present situation in consequence?

If you entered your present situation under no obligation to your employers to refrain from taking your part with other Christian workers in testifying the Gospel, during time over which your employers have no control, and only discovered their attitude after you entered their service, you are surely at liberty to say to them that they are exceeding their functions as "masters" in seeking to control your service outside the sphere in which you contracted to serve them. And if they insist on exercising such control, you may tender your resignation, and give your reasons for doing so. The words of Col. iii. 22 are addressed to "bondservants" or "slaves" as the word is—who were their masters' "property" and had no liberties such as a "free-servant" has, who engages himself to a master under conditions in which he has a voice. They do not cover your case at all, in so far as worship and service toward God are concerned, or the manner in which time not occupied in your business engagements is spent. Very likely, religious pride and reputation, stirred up by prejudiced opponents, is the cause of your employers' objection to your testimony, but this must not be allowed to intervene between you and doing the will of your Master in heaven. The principle of the words of Acts v. 29, "We ought to obey God rather than men," surely apply here, and the testimony of Acts iv. 19-20 would be in season under such arbitrary conditions. There is usually more of threat than intention of dismissal in such outbursts of religious intolerance, but if you have to leave your present occupation "for conscience sake," God has plenty of better places at His disposal. And there are thousands of witnesses to His faithfulness in fulfilling the words of 1 Sam ii. 30, for He surely never will be any man's debtor, who does His will, and suffers loss in consequence thereof.

Answers to Correspondents.

G. P.—The best book for your purpose is Bagster's English and Greek Interlinear New Testament, now 12s 6d net.

J. A. M.—The words of 1 Tim. v. 19 clearly forbid you to “receive”—much more to repeat—an accusation against “an elder,” which is unsupported by proper evidence from “two or three witnesses.” And these, note, are to be “witnesses”—that is, persons who have seen and known (John iii. 11)—not “talebearers,” who repeat what they hear, without making any inquiry as to the truth of the report. Endless mischief is caused in this way, and Christians are not free from blame, in the evil habit.

A. M., CROYDON.—Although baptism is not the door of admission to the Christian assembly, it is not to be left as a matter or “opinion,” or treated on the same principle as “meats and drinks” in Rom. xiv. 6. If one is ignorant of it, he should be taught; but if wilful, refusing to hear or heed what God has spoken, it is the indication of a condition which ought not to be sanctioned or glossed over, as if the truth of God may be set aside at will. Far too much of this passes as “liberality,” but we think the Word of God gives it a different name.

NEMO.—To act the part of traducers and persecutors of such as go against the popular will in doing the will of God, is a detestable occupation, and where it is the result of personal spleen, or envy, you may be sure that God will see to the “recompense” that befits it. Do not retaliate, or seek to “expose” such doings. Leave them to God. He will look after the doers of them.

ALEPH.—The prevalence of Sunday newspaper reading among professed Christians is a sad evidence of their carnal condition. It should form the subject of Scriptural instruction and exhortation, for some have so little exercise of soul as to what is due to the Lord and worthy of their own calling, that they do such things thoughtlessly. But if a man has so little conscience, that he can buy his Sunday paper on the way to or from the Table of the Lord, that is a public dishonour to the Lord's Name, and it calls for rebuke, that others may be warned, and fear.

H. L., DUBLIN.—The whole trend of things in recent years is to suppress smaller gifts—or what is the same in principle—to leave no place for their exercise in the ordinary assemblies of believers. We believe this to be an evil, and that it hinders God from giving us many brief but helpful ministries we need. It is not contended that small gifts should attempt to fill large spheres, but that there must be room for their exercise where they would be to general profit. “Clerisy,” in all its forms,

denies this, and arrogates the right of one man—or whoever else *he* may condescend to invite—to monopolise or control the whole.

J. P., CATHCART.—The Christian is not called to interfere in political affairs, or to take part in the overthrow of authorities, civil or judicial. His place in relation to both is, that of subjection and submission in all that they demand, short of yielding that which belongs to God alone. But there is no reason why he should not, if circumstances so require it, remonstrate with those who violate law with impunity, as Paul and Silas did at Philippi (Acts xvi. 37-39), and in solemn protest, challenge the consciences of those who act contrary to that law of which they profess to be the administrators, leaving the testimony to do its work, but threatening no revenge.

Who is a Minister?

In some recent cases which have been appealed before the Military Tribunals, and in others tried by civil judges in the Law Courts, the appellants claimed “exemption from military service” on the ground that they are “ministers of religion,” the “Military Service Act” providing that “men in Holy Orders,” or “regular ministers of any religious denomination,” are not to be conscripted for military service. We make no comments here on the claims made and the evidence given by those who thus sought their liberty, nor on the reasons assigned for the granting or withholding of it by the courts. But as many of the statements made and some of the claims adduced tend to obscure the teachings of the Divine Word on the subject of Christian ministry, and to neutralise the testimony of those who seek to own it, and conform to the Scripture pattern, it seems to be necessary in the interests of truth to make a brief statement as to what the Word of God teaches on the subject of ministry, to see who are ministers according to God's use of the term, and to examine some of the claims recently made in the light of it.

“A Minister of Religion” is described as “one appointed to attend to the service of God in His church, to dispense and give forth faithfully and wisely the Word, Sacraments, and other holy things.” He is either chosen by the people or appointed by the State, and is only eligible as “a minister,” in the denomination of his choice.

A "minister of God" (2 Cor. vi. 4) is one to whom has been entrusted (1 Thess. ii. 4) the ministry of the Gospel to the world, and of the Word (Acts vi. 4) to the church. He is no man's servant, but the servant of Jesus Christ (Gal. i. 10), from whom He receives his gifts of ministry (Eph. iv. 11; Col. iv. 17), and to whom he is responsible for their exercise (1 Cor. iv. 1, 2). He may give all his time and talent to this ministry, looking to his heavenly Lord and Master—who sends forth none on His service at their own charges—to supply his need through the freewill offerings of His people (Phil. iv. 15, 18), or he may labour with his hands at times or always (Acts xviii. 3, 4), so as to be chargeable to none (1 Thess. i. 9). But whether making tents in Aquila's workshop in Corinth, and preaching Christ "every Sabbath" to the Jewish people as opportunity was given, or wholly using all his time, as in the market of Athens, daily dealing with those he met there (Acts xvii. 17), Paul was a "minister of Christ" (1 Cor. iv. 1) everywhere and always, but never "the regular minister" of any church, chosen by its members, as "their evangelist" or minister, appointed and paid to preach to them and pray for them, all the year round. There was no such person known in the New Testament churches as "THE minister," nor do we ever read of "a regular minister" as distinguished from others who, having differing gifts, exercise them for the edification of their fellow-believers (1 Pet. iv. 10), when and as they are led by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. xii. 7). These Scriptural and abiding principles have been avowed and practised by assemblies of Christians gathering simply in the Name of the Lord Jesus, for over eighty years. They have been stigmatised by the leaders of the religious world as "rejecting the Christian ministry," and in a recent decision of the Law Courts the presiding Judge said, "The Brethren" did not countenance it; "they had" no room in their system for regular ministers." If by "regular ministers" a one man minister, chosen and paid by the congregation, is meant, the charge is correct. If it is intended to represent that they refuse to receive and recognise a Godgiven ministry, it is false, for it has ever been and is their practice, to receive and make room for those whom the living Lord and Head of the Church provides (see Eph. iv. 11-13) for the ministry of the Word, whether one or more (see Acts xiii. 1). But they neither elect nor ordain them to clerical functions, simply because they have no authority from

the Word to do so. Nor do they regard those whom the Lord has gifted and qualified to preach and teach as their "regular ministers," but as "servants of Christ" (Col. iv. 12), whose ministry is "unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11), not limited to any stated congregation. In the light of these Divine principles, fully owned by assemblies of believers—sometimes named "The Brethren" to distinguish them from others, but never accepted by them as a denominational title—it is surely incongruous for any one to become a "regular minister," in the sense that the religious world understands that phrase, and in which the Military Service Act regards it. It is worse to allow themselves to be registered in the records of the Realm as "regular ministers of the Brethren (or Plymouth Brethren) denomination," thus obtaining for a select number, State recognition as official "ministers," who, in common with "priests and clergymen," claim distinctive privileges denied to others who are ministers of the Word as truly (or more so) than they. The fact that a few like-minded with them have attached their names to documents produced in the Law Courts upholding such in this false position, gives the notion that a recognition of this semi-clerical caste of "regular ministers" is endorsed by the assemblies whom these signatories represent. But it is nothing of the kind, for in the majority of cases where this has happened, the assembly in which these men are, and of which they claim to be "representatives," were neither consulted or informed. Those who make declarations and sign those made by others, ought to be sure that they have the authority of those on whose behalf and in whose name they act, otherwise they may be blameably misrepresenting them. We earnestly appeal to the consciences of our brethren who seek to appropriate the provisions of the Military Service Acts for "exception" and "exemption" from combatant service, to make their appeal in such form and to use such terms as will not place them in a false position before the church and in the world, or give the impression that the truths respecting Christian ministry, and who are ministers, so fully and clearly taught by able and godly leaders for three generations, and practised in assemblies, are being disowned and discarded by some of the present time, in support of a semi-clerical caste of which the Word of God knows nothing, and says nothing, save to utterly condemn it. These are matters involving vital truths, not to be trifled with,

"They Went and Told Jesus."

IN the day of distress which came upon John the Baptist's disciples, when their honoured master fell a victim to the sword of Herod, it is said they "took up the body and buried it, and WENT AND TOLD JESUS" (Matt. xiv. 12). That was the very best thing they could have done in the circumstances. And we may be sure they were welcomed by the great Consoler in that hour of their sorrow, and that He imparted to them that solace they required, in the day of their distress. The distress is still with us, but the Lord is no longer here at our side, as He was in that far-off day. But He is just as accessible and as ready to listen to the story of our griefs, when we go with them direct to Himself and "tell Jesus" of them all. True, He is no longer the Jesus of the days of John—a homeless Stranger in a hostile world. For He has passed beyond the scene of His personal sorrows, into the calm and eternal peace of the heaven from whence He came. But He is the same tender-hearted, sympathising One, "the very same Jesus" as when He mingled His tears of sympathy with those of the sisters of Bethany, at Lazarus' tomb. And the experiences of human sorrow and loss, which He gathered in the years of His sojourn here, were not left in His tomb, but carried with Him into the bright heaven into which He has gone to appear as the Great High Priest, Sympathiser with, and Succourer of His people still on earth, sharing their sorrows as they pass through the very scenes in which He once knew rejection, loss, and

shame. To "tell Jesus," whom now His people own as Lord as well as Saviour, brings relief as nothing else can. And not only has He perfect sympathy and the ability to comfort His own in their sorrows "as one whom his mother comforteth" (Isa. lxvi. 6), but being "Jesus the Son of God" (Heb. iv. 14), He has power to succour, as He has ability to sympathise. For He is the Mighty God, "the Creator of the ends of the earth" (Isa. xl. 28), in whose hand is all power of deliverance. If He does not pluck His arm from His bosom to dash in pieces the enemies of His people, it is not because He cannot, but because He has something to teach His own in the time of their endurance, and of the trial of their faith. But it is to Him—direct to Himself—that we are to go and tell Him our sorrows. If others pray to dead saints, or tell their tale to living ones, go you direct to Himself—go, like John's disciples in that day of their overwhelming loss and sorrow, and "tell Jesus." You will find Him most accessible, and His touch most tender, for "He knows our frame." And do not fear to tell Him ALL, without reserve and without doubt, for He is "able to deliver" from the greatest danger and to "keep the feet of His saints" (1 Sam. ii. 9), in the most slippery places. And be it remembered, too, that there is nothing too small for Him to do, nothing too vast for Him to undertake. Therefore, whatever your care, or fear, whatever your distress, or sorrow, "tell Jesus," your Lord, it all. He is deeply interested in it all, and in *you*.

"Worlds on worlds are hanging, on His hand,
Life and Death are waiting His command." J.R.

The Joy of the Lord.

WILLIAM HOSTE, B.A., LONDON.

PERVERSENESS has ever been a characteristic of man. In the beginnings of Judah's judgments we read, "In that day did the Lord of Hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth : and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine : let us eat and drink for to-morrow we shall die" (Isa. xxii. 12, 13). But unless men will turn to God with true repentance, how can He cause His judgments to cease ?

Later, when the restored remnant of Nehemiah's day were called to joy and feasting : behold, sorrow and mourning. Does God say weep ? men feast ! Does He call to feasting ? they weep ! But the Levites exhorted the people to take comfort. "This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep . . . for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. viii. 10). There is much to depress God's people to-day, as then. There are weaknesses and failures, the Sanballatts and Tobiahs to oppose, besides the peculiar circumstances of the hour. But, amid all, "the joy of the Lord is our strength." This is usually taken to mean that joy in the Lord makes us strong. And that is surely true. We are indeed commanded to "rejoice in the Lord alway" (Phil. iv. 4). But we need strength to do it. It is only as we enter into "the joy of the Lord," that the joy of the Lord enters into us. It was precisely with His disciples' joy in view, that our Lord desired

to communicate His own joy to His disciples. "These things have I spoken unto you, that *My* joy might remain in you, and that *your* joy might be full" (John xv. 11).

When the Good Shepherd was carrying the lost sheep on His shoulder rejoicing, it might have been to slaughter or sacrifice. But animals are quick to catch the tone of a human voice, and the glad note of the shepherd's joy would inform its instinct, that all was well. And had it understood the meaning of "Rejoice with Me, I have found *My* sheep which was lost," it could have argued, "Since my shepherd sets such store by me, as to invite others to rejoice with him on my account, and he calls me his sheep. Certainly he never will let me perish."

To the prodigal, the father's kiss meant forgiveness ; and the best robe and fatted calf supplied his immediate needs. But the father's joy went further still, and assured him of permanent restoration to all the privileges of the home. He was no mere passing guest, but a son of the house. It gives great assurance and comfort to each forgiven sinner to learn, that he is the subject of "joy in the presence of the angels of God." Yes, the Father has prepared a feast up there, on our account. They have "begun to be merry" in the Father's house over us. Surely, then, we can well be merry too. And the joy of heaven thus shared by us will prove our strength indeed, even amid depressing scenes.

"How deep, how full, the joy of Him

Who sits upon the throne!

The joy, the gladness of His heart,

In calling us His own."

The Dispensation of the Spirit.

ALEXANDER STEWART, GLASGOW.

THE Four Gospels set before us the life and death, and record the words and works of the Lord Jesus Christ. The book called "The Acts of the Apostles" takes up the thread where the Gospels leave it, and shows us the coming of the Holy Ghost, whom the Lord Jesus sent down, when He had ascended to the right hand of the Father. Thus we read at the close of the Gospel of Luke, that the Lord after His resurrection, appeared to the disciples, and, having said, "Behold I send the promise of My Father upon you : but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high," He "led them out as far as to Bethany" and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven, and they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." And at the beginning of the Acts, after narrating how they occupied themselves in the interval, it is said, "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them : and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

This Book is occupied throughout with

the doings and sayings of those who went forth endued with the Spirit to preach the Gospel and build up the Church of God, so that we may say "The Acts of the Apostles" is the chronicle of the special actings of the Holy Ghost, even as the Four Gospels is the chronicle of the special actings of the Lord Jesus.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE SPIRIT.

We are now living in the dispensation of the Spirit, then begun. Christ having been crucified and raised from the dead, passed into the heavens. The Holy Ghost came and He has not gone. He is still with us, in personal presence and gracious manifestation.

We turn, then, with attention to the Book of the Acts for instruction, both as to the preaching of the Gospel, and as to what they are to do who receive it. What is revealed in that Book applies now, as it did at the first. Neither the Gospel nor the Christian course, is changed.

It may be asked, "Has no progress been made since these days? Were we not meant to leave first principles and go on?" We are to leave first principles as a building leaves its foundations, rising to completion according to the design of its founder; not as a statue leaves its pedestal to fall and be broken. We are to go on, as a railway train goes on, upon the rails, which it would be destruction to quit. We are to build on the foundation, and to run in the course revealed and lined out in the Scriptures. Progress apart from and outside of these, is ruinous.

The Word of God, the Word of Truth,
Shall still unshaken stay,
When all that man has thought and planned
Has gone, and passed away.

Signs of the End.

W. J. McCLURE, CALIFORNIA.

ALL attempts to fix dates for the second coming of the Lord Jesus have resulted in failure, bringing that precious truth into reproach. The time set by such calculations came and passed, but the Lord did not come. This has led some to regard a truth which, of all others, should be dear to the believer, as if it were purely a matter of speculation, and they therefore leave it alone. Very likely this was the very thing at which Satan aimed, in the setting of dates for the Lord's coming again.

Now, while many have gone astray in this respect, care is needed lest we go to the opposite extreme, and fail to see the signs, which are multiplying on every hand, which indicate the nearness of His appearing. To read aright such signs as God may give regarding the nearness of the end of this age, and to fix a date for it, are as different as truth and error. Some ninety years ago, the Lord was pleased to restore to the church the long-lost truth of the personal return of His Son as His people's hope (1 Thess. i. 10). Then, like the midnight cry, it awakened, as out of a sleep, many of the people of God, so that they began to look for the speedy coming of Christ, as promised in the Word. Could we have talked with any of those dear men, and asked them if they thought that ninety years would elapse ere the Lord would come, we cannot imagine their answer being in the affirmative. No; they truly expected that His coming was very near. It may be said

by some, "If these Christians thought that His coming was imminent ninety years ago, may it not be that others, fifty or more years hence, will still be waiting for the realisation of the hope?" This is most unlikely. We now have clear evidences of the nearness of the end of the age, that they did not possess. The signs which we desire to point out had not materialised, when the precious truth of the Lord's coming first opened up to us. Our object in these Short Papers is, to briefly point out some of these signs so that we might be stirred up to look for His return—which must precede their fulfilment—not as an event of the distant future, but as something near at hand.

We get a word in Matt. xxiv. 33, which has literally to do with God's earthly people, Israel, after the church has been caught away, but the principle of it we can apply to our own case. "Even so also, when ye see all these things, know that He is nigh, even at the doors" (R.V.). So, as we read the conditions described in the Epistles, as marking the end, and find them prevailing all around us, may we read aright their meaning, and be taught to act as God would have us amid such conditions.

SIGN I.—THE APOSTASY OF THE PROFESSING CHURCH.—In the seven letters to the Churches in Rev. ii. and iii., we have an inspired chart of the course of the church's testimony on earth, from the days of the apostles until the coming of the Lord. Just as the mariner, sailing along a coast, consults his chart, on which are marked the lighthouses, capes, headlands, and bays, and learns thereby just

where he is, so the Christian, who has learned to read aright the Lord's messages to the seven churches, can approximate as to where he is, in regard to the progress of the dispensation.

The Philadelphian stage was reached when the Lord restored the truth of His return and the simple gathering to His Name. Now, surely the Laodicean, or closing stage, is reached. Laodicea is not charged with the gross things named against Thyatira. The professing church of the present, makes much of Morality, Temperance, Civic Righteousness, National Righteousness, etc. It is self-complacent; its language is, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (ver. 17). Surely in respect of material things, it has reason to speak thus. In no period of its existence has the professing church been so rich in societies, associations, guilds, leagues, and circles for carrying on its work, as now. Indeed, its wealth of machinery enables it to get along without God, for when it is saying that it has "need of nothing," the One it professes to serve, is seen standing OUTSIDE the closed door. And those inside don't seem to miss Him. Indeed, His presence would be disconcerting, for there is too much among them that He would have to deal with and to judge.

Pilgrimage and Home.

An altar and a tent,
Are all we covet here,
With these we surely are content,
Abiding in Thy fear.

A home of endless rest,
Awaits God's pilgrims there,
Which they with Christ supremely blest
In Paradise shall share,

The Church in its Worship.

SECOND PAPER BY THE EDITOR.

WORSHIP has been described as "adoration paid to God." Etymologically, no doubt it is. But as an experience of the soul, it is the Christian in the conscious relation of a child with his face turned upward toward God his Father. It is the overflowing gratitude of a heart at rest in His love, giving back to Him of that received from Him, ascribing praise to the bountiful Giver. It has been well said that in *prayer* we are occupied with our need; in *praise*, with our blessings; but in *worship*, with our God. This is the highest privilege of the saint on earth. And when the church comes together for worship thus, it is on the highest plane. An assembly of the heavenly priesthood, cleansed, enrobed, and anointed for worship, is the nearest approximation to the employment of heaven, that saints on earth can know. Need we wonder if the devil hates it, and seeks to use means to spoil it? For true, collective spiritual worship—"worship in spirit and truth" (John iv. 7, 8)—the following Scriptural conditions are necessary:—(1) The worshippers must be born of God and in possession of the Spirit of God. No unregenerate person can worship God, therefore none, either old or young, should be included in the assembly of worshippers, mixed among them, seated so as to be regarded as "of them," or otherwise allowed to suppose they are part of the assembly. Such may indeed be in the room, or hall, to hear and see—as 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25, allows—but not as worshippers. And the same

position must be assigned to those who are under discipline, or who have otherwise for the time forfeited the confidence of fellow-saints because of unholy doings, or the acceptance of unsound doctrines. God's assembly is holy ground; holiness becometh His house for ever, and He is "greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about Him" (Psa. lxxxix. 7). This godly fear will be evidenced in the assembled worshippers being in their places in good time, inwardly in a right condition of soul, outwardly clad and otherwise answering to a people who are "not of the world," who have come to meet with the Holy God in the Name of His honoured Son, and to be guided in their exercises by the Eternal Spirit, the Paraclete from heaven, who is in them. For the liberty which the presence of the Spirit gives, is not license for any one to do what he pleases, but holy and blessed liberty of access into the immediate presence of God, without a veil between, to express our worship toward Him. This cuts at the root of all insubjection and frowardness, which are as natural to some, as unexercise and indolence are to others.

(2) Worship is to be "by the Spirit of God" (Phil. iii. 3, R.V.), expressed in such terms as all present can say "Amen" (1 Cor. xiv. 16) to them. For it cannot be too well remembered, that he who stands up to give thanks, or lead the assembly in its worship, is, while so engaged, its mouth-piece, expressing its thoughts and voicing its aspirations toward God. How sure one ought to be, that he is in such a condition as to discern what these at the moment

are, and to have the assurance in his own soul that he is in the line of the Spirit's leading, when he rises to speak. For the inward conviction of the Spirit's voice to the heart is to be accompanied by the suitable opportunity to express the seasonable word of adoration, or thanksgiving, or desire. Thus it is all things are done in decency and order, and all is harmonious and to edification. The restlessness of some, the desire to "do something" in others, and the fear of man in many, alike hinder and mar that flow of ardent, spiritual worship which is unto God as a savour of Christ, and acceptable in His sight. And if the presence of the living Lord "in the midst" of his assembled worshippers (Matt. xviii. 20) is a reality—as to faith it always is—there will be no lack of "interest" to keep the chimes of the heart in "melody." And if a present living, mighty Spirit is there, to present Christ to the heart, to give fresh and soul-thrilling realisations of His wondrous Cross, His perfect work, His peerless person, causing the heart to burn, and the spices to flow, there will neither be dulness in the silence, nor disorder in the activities of the assembled saints. But all will be as "the precious ointment"—composed of many spices, yet emitting one fragrance, ever acceptable to the Lord, and manward it will be as a "dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass" (Micah vii. 6), giving refreshing, and causing fruitfulness and joy, among the assembled and worshipping saints. There is no place amid all this for man's display of himself, nor for such innovations as his active will and planning mind would bring in.

The Epistle of Jude.

PART V.—SAFEGUARDS AND SERVICE.

THE present occupation with God, the heart abiding in His love, the soul occupied with the Word for edification and guidance, the spirit dwelling in the atmosphere of continual prayer as led by the Holy Ghost, the outlook of the saint is toward the final deliverance from this scene of apostasy and corruption—"looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Mercy reached us in our guilt as sinners (Eph. ii. 4); mercy has been "multiplied" to us as saints (ver. 2), all along the way (Heb. iv. 16), and it will not fail any who seek to be "faithful to the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 25), until it has set us in the full enjoyment of that "eternal life" (Rom. vi. 22) which we already have in possession. And thus abiding in God's love and light, looking for the Lord's coming, the servant of God has spiritual discernment in his service. Some are mixed up with surrounding evils. How about them? "Of some have compassion making a difference." There are those misled in their ignorance, and those who deceive and lead astray the simple. Patient instruction is to be given to the ignorant. Those who are in doubt, not initiated in error, may yet be rescued as from fire, but without relaxing holiness or mingling with their condition, always acting in the "fear of God," never doing evil that good may result. Many have forgotten this, and claim liberty to go into all sorts of evil associations under the plea of helping out those who are in them. But we can only bring others out

from evil, if we are separate from it ourselves, and walking with God in the way of His truth. The Word tells us to "abhor that which is evil," and to "cleave to that which is good" (Rom. xii. 9)—not to leave it in order to reach others who are mixed up with corrupters of God's truth. There is to be no association whatever with those in whom the principles of lawlessness, which set aside the Lordship of Christ and oppose the truth, are working. This would be paying a tribute to their disobedience and involving others in their sin. And then to "Him who is able to guard His own from stumbling" while here, and to "present them faultless before His glory" there, we are committed, as our unfailing safeguard and hope. There is no hint that the apostasy will cease, or that the saint will ever be free from the need of heeding the warnings of this Epistle. But "God and the Word of His grace" (Acts xx. 32), is our unfailing resource amid deepening darkness. He will keep our feet (1 Sam. ii. 9) if we but walk in His truth (3 John 3, 4), and own the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ over us in every sphere of life. Soon He will come, to assert that authority in claiming all His own, and in clearing the scene by judgment in which He is now rejected and His Word despised. It is not without its meaning that the Lordship of Christ, the value of the truth, separation from abounding corruption, and the maintenance of personal godliness by a walk with God, subject to His Word, should fill so large a place in the last Epistle of the New Testament. For these are the only preservatives for the saint in these last days.

Triumph Over Death.

GATHERED FROM THE MINISTRY OF J. G. BELLETT.

THE hope of the saint, as set before him in the Word, is the coming of the Lord from heaven, and the triumph of resurrection. It is for this final victory of grace that faith looks, and for it hope waits. But the opening words of 2 Cor. v. set before the saint an intermediate triumph, which, in the midst of a world in which death reigns, he celebrates and sings. It is the present triumph of the Lord over death as applied to the body of the saint, which in view of his dissolution he celebrates beforehand, and speaks of being "absent from the body" to be "present with the Lord." This is not the final triumph of resurrection in which the shout is to be heard,—“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Cor. xv. 55). This will indeed be sung in the coming hour of the resurrection of the dead, and the translation of living saints. But there also is a triumph at the time of their unclothing in view of death, and in the faith of victory over it through Christ. It is of this final and manifested triumph of resurrection and glorification and the receiving our eternal house from heaven, that the opening words of this chapter testify. God has wrought us for this, and of it He has already given us the “earnest of the Spirit” (ver. 4). But there is more than this. The “unclothing” of the saint, the passing from his earthly tabernacle here, is seen as a present triumph,—not displayed and final as in the victory of resurrection, when death and the grave

shall be spoiled, but a secret triumph in which faith sees the intermediate condition, and speaks of it as “Absent from the body and present with the Lord,” with the present exultant confession of being “Always confident.” For to the saints who already share in “the triumph of Christ” (2 Cor. ii. 14), all is won, and all is victory. And it is surely our happy privilege, beloved, to so live in the certainty of these things, and to have them in us as present realities, kindling the affections of the heart, that whether it be the passing of the spirit in the hour of its departure from the body, to be with Christ, or the full and final victory of resurrection, we should be “always confident,” and more than ready to go, as those who are “more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Rom. viii. 37). It is the present power of this victory in the saints, that keeps the heart above and beyond the present scene, and causes it to dwell among those “things which are above,” where Christ the Victor and Forerunner has already entered, and amid which we shall most surely stand with Him, in abundant and glorious triumph. And so, whether it be release to go one by one, to be “at home with the Lord,” or the triumph of resurrection all together, all is victory and all is joy. His triumphs will be everywhere.

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

Fruit that Abides.

IN the words of the Lord on "Fruit-bearing recorded in John xv., there is one remarkable word, which, in the quest for "much fruit"—much in quantity—is apt to be overlooked. It is this, "I have chosen you and ordained you that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should *remain*" or "abide" (R.V.). It is a characteristic of all that is wrought of God, whether directly by the operation of His hand, or through the instrumentality of His people, that it continues, it remains, it abides. In that aspect of fruit-bearing, which is referred to in Rom. i. 13, where the apostle regards those converted to God through his labours in the Gospel as fruit, it is abiding fruit that is sought after, fruit that remains as evidence and witness to the power of God working in and through His servants. If fruit is abortive, unenduring, it points to a defect in the vitality of the tree. If converts do not "remain," there has been either lack of Divine power in the preacher, or shallowness in the Gospel they have heard and received. W. L.

God's Care of His Own.

HOW wonderful is God's daily care of His people! This is finely illustrated in His dealings with the people of Israel throughout their forty long years in the wilderness. He watched over them with a jealous care all the way. Daily, their bread came down from heaven, never failing. As on eagles' wings they were carried along. He looked out a place for

them in which they would pitch their tents. Their shoes waxed not old, nor were their garments worn out—although used for forty years. God was faithful to His Word, and although they failed, He did not fail, nor did He forsake them. It is this God in whom we trust. He may test our faith, but He will not fail us. His answer to our cry may seem to linger, but He will not turn it away. What, then, have we to fear? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" No weapon formed against those whom God befriends, can prosper. No combination of enemies, however strong, however perfidious, can hurt those around whom the angel of the Lord encamps (Psa. xxxiv. 7) to deliver. No evil can reach the feeblest of God's children without His permission, and His permission transmutes the evil into good. Let our confidence then be in His love and care. The more we prove His care, the deeper the river of our peace will run. And the more we are enabled to bear witness to the Divine love in giving to and guarding us, before the world, the more glory does our testimony bring to God. A. R. HABERSHON.

The Believer's Security.

WHEN danger lifts a frowning face
And deadly foes assail,
JEHOVAH is my Hiding-place,
My home within the veil!

Why should I fear these Hosts of Pride?
My Refuge is in THEE—

I KNOW THE LORD IS ON MY SIDE,
And that's enough for me!

So all is well: Whate'er betide,
The Lord is on the throne—
I triumph through the Crucified,
And trust in God alone!

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

OUTLINES ON GOSPEL SUBJECTS.

CHRIST AND THE MULTITUDE.

Matthew xv. 30-39.

- A Needy Multitude (ver. 30).
- A Wondering Multitude (ver. 31).
- A Cared For Multitude (ver. 32).
- An Expectant Multitude (ver. 35).
- A Satisfied Multitude (ver. 33, 37).
- A Sent Multitude (ver. 39).

WHERE THE SEED FELL :

Varied Effects of the Word Preached.

(Matt. xiii. 1-17).

- Some Seed fell BY the Wayside.
- Some fell UPON the Rocky Ground.
- Some fell AMONG the Thorns.
- Some fell INTO the Good Soil.

The SEED was the same for all.

The SOWING was varied through all.

The SOIL was different in all.

BRIEF STUDIES ON SCRIPTURE THEMES.

A TRUE MINISTER'S CREDENTIALS.

- CALLED by God the Father (Gal. i. 15).
- COMMISSIONED by God the Son (Acts xxvi. 16).
- CLOTHED by God the Spirit (Acts ix. 17).
- Calling, gives the Minister his Place.
- Commission, gives him his Work.
- Clothing (endowment, Luke xxiv. 49, same word) gives him his Power for Service.

GOSPEL SERVICE.

- SOWERS (Mark iv. 14)—Putting in the Seed.
- PLANTERS (1 Cor. iii. 6)—Rooting the Converts.
- HUSBANDMEN (2 Tim. iii. 6)—Bringing in the Fruits.

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

- A Request of Conscience (1 Pet. iii. 21)—Godward.
- A Confession of Discipleship (Matt. xxviii. 19)—Manward.
- A Likeness of Death and Burial (Rom. vi. 4)—Selfward.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

If a false report, damaging to my personal character as a Christian, and likely to weaken my testimony in the world, is raised by one claiming to belong to the Lord, am I justified in seeking to refute the calumny, or should I bear it, leaving God to deal with the traducer ?

If you are clear before the Lord that the report raised and spread is false, you need not vex your soul or spend your energies seeking to refute it. Go to the one who raised it, or those who spread it, and in a Christian spirit inform them of the wrong. But do not threaten, "rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing" (1 Pet. iii. 9). If your fellow-Christians do not see it to be their responsibility to deal with the offender, leave him to God, who sooner or later will take the matter up. You may safely leave your character in God's hands, and go on with your work. It will only chafe your spirit and unfit you for your service, if you occupy yourself overmuch with the sayings and doings of "tale-bearers" and others, who do the "scavenger" work of the community they are in.

Answers to Correspondents.

RESH.—The first consideration for you as a Christian surely ought to be: "Is my position as one deriving gain from a co-partnery, in which the sale of strong drink brings revenue, according to the will of God?" And next: Is it "walking worthy of my vocation" (Eph. iv. 1) as a Christian? Settle these two matters before God, and the rest will become clear to you.

VERITAS.—It is a vicious system of reasoning, surely, that essays to claim that all who share the privileges and protection of the State, in which for the time they live, are responsible to take sides in its quarrels and actively share in its hostilities. The Christian pays, in the form of tax and tribute imposed by the Government, for what protection he receives, and thus he discharges his responsibility to the State (see Rom. xiii. 6, 7).

A. G., ESSEX.—If there is no definite teaching of the truths that form and order the Christian assembly, little wonder if young believers and others brought into your midst do not understand or own them in practice. Some seem to think that Christians find out these things for themselves. But they don't, as general ignorance of what is due to the Lord "in the assembly of His saints" (Psa. lxxxix. 7) clearly proves. It is your responsibility to teach what you know of the truth, and to circulate among those who need it what others have taught. You need not expect godly order or unity of action, if every man does that which seems "right in his own eyes," and if the gatherings are regarded as of a "free and easy" character, where each is able to do and say whatever he likes. This

may be to "the taste" of some, but it is not God's assembly as it is pictured in the Word.

G. M., BOLTON.—The liberation of Jerusalem from the misrule of the Turk is not an event that comes within the scope of any prophecy of the Word. It is not the "deliverance" spoken of in Dan. xii. 1, or elsewhere. Nor is it the beginning of Jewish national blessing. Jerusalem's darkest day has yet to come (see Zech. xiv. 2, 3). And then when all hope is gone, its true Deliverer will appear.

M. F., GOSPORT.—A Christian, whose business causes him to be in places where he is unknown, over the Lord's Day, should surely carry with him a letter of commendation from the assembly in which he usually is. It is easily done, and should in the interests of godly order not be neglected. It is no evidence of either spirituality or intelligence in the first principles of the assembly of God, to insist on being welcomed as a fellow-believer, on one's own unsupported lip evidence.

EMIGRANT.—If there are no Christians assembling on the simple lines of the Word, in the place to which you go, begin in your own house. A church in a "house" (Rom. xvi. 5), composed of the saved of its inmates, is an ancient institution, and many healthy assemblies of modern time have begun in this way. If God's Word brought you out from sectarianism in Ireland, it will not lead you back to it in Canada, not even as a visitor for a day. Divine principles are ever the same; circumstances do not alter them.

G. H., GLASGOW.—Those who shepherd and guide the saints must be "among" them. The true overseers (made so by the Holy Spirit) are "IN" (see Acts xx. 28, R.V.) the flock—not lords over it, or at a distance from it. And the only character of rule recognised in the Word as suited to the Church, is shepherd rule, not Prelatical. There is no place in the Word for a city or metropolitan bishopric or board of management, over local assemblies. Each stands in direct responsibility to the living Lord and Head, and is shepherded and guided by those within its own borders, who are fitted for such work.

Questions Requiring Answers.

Is there any record in the Word, of congregational singing in connection with the preaching of the Gospel?

A common argument with those who are in the

habit of going to all-sectarian missions to preach, and identifying themselves openly before the world with their principles,—such as shutting out certain teachings of God's Word, and with their practices—such as collections from the unconverted, musical performances to attract the crowd, chairmen and preachers who are unsound on vital truths of the faith—is justified by those whose habits these are, in saying that they are not responsible for what is done in these places, so long as they are only VISITORS and not members of these associations. Does this hold, in the light of God's Word?

Notes from the Battle Fronts.

France.—"In several English camps around Paris, there are a number of earnest Christian men, and their consistent testimony is having a good influence on their comrades. It was a joy to me to point one of these English 'Tommies' to the Saviour last Lord's Day." "In these times of many movements, we have not the same opportunity for meeting to pray and read the Word together, but we miss no chance of having a little time with God, and much we need it. We know that fellow-believers at home do not forget us in their supplications."

Salonika.—"The booklets sent are very acceptable, and have been well used for distribution. There are some interesting cases of real soul anxiety, and it is a joy to be able to lend them something to read with the Gospel clearly and simply stated, which we know is just what they need."

On Board a Warship.—"We have a week-night meeting as often as we can, and it brings strength and refreshing to our souls to meet with God at the mercyseat to speak to Him, and around His Word, through which He speaks to us. The books for young believers, have been a real help to the lads lately converted."

In a Field Hospital.—"Scenes, enough to melt the hardest heart, are witnessed here daily. The ravages of war reach all classes, from the highest to the least. And there is opportunity to those of us who know the Gospel and have proved its power, to make it known among the sufferers."

A Testing Time for the People of God. Some Practical Considerations for Daily Life.

The great world-war with its resulting sorrows is—

as many who seek to see things in God's light avow—a work of Satan, which God has permitted in retribution for unrepented of evils and national sins retained and boasted in, among those nations in whose midst the light of God's Truth has long vouchsafed to shine, only to be rejected by their responsible rulers and representative leaders. This will no doubt be sneered at by most. But it is one of God's inexorable laws, to which the history of nations bears its witness, that national iniquity brings national judgment, after solemn warning and patient grace has failed to lead to repentance toward God. It was so with great nations of the past whose sins were visited by Divine judgments. It will be so in the future, as we are told in "the sure Word of prophecy," which "as a lamp shining in a dark place" (2 Pet. i. 19, R.V.), casts its light on things which will shortly come to pass. And it surely is so in the present. For although "grace reigns" and Divine longsuffering is exercised toward individual sinners for salvation, God has not relaxed His principles of moral government among the nations, nor has He revoked His eternal decree that "whatsoever a man soweth, THAT shall he also reap." This reaping is here and now, so far as unrighteousness and injustice between men and nations are concerned, whereas the final account of individuals with God has still to be dealt with according to righteousness (Rev. xx. 12), on a future judgment day. In this latter judgment, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will not share, for into such judgment the Lord Himself says the believer "cometh not" (John v. 24, R.V.) For to him there is no wrath (1 Thess. v. 9), and there can be "no condemnation" (Rom. viii. 1). But if Christians of their own choice, become mixed up in the world's politics and wars—as Lot, the nephew of Abram, was in Sodom (Gen. xiv. 12)—they need not hope to escape their share in the results. While no operation of the Divine hand toward His people is of a condemnatory character, the same events and circumstances which are allowed and used by God in retributive judgment on the nations, are oft used as the instruments of His chastisement and testing—or putting to the proof—the faith and faithfulness of His own, who are in the midst of them. This is abundantly proved by the teachings of the Word, and in the life experiences of the people of God. If Christians can pass through such experiences as have been their lot during these years of war, without being exercised in heart before God, in the lessons He intended them to learn and in the discipline

He would by their means impart, the heart must be far from God, and the conscience little exercised in His Word. For if we only see in the losses and sorrows that come upon ourselves and others, "the chances of war," and reckon them as "incidents" and "casualties" over which God has exercised no control, and in which His hand need not be recognised, it surely indicates a deplorable lack of soul-exercise before God—if not of something worse—respecting His dealings with us. For it was not a humbled and disciplined, but a hardened and unrepentant David who said, "The sword devoureth one as well as another" (2 Sam. xi. 23), to silence the voice of guilt on his conscience that day. We need not expect the world, or the nations and their leaders to see and own God's dealings in chastisement in events of the present war, but if God's own people fail to do so, it will be to their shame and loss. For when the Divine dealings "exercise" the hearts of the children of God, there is "profit," but where they are disowned or attributed to "chance," that is the language of the ungodly world, and must bring further and deeper rebuke, until repentance and restoration are produced. God as a Father, will never allow His children to run riot in the ways of the ungodly, without causing them, sooner or later, to know His displeasure. And thus it is that the children of God individually, and churches of God collectively, are being tested—"put to the proof," as the word in 1 Thess. ii. 7; 1 Pet. i. 7 is—and permitted to learn what hold they have on the truths they profess to own, and what control these truths have on them. There have been many astonishments, as men's true conditions became manifest. Through grace, many have stood firm and fast in the truths they learned from God, through His Word. In the "proving" they have become "approved unto God" (2 Tim. ii. 15), and in the testing they have been blessed. But where this or that has been learned from man and held as mere opinion, which may be altered at will, or given up for something easier or more popular, the results have been very different. For the test has manifested the real condition. The spirit of revolution in the world, and of apostasy in what professes to be the church, will go on and increase as we learn from the Word, but those who own the Lordship of Christ and the authority of the Word to control them in all relations to God and man, to nations and governments, need to cleave to the Word and hold it fast, no matter who frowns or threatens, or who casts off and gives up the Truth.

The Breaking of the Morning.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE AMID THE GLOOM.

I CAME across some fervent and seasonable words of Samuel Rutherford the other day, written in the years of his persecution for the Lord's Name, and his confession and practice of God's truth, which came as a word in season to my own heart, and which I here pass on to fellow-believers for their comfort and cheer:—

“Our fair morning is at hand, the Day-Star is near the rising, and we are not many miles from home. What matters the ill-treatment in the smoky inns of this miserable life? We are not to stay here, and we will be dearly welcome to Him to whom we go. However matters go, the worst shall be a tired traveller, and a joyful and sweet welcome home. Look to the east—the day sky is breaking. Think not that Christ loseth time or lingereth unsuitably.”

The prophet of ancient time was asked the question, “Watchman, what of the night?” (Isa. xxi. 10), and his immediate and definite answer was, “The morning cometh and also the night.” A cloudless morning of glory to the saint and the Church, a night dark with awful judgment to the sinner and the world. And the order is first “the morning,” after that “the night.” We need not fear the present “distress” of nations developing into the final cataclysm depicted in the pages of the prophetic Word, or the saints being left to pass through the darkest and most distressing scenes of the world's last pangs before the hour of its deliver-

ance. For as Rutherford well says, “Our fair morning is at hand,” and “the Day-Star is near rising.” And this is the Christian's hope. It is to see the living Lord, and to meet Him in the air amid the myriads of His saints, from every land and clime, who will in “the twinkling of an eye” be summoned by His voice from earth, to be received unto Himself and conducted in the joy of His heart to the Father's House to receive a royal welcome there. What matters the rough road and the sad experiences of the way, that are to have such a glorious ending? And why let the watch fires burn low and the lamps go out, when He is so near? This is not the time for sleep, but for watching and waiting, as those who watch for the morning. “The night is far spent,” and this its last hour may be the darkest and coldest in spiritual things, and the roughest and least comfortable to many. The darkest and coldest hour of the natural night is that just before the breaking of the morning, and so it surely is in the spiritual realm. Darkness, dense and judicial because of light rejected, is on the earth, and the love of many who once watched for the light of morning is waxing cold, and the last tests of loyalty to the Lord bring their trials. But it will all be forgotten in the joy of that moment, when our eyes shall see the One who loves us, and who will welcome us with exceeding joy to His heart and home. Thus may we live in the expectation of “that blessed hope”—the hope of saints of ages past—which is the personal return of the Lord from heaven, when He comes as “the Bright and Morning Star.”

The Joy of the Lord.

PART II. WILLIAM HOSTE, B.A., LONDON.

THE joy of the Lord is His people's strength. Thus it will be in the last days of Israel's chequered history. Restored once more to their land and to their God, they will hear His tender assurance, "Fear thou not: let not thy hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty. He will save, He will *rejoice over thee* with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing" (Zeph. iii. 16, 17). "Everlasting joy" will dawn on their heads, when they find themselves the subjects of Jehovah's care and rejoicing. If the question be asked: Why should Jehovah rejoice on the occasion referred to in Nehemiah vii. ? the answer may be found in the day of gathering, the manner of the gathering, and the people gathered. The day was the first day of the seventh month, one of the three great annual feasts of Jehovah, that of trumpets or of the ingathering. It was "a holy convocation unto the Lord," a harvest home, and naturally a day of gladness. When Jehovah appoints a feast, He will not make it a *fast* for our unbelief. Therefore "let us keep the feast," for it is a feast for and with Him. The trumpets were sounded to call attention to the special sacrifices of the day; the nine burntofferings, with their appropriate meal-offerings and their sin offerings, that they should be "a memorial before Jehovah" (Num. x. 10). These sacrifices were so many joys to the heart of God, as with divine prescience He translated them into terms of Calvary. The Son was daily His

delight in a past eternity (Prov. viii. 30). During His earthly ministry He was "Jehovah's elect, in whom His soul delighted," and that delight can only be the greater now, since His "obedience unto death, even the death of the cross." Then again, the people who gathered round His Word that day, were His redeemed people in whom He took pleasure—loved for the fathers' sake, and called out of the nations to be His "peculiar treasure." They represented, moreover, the faithful remnant who had left the comfortable surroundings and worldly advantages of Babylon, to return to what commonsense would have judged a ruined and hopeless cause. They had set up the altar of Jehovah, rebuilt the temple on a modest scale, re-established the feasts according to the law of Moses, and rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem—at best only an amateur patchwork affair, for priests, merchants, goldsmiths, and women are not usually expert masons (see Neh. iii.). But their work had a special interest and was a joy to Jehovah. They had a little strength, they had kept His Word, and had not denied His Name (Rev. iii. 8). The joy of Paul over Philemon's love to the saints and that of John when he wrote—"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth," were only echoes of the Spirit's joy in them. Small wonder then that we read later of this same remnant. "They rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy," for obedience always brings joy to the obeyed and also to the obedient. May it be ours to prove it happy daily experience, that "the joy of the Lord is our strength."

Israel's Unbelief and Fall.

SIR ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B.

THE popular conception of the Divine "Plan of the Ages" may be epigrammatically described as "a pandemonium ending with a conflagration." How vastly different is it from the scheme revealed in Scripture! For all Hebrew prophecy, from Moses to Malachi, speaks of "times of restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 2), or, in other words, of a coming age when everything shall be put right on earth by a reign of righteousness and peace.

And this was the burden of the Baptist's preaching, and of the early ministry of the Lord and His apostles. "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" was not "the Gospel" as we understand the word: it heralded the advent of the promised "times of restitution," when the heavens shall rule over the earth. But though Israel's Messiah-King was in their midst, "His own received Him not," and His death on Calvary was the response the nation made to that "Gospel of the kingdom."

His intercessory prayer upon the Cross, obtained for them a respite from the consequences of that awful sin, and at Pentecost the apostle of the circumcision was inspired to proclaim that a national repentance would bring back "the Christ who before was preached unto them," and usher in the promised age of blessing (Acts iii. 19-21). But Israel was obdurate, and the murder of Stephen was the answer made to the Pentecostal amnesty. He was the messenger sent after the King to say they would not have "this Man to

reign over" them (Luke xix. 14). So "there was no remedy," and instead of sending back the Christ, God sent the awful judgment under which the nation still lies prostrate.

After the death of Stephen, the apostle Paul received his call. It is generally overlooked that, though his commission was specially to the Gentiles, it included a definite mission to Israel (Acts ix. 15). And in fulfilment of that mission he travelled all Jewry, from Jerusalem round to Rome. And in every place his first appeal was to the synagogue. But though individual Jews responded to the Gospel, not a single synagogue accepted the proffered mercy. That part of his commission was therefore fulfilled when "the chief of the Jews" in Rome rejected his testimony, and the Book of the Acts closes by proclaiming that "the salvation of God was sent unto the Gentiles." And surely the fact is significant that it is in "the captivity Epistles," written after that crisis in his ministry, that we find the full revelation of the distinctive truths of Christianity.

The Use of Tribulation.

GOD never would send you the darkness
If you always could bear the light;
But you would not cling to His guiding hand
If the way were always bright;
And you would not care to walk by faith,
Could you always walk by sight.

So He sends you the blinding darkness,
And the furnace of sevenfold heat;
'Tis the only way, believe me,
To keep you low at His feet.—
For 'tis always so easy to wander
When our lives are glad and sweet.

The Church in its Worship.

THIRD PAPER. BY THE EDITOR.

A FEW practical considerations of and deductions from these Divine principles of the Word, which are abiding for "churches of the saints" throughout the whole period of their continuance on earth, may serve to exercise the hearts of all, unto giving them godly place and consideration, with reverent practice, in a time when many are letting them slip, while others are busy introducing and enforcing ways and means which, wherever accepted, render God's way and Word void, by man's tradition (see Mark vii. 12).

1. Since worship is a spiritual function, and only possible to the children of God, it is clear that there can be no collective worship in mixed congregations in which the people of God and the world are invited to share together in "the public worship of God." It is one of the devil's chief deceits to keep sinners from learning their need of being born again, to make them believe they can worship God, and where true children of God associate with them in this capacity, they help the great deceiver to do his work effectually.

2. If spiritual worship can only be rendered to God by those who are in a clean and spiritual condition, it behoves all who appear before Him as His assembled worshippers, to examine themselves as to their state of soul. "The assembly of the saints" is not the place, nor the gathering for united worship the time for self-judgment or heartsearching, or confession and restoration. All this should be done before in personal, private, and

prolonged dealing with God in the closet. Then there would be no need for that protracted ministry which is said to have become generally a necessity, to bring ill-conditioned worshippers into a right state of soul, and to tune the chords of the assembly for its collective worship. It may be open to question whether most of it has either the message or the spiritual power to effect that which it claims as its object, while the time it occupies robs God of that which is His due, and hinders those who are spiritual, from rendering unto Him that which they have come to give.

3. If there is to be spirituality in worship on the first day of the week, there must be spirituality in life and godliness in walk, on the six days that precede it. There is no sudden leap from the carnal to the spiritual to be expected at the appointed hour of the church's assembly for collective worship. What the worshippers are in the market, the business, and the world on Saturday, that they will be on the Lord's Day. If the world and its gain is the object in life, with heaven and eternal things scarcely in view, during the week, it is vain to hope for heart occupation with Christ and the "things above" on any large scale, on the Lord's Day. If unholy alliances with the ungodly are daily practised "in business life," and friendships with the world sought after and maintained in the "social circle" at the expense of God's truth, it is vain to hope for the full enjoyment of "the fellowship of saints" when assembling with them. It is only as we walk with God, in His light, according to His

Word, that we can "worship in the beauty of holiness" unitedly when the appointed hour has come.

4. If worship is "by the Spirit of God" (Phil. iii. 3, R.V.), who indwells each believer, to instruct and guide and maintain in a right condition, and in the local assembly (Eph. ii. 22) to guide its worship and provide for its edification (1 Cor. xii. 4-11), then it is like cutting off the stream that makes the pastures green, and like turning aside the hand held forth to guide and direct the exercises of the assembled worshippers, to bring in human arrangements or even suggest beforehand what is to be done or spoken. Let it be ever remembered that the living Lord Himself is there, even "in the midst" (Matt. xvii. 20), to be owned and honoured, and that the Divine Paraclete is there as Enabler, Helper, Guide, and Teacher, to bring forth *from* the assembled saints that which He has brought *to* them through taking of the things of Christ, and presenting them in fresh beauty and holy power to their hearts, and to open the lips of such as He knows to be fit mouthpieces to express the assembly's worship. This will never be done by appointing a man or men, however gifted, or in a programme, however well arranged, for, while what men regard as "good order in worship" may thus be secured, it will lack that freshness which is of the Spirit of God, and which, like the holy perfume of the sanctuary, cannot be imitated by any composition of man's devising. His imitations are often attractive, but they lack the true freshness and fragrance of the Divine handiwork.

The Dispensation of the Spirit.

SECOND PAPER. ALEX. STEWART, GLASGOW.

IN the second chapter of Acts we read that, when Peter had preached Christ to the dwellers at Jerusalem, they were pricked in their hearts and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Whereupon they were told to repent and be baptised, and they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; and it is added, "Then they that gladly received His word were baptised, and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." The way of salvation is by receiving the Word of God—a way which completely sets aside all human merit and puts man in his true place. Without all contradiction, God is the giver, man, if he would be saved, only the receiver of eternal life. This is illustrated in the 18th chapter of the Gospel of Luke, a chapter which might be headed with the words, "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away." At the 17th verse, we find the Lord Jesus saying, "Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." And immediately afterwards we have the record of His dealings with two men, one of whom did and the other did not take the humble and receptive position pointed out by these words. No sooner has He said, "Whosoever shall not *receive*," than we find it written that a certain ruler, who

was very rich, asked Him, saying, "Good Master, what shall I *do* to inherit eternal life." This man did not conceive of himself as "without strength." He had not come to an end of himself, consequently he had not come to the beginning of the resources that are in God for a sinner. He assumed power in himself, and he was met on his own ground and shown that he could not stand there. Having said that he had kept the commandments from his youth up, Jesus said unto him, "yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful, for he was very rich."

Then appears one presenting in every way a contrast—a blind beggar sitting by the wayside begging. Out of his poverty and blindness he calls aloud. The Lord stops, commands him to be brought, and asks him, "What wilt thou that *I shall do* unto thee?" Note the contrast. Here, Christ is the doer, not man. Here the Gospel is illustrated, not the law. The blind man says, "Lord, that I may *receive* my sight." The Lord takes up the word: "*Receive* thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee;" and it is added, "and immediately he *received* his sight and followed Him, glorifying God." The doer gets nothing, the *receiver* gets all he wants.

The men to whom Peter preached, "received the word," and having received it, they were baptised. This is the privilege of those who have become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Having

had part with Him in His death upon the cross, they are buried with Him by baptism into death.

The precious blood of Christ has been shed for our sins, and they are gone. Moreover, as is the power of the blood of Christ to atone for sin, so is its power to purge the conscience of the believer. A perfect sacrifice gives a perfect conscience. We have no more conscience of sins (Heb. x. 2). They no longer condemn us before God. But the fact that our sins were there, is not the only part we have in the Cross of Christ. Ourselves were there. We have been crucified with Christ. We died with Him (Gal. ii. 20; Rom. vi. 6). As the race of mankind came before God in the days of Noah and He judged it unfit to remain and swept it away by the flood, so did our nature come before Him at the cross, and there our old man was crucified and sin in the flesh condemned. "Sin in the flesh" is the regnant principle; "the old man" is the sphere in which it reigns. Both have been dealt with, and, so far as the believer is concerned, have come judicially to a full end.

God's Evangelist.

ANointed by the Spirit,
Trained at the Master's feet,
Commissioned, and sent forth by Him,
All furnished and complete:
No human art or wisdom
His talent could assist:
A heavenly-moulded gift of Christ
Is God's Evangelist.
Eternity before him
More real than time appears:
Then, wonder not he pleadeth with
The eloquence of tears.

Signs of the End.

SECOND PAPER. W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA.

ANOTHER distinctive mark of the time of the end is given in 1 Tim. iv. 1, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons." This, we believe, does not so much take account of the rise of the many anti-scriptural and soul-destroying systems, as it does of the departure from the truth of those who once held it. This is clearly seen in some of the Scottish Churches. Take, for example, that Church, once so sound on the great fundamentals of Christianity, the Church of M'Cheyne, of Burns, and of the Bonars. Who could have conceived forty years ago, that men would be tolerated in the pulpits of that Church to-day, and elected to sit in the chairs of its Professors who have given up all that is vital to Christianity, denying the doctrines they vowed at their ordination to uphold and preach.

In the Spring of the present year, we read in a New Orleans daily paper, a letter from the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church, in which they gave their reasons why they did not see their way to unite organically with the Northern Presbyterian Church. Among the reasons given was, that one of the Synods under the jurisdiction of the Northern General Assembly—the Synod of New York—was in the habit of ordaining men to the ministry who denied the Virgin Birth of Christ, disbelieved His miracles, rejected the inspiration of the Bible, and denied

eternal punishment. And the same is true in many such Churches. A few days after this appeared, we were present at a conference meeting in Chicago, and mentioned this incident. At the close, a minister of that very church, who was present, told us he was one of a committee who had to examine a recent candidate for the ministry. In course of his examination, this prospective preacher and teacher flatly denied the Lord's Virgin Birth, and yet, in spite of the protests of this aged minister, that young man was ordained. This is an illustration of what 1 Tim. iv. 1 predicts as one of the signs of the end. Toleration of almost anything except God's truth, mark the times in which we live.

SPIRITISM.—This ominous sign has developed of recent years in such a way that it is difficult to see how any can fail to be deeply impressed by it. At the first advent of our Lord, there was great activity amongst demons, as any one reading the New Testament may gather. With the going forth of the Gospel, demonism received a great check, and in the mercy of God, in spite of all the failure of the Church, it is only lately, at least in so-called Christian lands, that it is coming to the front again. It would seem that Satan knows his rule over the world will soon be challenged, and he is seeking through demons, to maintain that rule over men by deception and misrepresentation. It is not so long since this revival began, but what strides it has made! What a change from the rude spirit-rapping, in the home of the Fox sisters, in the State of New York, to the elabor-

ate display now seen all over the land! Beautiful temples, built by so-called Christian Scientists, Spiritualist Churches, great offices in first class streets, where clairvoyants, thought-readers, palmists, etc., exercise their devilish arts and become rich on the money of the men and women who consult them, without fear of prosecution by the State. This mighty increase from that small beginning, speaks in unmistakeable language that the time of the end is surely with us.

THE TEN KINGDOMS.—Those who have learned some little of the events of prophecy know, that the Roman Empire is to be resuscitated, as a confederacy of ten kingdoms under one head. This blasphemous personality cannot be revealed until the true Church is caught away to heaven, but the empire itself may come into existence before its head is revealed, and most likely will be an accomplished fact, before the Lord comes to take His own from the scene.

At this moment, the greater part of that empire is already brought together in the nations which we speak of as "The Allies." And out of this terrible war, we may see the work of resuscitation completed. To many, the thought that ten nations, among which will be Britain, France, and Italy, could so far rise above their mutual pride and jealousy, as to vest supreme power in the hands of a representative of any one of them, seems impossible. But we only need to remember that God has said it, and what He has spoken shall and must come to pass, however unlikely, or how contrary to the reasonings of man.

Dead Flies in the Ointment.

THE preacher who was king in Jerusalem (Eccl. i. 1) wrote, over twenty-eight centuries ago, "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour" (Eccl. x. 1). These "dead flies" are with us still, and wherever they are found, the good ointment of the Saviour's peerless Name—for His "Name is as ointment poured forth" (Song i. 3) in the lives and testimonies of all who bear it—is marred in its value and made to stink in the nostrils of the world, by the incongruities and inconsistencies of those who act unworthy of it.

Mr. A. discourses often on the "grace of lowliness," and exhorts us to walk in the spirit of humility, even "as He walked" (1 John ii. 6), who is our great Exemplar. But his massive gold Albert dangling in front of him, and his wife's very fashionable and costly outfit, do not seem to us simple folks to be any notable example of the graces he desires to magnify in his exhortation. That is a badly "dead fly" in the ointment.

Brother S. is very apt in using illustrations in his preaching of the Gospel in the open air. Last Sunday he told the story, of a townsman paying the debt of an employee, to prevent his creditor selling off his home, and said this was what Christ's death had done for sinners. A business man in the company was overheard saying to another, "If the preacher would pay a debt standing in my books against him for several years for furniture,

I would understand the thing better." That debt of the preacher's caused a badly stinking savour in the ointment.

Miss L. teaches a class of working girls, and counsels them to "serious thoughts" on eternal things. But on the way home she is apt to walk and flirt with young men, and the girls say she "is not so serious as she professes to be." That "little folly" greatly spoils her testimony.

We sing with deep pathos and much feeling in the worship meeting—

"All the vain things that charm me most
I sacrifice them to His blood."

And yet there are lots of "vain things" still about us, in the form of flowers and feathers, gems and jewels, which must still have some "charm" for us, else they would not be there. Their presence do not quite convince ordinary folks, that we have as yet "poured contempt on ALL our pride." These too are "dead flies" in the "precious ointment."

We speak of being "citizens of heaven," and only "strangers" here, but in an election time, "the vote" is that of one claiming the right to be a "citizen" of earth, and using that right to overturn the Government, and create another more to his liking. Need we wonder if honest politicians say that all the talk of heaven as Fatherland, is mere "sentiment." The practice is not consistent with the profession. "Dead flies" spoil many a pot of precious ointment, and with much grand preaching and high profession, but low practice, the truth is vilified and the Gospel, which the lives of those who profess to believe it, are intended to adorn and commend, is refused because

of the many "dead flies" whose "stinking savour" so badly mar its fragrance. It is only when the people of God, exercised by means of a practical and wholesome ministry, dealing with such matter of fact things, cleanse themselves from such "follies," and seek to bring them into harmony with their praising and preaching, that the Lord's Name, poured forth in their testimony, will have power.



"Turn Thou to Thy God."

THESE words of the ancient prophet (Hos. xii. 6) have their message to the saints of God at the present time. There is no deliverance at the hand of man. Every hope has failed. In God alone is His people's salvation. We ought to have known that before. In theory perhaps we did, yet the arm of flesh was trusted. Armies, fleets, generals, leaders, anything and everything but God. We do not wonder at the world having their hope in these. They have nothing better. But the saints of God in whose lives there are a thousand witnesses of God's delivering power! Where have they been? In whom and in what have they been trusting? "Turn THOU to thy God;" "Wait on thy God continually." This is the call from heaven to us to-day. Deliverance comes from God, and it will, when the heart turns truly to Him, and the waiting soul is wholly occupied with God. But not until then.

"Man's weakness, waiting upon God,
Its end can never miss,
For men on earth no work can do
More angel-like than this."

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

A CALL FOR TO-DAY.

(Hebrews iii. 15.)

A Present Opportunity—"To-day."

An Urgent Call—"Hear His Voice."

A Real Danger—"A Hardened Heart."

ETERNAL FACTS.

(Galatians vi. 7.)

A Divine Warning—"Be not Deceived."

An Absolute Certainty—"God is not mocked."

A Personal Responsibility—"Whatsoever a man soweth."

An Unalterable Decree—"That shall he also reap."

A GRAND ASSURANCE.

(John vi. 37.)

A Wide Designation—"Him."

A Simple Condition—"That cometh to Me."

A Faithful Promise—"I will."

A Grand Assurance—"In nowise cast out."

BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS.

THE CHRISTIAN'S CALLING.

Called to Liberty (Gal. v. 13).

Called to Peace (1 Cor. vii. 15).

Called to Blessing (1 Pet. iii. 9).

Called to Glory (2 Pet. i. 3).

THE BELIEVER'S THREEFOLD VICTORY.

Victory over Sin (Rom. vi. 14)—By Grace.

Victory over Satan (1 John ii. 14)—By the Word.

Victory over the World (1 John v. 4)—By Faith.

TIMOTHY, A PATTERN SERVANT.

A Man of God (1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. iii. 17).

A Minister of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. iv. 6).

A Working Evangelist (2 Tim. iv. 5).

A Good Soldier (2 Tim. iii. 3, 4).

An Approved Workman (2 Tim. ii. 15).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Subjection to the Claims of the State.

It is being taught among us who are young Christians here, that full subjection to the claims of the State is our duty in everything, and that whatever the right or wrong of the service demanded may be, we are to render it. This we are taught is the "submission" we are taught in 1 Pet. iii. 13, to give, and the "subjection" we are told to render in Rom. xiii. 1. And if there be wrong in what we are required to do, then our rulers, not we, are

responsible. Is this the teaching of the passages quoted, and of the Word generally?

Subjection to authorities, in all that they are authorised to demand, and submission in all legislation they are at liberty to enact in THEIR SPHERE, is plainly enjoined in the Scriptures cited, as indeed in the general teachings of the Word. But such subjection is not to bring the Christian into the place of being a "bondservant of men" (1 Cor. vii. 23, R.V.), so as to prevent him rendering to God that "reasonable"—or spiritual—service (Rom. xii. 1, R.V.), that is due to Him alone. If rulers exceed their authority and demand obedience in such things as involve direct disobedience to God, then their claims are not to be submitted to but rejected. Only supreme ignorance of the principles of the Word of God, or judicial blindness—which comes through trifling with them—can cause any professed teacher to say that subjection to unrighteous claims is to be given, and that acceptance of them is justification for the rejection of the higher claims of God. Not so, thought the three Hebrews in the day of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image (Dan. iii.), nor Daniel in the day of Darius' prohibition of prayer (Dan. vi.). Nor did England's martyrs in the time of the Marian persecution, or Scotland's Covenanters in the time of Claverhouse, yield such blind submission to the "powers" of their time, who were the tools of the Papacy, and the instruments of the devil in these days. They stood firm for what they knew of God's truth, not loving their lives unto death in its honour. It remained for a more enlightened (?) age to discover, and for men with less grit to formulate the sophism, that the State is a fetish to be worshipped, and that obedience to its claims in all things is the equivalent of obedience to God. We know that many Christian young men have been entirely misled by such reasonings, and the Lord may yet have something to say to those who have stumbled them by their evil counsel. The doctrine of blind subjection to all that the ruling authorities—civil, military, and ecclesiastical—may demand and compel, is one that ought to please Antichrist well, for when he comes, it will be to find a submissive, "patriotic" people ready to receive and own his rule, to obey him as their master, and to worship him as their God.

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Answers to Correspondents.

YOUNG BELIEVER.—We would advise you to

read your Bible for "devotional exercise," and to leave "Thomas a Kempis" writings severely alone. He was a bigoted Romanist, and his works are badly tainted by Romish doctrine.

NEMO.—As an altar in the church is the symbol of priestcraft, so is a pulpit of clerisy. The former denies the common priesthood of all believers; the latter, the Lord's right to raise up whom He will to minister, and the Spirit's liberty to use them as He directs.

T. F., MICHIGAN.—We do not know of any Scriptural warrant to invite or receive visitors from the world's religious systems to break bread for a passing occasion. If they are convinced that their place is in the sect of their choice, it is there they surely ought to be allowed to remain, until the power of the Word of God acting on their conscience brings them out. Then they will not want to return, even for a day.

A. L., BEDS.—There is ample scope for individual Gospel effort on such lines as you suggest, in cottage meetings on week nights of winter, open-air in hamlets during summer and autumn. And you do not need to wait until others see fit to fall in with such work, or give their promise to help in it. Begin with God and for Him. If He is really with you, the results are sure.

E. G., CANADA.—It is surely inconsistent for a Christian workman to earn big wages in making munitions of war, and at the same time to find fault with his brother who goes to use them. Such grave inconsistencies on the part of some, render their "testimony"—as it is called—of very little value in the eyes of the world. They can scarcely plead ignorance, for they must know perfectly well to what purpose their handiwork is to be devoted.

W. M., NEW ZEALAND.—The peace and harmony of an assembly of Christians will not be maintained for long, if teachers of "diverse and strange doctrines" are welcomed as their instructors. The only condition upon which peace can be maintained and spiritual prosperity enjoyed is, to welcome and give effect to all God's truth, and to exclude all that is contrary to it. The immediate effect of false teaching may not immediately appear, but as the old adage has it, "If nettle seed is sown, it is apt to grow," sometimes where least expected.

The Children of God and the Great War.

For well-nigh four long years, a war of unexampled magnitude has raged in Europe—and extended far

beyond it—in which most of the great nations are now involved, and as a result of which great national changes have already been effected. And the end is not yet. When and how, and with what issues that end may come, no man can see or say. The nations are "angry" (Rev. xi. 18), and continue to "breathe threatening and slaughter" (Acts ix. 1) against each other, while alleging they are engaged in "a righteous cause," in which they demand or claim the help of the Almighty. In all this, there is nothing strange, for the nations have been arming and preparing for some such struggle for thirty years. No doubt it came at an unexpected hour, has continued and extended far beyond the calculations of all, and will bring results of a kind and measure uncalculated and unconceived by any. The effects on the whole race of mankind have already been remarkable. The spirit of war is "in the air," and men "live and move and have their being" in it. And its sorrows are everywhere. For over and above the millions who lie in untimely graves, and the millions more from whose lives the vigour of manhood has departed, there are mothers mourning the loss of only sons and fathers bereft of those on whom their hopes were set, and widows from whose lives the light of love has gone, and orphans cast on the mercies of a cold and heartless world for the necessities of their existence. O the sin, and sadness, and sorrow of it all! to satisfy the lust for power and minister to the guilt of pride in those who, led on by the great enemy of God and adversary of man, are doing his dastardly work, yet fulfilling the eternal purposes of God in the earth. The effects of this great war on the children of God in all these nations, has already been remarkable. In some, their voices have been silent. Whether from fear or by constraint, it is hard to say. But it would be unjust to charge our brethren in Christ in "enemy lands," with complicity in all their nation's doings, until we know exactly what their position has been. We know that Moses was in the palace of the king of Egypt part the years of Israel's oppression, but he was not an oppressor. And Daniel was at the court of Nebuchadnezzar during the day of the edict of the worship of the golden image on Dura's plain, but he was not an idolator. So we need to distinguish, and to wait. All in Germany may not be sympathisers with shelling British hospitals and sinking passenger ships, any more than all in Britain are with the action of her rulers, in compelling those to bear arms who from "conscience toward God"

(1 Pet. ii. 19), and obedience to His Word as they understand it, are unable to yield to comply with their demand. And many such, although godly and blameless in life, are being herded in prisons and penal settlements as and with the worst of criminals in consequence. These are matters in which the great and righteous God, the moral Governor of the world, will yet let His voice be heard, and He will render recompence to whom it is due. Ours is to keep silence and wait. But there are matters concerning which the children of God in these war lands are responsible to let their testimony be heard, and evils from which they are called to keep themselves apart and their garments clean. It has been openly proclaimed by men in high places, and evidently accepted by most as a "moral law," that pledges unkept and evils committed by an enemy nation, justify others in adopting the same measures and paying the defaulter back in his "own coin." It is difficult to see where the "Christianity" of those who thus reason is to be found. It certainly is not derived from God's Word, or according to it. It would be hard to conceive a more direct denial of Christian principle or precept than this, or to find a more manifest example of a return to barbarism. According to such reasoning, we might all be cannibals. For if the South Sea Islanders killed and ate the first British missionaries, this new law of retaliation would bid us do likewise, and still worse, if we should be able. In the clear light of the teaching of Prov. xx. 22; Rom. xii. 19, the children of God can have no part in such doings. They ought, on the contrary, to witness against them, and deny the principles that underlie them. Had there been a national appeal to God as the "Governor among the nations," when these inhuman practices began, it would have been different with us to-day, but that would—as some avow—have "admitted our weakness," and given the enemy a chance to say we were "beaten"—which is evidently more in their estimation, than rebelling against the commandments of the God of heaven. And many Christians, who profess to own His Word as their only rule of life and conduct, are so leavened with the world war spirit and dominated by its principles, that they see no harm in adopting the godless principle that "the end justifies the means." Little wonder infidels speak and write of a "collapse of Christianity." But God lives, and He will not always be "silent," for He is watching events, and will "speak in wrath" (Psa. ii. 5) to the world openly, as He is already speaking to His own in

chastisement secretly, on account of these things. And when the sin of such conduct is owned, and its practice ceases, then may we expect deliverance.

Notes from War Countries.

France.—"In spite of wild rumours which alarm the people, there are many ready to hear and read the Gospel, and some hearts are open to welcome it." Among the troops in many of the huts, in which a clear and clean Gospel is preached, God is working mightily.

Italy.—"Among the British troops here, there is excellent opportunity for spreading the Gospel, and they seem glad to hear the good news from one of their own countrymen."

Egypt.—"I am a young believer, not long converted, and am greatly helped by reading the precious books you sent me. We need all the spiritual food we can get here."

Belgium.—"Although conditions become harder and restrictions more severe, the Christians go on quietly in the work of the Lord, and have His blessing."

FALLEN ASLEEP.—**Mrs. George Taylor**, Aberdeen—formerly of Oyne Station—May 16, aged 83. Saved in 1859, one of the first few who gathered in the Name at Old Rayne in joiner's workshop; given to hospitality, a "mother in Israel." **Mrs. Mary Nelson**, Frizington, Cumb., June 4, long a sufferer, in the assembly for 35 years. Now at rest with Christ. **David Greenlaw**, Rothesay, for many years in Greenock. Joined with first few meeting there, 52 years ago. **Mrs. Dunlop**, wife of Thos. Dunlop, Glasgow, for many years in Wyndford Hall assembly, Maryhill, converted in Kilmarnock nearly forty years ago. **James Main**, Lossiemouth, lost his life at sea, aged 50; a true follower of the Lord. **Robert Miller**, Larkhall, May 19, aged 76. Connected with the assembly from its beginning. He bore a good testimony. **John M'Gregor**, Springburn, Glasgow, after an operation. For many years a valued helper, who had the welfare of fellow-saints on his heart. In Townhead and Springburn assemblies. His aged widow is very frail. **Mrs. James Biggar**, Kilmarnock, June 7, saved in Auchinleck 38 years ago. **J. W. Moore**, formerly of Borneo, passed peacefully to the presence of the Lord on June 22, at the home of his brother, Brooklands, Cheshire. **William Stannage**, Burnbank, in Victoria Infirmary, Glasgow, June 3, aged 70. For many years in Ebenezer Hall assembly.

Fellowship in Rejection.

THE PORTION OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH.

THE familiar words of the prophet Isaiah, "He is despised and rejected of men" (chap. liii. 2), had their fulfilment in part, when Israel's Messiah appeared in the lowly form of the Nazarene, to be "despised of the people" (Psa. xxii. 6) over whom He had come to reign. The proud rulers of the Jews and the official leaders of their religion, conspired to reject and crucify Him. And this they did by the "lawless hands" (Acts. ii. 23) of the Gentiles, to whom they handed Him, after condemning Him to death. For while Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate were the instruments (Acts iv. 27) used by Satan, the "Gentiles with the people of Israel were gathered" in a common rejection of God's "Holy Servant Jesus," and their representatives combined, stood around the Cross deriding and insulting the Son of God in the last hours of His agony. Nor was this all. After the hand of God had been stretched out in power to lift Him from the grave, and His claims attested and vindicated by signs and witnesses from heaven, and the promise of the sending of the Comforter fulfilled and sealed in the salvation of thousands of their fellow-dwellers in Jerusalem, the rulers and representatives of the people continued their opposition to and rejection of the living Lord, in persecuting His servants and imprisoning His witnesses. And then, in one last act of consummate wickedness, they thrust Stephen outside their gates and stoned him to death in full view of an open

heaven and a standing Christ waiting to there welcome His servant who had shared His rejection. This was the fulfilment of the words of the parable spoken by the Lord, of the citizens who hated their ruler and sent the insulting message, "We will not have this man to reign over us" (Luke xix. 14) after him, to that "far country" whither he had gone to receive the kingdom and to return. And so to the world, the glorified Christ of heaven exalted to the eternal throne, is still the "despised and rejected of men." And His people have been called to share in His rejection. For not only are they "IN Him" before the face of God, accepted and at home in the heavens, where He is their Representative, but they are for a season left as His witnesses and credentials in that same world where He was rejected and cast out. Their place is WITH Him, "without the camp, bearing His reproach." It is their glory to have fellowship with their Lord in His rejection, and to be partakers of His sufferings. Do we esteem the honour and joyfully accept the place? Is it our common experience to esteem "the reproach of Christ, greater riches" than all the treasures of this Egypt-world in which we sojourn? Some of earlier time, counted it their honour and glory to have fellowship with their Lord in His rejection here, and to be accounted by the world, political and religious, as "the filth and the offscouring of all things" (1 Cor. iv. 13). Have we become wiser than they? Or is it that the dust of earth has dimmed our vision, and unholy alliances with the world depraved our desire, until a place of honour where He

was despised, and of approbation from a world by which He was rejected, is sought and grasped at by many who glibly and insincerely sing—

“ Lord, we share in Thy rejection,
Thy reproach and Cross we love.”

For it is a fact only too well attested in the habits of many who once seemed content with the pilgrim path, and the place of rejection, that the lure of the world, and its ways, and the popular but flimsy religious attractions of the time, are withdrawing them gradually but surely from the place of fellowship with Christ in rejection. But the hidden path which the worldly-wise know not, is still open to the saint who is prepared to count the cost of treading it, and to be reckoned—not only by those who know not God, but by many who claim to belong to Christ—to be “ extreme,” not “ keeping pace with the times ” in which we live. The path of true fellowship with Christ is never pleasant to nature; it was not meant to be. But to the heart in which He is sanctified as Lord (1 Pet. iii. 15, R.V.), “ the fellowship of His sufferings ” (Phil. iii. 10) is always sweet, and the brand of the Cross is honourable.

J. R.

God is over all.

Is good or evil reigning here ?

One Lord or many, bearing sway ?

Who is the ruler of each sphere ?

So oft we ask—but who shall say ?

Sin triumphs, death and pain are rife,

The good and bad, like sorrows know ;

All is disorder, darkness, strife ;

Who then is master here below ?

Whence has this chaos come, and how ?

Or when shall earth shake off this load ?

This is the Word to which we bow,

“ Be still, and KNOW THAT I AM GOD.”

Two Symbolic Ordinances :

BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

ALEXANDER STEWART, GLASGOW.

THE believer is still in the body, though he has become a new and spiritual man. Hence there is conflict. Hence he is called to mortify the deeds of the body, and he is empowered to do so by the Spirit Who is given to him, and Who operates on the new man, as we read, “ strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man ” (Eph. iii. 16).

Having thus two natures, one derived from the first Adam, the other from the second Adam (Who is a quickening Spirit), he is a subject for baptism, and he ought to take the Lord's Supper—these two ordinances being suitable to his new dual condition.

TWO SYMBOLIC ORDINANCES.

In baptism, the believer is buried, as dead with Christ. In the Lord's Supper, he feeds as a living man on “ Christ, our Passover sacrificed for us.” Burial is proper for the dead; sustenance for the living. Had the daughter of Jairus remained dead, she would have been buried. When her life came again, the Lord commanded to give her meat. The believer is baptised once; he takes the Lord's Supper often, and fittingly so, for men are buried but once, while they eat and drink many times.

That baptism is *burial* is shown in Rom. vi. 3, 4—“ Know ye not that so many of us as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death. Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ

was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." And Col. ii. 12—"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through the faith of the operation of God Who hath raised Him from the dead." This Scripture also teaching that we are not only buried but risen with Christ, having entered on new life in association with Him.

The answering figure in the Old Testament is the Flood. We read in 1 Peter iii. 20, 21, that "the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a-preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ?" Man as a sinner was judged and submerged, while yet in the person of Noah he was brought through the waters, to begin life anew on the cleansed earth.

DIFFERENT BAPTISMS.

There are, at least, four baptisms mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew, two of them being baptisms with water. They are the baptism of John unto repentance (iii. 11); the baptism of suffering endured by our Lord Jesus on the Cross (xx. 22); the baptism with the Holy Ghost (iii. 11); and the baptism in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (xxviii. 19). The baptism of John has passed away. Our Lord is no longer straitened, for His fiery baptism is over. There remain the baptism of the Spirit and Christian baptism with water.

If it be asked, Is not the baptism of the Spirit sufficient? we answer, no; for we read in Acts x. that Peter, having preached to those assembled in the house of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word, and "then answered Peter, can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? and he commanded them to be baptised in the Name of the Lord." Instead of their having received the Spirit being a reason for *avoiding* baptism, it was a reason for undergoing it.

Having, as needy sinners, received the gift of God, and having been baptised, we should be added to the fellowship of our brethren in Christ, the power of which fellowship is the Spirit we have received. We should gather with them around the Lord's table, enjoying the privileges and exercising the functions of members of the body of Christ. Through grace we know God, for "the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true" (1 John v.). We are divinely capacitated to worship God, Who is a Spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John v.), and we are called each in his measure to serve God and our brethren (Rom. xii.).

And as we ought not to take up such a position lightly, so we ought to stand in it firmly. "They continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." The Lord is coming again. Shall He find us so standing, so occupied, at His coming?

Prove Your Weapons.

A VETERAN WARRIOR'S WISE WORDS.

BY THE LATE GORDON FORLONG, NEW ZEALAND.

I WOULD very earnestly ask all young believers, to become acquainted with their Bibles, and to study them accurately and closely. It is only as you become acquainted with the very words of God, as His Divine breathings, and know that you are dealing with the exact words of the Holy Ghost, that you have confidence in their value for personal edification and in their power in testimony. With the aid of *The Englishman's Greek Concordance*—which may be used with profit by any reader—you will be able to trace where the same word is used in other connections, and to learn its full meaning. By this means you will get an acquaintance with the Word which will feed your own soul and furnish you to meet and defeat those who propagate error. I remember meeting a zealous Romanist who was using the words of Christ to Peter in Matt. xvi. 18 to show that *his* church is built on Peter. I asked him "Why in the original Greek, does the Lord call the rock *Petra*, and Peter *Petros*, if they mean the same? And why in all good Lexicons is *Petra* always "a rock"—not a stone, while *Petros* is the word for stone?" He was unable to answer; he had never heard of this distinction, nor would his priest be likely to tell of it to him.

A Christadelphian, arguing that "immortality" belonged only to saints, was easily confounded by showing that the word as used in Scripture has no reference to the soul, or man's duration of existence

at all, but to the body, and means literally "no death," as in 1 Cor. xv. 43, 54, and "no corruption" as in 1 Tim. i. 17; 1 Cor. xv. 52. To study your Bible closely and accurately, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, will furnish you for your part in "the wars of the Lord," and give you such strength and confidence in the power of God's Word as you will not feel afraid to meet error's boldest promoters. Do not waste your time reading "goody" books, milk and water compositions, which do not lead to the Book of God, and cannot fit or furnish you for the service of the Lord. You will never feel confident in using "the Sword of the Spirit" against the wiles and thrusts of the adversary, unless you know it intimately and accurately. You can never speak with absolute certainty of its great and vital truths, if you only hold them in borrowed faith, or as taught by man. You must hold them as from God, and know them as a rock beneath your feet. Read the Bible, reverently, carefully, prayerfully, using such aids as will help you to understand it. Keep your armour bright, ever ready to meet the enemy's attack. He is arming his host for the fight. Live, so that when the alarm is sounded, you will not be found wanting and unprepared, but, like the war-horse of olden time, you will rise boldly and face the foe bravely, with full confidence in your Leader, and in the weapons He has given and taught you to use in the great conflict with error. The wars of the Lord are not child's play, and the man to fight the Lord's battles must have proved his weapons, and be well able to use them.

God's Way of Assembling.

A TESTIMONY TO ITS POWER AND BLESSING.

HAVING been accustomed from the time of my conversion to read the Bible, and accept it as God's Guide Book to His people, individual and collective, in all things, I have sought in my simplicity, as grace has been given to me, to conform my ways to its teachings, and to be found associated with those who are seeking to be so guided, where I would be at liberty to give effect to its commandments and exhortations in practice. It has been a great joy to me to "dwell together in unity" (Psa. cxxxiii. 1) with fellow-saints who were of "one mind in the Lord" regarding the great truths of Scripture which separate the church from the world, and give the living Lord His place of supreme authority over His people and in His assemblies here on earth. It has been a joy indeed to walk together in love, of "one mind in the Lord," speaking the same things, forbearing with one another in matters of detail, in which all do not see eye to eye. I think I can say without fear of contradiction, that we have found it possible to hold fast with a firm grasp, truths which are vital to the constitution and maintenance of the assembly of God in its place of separation from the world, and to walk in the paths which obedience to these truths led us along, and at the same time, have much godly intercourse with fellow-believers who are not gathered as we are, but who truly love the same Lord and walk in all the light they have received from the Word. But we do not force them

to walk with us, or invite them to partial or casual association with us in our assembly life and fellowship. We seek to have them in our homes, and to visit them in their's for godly intercourse, but we leave it to God and the power of His Word to lead them on in "the way." We make known to them that our position as gathered simply in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not that of a denomination, bearing that or any distinctive title, and that we make no claim to be anything more than a few of God's scattered saints who have, through His mercy, found from humble and prayerful study of the Word, that it is open to us in these last days to go back to the original and only Divine way of assembling for worship and edification, which an all-wise God has given for His people's acceptance and obedience throughout the WHOLE period of the continuance of His church and churches on the earth. And "continuing stedfastly" in what we firmly believe to be the Lord's way for His people, assembling for worship, edification, prayer, and testimony, we have always courteously but ever decisively refused, to enter any of their denominational churches or missions. For we consider that if God's Word has really been our guide in coming out from these as being contrary to His will, we cannot, without dishonouring that Word, return thither again. We have been blamed by some for being "too rigid" because we do not believe it to be of God to lower "the standard" in order to make our way of assembling more acceptable to believers in denominations who would "come and go" if this were our

conditions of fellowship, but as we have no right to make restrictions where God has made none, no more have we any authority to grant liberties or enter on compromises with our brethren, on matters concerning which the Word of God has nothing whatever to say, and for which godly order in the assembly can make no provision. It is ours simply to act on the Word and leave God to work obedience in His people. We are not masters but guests and servants in His house. It is not our business to legislate, but to administer the laws the Lord has given. And our gracious God, notwithstanding our feebleness, and infrequently our failure in doing His will and walking in His way, has not only richly blessed our own souls, but abundantly used our testimony in the leading on in His truth of many of our beloved brethren and sisters in the Lord, who are now in happy fellowship with us in the assembly of His people. We have had our trials, as all who tread the path of faith must, and there have been difficulties which have cast us on God and the Word of His grace, but He has never failed us. Opposition from the religious world has sometimes been fierce, especially when God was manifestly working with us, and the religious people and press of the village never weary in declaiming against us openly, while opposing secretly. But all this was reckoned on and its cost counted, long ago. And we can raise our "Ebenezer" to the Lord who has helped us hitherto, and who will not fail nor forsake us, to Whom be glory now and evermore. Amen.

D. G.

Error Garnished with Truth.

IT has been said that "error is never more dangerous, than when it is propagated by men who have in time past been witnesses for God's truth, and its power of deception is never so great, as when it finds its shelter under some generally welcomed doctrines of the Word." This is a true witness, and we see its evil workings very fully in our time. Men whose names were held in honour for their fidelity to the faith, but who have drifted into error and become active in its propagation, are far more dangerous to the people of God than open and avowed enemies of the faith. They are generally more cunning too, in their ways of presenting their evil doctrines. They know how to deceive, by overlaying the errors they wish to be accepted with a pleasing garnish of well known doctrines concerning which all Christians are agreed. And their "orthodoxy" deceives the simple! We are now familiar with such sayings as, "How can a good man, who holds and teaches ruin by the Fall, redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Spirit, be far wrong on the destiny and doom of the ungodly? And why should we refuse the ministry of one who holds and teaches truths of "the Higher Life," and is a warm supporter of "the deepening of spiritual life movement," because he is not quite in line with others on the matter of man's existence beyond death, but holds and, when he gets a favourable opportunity, teaches "Conditional Immortality,"—which, stripped of its *camou-*

flage, is the annihilation of the unconverted at or after death? Such are the arguments frequently heard when avowed holders and teachers of fundamental error are found on Conference platforms, and their writings commended to young Christians unable to discern between truth and error. But it is dangerous reasoning and needs to be exposed with no uncertain sound, and firmly gripped with no soft-gloved hand. For the errors of such men are doing their evil work in souls and in circles where such laxity prevails. For example, a young man from the country goes to a Conference on "Holiness," hears a popular speaker, whose honeyed words attract. He soon finds from *private* sources that this attractive speaker has also *written*—what he dare not there speak openly, but warmly advocates privately—in favour of the annihilation of the unsaved as being their punishment. Thus the poison of his error is spread abroad. Picking up a book by a godly and gifted writer,* quite recently, we were not a little astonished to find the following, which warns us that deadly error may be found concealed among fragments of truth which serve only to decoy and deceive. "Do I persuade myself," writes the authoress, "as did William Law, whose dreams are now reproduced for the benefit of Christians, that 'from eternity to eternity no wrath ever was or will be in the Holy, Triune God.' It is as good sense," says Law, 'as consistent with the divine nature, to say that God, moved by a wrath in and from Himself, began the

creation, as that wrath in God *ever punished* any part of it.' " We wonder if this long discredited mystic writer, ever read the Spirit-inspired words, "For which things' sake the *wrath of God* cometh on the children of disobedience" (Col. iii. 6)? Or the solemn declaration of the apostle in Rom. i. 18, "For the *wrath of God* is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." To deny God's righteous wrath, is to deny that sinners will be punished, and to help on their deception. Surely Christians will think twice, before they commend such writers' books to their fellows, or bring into contact with vital error those unskilled in its detection, even when it is garnished with much that is true and pleasant to read. For it is the false doctrines found in such books, received, that lead on to the more glaring errors found in Christadelphianism, Spiritism, and other systems of error.

Waiting.

TEACH me to wait, O Father,
 When the days are dark and long,
 When the hands that would work must be idle
 And the plans that I make go wrong.
 Teach me to wait and have courage,
 Teach me to wait and be strong.

Teach me to wait, O Father,
 When my hopes seem all in vain,
 When my hands with work grow weary,
 And life is full of pain.
 Teach me to wait with endurance,
 To wait and not complain.

Teach me to wait, O Father,
 For the joys that slip away
 From the hands stretched out to grasp them,
 Entreating them to stay.
 Teach me to wait and have patience
 To wait and hope each day.

* Frances Bevan.

Signs of the End.

SECOND PAPER. W. J. M'CLURE, CALIFORNIA.

GREAT and sudden changes in national and political life will evidently mark "the time of the end." Events, which in the ordinary routine of things would be reckoned to require long years to accomplish, will be speedily brought to pass. For God, who lingers over men in the time of grace, will make "a short work" (Rom. ix. 28) of His judgment in righteousness. The present speedy overthrow of great Empires and powerful Nations may well prepare us for rapid and great changes in the countries out from which the ten kingdoms of the coming Roman Empire will arise. For example, should a result of the present war be, that some portion of the German Empire which originally belonged to the Roman Empire, should break away from Prussia, and Prussia and Russia (neither of which formed part of the ancient Roman Empire) become allies, Russia's millions, thoroughly Prussianised, would become such a menace to Europe, that a confederation of ten kingdoms under one head, would commend itself to men as the only safe course. And if some military genius should arise among the Allies, the combination would quickly be accomplished. Thus God would cause to be fulfilled His own prophecy, as He has fulfilled so many in the past, allowing the wars and policies of men to work out His purposes.

THE JEW.—In the "fig tree" mentioned in Scripture we have a type of Israel as a *nation*. We find this tree in three places and conditions in the Gospels.

First, in Luke xiii. 6:9, the nation is seen under suspended sentence for fruitlessness. Second, in Matt. xxi. 18-20, the sentence has been executed, the tree is blasted and withered. For over eighteen centuries this has been the condition of Israel as a nation. Third, in Matt. xxiv. 32, 33, the fig tree is seen "putting forth" its leaves. Surely this condition is appearing among the Jews. After their long winter of *national* lifelessness, the Jew is turning his eyes to Palestine, and we hear of Jewish Congresses and Conferences. These may be "the leaves," which as present events indicate, they have begun to "put forth."

Simultaneous with this revival of national life of the Jew, is Great Britain's altered attitude toward Turkey. About sixty years ago, she fought to bolster up Turkey, now she is fighting to drive her out of Europe and out of Palestine. And while we may see some temporary backsets, it will be done. Why this change? We look beyond men's changes of policies and cabinets, and see the hand of God at work. His "set time" had not come in the middle of the last century. Now, the hours of the Turk's dominion over the Holy Land seem numbered, and as soon as he is driven from the sacred soil, we shall see a separate Jewish state set up. Men are speaking of this to-day, as they are speaking of the "United States of Europe."

It is not only possible, but probable, that we shall see both set up, ere we go up "to meet the Lord in the air." For although the conversion of the Jewish remnant will not take place till after the

church has gone, they will return to their land in unbelief. And it will be while there, that their eyes shall be opened to see in the once-crucified Jesus of Nazareth, their Messiah and their Hope.

Of all the signs—present signs of the end—that are appearing, we believe this in connection with the Jew is the plainest, and that it ought to speak most loudly to us. Their newly quickened hopes cannot be realised fully until we are gathered unto Christ in the heavens. But if we see these things shaping themselves, how near must His coming be for which we wait. And how many of us may well be rebuked by the words of the Lord in Matt. xvi. 3, "Ye cannot discern the signs of the times." Worldliness has blinded the eyes of so many, earthly things have so obscured the Hope of the most, that His coming will be an unexpected surprise, instead of an event looked for, longed for, and heralded as "near, even at the doors," even among those who are the true children of God, and of those who will be "alive and remain" in mortal flesh, in the hour that the gathering "shout" of the returning Lord is heard. May the Lord awake His people to the solemnity of the time, and cause His watchers to trim their lamps and be ready.

Christ's Sympathy and Power.

IT is well to bear in mind that this is not the day of Christ's *Power*, but it is the day of His *Sympathy*. When passing through the deep waters of affliction, the heart may at times feel disposed to ask,

"Why does not the Lord display His power, and deliver me?" The answer is, "It is not the day of His power." He could prevent that catastrophe—He could avert that sickness—He could remove that difficulty—He could take off that pressure—He could preserve that beloved and fondly cherished object from the cold grasp of death. But instead of putting forth His power to deliver, He allows things to run their course, and pours His own sweet sympathy into the oppressed and riven heart in such a way as to elicit the acknowledgment that we would not for worlds have missed the trial, because of the abundance of the consolation.

By and by He will display His power; He will come forth as the Rider on the white horse; He will then unsheathe His sword; He will make bare His arm; He will avenge His people, and right their wrongs for ever. But now His sword is sheathed, His arm covered. This is the time for making known the deep love of his heart, not the power of His arm, nor the sharpness of His sword. Are you satisfied to have it so? Is Christ's sympathy enough for your heart, even amid the keenest sorrow and the most intense affliction? The restless heart, the impatient spirit, the unmortified will, would lead one to long for escape from the trial, the difficulty, or the pressure; but this would never do. It would involve incalculable loss. We must pass from form to form in the school; but the Master accompanies us, and the light of His countenance, and the tender sympathy of His heart, sustain us under the most severe exercises.—C. H. Mackintosh.

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

BRIEF OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

MANIFESTED, in the Gift of the Son (1 John iv. 10).
 COMMENDED, by the Death of the Son (Rom. v. 8).
 KNOWN, by faith through the Word (1 John iv. 16).
 ENJOYED, through the Indwelling Spirit (Rom. v. 5).

THE WRATH OF GOD.

Its Past Revelation (Rom. i. 18) on all Ungodliness.
 Its Present Abiding (John iii. 36), on Unbelievers.
 Its Future Manifestation (Col. iii. 6), on Disobedience.

DIVINE POWER MANIFESTED.

"The Power of God" (Rom. i. 16) in the Sinner's Salvation.
 "The Power of Christ" (2 Cor. xii. 9), in the Saint's Strengthening.
 "The Power of the Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 4), in the Servant's Testimony.

"IN NOWISE."

Of the Sinner's Ruin (Rom. iii. 9).
 Of the Sinner's Helplessness (Luke xiii. 11).
 Of the Sinner's Unfitness (Rev. xxi. 27).
 Of the Saviour's Welcome (John vi. 37).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Why Does God Not Stop the War?

At the close of our open-air meeting last Sunday evening, a well known scoffer, who misses no opportunity of manifesting his hostility to the Gospel, shouted, "If God cares for men's souls, why does He not stop the war?" There was no answer given. I felt there should have been, and as others no doubt meet the same question, it would be seasonable and acceptable to many, to have a brief and simple answer to give to this question.

A scorner is to be answered "according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit" (Prov. xxvi. 5). And the Lord's way with such scorners and their questions was, to give them such answers as exposed their true condition (Matt. xx. 15-46), and silenced their tongues. But in a case where a challenge is thrown out in public, with the object of opposing the Gospel and neutralising its effects in those who have heard it, it may at times be needful for those who are able, to meet the unbeliever with the Word of God—never by arguments for, or defences of its teachings—and let him feel the

sharp edge of the only weapon before which he cannot stand. "Why does God not stop the war?" is a senseless as it is an insolent question, and might be met by an older and a larger one of the same sort from the stock-in-trade armoury of infidels. "Why did God not prevent sin at the beginning?" There are others to which no human answer can be given. "Why did God permit His Son to be murdered at the hands of wicked men? And why does He allow His saints, who are the objects of His love, to suffer unto death for His truth's sake?" These are questions which the ungodly do not ask, but which often arise in the thoughts of many in whom the fear of God dwells, causing them many searchings of heart and often giving rise to conflicts with the adversary, as they seem to give him opportunity to question the Divine love, and to throw suggestions of doubt as to God's exercise of His Divine power over events on this earth.

As to God's ability there need be no question. "Power belongeth unto God" (Psa. lxii. 11), and He has exercised it openly in causing "wars to cease" (Psa. xlii. 9), in extinguishing a nation's army in an hour" (Exod. xiv. 28-32), in stopping an invasion by the greatest power of its time, at the gates of a city (2 Kings xix. 35), smiting the entire host into death by the hand of His angel, and in many other ways letting it be known that the Most High "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him—What doest Thou" (Dan. iv. 35). On other occasions He allowed His people to be defeated by their foes, and for their sin and disobedience brought under servitude to the heathen. If light given has been turned to darkness, privileges bestowed abused, the fear of God cast off, and His Word disowned, God will allow nations, as He allows individuals, to reap the harvest of their own sowing, and when they do, they need not blame God for refusing to prevent it. The nations engaged in this awful war have each in their measures been recipients of God's mercies, and they have been well warned of the results of their abuse of them. Voices have again and again been lifted up in their midst, witnessing against their evil ways, only to be silenced in scorn. Lust of power, display of armaments, boastings of ability to conquer, have been the national sins of all, and are yet unrepented of by their kings and governments. Even among those who are not out for conquest, but in defence of those rights and liberties which are their due, there

is much in practice that is opposed to God and His Word, whose authority they profess to own. For this, He has a controversy with them. And because of this, His hand is not outstretched to deliver, nor will it be, until the sins which have turned away His face are confessed and cut off. God does not exact from a nation such spiritual obedience and acknowledgment of His Christ, as none save born again saints can give. He does not expect from a nation, that worship and service, which His Church alone can give. But He does demand the righteousness which "exalteth a nation" (Prov. xiv. 34) with the open and full denial of such sins as are "a reproach to any people." Let those who reply against God in His apparent unconcern in the prolongation of this worldwide war, answer, if their hands are clean in these things. Has iniquity not been exalted, barbarism copied, God's Word openly set at nought, many of His people forced to do what they disapproved of, some treated as criminals because they could not disobey God, to meet the unjust demand of military law—a form of law which the Word of God nowhere bids the Christian obey—and others actually martyred for their faith. These are sins against God and the Word, which cannot pass unchallenged and unrequited. What if these, of which politicians and newspapers take no notice, (save in ridicule of those who expose them) are the cause of the delayed deliverance. The day in which all secrets are revealed and hidden things made known may tell, that these and other evils continued, defended, and gloried in, have kept the God who gave deliverance in time past, to Britain and America in the days of threatened national danger, at a distance, and allowed the flower of their manhood to fall and the wealth of their resources to be drained at the hand of a combination of nations in whom God has no pleasure, but whom He has permitted to work out their evil designs as a scourge and a retribution on unrepented sins and of proud boastings. When "Repentance toward God" is wrought, and when these, with other such ungodly and unholy practices, cease, THEN God will "stop the war." And it lies with the people of God, wherever found, to deal daily with God in believing supplication, while they give a distinct and definite personal testimony to His Truth regarding these things. For silence in a time of grave crisis is not grace, but guilt, and may involve those who from fear or faithlessness, keep silence, in the judgment of those to whose evil deeds they silently give their acquiescence.

Answers to Correspondents.

YOUNG CONVERT.—The author of the book *you* name, was the late William Reid, then of Carlisle. It has been the means of the conversion of many.

WORKER.—You are under no obligation whatever, to limit your Gospel service to the assembly's hall in which you meet for worship. "All the world" is the Gospeller's parish and sphere.

PATRIOT.—If the Legislature has made provision in their Military Service Act, as they have—as we believe, under God's overruling hand in answer to prayer, for those who from conscience toward God cannot bear arms to kill—it cannot be wrong surely, to take advantage of it. And none has any right to refuse it, or fail to give effect to that which bears the King's authority.

ADVERTISER.—Honest and truthful advertising is quite legitimate. It is simply a means of letting people know what you have to sell, and at what prices. But "puffs" and fictitious descriptions and commendations, are unworthy of a Christian. And most of us know what value the world puts upon them.

A. N., ANDOVER.—The taking of collections from the unconverted at meetings for the preaching of the Gospel, no matter for what "good work," is not to be encouraged, and should not be countenanced by any who see the use the devil makes of such "offerings," to deceive sinners in the belief that they are helping on "God's cause." Whereas, nothing they give is acceptable to Him while they reject or neglect Christ, God's last and greatest gift to men.

H. B., NORFOLK.—The praise of the assembly of saints should surely be led by one to whom God has given the fitness, and opportunity given for him to exercise that ability. But he is not at liberty to select or even suggest what hymns are to be sung, that is the privilege of the assembled worshippers when they are assembled, under the guidance of the Spirit of God in the assembly. Hymns chosen to sing and subjects for ministry prepared by individuals beforehand, may be wholly unsuited and altogether out of the leading of the Spirit, for that people at that time.

ALPHA.—Time will tell, whether the work you see, is of God. Meantime, do not leave that which you believe the living Lord has given you to do for Him, in order to identify yourself with it.

D. M., EDINBURGH.—The remedy for dulness and lack of a free outflowing of spiritual worship

in the assembly when gathered on the first day of the week, is not a stated "sermon to them, by an approved minister" to bring those assembled into a better spiritual condition—an object which few of such "sermons" have the wherewithal to effect—but a wholesome ministry with pointed exhortation on other seasonable occasions, impressing on all the Lord's people, their responsibility to appear before the Lord in a condition worthy of His presence, and to keep themselves separate from all that defiles and unfits for fellowship with God during the six days of the week. For it is the lives we live, the paths we tread, and the company we keep, that affect our spiritual condition as assembled worshippers on the first day of the week. One cannot become suddenly "spiritual" at eleven o'clock on the Lord's Day, who has been living carnally throughout the week. Nor need any expect to enjoy the "fellowship of saints" in the church to the full, whose habit it is to walk hand in glove with the ungodly in the world all the rest of the time. In most of the remedies proposed for the "spiritualising" of worship, this is discounted or ignored—perhaps it is too sensitive a point to be touched—but we are quite sure that it is in this region that the restoration and reviving must begin, if any abiding result is to be obtained from it.

A. M., NORFOLK.—The collective offerings of an assembly may surely be disbursed by those who are entrusted with them, but the uses to which they are to be put, lies with the assembly. And in the case of gifts to labourers, and collections for relief of need, it greatly helps the saints to give intelligently and heartily, when they are informed beforehand for whom and toward what objects their gifts are to be used. Of course where "expenses" swallow up the whole, there is nothing to communicate. As in olden time, those who had given their gold to make the "calf" (Exod. xxxii. 3) had nothing left for the "tabernacle," so now, "the fashion of the world," in which so many think it necessary to dress and live, robs the Lord's treasury of its due.

Mems from Battle Fronts.

Good Cheer.—"Amid much to test and discourage, we have good cheer in the assurance that loved ones at home ceaselessly pray for us."

Around the Book.—"Within sound of the guns, I came across the other night a little group of soldier lads gathered around the open Book, from

which one read the evening Psalm. The sight brought the tear to my cheek, and reminded me of the thousands here who are kept in perfect peace amid scenes of war, through the daily renewing they receive from the Word of God."

Ready to Listen.—"Our men are no longer scoffers, nor are they careless, but are ready to listen with reverent attention to the Gospel, from those whose lives commend it. But they have a bitter contempt for mere profession, whether in Padre or Private, where the life gives it the lie."

A Good Work.—"In our hut here, the Lord is working, and many are being brought to a personal faith in Christ. The Gospel Mirrors, with their splendid Gospel texts, are a great attraction, and the men are eager to get them."

Notes from War Countries.

Belgium.—Details of the experiences of God's people in this sorely devastated and rigorously ruled land are few. But those allowed to reach us give some hope that they are permitted to continue their assemblies for worship, and under restriction, for Gospel testimony, in several of the places whose names are familiar to us.

France.—In this the day of her crisis and of faith's fiery trial to God's saints and Christ's servants in France, there are some tokens that hearts mellowed by sorrow are seeking to a forgotten God. And Rome, with all her native cunning, is doing all she can to draw the seekers back within her power. The Gospel is not sought after by the mass of the French people, but the few who seek to spread it are diligent, "in season, out of season," in bringing it to soldier and civilian alike.

Persia.—There is all but a full silence from those known to us in this far-off and much invaded country, which causes anxiety as to their welfare. For wherever the Turk and others acting for him have power, there, persecution and the sword awake against the Gospel of Christ and all who love it.

Palestine.—Interesting letters from young British soldiers in the Expeditionary Force under General Allenby encamped "round about Jerusalem," tell of groups assembling for prayer and reading of the Word in the precincts of the holy city. And one gives the information that on the night before the British General with his staff unostentatiously entered the gate of Jerusalem, a well attended prayer meeting was held, at which all ranks joined in supplication to God.

Leaning upon the Beloved :

THE LAST STAGE OF THE HOMEWARD WAY.

THE last picture given of the Bride in the "Song of Songs" is very beautiful and very blessed. She is described as "coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved" (chap. viii. 5). The dark and dreary wilderness is all but behind her, the heavenly home for which she has long sighed is gleaming in the distance before her, and as one who knows and feels that she is feeble and weary, she leans on the arm of One whom she well knows will not fail her in these last few stages of the homeward way. In her earlier and more active experiences, as they are described in the wonderful imagery of this song, she is seen sometimes wandering in the city, sometimes serving in the vineyards, or tending the flocks ; but here in the last look we have of her, she is simply "leaning," that is all. Her attitude surely expresses conscious weakness, but it implies confidence, for she knows the arm of her living, loving Guide is mighty, and that His love is all-sufficient for her need and care. So she draws nearer than had been her wont, and confides herself in unquestioning faith unto His love and power, to bear her safely home. And thus it is that she leaves the wilderness world, and exchanges the scenes of her toils, trials, and tears for that bright land which for long she had known as her home. Shall it be thus with us whose wilderness days are almost over? Shall it be so with the Church, whose earthly course is nearly ended, that this "leaning upon the

Beloved" shall be fulfilled in richer, fuller, happier measure than it has ever been? It is what above all else the heart needs, what the writer and the reader personally need to know and to enjoy. Things around, within, behind, are all disappointing, but He the living Lord and Lover, is just the same as when in life's bright and early morn we first learned of His love and drew to His side. And He is just as ready now to answer the confidence of heart that draws near to His side, leaning upon His loving arm, as He was in that first hour of trust for salvation and satisfaction, when as sinners we came to Him. Whatever the few last steps may bring, they will be our best and brightest, if we go "go up from the wilderness leaning upon the Beloved," cleaving to Himself, confiding in His love, and leaning fully on His arm. It has thus been so with some, whose last days were their best. For after the warfare and the work, the wrestling and the storm, there comes the "great calm," and the sweet and satisfying rest that comes through leaning upon the Beloved. This is the posture, and this the place of repose for the way-worn and weary soul, whose wilderness days are nearly over. And thus it is, that we should surely leave the wilderness for the joys of home. It was so with Rutherford, who sweetly speaks and sings:

I've wrestled on toward heaven
'Gainst storm and wind and tide ;
Now, like a weary traveller,
That leaneth on his guide.
Amid the shades of evening,
While sinks life's lingering sand,
I hail the glory dawning
From Immanuel's land.

J. R.

The Sonship of Believers :

ITS PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

COL. BEYERS, GREYSTONES.

IN this world there are two families seen walking side by side, mingling in the general affairs of life, yet severed by the Cross of Christ. They are the "children of God" (1 John iii. 10) and the "children of the devil." This relation to God as His children is very blessed, yet how little is it really understood. Born of God (1 John i. 12) when His Son is received as Saviour, and given the Spirit of the Son (Gal. iv. 6) to dwell in them, making good in blessed experience the new relationship, it is their privilege to draw near to God, addressing Him as "Abba, Father," yet ever in reverence and godly fear. It is in this spirit of sonship that we worship, not afar off as those who were under law, but as brought nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. i. 31) and having access in the Spirit to the Father (Eph. ii. 18); free from law, yet not lawless, but enlawed to Christ whom we know as Lord. Sonship also brings an inheritance: "If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. viii. 24). In earthly families the elder son may inherit and claim his father's title and property, reserving it wholly to himself. The Son of God, as "Firstborn among many brethren," has all things given into His hand (John iii. 35). But He has made all His own, "joint-heirs" in the riches of His inheritance, for "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's" (1 Cor. iii. 23). Nothing can be closer, nothing greater, than to share with Christ in all the riches

of His inheritance. We share in His grace now; we shall share in His glory by and by. But privilege ever brings its responsibilities, and sonship entails upon all who share it, to live the life of the family to which they belong, and walk worthy of the Name they bear, among men of the world. "The children of God are manifest" (1 John iii. 10) in the lives they daily live. "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." The sons of God are to be "without rebuke" in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation among whom they "shine as luminaries in the world" (Phil. ii. 15). Such a testimony was Daniel's in the Persian Court, so that when his envious enemies sought to find cause against him, they found none. As sons of God, we are to display *impartiality*. This is one of the characteristics of our Father in heaven. He makes His sun to shine on all, He is no respecter of persons in the world, and He shows no partiality toward His own children. They are all loved with the same love, and watched over with the same care. And by acting graciously toward all our brethren, and forgivingly toward our enemies, we exhibit the character of our "Father who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 45, R.V.), and manifest that we are His sons. Children of God are not known by the world (1 John iii. 2) in their relation to God and heaven; it hates them as it hated their Lord (John xv. 18), because He testified that its works were evil (John vii. 7), and stood apart from its course and ways. And such will its attitude ever be, to those who seek to

order their lives by the Word of God, and keep themselves separate from the world in its follies, its politics, and its religion. The day will come for "the manifestation of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 19) in their dignity and glory before all creation. But this will only be, when the earth-rejected Son of God returns in power, to drive all usurpers from the scene, to deliver creation from its groan, and to subdue all things unto Himself. Meanwhile we are to take our place with Him "without the camp," and be content to fill the place of "strangers" here, where He had nothing but a cross and a grave. The tendency of the time is, for many children of God to seek places of "influence" in the world, conforming to its ways, and sharing in its religion, in order to benefit it. But the path of the child of God is to follow the footsteps of Christ.

Be Still, My Soul!

BE still, my soul! the Lord is on thy side,
Bear patiently the cross of grief and pain.
Leave to thy God to order and provide,

In every change He faithful will remain:
Be still, my soul! thy best, thy heavenly Friend,
Through thorny ways, leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake;
All now mysterious, shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds shall know
His voice, who ruled them when He dwelt below.

Be still, my soul: when dearest ones depart,
And all is darkened in this vale of tears,
Then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,
Who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.
Be still, my soul: the Lord will well repay
From His own fulness, all He takes away.

Sowing with Diverse Seeds.

THE Lord commanded his redeemed and separated people of Israel, dwelling in the land into which He had brought them: "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds; lest the fruit of thy seed which thou had sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled," or as it reads in the Revised Version, "lest the whole fruit be forfeited, the seed which thou hast sown and the increase" (Deut. xxii. 9). The sowing of seed is often emblematic of the preaching of the Word (Mark iv. 14). The seed to be sown is the Word of God (Luke viii. 11), and this the Spirit uses in begetting spiritual life in the believing sinner (1 Pet. i. 23). By the use of the unadulterated Word, the saved grow (1 Pet. ii. 2), and by means of its ministry, the churches are edified and increased (Acts xx. 32). But the enemy has his "divers seeds," and he ever seeks to corrupt and defile the vineyards of the Lord by getting his servants to sow them. In early times, he had those who "corrupted" the Word (2 Cor. ii. 17), as a huckster mixes the goods he sells, with false materials, for gain—and by this means "defiled" the sowing of the Lord's true husbandmen. In the Galatian churches, the "divers seeds" of Judaism did their evil work (Gal. iii. 1). The Colossian saints were warned to "beware" of philosophers and reasoners with their "vain deceits" (Col. ii. 8), whose teachings had as their object the leading of the saints back to the rudiments of the world and away from Christ.

"Divers seeds" are still sown plenti-

fully in what professes to be the vineyards of the Lord, and the corruptions and defilements which result from the growth of such sowings are found everywhere. For the devil can always find men to sow his "tares" or darnel, who never shewed much zeal in the sowing of the good seed of the Word of God. And any number of "teachers" and "gifted preachers" are on foot going their rounds to indoctrinate in their pet theories, those who have been reached as sinners with the Gospel, and gathered as saints through the energies of others. For it is very well known, that sowers of "divers seeds" do not go out into the great open fields of the world to do their devilish work, but prefer the easier soil upon which others have spent their labours. And so easily cheated are some, that they regard their "good words and fair speeches" (Rom. xvi. 18) as the Spirit's ministry, and give high place to those adventurers who sow discord, until they come out in their true colours, leaving a legacy of division and corruption behind them, which years may not rectify.

A favourite device of these sowers of divers seeds is, to speak scurrilously of those servants of Christ to whose labours they owe the opportunities they have for their nefarious work. They were "ignorant," or "narrow" and "out of date," these earlier preachers. The times are different, and we must "move with them." The old methods and the ancient message must be adapted or "harmonised" with the progress of the time. And the old time separation from the world and its way, is to give place to a bid for recognition in it, with a view to gain "influence" with it. We

know how readily the flesh assents to all this line of things, and how agreeable and acceptable to hearts which have departed from the living God, and to feet which have become weary of the path of rejection with Christ and of reproach for His Name, these reasonings and seductions are. But they are all "of man" and all opposed to God's Word. They do not edify, or strengthen the testimony of God's people. They cannot increase, but only rob assemblies of the saints, of real spiritual power. It is the business of those to whom God has given the spiritual care of His saints, and set as watchmen over His husbandry, to "root out" (Jer. i. 10) the growth of all these "divers seeds" wherever they are found, with a firm hand, and to make it impossible for such "evil workers" to gain access to places where they can carry on their unholy traffic as spoilers and corrupters of the truth of God, by bringing the prohibitions of the Word to bear on the consciences of the Lord's people, regarding their responsibility, in allowing such sowers of defiling seed, free access to the churches of the saints.

Hold Fast the Faithful Word.

HOLD fast the faithful Word of Truth !
 Thy Lifebuoy in the flood.
 What ! wilt thou loose thy hold, forsooth,
 Of hope so strong and good,
 Because the doubters doubt ? Nay, grip
 With tighter hold what some let slip.

Hold fast the faithful Word of Light !
 God's Lamp amid the gloom :
 The one love-beam to cheer the night,
 The darkness of death's tomb.
 Hold fast ! hold forth ! the Light divine,
 To show thy destined path and mine.

Waiting for the Son of God.

A BIBLE READING BY THOMAS NEWBERRY.

THE Thessalonian saints had been converted under Paul's ministry. They had been "*turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven*" (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). In the two Epistles Paul was commanded to write to them, there is the fullest and clearest systematic teaching given on the coming of the Lord, first, as it will affect the saints, next, as it will affect the world. It is always necessary to distinguish between these two spheres, and to mark the distinctions made by the Divine Spirit in the Word in regard to the coming of the Lord *for* His people and *with* them; His coming to the *air* and His revelation to the *earth*. These idolators were turned round about to serve the living God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. Every word here is of importance. "To wait" in the original, means to wait and go on waiting. It is an emphatic word, and signifies a waiting with expectancy until the Lord shall come. For He Himself is so waiting in heaven, and His people on earth are called to wait in fellowship with Him. It is in His character as "the Son from heaven" that we are waiting for Him. He will come as Judge and reign as King, but it is not in either of these characters that we are expecting Him now. We are not looking for Him to put down evil, to punish the ungodly, or to inaugurate His reign in power. These will all take place in their appointed time, but neither of them is our hope. Nor do we look for

Him as the Son of Man coming to earth, as in the day when His feet shall stand on the mount of Olives (Zech. xiv. 4). Our hope and expectation is the coming of the Son of God, risen from the dead and glorified in the heavens, coming back in person to receive His people unto Himself according to His own promise in John xiv. 3. In chap. iv., we have in detail the circumstances of His coming again: its manner and its mode is there described: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven"—not yet to earth or in judgment, but "with a shout," expressing the gladness of His heart, that the time of His expectation is fulfilled. And "with the voice of the archangel"—for the angels over which he rules, will share in the joy of that moment, and "the trump of God," which will summon all around the Lord Himself. First "the dead in Christ" of all ages—then the saints who "are alive and remain" in mortal bodies on earth, of whom Paul and the Thessalonian saints formed part in that time, as we do to-day, all will be changed in a moment and "caught up to meet the Lord in the air"—in that clear crystal **beyond** the clouds. The clouds will receive the saints as one of them received the Lord (Acts i. 9), but they will pass beyond them, into the immediate presence of the Lord, "without a cloud between." These clouds will then be between them and the world, shutting out the glory of that scene from the earth below. There, we shall "see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2), and as the melted wax receives the seal, so the whole company of the redeemed, who will be the first to gaze on the unveiled beauty of the Lord,

will immediately receive the impress of His likeness. "We shall be like Him." Do we realise how near we may be to this moment of inexpressible bliss? For between us and this glorious event we do not and dare not put anything longer than "a moment, the twinkling of an eye." Much remains to be fulfilled before the return of the Lord as Son of Man to this earth, to put down all alien rule, to establish His kingdom and to reign. But His coming to "the air" to receive His own from earth and to gather them unto Himself, waits for no event on earth, and is not dependent on the fulfilment of any prophecy. It is not for the fulfilment of any part of the prophetic Word that we wait, nor for the revelation of Antichrist, but for the fulfilment of the Lord's own Word "I come again" (John xiv. 3.).

Perhaps To-Day.

PERHAPS TO-DAY—the Lord will come,
To call the ransomed myriads home.
"Quickly I come"—His voice we hear,
His perfect love has cast out fear;
And faith each new-born morn can say:
Our Lord may come—perhaps to-day.

Perhaps to-day, will pass time's scene,
With all earth's mists that intervene;
The day will dawn, past be the night,
Faith will be changed to glorious sight,
The Morning Star with brightest ray,
Speaks to our hearts: Perhaps to-day.

Perhaps to-day, the Prince of Peace
Will bid His people's conflicts cease,
Their sighs will end, their tears depart,
Eternal peace will fill each heart,
Speak, lest we faint upon life's way:
"Behold I come"—perhaps to-day.

A. GARDNER.

The Church's Edification.

BY THE EDITOR.

THE object of ministry and all other exercises in the Christian assembly seems to be summed up in the words, "edification, exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv. 3), which, tersely stated, means to build up, to stir up, to bind up. To all who speak, the word is, "Seek that ye may excel unto the edifying of the church" (ver. 12). No ministry, no exercise has any real value, unless it has this element of edification in it. Hence the apostle's word to each and all, those that minister and those that give thanks is, "Let all things be done unto edifying" (ver. 26). The gift of prophecy is no longer with us, but the principles of this chapter abide as the Lord's own counsel regarding the order of His churches, to the end of their course on earth. No other pattern and no other order is according to God, however widely adopted or however long observed. We must go back to the ancient foundations and to the Divine pattern, as given in the Word, if we would prove the Lord's faithfulness in giving a spiritual and an edifying ministry in the midst of His assembled people. But no chapter in the Bible is so universally set aside as obsolete, and its principles no longer capable of being put into practice, as this. And yet the apostle claims for the order set forth in this chapter as being "the commandments of the Lord" (ver. 37), and their acknowledgment as such, as a proof of being "spiritual." If spirituality were to be tested according to this standard, there would be less to say about it

in certain circles than there generally is. And no "deepening of spiritual life" is worth the breath it takes to claim it, if these "commandments of the Lord" are neglected and man's traditions and rules, that render them void, put in their place.

The gifts given by the living Lord to men, as named in Eph. iv. 11-13, are said to be "for the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (R.V.). Not that the evangelist is to do all the preaching, the teacher all the teaching, and the pastor all the shepherding, holding any or all of these as his exclusive right, but using his gift to equip and furnish the whole rank and file so to speak of the saints, to share in the ministry, the work of service, each according to his measure, and in the sphere in which God has set him. This is so obviously the teaching of the passage, that the wonder is how any that claim to own the Scriptures as the Word of God can deny it. Even such a high placed ecclesiastic as Dr. Handley Moule, Bishop of Durham,* commenting on this passage, says, "These gifts were not to terminate in the ministers themselves, but altogether for the benefit of the church at large. And they were given for the church at large, on purpose that 'the ministry' might not absorb or monopolise ministration, but might promote its exercise through the whole body." But what then? If the "saints" are to be so equipped for ministry, where are they to exercise it? For unless the bishop's hands have been laid on the head of this graced and gifted saint, and he ad-

mitted to "holy orders," he is only a "layman," and has no right to take any part in "the ministry," no matter how full of the Spirit or furnished in the Word. If one man is appointed to pray for and preach to a silent congregation all the year round—and he may have neither grace or gift to do either—where and when are "the saints" to exercise their ministry? We do not claim that every man has the right to minister in the church, but we do claim that there ought to be sphere and opportunity for all whom God has called and the Lord has gifted for ministry, to exercise their gifts. And this is not found in any of the popular denominations or churches. In the wise and well chosen words of another,† "Let any servant of Christ, be he ever so honoured and godly and competent to minister, be found in any of the so-called churches, he is by human rule and arrangement prohibited from delivering a message from God. He is instructed in the Word of the Lord as a good steward, to minister according to the grace given to him, but there is no room for his ministry; man's will interdicts his fulfilling his responsibilities to the Lord. But I ask, is there such an order to be found in Scripture as this, in which there is no room for the exercise of these gifts which the Holy Spirit has bestowed? Is there such a functionary to be found in Scripture as the 'clergyman' or 'minister,' whose sole prerogative is to preside and minister in the assembly of saints? We would earnestly commend a prayerful and reverent search of the Word of God for the answer to this question.

* See *Ephesian Studies*, page 191.

† J. R. Caldwell in "The Charter of the Church," VOL. II.

Holy Living and Godliness.

AFTER describing the final dissolution of the present heavens and earth, and in view of a new heaven and a new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness" the apostle brings a present application of the power of these great facts home to the people of God in the weighty and solemn words—"Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness" (2 Pet. iii. 11, R.V.). "Holy living" as before God, in view of that Eternity upon which we are so soon to enter, is the only kind of life reckoned as of any value for the people of God. And "godliness," in all their dealings with and relations toward the world in whose midst they for the present are. These are the qualities on which heaven sets its value, and reckons them as of great price. Yet how rare they are, and how little valued, even among God's own people! "Gifts" are idolised, "ability" worshipped, and "success," as men reckon it, admired; but "holy living," separation in heart and life to God and from the world in all its forms and in its spirit, with a life all the week and in all the aspects of it governed by the will of God and guided by His Word, this is too often reckoned as too old-fashioned to be of any influence, and too austere to be very pleasant. But it is the only kind of life that pleases God, and that will be found to have any abiding results in that Eternity to which we hasten. "Holy living" of this sort is not a mere "Sunday religion," put on and laid aside like the clothes men wear on the

Lord's Day. It goes into the week, and into all the ramifications of life, in the home, on the farm, in the market, at the desk. "Holy living" forms the spirit we are of, the pursuits we follow, and the aims we keep before us; God is brought into, and "godliness" affects the words men utter, the business they do, the houses they furnish, and the company they keep. Where there is a truly sanctified and surrendered life, the savour of God and godliness will be found in all its arts. The power of such a life will be felt even where it is opposed and made light of. "*Herod feared John, because he was a holy man and a just*" (Mark vi. 20). The Shummanite sought the fellowship of Elisha, and made ready a prophet's chamber for him, because she perceived that he was "*an holy man of God*" (2 Kings ix. 8), for true godliness cannot exist without having its effects upon those who see it. This is the kind of life that tells, yet there is less of it than there "ought to be," as the apostle speaks. Plenty of talk, overmuch loud profession, dogmatism, and denunciation in superabundance, conceit of position, and pride of influence in full measure, but "holy living and godliness" in view of eternal issues, alas how little! Let us search ourselves in these things, beloved. Much now esteemed among men and sought after even among Christians, will look very small in the light of Eternity, but "godliness is profitable." Let us therefore cry to God for a real revival of it among us, and be ready to part with and cast from us all that hinders it, when God makes His Word speak to our consciences.—T. W. T.

Sharpening Our Tools.

BY THE LATE JOHN DICKIE.

"I NOTICED the other day," said the late John Dickie, "while I was walking along a back street of the town, a corkcutter at work in his shop. He cut a few pieces into the form he was shaping; and then turned to his sharpening stone to give a fresh edge to the knife he was using. I saw the necessity of that, for had he continued to use his tool in a blunt condition he would surely not only have had less and poorer work, but the tool itself would have suffered by being used in an unfit condition. The simple incident had its lesson to me. If I continue in service when out of spiritual condition, I am not a tool 'meet for the Master's use,' nor need I expect that He will use me while in that condition. It is necessary, when being used in the Lord's work, to have our seasons apart with Him for self-judgment and heart-searching, for sharpening and resetting, so that we may be ready for any work in which He may see fit to use us. Continual work is not possible to an edge tool. It has to be re-sharpened and kept in a condition fit for its owner's use. And so it must be with all who are to be used by the Lord in doing His work. It is written concerning the earliest of the Lord's servants, that they gave themselves to *prayer* and the *ministry* of the Word" (Acts vi. 4). Many have been cast aside as unfit for the Lord's use, because they continued in service when out of condition. They "ministered" when they should have been "in prayer." We must keep our

edge sharp, if we would be used of the Lord, and in order to do this often turn aside from the public to the private sphere, from speaking to men, to speak to God; from preaching to others, to examination of ourselves. This is an exercise needful to all who would maintain a right spiritual condition, but it is especially applicable to those who preach and teach. "Take heed unto *thyself* and to the *doctrine*" (1 Tim. iv. 16), is a word of great value to all who are actively engaged in the Lord's work. And it cannot be neglected, without loss of that spiritual condition and fitness, in which one has to be found, in order to be used as a tool in the hand of the Lord. If we would speak, to others of the Word of God, giving it out in ministry, we must be taking it in fresh from Him for our own soul's sustenance. And if we would be carried forth by Him for His work we need to be much alone with Him in private, to be sharpened and fitted for His use. The tendency of the time in which we live, is to have everything done in haste, to adopt the methods that bring the quickest returns, and to get everything done with as little labour as is possible. This will not do in the holy and honourable service of the Lord. Anything and anyhow, will not do for God. He must have thoroughness and reality in all who come near to Him, or go forth as His messengers and ambassadors among men.

The Fear of God.

Fear God, ye saints, and you will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you His service your delight,—
Your wants shall be His care.

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

"NO DIFFERENCE."

In the Guilt of Man toward God (Rom. iii. 22).
In the Grace of God toward Men (Rom. x. 12).
In the Gospel's Power to Save (Acts xv. 9).

FAITH'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CHRIST.

It Receives Him as God's Gift (John i. 12).
It Relies on Him as Saviour (2 Tim. i. 12).
It Renounces all for Him as Lord (Phil. iii. 8).

"BE IT KNOWN UNTO YOU."

The Preaching of Forgiveness (Acts xiii. 38).
The Proclamation of Salvation (Acts xxviii. 28).
The Healing Power of Christ's Name (Acts iv. 10).

CONCISE BIBLE STUDIES FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS.

GREAT DELIVERANCES.

From the Wrath to Come (1 Thess. i. 9).
From the Power of Darkness (Col. i. 13).
From the Present Evil World (Gal. i. 4).

"IN THE LORD."

Walking in the Lord (Col. ii. 6)—Our Path.
Working for the Lord (1 Cor. xvi. 10)—Our Service.
Waiting for the Lord (Luke xii. 36)—Our Hope.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Teachers of Household Baptism.

As a young believer, I learned from the Word of God that it was my privilege to be immersed in water, in confession of my identification with Christ in death and resurrection (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12). I have never doubted that this is the baptism of Scripture, and that all others are only man's tradition. In the assembly where I then was, this was plainly taught, and we had many precious seasons at the baptism of believers, sometimes in our hall, often in the river outside the town, where many heard the Gospel there proclaimed, and others who had been converted, but never heard the truth of baptism, learned and obeyed it. Now I am in an assembly where there are several leading brethren who hold and privately teach the baptism of households as such, composed of saved and unsaved. One at least has written a book defending this doctrine, and calling those who practice believer's baptism, "Baptists." To prevent what an elder brother calls "the appearance

of schism," not a word is ever said in public ministry on the subject, and there seems to be a tacit understanding that if the one party say nothing, neither will the other. The result is, there are those in the assembly who are not baptised, and know nothing at all of what the Word teaches about it. Would I be justified in these conditions, to read the Scriptures and testify what I believe to be the truth and the duty of believers, at a suitable time, making no reference to the household baptism theory, but simply letting the Word speak to the consciences of the saints who are there to hear it?

There is nothing in the Book of God but what is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction" (2 Tim. iii. 16) to the people of God. It goes ill with any company in which any part of it is suppressed, or by carnal compact disallowed or ignored. And any "unity" based on shutting out any part of God's truth is a sham. If you believe that God wants His Word on baptism to be known, and that you are capable of setting it forth in a wise and godly manner, do not allow the fear of results to hinder you. God's Word can never mar or hinder God's work; but the neglect of any truth He has given for our obedience in it, must and always does hinder spiritual progress. Those who hold and teach unscriptural doctrine—and we know of none who hold error who do not either publicly or privately, by word or pamphlet, spread it—do not usually like to have their teachings brought to the test of the written Word, for that Word has the power of conviction in it to all unbiased minds, and is the Divinely appointed instrument for the enlightenment of those that are untaught, and for the recovery of such as have been led astray from the truth. It has to be made known in all its plainness and fulness, even if its use in a godly manner, may bring forth opposition. Far better have the air cleared and room made for "the whole counsel of God" on baptism and everything else, than spiritual dearth and barrenness through trifling with what belongs to God, in order to pander to the tradition of men. And "household baptism" is nothing less than tradition, originated by an able and gifted man, whose following could not believe him liable to err, but accepted his dictum on baptism and other things, as if it were the voice of God. It was only after their own circle had vanished in multiplied divisions, that they sought, and in some cases, obtained access to assemblies of Christians where believers' baptism had always been taught as part

of the truth, and uniformly practised in its Scriptural form. But the mistake was made in allowing them to bring with them what had caused division among themselves, and especially in putting, or allowing some of the leaders among them forward as fit to instruct others, while they still held these schismatic doctrines. It is one thing to bear with ignorance and seek to help on in the Word those who are willing to learn, but quite another, to have men brought to and set up at Conferences and the like, as instructors of their fellows who love the truth that they repudiate and reject. The first step of faith's obedience, after conversion—namely, the believer's immersion in water—is not to be shelved, or allowed to pass to the level of "meats and drinks," to be received or rejected at one's pleasure; therefore, let it be rung out without fear, even should it give offence, or bring out opposition.

Answers to Correspondents.

YOUNG BELIEVER.—We would be chary in following one as a leader who has so often "changed his views" as the writer you name. "Meddle not with them that are given to change" (Prov. xxiv. 21), is wholesome counsel at all times. And when the "whirlabout" assumes the rôle of a religious teacher, he is apt to expect that his newest conclusions will be as thoughtlessly accepted by others as they have been quickly reached by himself. A "Berean" attitude in all such cases (see Acts xvii. 11) is the only safe one.

QUERIST.—Athanasius lived in the fourth century, and was in the hand of God the instrument used to defeat the Arian heresy which denied the Godhead of the Son, and had as its object the extinguishing of "the faith once delivered to the saints from the earth." He died in A.D. 373, after being hid from his persecutors for four years, in his father's tomb.

PASTOR.—You are quite right in your definition of pastoral work as distinguished from ministry. The teacher's sphere is mostly in public, the pastor's in private. The teacher gathers the flock together to feed them with the Word publicly, the shepherd goes out privately after the sickly and straying sheep to bind them up and bring them again (Ezek. xxxiv. 4). There is great need for exercise of the pastoral gift, and those who do, must learn to be content to await the Chief Shepherd's recompense (1 Pet. v. 3). For there is no requital for

and often very little recognition of such service here.

A. D. M.—If those who take the place of leaders in an assembly, frequent places of amusement, or appear publicly in the company of the ungodly, sharing their games, it is only to be expected that younger ones will go further along the same path. And those whose evil example they have followed, can have little moral or spiritual influence in warning them of, or in seeking to recover them from the paths in which they go astray. Hence the force of the apostle's word to all such, "Being ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. v. 3).

G. R., BANFFSHIRE.—If one who professes to be a Christian, and has a place in an assembly of God's people seeking to be guided by His Word, claims as his "liberty" to frequent public houses and other licensed premises in which drunkenness prevails, in quest of business, he should be faithfully warned of his danger, and instructed regarding the inconsistency of his ways. For it is clear that such a person has little sense of responsibility as to what is expected by the world from one who says he belongs to Christ, and evidently less exercise in what is due to the Lord. Gracious and faithful dealing will either recover him from the error of his way, or if he determines to cleave to it, cause him to withdraw to "his own company," which he evidently prefers to the fellowship of the godly.

W. M., Co. DOWN.—The Corinthians—who were mostly Paul's spiritual children (1 Cor. iv. 14, 15), and had been instructed in the truth as he had received it from the Lord (see 1 Cor. xi. 2; xiv. 37), were in danger of being led astray from the ways of the Word, under the influence of others who had come among them as "instructors in Christ." For while few, then or now, court the hardships of going into new fields with the Gospel, or at their own charges labouring in untilled soil, there is usually no lack of ready "instructors" who tread on each other's heels, to lead on in their own line of things, those converted by means of other men's labour and not infrequently—as in Paul's case—to undermine, if they can, the influence of those who had toiled for their salvation. And so easily caught are some, by the talk of a glib tongue and cheated by an assumed air of superior piety, that they allow themselves to forget the truths they once acknowledged, and become enamoured with the new teachings, however destitute they may be of Scriptural authority. But a little time wears their gilding off, and then things appear as they

are, not always however until irretrievable harm has been done, and irreparable division caused among those who were formerly of one mind "in the Lord." The duty of all who care for the flock is to give timely warning of the dangers of following upstart leaders and unstable teachers, whose past unsteady course might surely warn those who are in danger of being made a spoil of by them.

Home-Call of William Lindsay, Evangelist.

For over fifty years, the voice of William Lindsay, of Prestwick, was well known among assemblies of the Lord's people in the south-west of Scotland and far beyond, and from his lips the Gospel of the grace of God sounded forth on many a village street and in many an isolated and neglected hamlet. Converted in Renton, Dumbartonshire, in the Revival days of 1859, he began early to testify for Christ among his neighbours, and in the district around. Led on step by step, as all true servants are, he gave himself wholly to the preaching of the Gospel, looking directly to the Lord for guidance in his service and the supply of all his need, spiritual and temporal. The truths of assembling in the Lord's Name, the guidance of the Spirit in worship and ministry, the personal return of the Lord as the Christian's proper hope, and other truths not so generally known at that time in these parts among believers, were learned and valued, and made known by our brother from that time to the end of his ministry. Never robust in health, it was a wonder to many how he endured the continuous toil, very often entailing long journeys on foot, sometimes with not too comfortable lodgings, after crowded meetings in miners' houses and ill-ventilated halls. But he never murmured, but went on steadily and stedfastly in the work he believed the Lord had called him to. We first met our departed brother in Ayr, in the summer of 1874, in the midst of a season of ingathering, and shared his fellowship in the happy work of leading sin-stricken souls to the Saviour. And all along the years, without a break, it was our privilege to hold converse with him on things "touching the King," whose Name he honoured and on whose worth he delighted to speak. A visit to South Africa and a visit to America filled up part of his later years, and then signs of weakness, accompanied by pain, necessitated a serious operation last year by the hand of a skilled surgeon in Glasgow. He told us

in glowing words, how God brought him through all this, as a wonder to many. In the early part of the summer, he had his heart's desire granted, in being permitted, accompanied by his devoted wife, to visit a number of the places in which he had laboured in the years gone by, and then his strength gave out, and he came back to his home in Prestwick to lie down, worn and weak, to await the summons to his rest and home, which came on the morning of 29th July. He passed peacefully into the presence of the Lord whom he loved, having reached his 79th year.

Brief Notes from the Battle-fronts.

France.—"Our General is fully in sympathy with the Gospel preached in the hut in our camp, and has attended the meetings more than once." "There is a real interest in the Gospel where we are at present, and really awakened souls are dealt with each night at the close of the meeting."

Macedonia.—"In this land, where apostles lived and laboured, there is little trace of Christianity in its Scriptural simplicity, nor have I yet met a single native Christian. Light misused and grace despised brings darkness and blindness. We seek in our simple way to make known 'whose we are,' and to spread the Gospel to which we owe so much. There are a few who know the Lord among us, and we have happy and helpful times together over the Word of God."

Russia.—"It is difficult to get information regarding those known to us as Christians in parts of this sorely distressed great country. Some we believe are in prison, others in exile, and many in sore tribulation. Let us remember our fellow-believers in Russia before the throne of grace, and cry to God that the terrible experiences through which the country is passing, may be a means of opening it up in days to come to the Gospel, which few of its many millions have ever heard."

Gospel Literature is very much in demand by workers giving their service among the troops in France, and they have splendid opportunities of putting God's glad tidings into the hands of thousands of men going up to the battle fronts, many of whom will never return. Let those who remain at home remember these men, and take "shares" in the good investment of providing them with that which is of more value to them than a Victoria Cross.

At the Right Hand of God.

FOUR times in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Lord Jesus is presented to us as at the right hand of God. And it is the work of the Spirit in this Epistle, to occupy the hearts of the saints with this glorious Object. The language varies according to the view presented, but all conjoin to exalt His glorious Person and to tell out His infinite worth. First, in chapter i. 3, He is presented as *The Perfect Sacrifice*. The One who having "by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." His presence there, is the witness to His people, that their sins have been put away; all so completely purged to the Divine satisfaction, that the Sin-purger has been welcomed, yea, enthroned at the right hand of God. Had there been a single sin unpurged, He could not be there. He finished His work and "sat down." What a peace-giving sight! How can any believer doubt that his sins are gone, when by faith he sees the Sin-purger there? Rather let him sing—

"When Satan tempts me to despair,
And tells of evil yet within;
Upward I look and see Him there,
Who made an end of all my sin."

Next, He is seen in chapter x. 12, as *The Offerer*, who, having offered one Sacrifice for sins, the effects of which abide continually, "sat down on the right hand of God." The Offerer is accepted according to the value of His offering. And the sinner who believes is accepted, according to heaven's own estimate of that perfect Sacrifice offered by the Son of God.

Then in chapter viii. 1, we see Him "set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" as our *Great High Priest*, to sympathise to succour and to save His people as they journey, along through the wilderness, beset by many and mighty foes. To maintain His own in the condition of perfected worshippers within the vail, He makes continual intercession for them. With all the tenderness and sympathy of One who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. iv. 15)—the Perfect Man; with all the ability and strength of One able to deliver and to succour—the Mighty God, He **lives** to serve and to sustain His people. With "such an High Priest," who ever liveth to make intercession for them (Rom. viii. 34), the saints have nothing to fear, but everything to enjoy. And lastly, in chapter xii. 2, He is seen as our *Perfect Exemplar*, the Beginner and Completer of faith's rugged path, who trod it all with unflinching step, down to the shame and loss of the Cross. He met with no recompence for His faithfulness to God here, but He reaps His full reward up there, now "set down at the right hand of the throne of God." And all who now follow in His steps, are to run the race with endurance, "looking off unto Jesus." For as He by constant trust in God and unflinching obedience to Him has reached that throne, so surely shall all who follow in His steps however rough the road, reach that heavenly goal and share His glory there. For the enthroned Lord there is their Forerunner, and He has gone to "prepare a place" for them and will soon "receive" them to Himself. J. R.

Truth, Love, and Obedience.

A MEDITATION ON JOHN'S 2ND EPISTLE.

ALEX. MATTHEWS, TACOMA, U.S.A.

THESE form a threefold cord which cannot be broken, although some there are who would sever them. True love, is "love in the truth," and it is manifested by obedience to it. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John v. 4), and anything short of this is not and cannot be, "love in the truth" (ver. 1). This love is not mere natural affection: all have this in some degree. But the love which is "of God" (1 John iv. 7) is something that no unregenerate man possesses, nor can the unsaved produce it. It comes at the new birth, is inherent in the new life, and is of the Holy Ghost (Rom. v. 5). It always owns and honours God's truth: this is its character. Unless this is seen, even saints may be beguiled by its counterfeit. That "charity" which is reckoned so great a virtue, which ignores the claims of truth and is tolerant of anything, no matter how opposed to God's will and Word, is not the "love" of these Epistles. Those who claim the right to maintain what they call "diversity of judgment" concerning the commandments of the Lord, accepting whatever of them they think fit and ignoring the rest, are not of those who are by the apostle commended as having and manifesting that love which is "in the truth." Nor is it love to receive or bid Godspeed to any who have departed from or given up any part of the truth of God, and by his evil example led others to disregard it. "Whoso takes the lead (R.V.)

and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ"—which implies that he once knew and had it—is to be separated from, and receive no greeting as a servant of Christ. Is this too strict? Is it out of character with our broad-minded time? Perhaps. But it is the Divine test of love, and whatever comes short of it, is not "of God," but is man's imitation. And there is a contrast between the love which is "without dissimulation," which "abhors that which is evil" (Rom. xii. 8), and honours God by keeping His Word, and that fawning thing which leaves God and His truth out of count, if it can court favour with and receive praise from men, for liberality and large-heartedness. It is our privilege, as it is our honour, to prove our love to God, by owning the authority of His Holy Word, and rendering to its commandments that obedience which true love ever renders, whether it be in doing that which He had commanded, or in refusing that which He has forbidden, whether in cleaving to that which is good or in abhorring that which is evil, and keeping ourselves entirely apart from it. There are Divine truths in this brief Epistle, which, although little heard of in these days, are of immense importance to the people of God in these last days, and they should have the place in our personal meditation and in public ministry in the assemblies of God's saints for "instruction in righteousness," and preservation from the wiles of the adversary that they claim. For if "the truth" is not taught and loved, it will not be honoured in obedience among the saints of God, or its power enjoyed in their assemblings.

Through Death to Life.

EXPOSITORY NOTES ON I PET. iii. 20; iv. 6.

WM. HOSTE, B.A., LONDON.

THE mention of Noah and the Ark in I Pet. iii. 20, introduces baptism. God's deliverance is not by removing judgment from the sinner, nor the sinner from judgment; but by linking him with something or someone capable of enduring the judgment and emerging beyond it. The Flood was as real for Noah as for the rest of mankind; but he was inside that which could out-ride the storm. They were outside. Indeed, that which buried them, buoyed him up; the more it poured, the higher he rose. So at the Red Sea. Israel linked with Moses, traversed by Divine power, that which definitely swallowed up the Egyptians. "They sank like lead in the mighty waters." As soon expect lead to float, as the enemies of God to emerge alive from His judgment. God's judgment against sin is as real for the believer as for the world, but the former is linked by faith with Him who bore its full brunt, and passed through all its "waves and billows," on to the resurrection shore. The unbeliever will be cast into the lake of fire, whence there can be no resurrection.

Baptism is the antitype of Noah's deliverance, in that its waters symbolise the judgment of the Cross. In them, the believer is identified in figure with Christ in His death and burial, and then emerges with Him on to resurrection ground. All he was and had done as a child of Adam has been dealt with at the Cross, and is buried out of sight. Baptism, denotes no

mere *outward* cleansing, but a radical through and through change of relationship with God. It is this that gives the "answer of a good conscience" toward Him—every claim against the sinner being divinely met in death and resurrection. No believer doubts the reality of Christ's abandonment in his stead under the judgment of God; nor need he doubt the reality of his acceptance in Christ now, in the favour of God. The Cross is the measure of our guilt; the throne of our blessedness. That which gives value to the truth of baptism, is the resurrection, ascension, and session of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God, as Lord of all. Chapter iv. applies this truth practically.

The phrase, "suffer in the flesh," occurs twice in verse 1. Can this refer to some treatment of the evil principle within us, so as to make us cease from sin? It cannot, because it refers first to Christ, and He had no "flesh" in this sense. The phrase takes us back to chap. iii. 18. "Christ suffered once for sin . . . *being put to death in the flesh*"—His physical death on the Cross. The words at the close of the verse, must also refer to bodily death. It is physically impossible for a dead man to go on sinning. Let this thought be a weapon on another plane. Let this physical impossibility inculcate in you, who have judicially and figuratively shared in Christ's death unto sin, the moral impossibility of going on sinning. Actually, you are still alive, but in a fresh sense. The Cross has struck athwart your whole existence, and has made a deep moral break in every domain of it. A new principle governs you now—

no longer "the lusts of men," but the "will of God." This entails a visible transformation, and brings you under the judgment of your fellows, who will be judged in their turn by the Judge of quick and dead. These latter will not be judged as dead, but will be raised for judgment. In like manner the Gospel was not preached to them since, but before they died, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh (*i.e.*, according to their outward life), and live according to God in the Spirit (*i.e.*, in their inner being).

The Gospel sifts its hearers, exposing acceptors to the judgment of their fellow-men, and rejectors to the judgment of God. To the world, the believer is a strange being, to be criticised and condemned. To God he is alive in Christ, in the inner springs of his being. Neither estimate must be neglected. Let the world have no cause to blame us, and let us so walk as to "bring forth fruit to God."

The House of God,

WITH ITS WORSHIP AND SERVICE.

NOTES OF A BIBLE READING BY J. G. BELLETT.

IN ancient time, when the God of Israel had His dwelling in the midst of His people, first in a moving tabernacle in wilderness years, and later in a temple firmly built on Moriah, He gave minute instructions to His servants, Moses and David, as to the worship and service of that house. And these were to be observed with a jealous care. The tabernacle in the desert and the temple in the land,

were sanctified by the presence of Jehovah, and all in and about His dwelling-place was to be in character worthy of Him. In the days of the "House of God," as Heb. iii. 6 speaks, of the present time, He has not surely relaxed His jealousy that all may be in holiness and in character with His presence there. The *Worshippers* are to be true worshippers of the Father (John iv. 23), and the sacrifices they bring are to be "*Spiritual* sacrifices acceptable to God by Christ Jesus" (1 Pet. ii. 5). "Will worship" (Col. ii. 23) is to have no place there; all is to be under the authority of the Son who is "over" the house (Heb. iii.), and according to the Spirit, whose habitation (Eph. ii. 20) it is. Each *Servant* is to know his place and proper service, and to occupy himself for the honour of the common Lord of all, and for the edification and comfort of his fellow-guests of the household. And each is challenged to exercise the gifts he has received from the Lord, as immediately under His eye, seeking only to please Him, and not to become as a pleaser or the bondservant of men (1 Cor. vii. 23). And each is to cultivate with all diligence those moral qualities and cherish those Christian graces which are the adornment of all true ministry. For the possession of a gift or of knowledge is a danger, if it be not accompanied by grace, and exercised in the Spirit (2 Tim. i. 14). There were some in the church at Corinth who had gifts and knowledge and all utterance, but they lacked the grace and moral qualities that ought to characterise God's ministers in all their service in His house. They were carnal and not spiritual, for

they were lacking in grace and walking as men (chap. iii. 3). The apostle tells them in subsequent chapters that there must be spiritual condition and saintly character if their ministry is to be for the edification and blessing of others, and that there is to be saintly walk in order to have acceptable and holy service. Surely then, the first duty of all who are in and about the House of God as it now exists, is to honour Him who dwells therein, and to present themselves before the Lord in fitting moral and spiritual condition, to engage in whatever service He may appoint for them. For He is to be sanctified in all who come near to Him, and honoured in all who serve in His holy temple.

The Church's Edification.

SECOND PAPER. BY THE EDITOR.

THE unbiased reader of the fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, will readily see that the character of the assembling of Christians there described, is not a meeting for the preaching of the Gospel to the world, nor is it an assembling of Christians to hear the ministry of a teacher. Such meetings there are, but this is not one of them. It is the local assembly of believers, "the whole church come together (assembled together, R.V.) in one place," the church "in assembly," as 1 Cor. xi. 18 speaks—for mutual edification. And while in all such gatherings, those who are gifted as teachers (Eph. iv. 12) by the living Lord, and for a season "set" by God in that local church (1 Cor. xii. 28; Acts xiii. 1), will naturally take the lead in ministry (Acts

xi. 26), they are not to so monopolise such opportunities as to shut out the lesser gifts, which God may be raising up and developing in their midst. If the assembly is to have the benefit of these, there must be some form of assembling in every local church, where their ministry, even if but of a "five words," type, is available. The larger gatherings for ministry, called "Conferences," do not provide it. The Lord's Day morning gathering to shew forth the Lord's death, is not usually characterised by much of it, nor would it be in season there. A meeting distinctively for ministry of the Word might, under certain conditions, give some opportunity for brief words of exhortation, but we claim that in order to give place for this form of mutual edification, there ought to be at some convenient time, a stated assembling of the church. This was a distinguishing mark of Christians assembling in the Lord's way—in contrast to all denominationalism in the past—which is being lost in our time. It has been called "the open meeting"—open, not for any to do as they like, which would be confusion—but open to all whom the Lord fits, and the Spirit at that time enables and supplies, to lead the thanksgivings of the assembled believers in worship Godward, or to minister the Word from God manward, as given for that assembly as thus and then gathered. This "open meeting" doubtless affords opportunity for froward and restless men to exhibit themselves, and for this reason some who have been long accustomed to the "cut and dry" arrangements of the varied systems of the world's religion, fear it will not work

in practice. It certainly would not, but for the realised presence of the living Lord in the midst, to control, and the gracious aid of the Holy Ghost, the Divine Paraclete, the ever ready Helper and Strengtheners of the saints, who dwells in the church, to order and to guide its ministries. It was this "open meeting" that characterised the early churches, as 1 Cor. xiv. clearly tells us, and although disorders had appeared in its workings, yet there is no hint given that it should be abandoned for a humanly arranged and ordered "service," in which one or more were appointed to do everything.

When some ninety years ago, the first little company of believers as such, who had found their way back to God's Centre, began to assemble in the Name of the Lord Jesus, claiming His promise of Matt. xviii. 20, as their authority for so doing, the principle of the open meeting when thus assembled was firmly adhered to, as being the way of the Lord. One of the leaders* of this first little company in Dublin, has written on this subject, what was accepted and practiced in 1828, as follows:—"Everything connected with the open meeting calls for the greatest lowliness of mind. Mere sanctified ability and educational acquirement in a member of the body of Christ, will not suffice to edify His body. And that everybody with any experience knows. A man must have a gift, in order to be able to edify his fellow-members. And after that, he has to wait upon Christ, the Head of the body, His Lord, for guidance as to whether, when the members are come

together into one place, he is to move. If there were no gifts remaining, but the gift of exhortation, still the word would be: 'Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, but *exhorting one another*' (Heb. x. 24-25): Some have considered that the words translated, 'Let everything be done decently and in order,' might be more correctly translated, 'Let everything be done decently and according to arrangement.' Be it so, if any one desires it. But any arrangement that would nullify the arrangements of God, would certainly not deserve to be called an arrangement. It would be a *disarrangement*."

That this form of assembling for the united worship of God, for ministry of the Word, and mutual exhortation, needs a right spiritual condition, real acknowledgment of the Lord as present to rule, dependence on the Spirit to guide and enable, and subjection to one another, has been made plain by the failure manifested and the disorders produced when carnal and worldly men have tried to put it into practice. God's pattern needs God's power to give it effect in practice; man's arrangements can and do go on like clockwork, without it. And surely it is one of God's mercies to His people that it is so. For of what value to Him is form without power, or fine appearances without reality? This is why some who have left the simple pattern of the Word, and gone back in part or in whole to the world's way of a man elected ministry, seem to get better results in numbers and

*Lord Congleton.

apparent good order than others who, while clinging to the Divine pattern, lack the spiritual condition to carry it into practice. But this does not reflect on the wisdom of God in designing the pattern He has given in His Word, nor does it justify any measure of departure from it, for man's arrangements.

The Devil's Imitations

OF THE PRESENT WORK OF GOD.

WHEN I landed in Canada over thirty years ago, it was considered a very strange thing for any man to say he was saved and on the way to heaven. There were lots of religious folk who said they had "made a start," or "experienced religion," and hoped to be all right at last ; but a clear-ring testimony of being saved by grace and sure of heaven was the exception, even among those who had been born again. But God blessed His Word, and the Gospel in its simplicity and power was sounded forth from the Atlantic to the Pacific, bringing God's salvation and the knowledge of it to many. The devil opposed and the people fought against this work of God, but the power of the Holy Ghost triumphed, and in every place where the Word was preached, a people were saved and separated from the world, to own Jesus Christ as Lord, and to assemble in His Name alone, outside the world's religion, and fiercely opposed by its leaders and preachers. But the devil finds that opposition does not always pay, and then he turns to another favourite device of his—imitation. Sham revivals, producing

sham conversions by human means, became the popular thing ; singing and music took the place of preaching the truth that awakens sinners and brings them to "repentance toward God," and "decision cards," with names signed, instead of what Peter calls "precious faith," which deals directly with God and Christ, became the means of starting for heaven. All this was the devil's imitation of the work of God. And it is in this way he keeps his business up to date, by imitating whatever God is then working. Whatever God is doing, he first opposes it, and then he imitates it. And he can always get somebody to carry out his plans. Saddest of all, when he gets true children of God, who are away in heart from Christ, and have become so blinded by the dust of the world, that they see no difference between the real thing and the false, and are ever ready to help on the devil's imitation of what God is doing. There are plenty now who say they are saved, but their tongues are the only evidence of it. Their lives deny it. They are like the world in everything, save their profession. It is a solemn thing to help the adversary to mislead and deceive, and to be associated with those who carry on his deadly work. And there is plenty of it, ever increasing, as form takes the place of power, and as worldliness eats godliness out of the life. Nothing can keep a child of God right, but a walk with God in the ways of His Word, a heart for Christ and a place with Him in His rejection, with a clean cut and a life lived in separation from the world, alike in its follies and its false religion.

D. M.

A Call for Reconstruction.

A WORD much in evidence in these times, when all is in the melting pot, is Reconstruction. Politicians are planning for a reconstruction of national institutions, Labour leaders are pre-arranging for reconstruction in the relations of Capital and Labour, of employers and employees, and the Churches are loudly proclaiming the need for reconstruction and reorganisation in their inter-relations and arrangements. Few seem to see the deeper need of Regeneration. For of what use can Reconstruction be, if you have nothing better than the old materials to rebuild with, and nothing different from the former apparatus to work with? It pleases the great adversary, and suits his purpose well, to hear leaders in political and religious circles indulging in these day-dreams of "a better world" and "a purer Church," to emerge out of the chaos produced by the great war of nations, and he may well laugh at the success of his powers of deception upon them. For well he knows, that the future is to be worse than the past, and his power of deception still unbroken, until by the One mightier than he, will be deposed from his place. Among many who claim to be Christ's and to go by the Word of God in their personal life and conduct and in their church life and service, there is an outcry for changes, and a call for more up to date machinery to carry on what they reckon to be the Lord's work. And this is mostly, if not wholly, toward a more popular line of action, which its promoters think will give them more access to and greater

influence with the masses of mankind, who are unreached by the generally recognised methods and means used in the propagation of the Gospel. It seems to be almost lost sight of, that Revival and Restoration to God, to His Word and His way, are as truly a first necessity to saints and churches, as Repentance and Regeneration are to sinners, ere God can have materials with which to work for the better conditions so much sought after. For the world, there can be no Reconstruction of nations to deprive the devil of his rule, for he is the "prince" of the world, and will ere long produce his representative in the person of "the Antichrist," whom the whole world will hail with gladness as the one who promises to fulfil all their dreams of a paradise below. To the Christian, as to Churches composed of such, there can be no real reviving and refreshing, apart from genuine repentance toward God for departure in heart from Himself and from His Word, and too much affinity with and conformity to the world, and no godly progress and enlargement, apart from a humble but whole-hearted return to God's Word, and to all its claims and commands as due to Christ as the Lord above, and the Spirit as Paraclete within. When the hearts of God's people are exercised in these things, their spiritual condition raised, separation from the world expressed in a definite severance from its ways, and the plain path for a purchased and a pilgrim trodden without reserve, bearing "the reproach of Christ" without a fear, and walking with God in the footsteps of His Word, there will be no lack of blessing, or of Divine Power.

Holy Places and Man's Religion

THERE are no "holy places" on earth now. Once, Jerusalem was "the holy city" (Matt. iv. 3), and Zion, God's "holy mountain" (Joel iii. 47). Within the temple on Moriah were the "holy places made with hands," which were "figures of the true" (Heb. ix. 24). But all these have ceased or passed away. Even the "upper room" in which the first disciples met, in which the risen Lord appeared in their midst, and to which the Comforter came on the Pentecostal day, is never again named in the sacred narrative, nor are we told that the Christians continued to frequent in. Certainly it was held in no veneration as a holy place, although events of the greatest interest occurred there, which would ever be prominent in the minds of those who witnessed them. But there was no "dedication" of the place, no "memorials" of the events which happened there, preserved for veneration among the saints, to be passed on to coming generations. The Church of Rome, in common with Mohammedism, has her "sacred" shrines and holy places. And others following in her wake, have their "consecrated" buildings and "dedicated" places, as if one part of a ruined world were better than another. "The house of God" is the designation given to the stone and mortar building in which worship is performed, and it must not on this account be used for social purposes or the modern dance. But round the corner in "the hall" adjoining, theatricals, balls, and whist drives go on at pleasure, by the same

preachers and people who worship in the "consecrated" place. The sham of all this is apparent, and does much to fill the sceptic's quiver with arrows to shoot at "Christianity." But it is not Christianity according to God, only its counterfeit, a very poor replica of what was itself but a "shadow." And Protestants, whose forefathers would have denounced the thing as "idolatry," have their consecrated buildings and dedicated windows, and their ministers in their "sacred robes," as if timber, glass, and silk could become "sacred" in any sense recognised by God, or worthy of the veneration of His people. And concurrent with this sacerdotalism, a growing irreverence of things which God has declared to be "sacred," and for which He claims His people's loyal acceptance and loving obedience, is becoming all too common. "The Lord's Day"—the memorial of Christ's resurrection, the anniversary of the Spirit's descent, and the Divinely-appointed occasion for the assembling of the saints (Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xvi. 1), is used for pleasure and in secular pursuits, even by Christians. "The Sacred Scriptures" (2 Tim. iii. 15) are neglected by many, their Divine authority is questioned by men in high places, and their supreme authority is disregarded by most who claim to be leaders of the world's religion. Relic worship is pleasing to the carnal mind, and wherever a living Christ is lost to view, and the present ministry of the living and abiding Spirit in the church is disallowed and the truth rejected, there, idolatry of men and objects will find a place, and surely be held in high honour.

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

BRIEF OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

The Lord has them in Himself (John vi. 68).
The Preacher speaks them in his Message (Acts v. 20).
The Sinner receives them in Faith (Acts ii. 41).
The Spirit uses them in New Birth (1 Pet. i. 22, 23).

SINNERS SEEKING THE SAVIOUR.

A Religious Man to be Stripped (John iii. 1).
A Rich Man to be Exposed (Mark x. 13).
A Sinful Woman to be Forgiven (Luke vii. 37).
A Needy Woman to be Supplied (Matt. xv. 22).

THE ABUNDANCE OF GOD'S GRACE.

The Gospel of His Grace (Acts xx. 24)—In Salvation.
The Spirit of Grace (Acts xx. 32) for Sustenance.
The Throne of Grace (Heb. iv. 16)—For Supplication.
The Word of His Grace (Acts xx. 32)—For Strength.

CONCISE BIBLE STUDIES FOR CHRISTIANS.

THE BELIEVER'S POSITION, PATH, AND PROSPECT.

As set forth in Phil. chap. iii.

Found in Christ (ver. 9).
Fellowship with Christ (ver. 10).
Following on to know Christ (ver. 12).
Fashioned like Christ (ver. 21).

THE BELIEVER'S GOODLY PORTION.

In Ephesians i. 1-3.

"God hath blessed us"—Its Giver.
"With all Spiritual Blessings"—Its Character.
"In Heavenly Places"—Its Sphere.
"In Christ"—Its Security.

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Amalgamation with the World's Religion.

I am frequently asked to take part in evangelistic work conducted by and under the auspices of associations of all-sectarian character, in which all who bear the Christian name may be found, including some who have been expelled from Christian Assemblies for holding and teaching erroneous doctrine, and others whose ways are a practical denial of their Christianity. I have not hitherto seen it to be my place to comply with these invitations, on the ground that, if I came out from one sect in obedience to the Word of God, I cannot go in where all sects are allowed, and where their doctrines and divisions are recognised and accepted. But some of my brethren go, and they upbraid me for "narrowness" in so standing apart. Help from the Word on this would be valued.

We have numerous questions on this and correla-

tive subjects awaiting answers, which from lack of space can only be dealt with here in great brevity. And this more in the way of setting forth the Scripture principles that cover them, than in dealing with particular points of practice. For it is the Word of God that must guide and govern in all such matters, and only as it does, will there be certainty and godly decision as to the right path. Religious association with the world, in its so-called worship and Christian work, is distinctly forbidden to the children of God. It is an unequal yoke and an unholy alliance, into which none are to enter, and in which, when any discover themselves to be involved, they are commanded to "come out" (2 Cor. vi. 14-16). And if in obedience to God's Word you "come out" from one such association, it cannot be in obedience to that Word, that you return thither again, to one or many. The word to Jeremiah was, "Let them return unto thee, but return not to them" (Jer. xv. 19). And the same principle applies to-day. But it will be said there are Christians in these associations, and it is with them that you are asked to associate. Yes, but they are Christians in a wrong position, and to associate with them in it, is to confirm them in their wrong. "Let them return to thee"—to the path of obedience to God which they left, to have godly fellowship if they want it. "But return not thou to them," to join them in their self-chosen path of disobedience. Nothing better pleases one in a wrong path, than to see others alongside of him in it. And we know how the presence of one who had professedly separated from the world's religion, and then gone back into it again, if only for a visit, has hindered others who were in measure exercised about their position, from following what they saw of the truth. The fact that others, who once knew better, are there, does not make what is wrong right. Nor ought their upbraiding to deter you from "continuing steadfastly" in the path you believe to be of God. The cry of "narrowness" does not frighten the man who has the assurance that the way he is taking and the work he is doing have been given him by God, and that it is not men—not even his fellow-believers—but God, whom he is called to please and serve. The time is not far off, when there will be no half-measures or compromises on such matters, possible. It will either have to be the path of full and definite separation to God from false religion and sectarian divisions and amalgamations, or to be wholly in and of them. And the trend of things is entirely in this latter direction

already, as anybody may see, who watches where those who so come and go, usually end.

Answers to Correspondents.

READER.—Pass your query on to the author, who will no doubt "explain."

YOUNG CONVERT.—Your "quiet hour" alone with God and your Bible, is of inestimable value to your spiritual life, and no "service" should be allowed to interrupt or occupy it. God and His Word first; His work next.

G. N., WITHINGTON.—Get the interested Christians to a Bible reading in your home, or some other convenient place, where you will be able to go quietly over the Word of God together, and answer such questions as may be raised. A larger company, or a public gathering, does not meet the need so well.

H. G., SOUTH WALES.—The introduction of "an instrument" to your Gospel meetings, in face of the disapproval of some to whose counsel you have the responsibility to listen, may endanger, if it does not destroy, the "harmony" you have so long enjoyed. In our humble judgment, there is nothing gained either in "attraction" or "improved singing" by an organ. The best singing we ever heard, was by Christians full of joy in the Holy Ghost.

A. R., BERWICKSHIRE.—It is a pleasure to learn of God's people ready to meet around an open Bible and seek guidance in the way. We are sure you are on right lines to get it.

J. B., MICHIGAN.—The letter you send on "Conscription," from a Bible standpoint, is remarkable only in its evasions. It wholly ignores the Scriptures that cover the subject, and raises questions wholly irrelevant, to darken counsel without giving a single ray of light to guide an honest inquirer. One would suppose that God had left His people to grope their way in darkness, or to choose as they think fit, on this life and death matter. But has He?

ADELPHUS.—Your paper savours too much of politics and reviewing of events in the world, for our pages. We do not care to fill these pages with what can be read in any daily newspaper. Others giving themselves largely to this line of things, may insert your paper,

ARGUS.—As the Lord has given us in the Word definite instructions regarding the subjects, mode, and meaning of Christian Baptism, we cannot

consign it to the place you and those with you desire, not even to "gain fellowship." For we have proved that no "fellowship" that is built on compromise of God's truth is worthy of that name.

M. O., GLOS.—Providing you are willing to bear the "reproach of Christ," which a public testimony of the character you propose will surely bring, we would say—Go on, and God be with you in the work. That it is needed, few will question.

MAGISTRATE.—In your justification of the Christian occupying the place of a magistrate, you omit to quote the words of the Lord in Matt. xx. 25, in which a contrast is drawn between "the Gentiles" and those who are His. And the parable of Jotham (Judges ix. 7-13) tells what the elevation to worldly position and honour costs in spiritual loss to the Christian. Do you know many Christian mayors or magistrates who retain their spiritual freshness and maintain their separation from the world?

Answers to Special Questions.

Is there any record in the Word, of Congregational singing in connection with the preaching of the Gospel?

ANSWER A.—There is no record in the Word, of either congregational singing or prayer connected with the preaching of the Gospel, or in fact of Gospel meetings as we usually conduct them at all. "The eleven" stood with Peter, while he "lifted up his voice" in testimony (Acts ii. 14). The assembly of saints undoubtedly prayed (Acts iv. 31), the preachers "gave themselves" to "prayer" as well as to "ministry of the Word" (Acts vi. 4), and the saints are asked to pray for its preachers (Eph. vi. 19). But there is nothing to warrant a promiscuous congregation being asked to sing, what to most of them is an unknown experience or the declaration of a Gospel they have not received unto salvation.

R. N.

ANSWER B.—The idea of what is called a "Gospel Service" is not found in the Acts or the Epistles. And the less there is of it connected with the simple, unfettered preaching of the Gospel, the better. At Jerusalem (Acts ii. 14; iii. 12; iv. 42) the preaching was impromptu, as we say, without arrangement. At Cesarea, in Cornelius' home (Acts x. 33, 34), on Mar's Hill, and in Paul's hired house (Acts xxviii. 23), by arrangement, but there was nothing of the character of a modern "evangelistic service" in either. The present practice is like much else, borrowed in part from the sects,

and the Gospel would suffer no less, but gain much, if the preacher would go on with the delivery of his message, without "the congregation" having any part, save to listen to and receive it. J. G.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—While agreeing with the above, in their disallowance of anything approximating to a "Church Service" in connection with the declaration of the Gospel, and seeking to keep the great Evangel free from all "accompaniments" of music and such singing as detracts from its simplicity and substance, or is meant to attract the crowd, as if the Gospel had lost its power, we would name the following points of comparison and contrast for consideration. An evangelist, going singlehanded into a new field, with no helpers and himself no singer, would very likely "stand forth" and begin declaring his message without any preliminary of prayer or praise. But when a circle of fellow-helpers stand around, or if indoors—say in the hall in which the assembly of Christians gather for worship—it would be somewhat different. The testimony then and thus, would be that of the group of workers as "fellow-labourers" (Phil. iv. 3), or as an "echo" of the assembly's testimony (as in 1 Thess i. 8) in the Gospel. Their fellowship in the Gospel (Phil. i. 5) would therefore be more than that of mere hearers, and if the preacher knows his business, he will seek by every godly means to cherish and encourage it. "Praise is comely" (Psa. xxxi. 1) and in season "at all times" (Psa. xxxiv. 1). Prayer is to be unceasing (1 Thess. v. 17) and everywhere (1 Tim. ii. 8). A hymn of thanksgiving, a song of redemption from the Lord's people, with their united prayer and supplication for the Divine blessing on the Gospel to be preached, will surely be in season, and the preacher, if he knows anything of dependence on God, will welcome it. But there is no need for and little benefit from any prolonged "service," while there is, as we think, a positive hindrance in having either congregational or any other form of singing to the extent there generally is, connected with the preaching of the Gospel. Where the subject—"Jesus Christ and Him crucified"—is kept steadily before the speaker, and the object—"by all means to save some"—there will be little danger of allowing the Gospel testimony to degrade into a semi-musical service, where singers of questionable spirituality display their talent, and preachers of small calibre are very glad of any auxiliary to fill up the time. The preaching of Christ is the evangelist's mission, and it is such preaching that the Holy Spirit owns.

Notes from War Countries.

Belgium.—Little direct news is allowed to reach us of Christians in this distressed and desolated country, whose hour of deliverance from the oppressor's power is not now we hope, far off. In the midst of many trials, those known to us, go on cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart, ever grateful for the loving remembrances of fellow-saints afar and near, and their practical sympathy with them in the day of their distress.

Palestine.—The British occupation of Jaffa and Jerusalem has brought deliverance from cruel oppression, but the condition of most of the people is heartbreaking. Many have died of starvation, thousands are destitute, having lost relatives, home, and everything, wandering in terror from place to place in starvation, with little clothing. Relief is now reaching them, and some efforts are being made to spread the Gospel among them. "They shall prosper that love thee" (Psa. cxxii. 6).

France.—Most cheering reports come from workers among the troops, of their readiness to receive the printed message, and their willingness to be spoken to personally on eternal things. No doubt many who had the privilege of hearing the Gospel in the years of peace, are calling to mind what they then heard, and God is using it in salvation. But the devil is busy, at his old business of deception, and some of his most successful representatives are unconverted chaplains and parsons whose "German" theology is as deadly to the soul, as German "poison gas" is to the body.

Fallen Asleep.

George Birch, Bellshill, August 21, aged 69 years, for many years in the assembly there. **John Johnston**, Springburn, R.A.M.C., France, killed while bearing a wounded comrade to dressing station. **Capt. T. Allan Hogg**, second son of Mr. C. F. Hogg, London. Leaves young widow. **Joseph Stewart**, Eastpark assembly, Glasgow, in France, September 2. **Mrs. George H. Cook**, Sydney, N.S.W. (formerly of Govan), July 3, aged 55. **Donald Johnson**, Lake Shore, August 4, suddenly called, but has been ill from overwork in Government service for some months. His service took him to Ottawa, but he passed away from the old home at the Lake Shore, the scene of many happy gatherings of the Lord's people in years long gone by. **Mrs. Campbell**, Omagh, wife of Thomas Campbell, evangelist, Sept. 8. Leaves two young children, one an infant.

God Over All.

THERE is a God in heaven, "whose kingdom ruleth over all" (Psa. ciii. 19), who "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. i. 11). There is nothing beyond His power, or outwith the sphere of His control. A heathen king, in the day of his awakening to the presence and operations of the God of heaven in the affairs of his life and kingdom exclaimed, "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. iv. 35). It was a great lesson for the haughty Gentile ruler, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, to learn, through his humiliation to the level of the beasts of the field. And it is the lesson that emperors and kings and people are being taught in the happenings of the times in which we live. God had been disowned, discarded, and denied, in the world His hands have made. Gross atheism had settled on the nations. The Name of God was neither honoured nor invoked, but blasphemed. The claims of His throne were openly and flauntingly sneered at. Moral law as between man and man, and nation and nation, was relaxed. The claims of humanity were being treated as the claims of God had been. Man's "inhumanity to man," his proud will to rule, his aspirations to domination, his claims to do as he would, had reached their giddy height. God's solemn warnings and stern rebukes in the form of national judgments by earthquake, famine, plague, and pestilence,

were unheeded and unheard. Then the great world war came, and spread like wildfire throughout the nations, until one after another has fallen, or bled well-nigh to the death. Has God no voice in all this? "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 16)—not originating evil, but in retribution allowing it. Is He "silent," as some say, and "afar off" as others allege, allowing things to take their course? We do not believe He is either. God is over all. He is on the throne of the heavens overruling all, at the helm of affairs guiding all, for the outworking of His own purposes. And the sooner His people recognise and own it, the sooner will the hour of their deliverance come. There is a spirit of Rationalism abroad, regarding the part God is taking in the great crisis of nations. His Name is sparingly used and His might is tardily acknowledged, even among those who claim to be His children. Can it be, that God's hand in giving deliverance is stayed by the indifference and unbelief of His people? It has been so in the past. Israel forfeited the land, by unbelief in God's power (Deut. i. 13). Joash lost the victory over Syria, by limiting God (2 Kings xiii. 19). Christ's mighty works were few, because of the people's unbelief (Matt. xiii. 58). God honours faith. And wherever there is a lowly soul, in fellowship with God, practising the holy habit of drawing near to Him, in "full assurance of faith" (Heb. x. 22), dealing directly and definitely with the living God, in whose will to bless and power to deliver, there is implicit confidence, to that will man come the "secret of the Lord."

A New Song.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON PSALM CXLIV. 9-15.
BY WILLIAM MATTHEWS, CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U.S.

THIS is a "Psalm of David," and David means "the beloved." God's dear children are all "beloved" (1 John iii. 1, 2). And this is a "new song," founded on a new deliverance. Each new song celebrates some fresh Divine deliverance, and give praise for some new mercy from the hand of God. There are four subjects well worthy of notice in this song. They are salvation, separation, sanctification, and satisfaction.

Salvation is first. There can be no song apart from being saved. The unsaved may sing, but they sing lies to God, when they join in such hymns as—

"O happy day, that fixed my choice,
On Thee, my Saviour and my God."

Only the saved can "sing praises unto God." Let us keep this in mind, and warn the ungodly of it.

Next comes *Separation*. But all who profess to be saved, do not go on in the path of separation. Some would have an easier path. They want to come and go with the world. They fear the trials, and the cross of the path of separation. They begin well, like the Galatians, but after a while they turn aside to a more popular path. When Paul was a prisoner in Rome, "all forsook him," and he prays it may not be laid to their charge. Separation to God from the world, full and definite, is what God seeks, and nothing short of this pleases Him, for "the friendship of the world is enmity with God" (James iv. 4).

Sanctification is found in ver. 10. Deliverance from "strange children"—those who profess to be saved and can speak the language of Canaan, but have not been born again. They are to be found almost everywhere. "Their mouth speaketh vanity," they speak what they do not experience. Only in so far as the life bears witness to it, is any one to be regarded as a Christian. It is only as God's people keep in separation from these "strange children," that they make real progress in Divine life. Affinity with lifeless professors hinders spiritual growth. Those who go on with God, are as "plants grown up in their youth." Are our young brethren like that? As "corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace?" Are our sisters like that? The truth sanctifying and polishing off all forms of worldliness, in dress, in habits, in spirit? This is true sanctification, in "spirit, soul, and body" (1 Thess. v. 23).

Satisfaction is the result. The people of God, right with Him, are a satisfied people. "Garners full of all manner of store," plenty for all, and "no complaining in our streets." When Christians get away in heart from God, and out of fellowship with Christ, everything goes wrong. They find fault and set up all kinds of excuses for their own backsliding. May God help us to search our own hearts, to judge our own lives, and "rid and deliver" us from all that causes such "complaining" in our assemblies, making us truly happy in Himself and in the way of obedience to His Word. For "happy is that people whose God is the Lord" (ver. 15).

In the Presence of God.

THE Christian is to live in the presence of God. That presence is his home. In heaven hereafter surely, but more, it is his dwelling-place and walking sphere now. This is a truth little heard of in ministry, little known in power, and in practice among God's own people. Need we wonder at the frivolity, the selfishness, the worldliness, the fickle character of testimony among us, if the fact that we are living and walking before God is unknown or forgotten? "Walk before Me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. xvii. 2) was God's word to Abraham, and it was a walk there and thus which made the patriarch what he was. If we "walk as men" (1 Cor. iii. 4) away from God in the experience of the soul, and not as those "made nigh" (Eph. ii. 13), the walk will surely be unsteady, the testimony uneven, the bearing ever changing. If we walk before God in His light, with God in His counsel, the effect will be manifest in a godly life which will tell upon others. There is nothing equal to a walk in the presence of God for providing reality, for His "presence has a wondrous power."

You know what it is to be in the presence of a superior, one possessed of great power, great gifts, of strong personality, who withal is your friend, and has a genuine love toward you. You know how his presence while you are in it, controls and commands your confidence, and receives your homage. You own it and are affected by it. So it is with the saint in the realised presence of God, who walks and acts there day by day. There is no

other power like it for producing a holy life! Nothing equal to it for keeping the saint clean and separate from the ungodly. Let us then walk habitually before God. Let the practice of the "presence of God" be our business all the day, and everywhere. Whatever is contrary to God's presence, shun. What cannot be done there, do not at all. The books read, the letters written, the company kept, the conversation engaged in, will all be affected, and character given to them, by a daily walk in "the presence of God." "The upright shall dwell in Thy presence" (Psa. cxlx. 13), but no crooked ways, or unholy habits, can live therein, for that presence is holy, and its light is sanctifying and searching. And where the Divine presence is enjoyed in the soul, there is security, peace, and happiness. For do we not read, "His presence is salvation" (Psa. xlii. 5, marg.)? And here and now, "In Thy presence there is fulness of joy" (Psa. xvi. 11), and hereafter for ever in heaven, in all its blessedness. R. W.

"Still Upward"

Not turning back because the way
Looks difficult and steep;
Not pausing, lest the world's soft tones
Should lull the soul to sleep;
Not lured aside to tempting paths,
Where earth's gay blossoms grow,
But bravely, perseveringly,
"Still upward" we will go.

That we may breathe the air of heaven,
May gain a clearer view,
See things of God, in God's own light,
See earthly things more true:
We will not yield to weariness,
Nor linger down below,
But laying every weight aside,
"Still upward" we will go.

The Church's Infallible Guide.

THE teachings of the New Testament are the only infallible and abiding authority for a Christian church—for its constituency, worship, government, discipline. All churches contrary to the pattern therein contained, are mere human inventions, their worship superstition, their government usurpation. They have no claim to be regarded as God's churches, at all, even if those who compose them may be His born again children. For it is not the presence of Christians that make a church, but the presence of Christ in the place which is His, as given by God and owned by His people—His place as Centre (Matt. xviii. 20), to whom we gather, and as Lord (1 Cor. xii. 3, 28), under whose authority we act. To form a church according to one's own ideas, and order it according to our likes and dislikes, with the same ease as we choose a suit of clothes or rent a house, or employ a servant, is self-will and insubjection to God. For God has given the pattern of what His churches are to be for all time, in His Word, and nobody has the right to alter or interfere with it, either by taking from it, or adding to it. It is God's own plan, and He means it to be carried out in practice, in every particular. He is more particular as to this than most of us think, and the least departure from what He has commanded, may cost the man who mutilates the plan of the Divine Architect his place as a servant, and the people who allow it to be done their standing as a church or lightbearer in the place where they are.

For as God alone knows what fulfils His own requirements, and what best meets the varied needs of His people, it is sacrilege to alter it, as if man knew better than God. The sin of doing what God had *not* commanded (Lev. x. 1) met its judgment in a former age, and it does so still, although in other ways. For God is not less jealous of His honour now in time of grace, than He was in time of law, nor will He fail to mark His sore displeasure, sooner or later, toward those that set aside His Word, or alter it to suit their own caprice and pleasure. God graciously bears with ignorance, and gives blessing, leading into fuller light, where what is known of His will is honoured and obeyed. But He hates wilfulness, and where it is practiced in defiance of His Word known but set aside, Divine chastisement is sure to follow. He has given His Word, in which all that He sees needful for His people to know and practice is treasured, and it is their responsibility to learn and do His holy will in all things. It is a strange excuse that we hear from the lips of some: that because the Church has failed in her testimony, there is no possibility of recovery. We will advance this sort of argument in another plane, and see how it looks. Because Christians generally live far below *the* standard given in the Word, we need not try to live Christian lives; and because, for twelve hundred years at least, all who bore the Christian name, adhered to Roman Catholic doctrine and Church polity, *we* should do so still. Time works no change in the pattern God has given, and we have no right to alter it.

Dwelling Together in Unity.

A CONFERENCE ADDRESS. BY THE EDITOR.

THERE are few Christian graces held in higher honour in heaven, or more fervently commanded and commended in the Word, than that godly unity which was so richly manifested in the church which was at Jerusalem in the day of her earliest love, when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul" (Acts iv. 32). In the language of the Old Testament, the acceptability of this happy condition Godward, and its beneficence manward, are expressed in the familiar words—"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity. It is like the precious *ointment* upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard," and "As the *dew* of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore" (Psa. cxxxiii.). The fragrance of the holy ointment was all for God, in the sanctuary within. The refreshing dew was on the fields without, for man, and so the dwelling together in godly unity is "good," as viewed from heaven, and "pleasant" as enjoyed by saints on earth. In the language of the New Testament—where the *union* of saints is more vital in character and closer in realisation—the unity demanded and expected is surely to be fuller and richer. And so we find it expressed in such words as, "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

fulfil me my joy, that ye be *likeminded*, having the same love, being of *one accord*, of *one mind*" (Phil. ii. 1, 2). And again in 1 Cor. i. 10, "Now I beseech you brethren, by the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all *speak* the same thing, and that there be no divisions (schisms) among you, but that ye be *perfectly joined together* in the same mind, and in the same judgment." There is a unity which, being wholly the operation of God, is inalienable, and cannot be lost. But there is also that which we are told to "give all diligence to keep" (Eph. iv. 3), and which by any words and ways which are not according to God and His Word, we may hinder or mar, and thus lose the blessedness to ourselves, while we rob God of His portion, found in those who "seek to dwell together" in the unity of the Spirit, in the uniting bond of peace. There is perhaps nothing in which the consciences of Christians of our time generally are so little exercised, as the responsibility which attaches to each individual believer, each several member of the body of Christ, to contribute his and her part, toward the fulfilment of this Christian duty, so fully and fervently expressed in the New Testament Epistles, in such an abundant wealth of terms, comprising unity in many aspects, within and without, of heart and soul, of mind and judgment, in word and work, in life and testimony. But what the living Lord appreciates and commands, the adversary strains all his power to mar and hinder, and when this does not succeed, to counterfeit. And do we not know how well he has accomplished his evil purpose, when we hear Rome's proud

boast of Catholic unity, "the same in everything, everywhere, and always." But the boasted unity of Romanism and of every human system that follows in its wake, is not the unity of life and love, not being of one heart and one soul, but the uniformity of death, in which there is no seeking unto God and His Word together, but blind subjection to a man, who claims to be the one infallible representative of the Lord on earth, whose authority is Divine, whose word is the voice of God. But while there is not, and never will be again unity seen on this earth among God's people such as there was at the beginning, the commandments of the Lord relating to it abide, and they must not be regarded as obsolete or incapable of fulfilment. For whatever the Lord bids His people seek after and do, His grace and power waits to enable them to fulfil, whether it be in their individual or their collective lives. And if some have gone astray in attempting to construct a unity which God has not commanded and will not maintain, let not this cause any to lower the Divine standard, or render void the Divine commandment, as if no measure of godly fellowship among Christians or unity according to the truth were possible, in this day of broken bonds and scattered saints. To be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. i. 10) is as truly the will of the Lord and the mind of the Spirit, as when the words were written to the church of God at Corinth, eighteen centuries ago. And what the Word of the Lord commands, the saints are responsible to hear and heed, not to fritter away,

or tone down to suit their condition. To say "the church is in ruins" and its unity is gone, is an unworthy answer to the claims of the Lord. One might as well excuse his lack of spirituality by saying "the church is carnal," or his unhallowed association with the ungodly, by saying "the church is in the world, and the world in the church." But the man who has a conscience toward God and governed by His Word, will say, "I esteem *all* Thy precepts concerning *ALL* things to be right, and I *hate* every false way" (Psa. cxix. 128). And he who stands with the power of God's precepts in his soul, will never be found seeking to palliate or foster divisions among God's people. or substituting the principle, of "agreeing to differ" for being "*of one mind* in the Lord." The Word is very full of God's gracious provision for the maintenance of this holy and happy condition among the saints, and a little consideration of these may help us toward a deeper exercise of heart, and to a more diligent personal effort in doing the will of God in this matter. And first of all, we may assure ourselves that it comes not along the line of man's natural sagacity or arrangement, but in the soil of a right spiritual condition, and of a lowly mind, subject to the supreme authority of the Lord, as expressed in His Word, and by the grace of the Spirit working in the heart. All Sunderings of those whom God has united, and all divisions among those whom God would have to dwell in unity, arise from departures in heart from God, which lead on to insubjection to the authority of His Holy Word. (*To be continued.*)

Results of a True Ministry.

DR. J. B. MULOCK.

I AM sure there is blessing to an assembly when it is cast upon the Lord Himself. And one would desire to see and acknowledge the wise purpose of the Lord in the temporary absence (from sickness or other cause) of any gifted brother from the midst of his gathered saints, if this is to cast them more directly on Him. As Paul in effect says to the Philippians, "You have hitherto leaned on me, but now that I am cast into prison, you will have to bear trials and temptations alone, which I am assured you will do much better able to do than when I was present with you." I have learned, I trust, that the secret of all true ministry is to cast the saints from ourselves upon the living Lord, so that they can do without us when we go. For it is a lesson we all need to learn, that to lean directly on the Lord Himself, is the true way of real spiritual progress. And as for ourselves, who seek to minister to and guide the saints, may the religious activity and human arrangements, which practically shut out the Spirit of God in the originating and exercise of such ministry as He knows is seasonable to God's people, be kept out of our ministry, and the saints taught by our practice as well as our words, to lean upon God. May He more and more lead us to covet the human weakness which leaves room for the display of that Divine power which made Paul "triumph in every place," and left abiding witnesses wherever He preached, that his ministry was not in the wisdom or cleverness of men, but in "the

power of God." This is our greatest need in this day of many activities. And this sort of ministry is what God will use, to produce and maintain a true testimony for His Name, in the individual lives of His saints, and to sustain a clear and shining light and a godly testimony in the assemblies of His own.

The Soul's Resting Place.

Lines found under the pillow of a young Scottish girl who died in early years, evidently composed by her in view of the home-call for which she was joyfully waiting.

SHED not a tear for me,
And weep not that I die;
I am alone where I would be,
In perfect peace I lie:
A refuge I have found through grace,
And Jesus is my Resting-place.

The storms of life are o'er,
The conflict soon shall cease,
Doubts interpose no more—
Now I have perfect peace:
This refuge I have found through grace,
And Jesus is my Resting-place.

Nought else have I to plead,
No other claim to show,
In Christ is all my need,
His perfect peace I know.
That refuge I have found through grace,
And Jesus is my Resting-place.

No painful thoughts annoy,
Jesus is ever nigh;
No fears disturb my joy,
In perfect peace I die:
This refuge I have found through grace,
And Jesus is my Resting-place.

Shed not a tear for me,
Weep not that I am gone;
I am, where I would be,
Before my Father's throne:
This refuge I have found through grace,
And Jesus is my Resting-place.

The Return of the Backslider.

THERE is about as much ignorance among saints, as to the way in which a backslider is truly restored to God, as there is among the unconverted as to how a sinner is to be saved. For both there is a Divine way, and all apart from that way is vain; pious counterfeits, ending in sorrow. Unreal conversions, the result of shallow work and spurious profession, are common enough. And in times like ours, when human ingenuity is stretched to the utmost to make up for the lack of true spiritual power, there is a real danger of those who have not been "born again" being passed as converts into what profess to be "churches of the saints" (1 Cor. xiv. 33). There, they may remain for years as deadweights and hindrances, until some circumstance arises which sends them to their "own company"—back to the world of the ungodly. And the same light and unreal work is evident in dealing with backsliders. For not all are really restored in soul to God, who are brought again to the association of Christians. The chief cause of this is, that the roots of their backsliding are not dealt with, only the results. But God's way is to reach the causes of all departure from Him. The old story of Bunyan's Christian who, through sinful slumber, lost his roll, may instruct us in this. He had to retrace his weary steps over the whole ground he had travelled, in bitter self-reproach, until he reached the spot where his backsliding had begun. And there, while on his knees confessing his sin to God, he found his roll which had

been lost; there his soul was restored, his assurance renewed, and the joy of God's salvation again was his. There is no new way of restoration, any more than of salvation. Both are clearly set forth in God's Word. "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21), is God's way of salvation for the sinner. Self-judgment, confession of sin, and cleansing from all unrighteousness (1 John i. 9), is His way for the restoration of a backslidden and defiled saint. And no conversion or restoration can be real, or abiding, which lacks these conditions. This is a matter in which we need to be more deeply exercised before God than we generally are. It is common knowledge among us, that a large proportion of those who are professedly "restored" from various forms of evil practice, do not manifest either a humbler or a more godly spirit. Nor are they as we should surely expect, on their guard, especially against the sins that overcame them. Take the sins of strong drink and evil speaking—two forms of evil which account for much backsliding from and dishonour to the Lord's Name. Are those who profess to have been restored, after falling under the power of false teachings, wholly separate from, and abhorrent of them? They surely ought to be, and if it be otherwise, it is evidence of a very shallow restoration. All this clearly points to the need of a ministry which, while not being unduly severe, or over exacting, should have in view the depravity of the human heart, and the claims of a holy and a righteous God.

R. D.

The Waiting Saint.

IN one of Isaac Watt's most admirable "Lyrics," he pictures a waiting saint in an outworn body, on the borders of the homeland, like unto the inhabitant of a decayed and crumbling house, through which glimpses of the homeland are seen and draughts of his "native air" come to the waiting soul, through the chinks in that decaying earthly house. In the hope that it may prove a word of hope and cheer to all, especially to some aged, lone, and waiting soul, seeking to catch glimpses of the "fair inheritance" of saints, while hope "practises her wings" in view of an early homeward flight to that country we call our own, we give the "Lyric" here :—

My cheerful soul now all the day
In waiting posture sings,
Looks through the ruins of her clay
And practises her wings.

Faith almost changes into sight
While from afar she spies
Her fair inheritance in light,
Above created skies.

Had but her prison walls been strong,
As once they sure had been,
In darkness she had dwelt too long,
And less of glory seen.

But now the everlasting hills
Through every chink appear,
And something of the joy she feels
While yet a prisoner here.

Some rays of heaven break sweetly in
Through all the opening flaws,
Visions of endless bliss are seen,
And native air she draws.

It is this "native air" that gives soul health to the saints of God, and keeps

them apart from the muggy atmosphere of worldly company and the pestilential breath of fleshly religion. And it is these "visions of endless bliss," seen and enjoyed in the soul, that makes earth seem so poor and far away, and heaven so near and real. Would to God more of this heavenly air, and of these visions of glory were known among us, for they are the only power to uplift and keep aloft the souls of God's people living in the atmosphere of a godless and corrupting world. There is no other power will do it. It was this heavenly vision of things eternal made real to the soul, that kept the patriarchs of ancient days on pilgrimage to "the city which hath foundations," and caused them to reckon the things of the world at their proper value. It was these "rays of heaven" breaking in, as the poet speaks, that lifted them above, and kept them superior to, and separate from the scenes through which they passed. And so it was in yet fuller measure with the saints of New Testament times. They were "strangers" here, because the cords that bound them to earth, had been severed by the power of the Cross. And they were "pilgrims" heavenward, because of the attraction things above had for their souls. Are we? Am I? With all our "progress in doctrine," and glib talk about "higher life," most of us are miles behind the simple souls of earlier years, in our acquaintance with heaven. It is more of "a happy land, far, far away" than the dear home for which we sigh, and the "native land," whose pure and holy "air" we delight to breathe, while daily expecting the call to go hence.

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, ROMANS X. 15.

A PURCHASED Peace, by Christ's Blood (Col. i. 20).

A BEQUEATHED Peace, Christ's Gift (John xiv. 27).

AN ASSURED Peace, in God's Word (Rom. v. 1).

THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD.

Manifested in the Sinner's Salvation (Rom. i. 16).

Exercised in the Saint's Preservation (1 Pet. i. 5).

To be Displayed in his Glorification (Phil. iii. 21).

USES OF THE WORD OF GOD.

As a MIRROR to show the Sinner's State (Jas. i. 23).

As a HAMMER to break Hard Hearts (Jer. xxiii. 29).

As SEED to impart Divine Life (1 Pet. i. 23).

As WATER to cleanse the Ways (Eph. v. 26).

As a LIGHT to guide the Feet (Psa. cxix. 105).

CONCISE BIBLE SUBJECTS FOR STUDY.

CALLS FROM CHRIST.

"LOOK unto Me" (Isa. xlv. 22)—For Salvation.

"BELIEVE in Me" (John xiv. 1)—For Peace.

"CONFESS Me" (Matt. x. 52)—In Testimony.

"CALL upon Me" (Psa. l.)—In Trouble.

"FOLLOW Me" (Matt. xvi.)—In Obedience.

"ABIDE in Me." (John xv. 4)—For Fruitfulness.

"THE LORD KNOWETH."

Those that trust in Him (Nah. i. 7).

Them that are His (2 Tim. ii. 19).

His own sheep (John x. 14).

How to deliver the godly (2 Pet. ii. 9).

THREE GROANINGS

As expressed in Romans viii. 19-26.

Creation's Groan for Deliverance (ver. 22).

The Believer's Groan for Emancipation (ver. 23).

The Spirit's Groan in Sympathy (ver. 26).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

There are in the town where I live, three companies of the Lord's people, professedly assembling in His Name alone, outside of all denominations, yet apart from each other, having no inter-communion, because of minor differences on points, which in my judgment ought not to keep Christians in separate camps. This divided testimony is a decided hindrance to exercised believers in the town, seeking association with either of the companies, and a contradiction of the truth that we all profess, *i.e.* that we assemble only in the Lord's Name owning the supreme authority of His Word. Can you give any Scriptural help toward these conditions, and suggest any means to bring such divisions to an end?

There has been much to thank God for in the reuniting of fellow-believers who had been sundered by no personal act of theirs, but on account of divisions among their progenitors, before they were born. Personalities had more to do than principles with most of these, and time tells the folly of perpetuating what should never have been. Mutual confessions and restored confidences were really all that was required to bring together those who were apart from no other causes than these. But where there are divided counsels, and vital differences as to what constitutes an assembly of God's people and how it is ordered, the bringing together of such discordant elements would be no unity. For there can be no godly unity where there is vitally divergent and contradictory views among leaders and teachers, as to what God's assembly is. Better to have two companies in two buildings, than two opposing parties in one, with continual friction and little fellowship in either worship or work; or, what is little better, a truce, on the ground of compromise, that nothing is to be taught on subjects concerning which differences exist, such as baptism, whether of believers or households; the principle of church fellowship, with an open door to all professing believers, when and how they choose, or the assembly welcoming to its fellowship and company those who express their desire so to be, to "continue steadfastly in the doctrine, the fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts ii. 41, 42) in that assembly, "coming in and going out" (Acts ix. 28), not running hither and thither, as if associated with nothing, subject to no rule, and accountable to nobody. There are "differences" on points of procedure, and "divergencies" on matters concerning which there is no "direct commandment of the Lord," which may well be borne with, and further light sought from the Word to adjust, by both, but where the truth—which is our only warrant for meeting as we do and being where we are—is involved, there can be no compromise, not even to gain the outward semblance of a unity which is not there. But where the sin and shame of division is felt before God, and a mutual willingness expressed to come together to confer and submit differences to the arbitration of the Word, true and blessed reconciliation and restoration may be and has been accomplished. But it is a work that needs great grace and wisdom, and should not be hastened faster than the consciences of those concerned will travel. Your desire is entirely praiseworthy, and we wish you our hearty "Godspeed" in its outworking.

Answers to Correspondents.

COL. B.—The hymn, "This world is a wilderness wide," was written by the late J. N. Darby, and although not distinctively a worship hymn, is valued by all, and often sung in gatherings of Christians.

J. L., DUNSTABLE.—A Gospel Tea was one of the old-time methods of reaching the class you name, with the Gospel. And even in these "rationing" times, it could be used in a simple way at little cost.

RESH.—The history of Ahab in 2 Chronicles xviii. clearly shows, that the powers of evil can urge on a proud, ungodly man, in the course upon which his will is bent, and use men like Zedekiah, in whom the spirit of error in great fulness dwells, to deceive him. The rebukes administered to Ahab by Elijah, for his evil-doing, had been flouted, the truth from the lips of Micaiah rejected, and the witness smitten, Ahab became an easy prey to the devil's deception. But although disguised in the battle, the arrow of God's judgment found him, and retribution swift and awful, fell on the godless man. We do not doubt that a like scene is being enacted in our own time, and that retribution will follow resisted conscience and rejected warnings in those who have Ahab-like sold themselves (1 Kings xxi. 25) to do evil on a scale hitherto unknown in civilised lands.

H. M., LANARKSHIRE.—We do not know of any companies of Christians who have been led into a separate and a Scriptural position, through the ministry of men who go into unscriptural associations, compromising the truths they profess to hold and teach, in order to reach them. In the nature of things it could not be, for how can any man teach in power, what in practice he denies? Or, how can he lead others along a path, that he does not himself tread? What we do know and have seen as a result of some such doings is, that when it was found out by the leaders of the denomination or mission, that doctrines had been taught which they did not accept, and which their constitution did not allow, there was a "row," and the "proselytising" preacher was expelled in disgrace. A few, who had become partisans with THE MAN—rather than instructed in the Word and brought out by the power of the truth—followed him, either to form a new halfway house, or if not in sufficient numbers for that, to be identified in the same measure as their leader, with some assembly, to which they would probably be introduced in a slipshod manner by the man who gets the credit

for bringing them "out," while their accession is reported far and wide as an evidence of "good results" from such doings. We have heard of and seen, something of the ultimate results of preaching under the auspices of sectarian missions, none of which have the true ring of reality and few even of continuity. They usually go as they came, in self-will without principle, a testimony to nothing. It would be an entirely different matter, if a company of sincere but uninstructed Christians, desiring to *know* and *do* the Lord's will, invited one able to teach them, to give his help. Then he would go without compromise and would be free to lead them on in the truth, as they are able to learn and do it.

Notes from War Countries.

Belgium.—The distressed and downtrodden people of this war-swept land are now in hope of an early deliverance, and the Lord's people known to us among them, earnestly pray for its advent. But the last stages of the struggle may be the fiercest, and our prayerful and practical sympathies must still be exercised in their behalf.

Russia.—The chaos and slaughter throughout this vast country is beyond all description, and it is difficult to get any definite information respecting the groups of Christians who were wont to meet for mutual help in the things of God in pre-Revolution days. But we hope that out of the awful debacle and anarchy there may open up a highway for the messengers of God's Gospel in Russia, such as has not been known for many centuries, and that the millions who sit in darkness there may yet "see great light."

Italy.—Continued demands on the Lord's people for military service in this land have reduced the many small assemblies in numbers, and removed from their midst some of their active helpers. And in temporal things they need remembrance, for in a larger measure than in most European lands it is "the poor," so far as this world's things count, who in Italy gather in "the Name," and walk in the simplicity of the ways of the Word.

America.—An order from the President of the United States makes provision for Christians who, from "conscience toward God," cannot bear arms, being employed in non-combatant service, "without violation of the religious or other scruples by them in good faith maintained." Instructions are given as to responsibilities involved and godly counsel as to the deportment befitting the Christian

who accepts the provisions of this order, in a recently issued paper for private circulation by our brother in Christ, Philip Mauro. It is well worth perusal, by all concerned.

Fallen Asleep.

Thomas M'Laren, Glasgow—second son of the late Thomas M'Laren of happy memory, as a devoted helper in Missionary work—suddenly called, aged 57. In his earlier years "Tom" was an ardent Gospeller, and took part with some thirty young men of that time in giving summer holidays to work in the villages. **Andrew Stenhouse**, Bells-hill, October 8, aged 49, a valued helper in Sunday School and Bible Class work connected with the assembly there. **Robert Thomson**, Pittsburg, Pa., saved in Cowdenbeath, Fife, 29 years ago, and in Leven assembly prior to crossing the Atlantic, twelve years ago. **Mrs. Pearson Smith**, Broxburn, in Public Hall assembly, left a bright testimony. **Joseph Hill**, Donacloney, Lurgan, aged 92, in Christ 64 years. **Mrs. Hiddleston**, Dumfries, 28th September, for many years in the assembly there; she witnessed a good confession. **Mrs. M'Isaac**, Dunfermline, suddenly, on October 12, long associated with assemblies in Stirling and Dunfermline, "given to hospitality." **Hugh Fraser**, Glasgow, October 20, a helper for many years in Marble Hall and Abingdon Hall assemblies. **Agnes Gray**, Keppochhill Hall, Glasgow, aged 29, saved in early years. As we go to press news comes of the home-call of **Robert E. Sparkes**, Bath, one of the Editors of "Echoes of Service," for 24 years an active helper in missionary work in many lands. Formerly in Belfast and Holywood, Ireland, where he was highly esteemed for his work's sake.

About the Believer's Magazine for 1919.

For the convenience of our readers, we give, as in former years, a brief forecast of what we purpose, in the goodwill of the Lord, concerning the issue of **The Believer's Magazine** for the coming year. And first of it, it is becoming that we should raise our "Ebenezer" to the God of all grace, by whose favour we have been enabled to continue our monthly issues throughout a period of great stress and strain, and record our gratitude to all who have helped, in providing suitable ministry, giving valued hints and helps, sending words of counsel and cheer, and continuously introducing and com-

mending to friends and fellow-saints. Apart from this help, and the prayers of very many, which we are assured ascend continuously on our behalf, we could not have continued the twenty-eight years' issue of the Magazine, or borne the burden of work connected with its editorship, publication, and distribution, more especially throughout the present year.

Enormous increase in price of paper and cost of production makes it necessary, either to reduce its size or increase its price. Consultation with a wide circle of the Lord's servants, who know better than we do, the wishes of fellow-believers generally, who read it, gives the common answer—which accords with our own conviction—that the Magazine should be continued in its present size, with a full and increased flow of ministry to meet the special need of the time, and its price advanced during whatever period this may be necessary to **Twopence**. Believing this to be the course which will be most acceptable, we purpose to so arrange as from January, 1919.

We are happy to be able to announce that we have already in hands for the coming year, a full and fresh supply of sound and spiritual Expositions of the Word, pithy and practical papers on many themes of special interest from valued present day authors and writers, whose pens have long ministered to the flock of God, with promises of more from well known ministering brethren, of all which we hope to give fuller details in our next issue. Meanwhile, we shall be grateful if a brother in each assembly in the British Isles and the Colonies, will do us the special favour of mentioning the above change to fellow-saints, and at the same time, intimating to whom orders for the coming year should be given.

The Christian Worker will be enlarged, at the desire of its readers, to its original size, giving fuller space for Biblical Notes and Expository Outlines on the Fifty-two Weekly Studies of **The Christian Life from Start to Finish**, which is to form the subjects for consideration and meditation throughout the coming year, used by over 4000 members of the Bible Student's Class, by hundreds of assemblies as the subject of their Weekly Bible Readings, in Young Believers' Classes, and for personal study and private meditation by lovers of the Word the wide world over, and its price will be **One Penny**. Specimen Copies of either or both, with Bill of Contents for 1919, will be cheerfully sent to any who wish to introduce and commend them in their Assembly at the year-end.

A Divine Deliverance.

THE great European War, which for over four years has caused blood and tears to flow in rivers, has come to a sudden end. We believe this great deliverance is from the hand of God. Many instrumentalities may have been used, but the manner and magnitude of the end, mark it as the handiwork of God, who is "Governor among the nations." And the hand of Divine power has been exercised in answer to the fervent prayers of the children of God throughout the wide world, not in one nation, but in all. These we believe to be the cause of the greatest event of modern times, before which, scepticism in the existence and power of a present living God, stands in silent awe, with its hand upon its mouth. And the acknowledgment of God's hand in the overthrow of wrong, and the judgment of evildoers has been world-wide. Never in the history of the human race has there been such a common acknowledgment of "Almighty God"—the name by which the world knows and speaks of Him—as in the days just gone by. Kings and statesmen, nobles and warriors, merchants and day labourers, have assembled together to "give thanks to God" and acknowledge His mercy in the cessation of hostilities and the deliverance of millions of mankind from the awful horrors of war. True, much of it may have been formal and in word only, for the unregenerate cannot render spiritual worship, or offer that "sacrifice of praise" such as God seeks of His own. But a national and sincere ascription to God of

the honour due unto His Name, is to be regarded with gratitude, and is a pleasing contrast to that pride and vainglory which boasts of armies and fleets and men of war, without a bare mention of the Divine Name, or a single acknowledgment of the Divine hand in this great event. Let those who know the God of might as Father, render unto Him the thanksgiving that is His due, and follow up that with that thanksgiving, which gives evidence of its depth and reality.

A Review of the outstanding facts of these four years of conflict and agony among the nations, and of faith's trial and endurance to the people of God, will surely be in season at this time of deliverance, and its lessons cannot fail to be of abiding profit to all who lay them to heart. That the origin of this awful conflict was from the great adversary of mankind, we have never for a moment questioned. It bore his mark and breathed his spirit, from the beginning. The instruments whom he found ready to carry out his plans were men of pride, dreaming of world conquest to exalt themselves. They had cast off all fear of God, and ceased to regard the claims of His Word. Long before the first clash of arms in 1914, Germany had become Rationalistic. Her Professors had denied the authority of the Bible. Her pundits had taught scepticism to three generations. Her statesmen were militarists, watching for an excuse for war. Her people silently or appreciatively, acquiesced. Under the flimsy profession of patriotism for "the Fatherland," they sought by craft and intrigue to force what they called their "Kultur"

—which was simply their domination—on mankind. Their cunning and bombastic Kaiser, well served their purpose to voice their sentiments and work out their plans. But an insulted God was looking on. He does not always arrest evil at its beginnings. He allows vain and lawless men to build their “tower” (Gen. xi. 4) and “make for themselves a name.” Then He goes “down to see,” and swift judgment falls on the builders and their work. Never since the day of Nebuchadnezzar of Chaldea, when he was driven from his royal throne, to company with the beasts of the field, has there been such a casting down of pride and retribution for wrong, as there is before the eyes of the whole world to-day, in crownless emperors, throneless kings, exiled from their royal palaces, fleeing for their lives, seeking shelter and protection in other countries, the huge armies in which they gloried being vanquished and disarmed, their fleets, which were to command the seas, surrendered and dismantled. “It is the Lord,” long silent, never indifferent, repeating in a voice that none need mistake, the ancient law of human life: “Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap” (Gal. vi. 7). “Vengeance belongeth unto Me, I will recompense, saith the Lord” (Heb. x. 36). For although the final judgment of men’s deeds awaits the judgment day (Rev. xx. 12), and their punishment follows after (2 Pet. ii. 9), that retribution which comes from God upon wrongdoing toward others, often comes upon the evildoer, whether saint or sinner, here and now.

The Christian and Politics.

CERTAIN relation of the Christian to the world, are apt to be confused, and his conduct relating to them disfigured, by failing to remember that the Word of God alone is his guide, and the Spirit of God his teacher in all that concerns his life and testimony here. He is not to have his mind formed by newspaper appeals to patriotism, nor his actions governed by what is done by others. As an individual, his obedience is due to God as his Father, and to Christ as his Lord alone. And there is light given and guidance provided in the Word for every department and sphere of life. God has not left His people to grope their way in darkness, or to be dependent on the varying and conflicting counsels of men, as to what He would have them do and not do, while here in the world. In respect of the Christian’s relation to the Government under which he lives, the commandments of the Lord are full and plain. He is to be “subject” to the higher powers, to yield obedience to their laws, to pay “tax” and “custom” enacted by them (Rom. xiii. 1), to pray for them (1 Tim. ii. 1-3), and not incur their judgment by evildoing, but to have their praise in welldoing. But there is not a word said about his taking any part in their creation or election, in other words, there is neither commandment nor precedent for Christians electing magistrates, or voting for Members of Parliament. They are not called to take any part in creating a Government, but only to be in subjection to it. “The powers that be, are ordained

of God," but He has nowhere instructed His own in the world, to use their energies in their ordination. There is light to guide the Christian in all earthly relations as husband, wife, father, child, master, servant; but not a ray as politician. We know the arguments used to incite God's people to vote for this and that representative in Parliament. There are evils to be dealt with, and legislation for reforms to be enacted, and the argument is, that Christians should use their votes and exert their influence in sending just men to Parliament, to make good laws and repress evils. But the Christian is not a world ruler, nor is he a world reformer. There were many unjust laws and evil practices in the Lord's time, but He did nothing to overturn the government that made them, or to remove the men that enforced them. The Lord was not a politician. His earlier followers took no place as legislators, they exercised no powers in electing rulers. They claimed no rights, save liberty to serve their Lord and do His work on earth, and pass through it as "strangers" here. Recent extension of the franchise to thousands in Great Britain, and the inclusion of many more thousands of women as voters, gives the approaching General Election, a wide-spread interest to many not before called to face the question, or share in the nation's politics. It is well to have the counsel of God on this matter, to be assured of what the Word has to say about it, and to do what the Lord has commanded. There will be great pressure put on the electorate, and many influences brought into use, to get Christians to take part in

the work of creating a Parliament to legislate for conditions arising out of the war, and deal with many a phase of human life of special interest to politicians. This will prove a special snare to Christians becoming involved in politics, in which they will be brought into alliance and common cause with the world of the ungodly, and exposed to every phase of its corruption. Christian men are called to higher service than voting for members of Parliament and sharing in political agitations—to be Christ's ambassadors making known His Gospel, His witnesses declaring His truth (Acts i. 8), His light-bearers displaying His virtues (Phil. ii. 12). And the Christian woman's sphere is home (Titus ii. 4-6). Her work is in the domestic circle (1 Tim. v. 10), her place of influence in her family (Prov. xxxi. 10-29)—not in the arena of politics, nor in the polling booths in a General Election. Let the people of God take this matter to heart and give it their consideration in the light of God's presence, and over His Holy Word.

Casting our Care upon God.

THE burden of sin, when it is felt by the sinner, brings its sorrow and keeps the eyes awake by night. But when the awakened sinner looks to Christ he is "lightened" (Psa. xxxiv. 5), and then there is peace. But many a saint carries his burden of care, not fearing as to his salvation, but his circumstances. Will the enemy succeed in his efforts to cast him down? Is the journey too great, the burden too heavy for him to bear? "Cast thy burden on the Lord."

The Flight of Time.

T. D. W. MUIR, DETROIT.

THERE are some periodic occasions and seasons which remind us of the rapid flight of time,—the beginning and the end of the year being of such a character. It seems but a little while since we were getting our pens accustomed to write 1918, and now in another month, we shall begin all over again, to adjust ourselves to a New Year, and a new date.

Now, we are sure our God would not have us pass by such seasons lightly, but would rather have us pause, and consider the lessons He would teach us as we go along. Looking back, we have a record of God's unchanging faithfulness and grace. Faithfulness, amid unfaithfulness on our part, though He ever gave us such reason and such encouragement to be faithful to Him. And grace which bore with us, and continued to bless us, even though we might well have expected His heavy hand in judgment.

TRIALS THAT TESTED US.

We have had our trials of various kinds during the past year. Some of them we can trace to our own folly, some to the folly, it may be, of others. Yet, in them all, we can see the wise hand of our God, doing that which was best for us. We did not understand the "why" of them at the time, and maybe we are still at a loss to know why, but we are assured that

"He knows and loves and cares,—
Nothing this truth can dim :
He gives His very best to those
Who leave the choice to Him !"

In other words, "We know that all things (whether sad or joyful) work together for

good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. viii. 29). So there we can rest knowing that "sometime, we'll understand." Till then, in His hand—all is well !

But, the trials of the way have been more than counter-balanced by the mercies we have known, whether they be of a temporal or a spiritual character. Even in scenes of our deepest sorrow, God has come near to us, in the midst of it all, and calmed our troubled spirits, by a word from His own Book, or a sense of His presence with us in it all.

"With mercy and with judgment
Our web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lustered with His love.
We'll bless the Hand that guided,
We'll bless the heart that planned,
When throned where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land."

And so, thank God, each passing year, is bringing the child of God nearer and nearer to seeing His own face, and enjoying His own presence for ever.

THE COMING DAY.

"The night is far spent, and the day is at hand" (Rom. xiii. 12). The "night" of His absence is drawing near to a close,—the "day" of our espousals will soon be ushered in,—for He is coming !

In view of this, what manner of persons ought we to be ? At one time, it may be, His coming was a great reality to us,—now perhaps it is only a doctrine. We "looked" anxiously for Him and perchance now we are simply "pre-millennialists ;" able to contend for the Scriptural details of His second coming, yet living as though there lay a millennium between.

Dwelling Together in Unity.

A CONFERENCE ADDRESS. PART II.

BY THE EDITOR.

THOSE who are to "dwell together in unity," are "brethren"—children of one family. They have a common life. "One spirit"—the Spirit of the Son (Gal. iv. 4)—indwells them. They have "the same love," and are to "love as brethren" (1 Pet. iii. 8). Where this is lacking in exercise, unity is impossible. Where the world and the church, the saved and the unsaved congregate together, there may be outward uniformity, but there can be no godly unity. Life and death do not cohere. Light and darkness can have no fellowship (2 Cor. vi. 14). This explains the lack of unity so often complained of. The ungodly "creep in unawares," and the effects of their presence comes to be felt as a dead weight. A purging is needed. Even in circles where all "profess," all do not possess the life of God. It is humbling to own it, but the thing is there, whether recognised or denied.

It needs to be remembered that true Scripture unity is not uniformity. There will always be diversity in the family of God. But different degrees of growth do not mar Divine unity. The bud, the flower, and the fruit are each beautiful in their season. The babe is not expected to have the knowledge or grace of the young man (1 John ii. 13-16). Yet they "dwell together," in the same household. A new recruit has not the wisdom or ability of his officer, yet all keep rank and go forward together on the march. Ignorance need not mar godly unity, where it is not wilful, but as the apostle instructs, "if any be

ignorance let him *be ignorant*" (1 Cor. xiv. 38), that is, let him take and keep the place which to the ignorant belongs, and not assume the role of a teacher or leader. A man ignorant of nautical laws may be borne with on board a ship, but he would be quite out of place at the helm. So in the assembly of God. There are lambs to be tended, and young ones to be taught. There are "the weak" to be supported (1 Thess. v. 14), and the wilful to be rebuked and silenced (Tit. i. 10-13), but the unity is not marred or broken thereby. The spices of which the "precious ointment" was composed, were varied—the myrrh, the calamus, the cassia were all there—some bitter, some sweet (Exod. xxx. 23-25). But all were mingled in the same holy oil, to give that perfect fragrance of which there was to be no counterfeit made. The graces of the saints wrought by the Spirit while they walk with God and with each other, yield all that is needed in loving service and godly care, so that there is no room for murmuring or complaining. And the oral ministry under the guidance of the self-same Spirit will leave no lack unsupplied, and no truth untaught. All will be in proper measure, to build up Christian character, and to maintain spiritual fellowship among the saints of God. Would that it always were so! That it ought so to be none, who reverence God's Word will deny. That it may be, none who believe in the all-sufficiency of His grace can doubt. The responsibility lies with us, and it must not be shirked or put upon others. It belongs to all who are Christ's, to do their part, and all can do something.

But there are dangers here, and the inspired penmen instruct and warn us concerning them—dangers to that spirit of brotherly love which ever ought to be found among brethren in Christ, and to that godly unity which they are called upon in the Word to maintain. There are some who “sow discord among brethren,” “tattlers” and “busybodies.” And this is a thing that “the Lord hates” (Prov. vi. 19). These must be silenced, or something better given them to do. There are others who “cause divisions” (Rom. xvi. 17). They are to be avoided, their teachings refused, their company not sought after. There are men who speak “perverted things” to “draw away disciples” after themselves (Acts xx. 30), to form cliques—“party men,” as the word in Titus iii. 10, is—who are to be admonished with a view to their recovery, but if unrepentant, “refused.” For all “diverse and strange doctrines,” however harmless or unimportant they may appear, have in them the quality of disintegration, and when once they find an entrance, work like the dry rot and the cancer, under the surface for a time, but soon openly in God-dishonouring division. May the living Lord, whose we are, and to whom each must soon give account of his stewardship, give unto each and all, a deep and holy sense of the responsibility which has been laid upon us, to “give all diligence” in seeking as much as in us is, through grace, to maintain and cherish this “good” and “pleasant” unity which is in the estimation of God as a holy fragrance, and among saints as a refreshing dew from heaven.

“Able Ministers.”

A STUDY IN 2 COR., Chap. iii. 6.

W. RODGERS, OMAGH.

THE Second Epistle to the Corinthians is to a large extent occupied with Gospel ministry, and we find in it some beautiful illustrations of the preacher and his work. Thus, in chap. ii. 14, R.V., there is a picture of a triumphal march, in which the preacher himself is exhibited as a trophy—a conquered rebel, and a freed captive at the same time; and in connection therewith, a sweet savour of Christ ascends to God. In chap. iii. 18, we have a mirror in which is displayed the glory of the Lord. In chap. iv. 4-7, it is a light above the brightness of the sun, and the preacher an earthen vessel from which the light shines forth. In chap. v. 20, we have an ambassage to enemies, the preacher being the ambassador. In chap. vi. 1 God joins Himself with His servants as His fellow-workmen.

Running through all these passages, as well as throughout the rest of the Epistle, is the thought of the effect which this ministry has upon the character of the one who exercises it, and also upon those who come under its power. The latter are called in chap. iii. 3, “The Epistle of Christ,” in chap. v. 17, “A New Creation,” while in chap. viii. 3, some are set forth as impelled by the grace they had received to go even “beyond their power” in service to Christ, and the saints.

As to the preacher, it is made plain many times over, that if he is declaring the Gospel in sincerity at all, his own personal character will reflect the character of the

message he bears, and will become more and more conformed to it. Thus, having asked in chap. i. 17, in connection with this unfulfilled purpose to visit them, "Did I use lightness?" the apostle's strange reply is, "There was no fickleness about the Gospel message I brought you at the first" (ver. 19); and he implies that he felt the weight of this message too much, to show fickleness himself. Again, in chap. iii. 18, there is the statement, "We are changed into the same image;" and in chap. iv. 1, 2, "Seeing we have this ministry . . . we faint not, but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by MANIFESTATION of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Still more strongly does the apostle express himself in chap. vi. 3, a verse which should be engraved on the heart of every servant of God, "Giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, THAT THE MINISTRY BE NOT BLAMED."

More particularly in the latter verses of chap. ii. there are some thoughts as to the characteristics of the Gospel preacher, that will well repay our study. He is, as hinted by the reference to the triumph in verse 14, R.V. :—(1) A subdued rebel, (2) a freed captive. As seen in verse 17, he is (3) a sincere and therefore an earnest man, (4) an authoritative messenger ("as of God"), (5) one who works under his Master's eye ("in the sight of God"). I wonder how far we who undertake from time to time to speak the Gospel of God to sinners, will find these five charac-

teristics reproduced in ourselves? Do we "go softly" as conquered ones should, and make up for our past rebellion by the willingness and exactness of our present obedience to the truth of the Lord? Do we stand fast in the freedom wherewith Christ has set us free, no longer servants of men (1 Cor. vii. 23), nor slaves to sin (Rom. vi. 16-22), nor even "brought under the power of" things apparently lawful (1 Cor. vi. 12)? Is our preaching done with the sincerity and earnestness which characterised that of Paul, not the occupation of an hour nightly or weekly, but a "stewardship" from which he was never for a moment free, with a passion that kept him praying and weeping for souls, day and night? Could it be said of us in our measure, as of the Lord Himself, "He taught them as one that had authority," because of our intense realisation that we are men "set under authority," and that, as the centurion of old had all the power of Rome at his back to enforce his legitimate commands, so behind us there is all the power of heaven with our message? And lastly, do we realise that the eye of our Lord is ever upon us, and carry out all the work which He entrusts to us, in ever present consciousness of this fact?

"LET YOUR MANNER OF LIFE BE WORTHY OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST" (Phil. i. 27, R.V.).

No Surrender.

Onward! soldiers, brave and true,
Christ the Lord hath need of you;
Boldly all His bidding do;
Who would faint, or flee?

Plain Preaching Needed.

PREACHERS who make it their aim to please their hearers rather than to let God speak His message through them, are more of a curse than a blessing to any people. The preaching that pleases everybody and sends sinners away well pleased with themselves, and carnal saints to puff their pet preachers and resume their worldly lives, is of no use for God, but must be very satisfactory to the devil, inasmuch as it helps him to carry on his work of deception. God's Word spoken in the Spirit's grace and power, is easily known by its results. It awakens sinners and strips them of their sham religion. It humbles saints and brings them into the presence of God to search their ways. It restores the soul and brings the backslider back to God. It arouses the devil and makes him roar. The preaching of the Lord Jesus had these effects, as any reader of the Gospels can see. The evangelising of Peter and Paul had the same results. Souls were reached. Men and women were brought before God, owned their sin, learned of His salvation, and were saved to become His witnesses among their fellows. And wherever God wrought, the enemy persecuted or counterfeited God's work. Preaching that has no such results, is not of God. It may be the preacher's hobby or his trade, but it is not of the Holy Ghost and in His power, or it would have Holy Ghost fruits. The sooner such preachers quit their posts and make room for God-sent and God-sustained men, the better. Dry theological discourses are of no use to anybody, no

more are silly stories and pithless sermonettes, borrowed, memorised, and reproduced second hand, without a breath of Holy Ghost power. Even where the Gospel is clear and full, if sinners are not awakened, aroused, convicted, and conscience stricken, it goes like water on the ground. Much of the preaching, we get, would make excellent fomentations and plasters to remove inflammations and to heal up wounds, if any wounds were there. The fact is, the greatest of all our needs at present is, a race of preachers sent from God with a message like Jeremiah's, to "wound" and "search" the conscience, to "thrown down" the false, and to break up "the fallow ground." There will never be much of a genuine Revival among God's saints, or of a widespread awakening among sinners, until this kind of preaching comes into use among us. We had it in full measure in the glorious days of '59. We had it in the years that gave birth to most of the assemblies of God's people in the British Isles, and in Canada. When the old-time plain and pointed preaching of God's Word, unvarnished and undiluted, going straight to the conscience like a lance, making sinners quail, returns, we shall see something of the old time results, in Holy Ghost conversions and sanctified lives among Christians. It is plain and practical preaching that is the chief need of the time.

R. S.

Here and There.

Down here, the powers of earth and hell
Beset our homeward road;
Up there, the songs of victors swell
Around the throne of God.

Taken Home

I WAS a visitor and guest in the house of a Christian widow, whose husband—a diligent and much esteemed servant of Christ—had died a few months before. Seated around the fireside, we conversed together of earlier years in life's fair morning in which we had shared and served together in a remarkable work of grace and happy time of ingathering. I scarcely dared to mention the name of her husband, lest in so doing, I might open departed afresh the wound which his death had made in that dear widow's heart and life. But to my great relief she began to speak of her beloved departed one as having "finished his course" and been "taken home." This seemed to be the solace of her widowed heart and the source of her quiet resignation and deep submission. She was not murmuring at his loss, although as I know she keenly felt it. She read in his home-going the lesson of a service accomplished, a pilgrimage ended, and a child at home. How blessed! How beautiful to see death invested thus! It was a new view of death to me, and I have never lost it. How blessed it is to finish the course set before us, to complete the work entrusted to us, and then, like a wearied but joyful day labourer, to be taken home—home to the rest of the Father's house, to the Master's presence, to the joys of His "paradise," to be "present with the Lord." Thus we think of loved ones gone before, and in the language of faith, speak of them, not as lost to us, but "taken home" to awake our coming there. They have been

"taken home." And as one sweetly writes—

Now nevermore

The spirit falters in its yearning quest,
Thy home is reached, thy strangership is o'er,
Sweet toil, yet sweetest rest.

The Father's heart,
There blessed refuge, is our refuge too.
We see thee still, art with thee where thou art
Hid, but from mortal view.

Gone unto God!
Gone to the Father, in His house to dwell
Gone from the shadowed vale that Jesus trod,
Beloved! it is well.

Such is faith's view of the Christian's departure from the present scene. And while it is not his hope, it may be, will be his experience, should the Lord not come before. And surely this is worth a fuller measure of consideration, than it usually receives. To die "is gain" (Phil. i. 23), to be with Christ is "far better." To be "at home with the Lord" is better than the best and brightest of our days "at home in the body" and "while absent from the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8, 9). Some reach the homeland through stormy seas and some in calm. One goes from long years of pain, another from the midst of joyous service and family peace. But all are "taken up" (Acts i. 2), as the word is, of our Lord's own going to the Father's House. And we are assured by His presence there, that a warm welcome to these bright courts, and to that holy gathering-place of the heavenly family, awaits us there. Blessed be God, for the clear issue and assurance of being "taken home."

"Home to the noiselessness, and peace
Of those bright courts above,
Whose walls can never be o'erthrown,
Set in Redeeming Love."

The Preacher and Bible Student's Column.

BRIEF OUTLINES OF EVANGELISTIC SUBJECTS.

THE BELIEVING SOUL'S RELATION TO GOD'S TRUTH.

The Truth Heard (Col. i. 5).
 The Truth Owned (Matt. xv. 27).
 The Truth Believed (2 Thess. ii. 13).
 The Truth Obeyed (1 Pet. i. 22).
 By the Truth Begotten (Jas. i. 18).

THE UNBELIEVER'S ATTITUDE TO GOD'S TRUTH.

Believe not the Truth (2 Thess. ii. 12).
 Obey not the Truth (Rom. ii. 8).
 Love not the Truth (2 Thess. ii. 10).
 Resist the Truth (2 Tim. iii. 8).
 Change the Truth (Rom. i. 25).

PRESENT BLESSINGS BESTOWED

On all who Believe the Gospel.

FORGIVENESS—ALL TRESPASSERS forgiven (Col. ii. 13).
LIFE—Life ABUNDANT bestowed (John x. 10).
PEACE—Divine PEACE possessed (Rom. v. 1).
ACCEPTANCE—Perfect ACCEPTANCE given (Eph. i. 6).
SUPPLY—All NEED supplied (Phil. iv 19).

The Young Believer's Question Box.

Does Matt. xxv. 47 teach Annihilation of the Lost ?

I write on behalf of a group of young Bible students who are much perplexed by a statement which recently appeared in a monthly Magazine, having the reputation of being sound in its doctrine. This statement is in relation to the final state of the lost. The author, after recording his judgment that the New Testament, as far as he can discover, teaches no such thing as "conscious suffering" for the lost, says, "The words of the Lord at the end of Matt. xxv., MIGHT mean annihilation and again they MIGHT not. This is a matter on which our Lord has NOT SPOKEN WITH DEFINITENESS, and we must leave it where He did." Can this be substantiated from Scripture. Does the Word of God leave it uncertain whether, after the final judgment, the unsaved are to be annihilated or punished? Simple, definite help will be valued by us, and we are assured welcomed by all, as this subject, which is vital, is much to the front at the present time.

When avowed unbelievers deny the eternity of punishment which the Word of God declares in awful and final terms, and open enemies of the Cross of Christ rage and declaim against it, we are not astonished. It is the way of the natural mind

to "reply against God" (Rom. ix. 20). But when men, who occupy the place of Christ's ministers and have the confidence of those who hear or read their ministry, by plausible reasonings make "the Word of God of none effect" (Mark vii. 13), the danger of being led into the path of error is greatly increased. And we know of some who never would have been misled by the coarse infidel denials of Bradlaugh, Ingersoll, Blatchford, and their followers, who have been caught in the devil's snare through the misinterpretation and misapplication of Scripture on this subject, by Farrar, White, Bullinger, and their disciples.

The Lord's words in Matt. xxv. 46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," refer to the condemnation of a living people, whose judgment will take place at least a thousand years before the "final judgment" of the dead, before the great white throne (Rev. xx. 11). They are sent into the "everlasting fire, PREPARED for the devil and his angels" (ver. 41), but not yet experienced by them. For as Rev. xx. 10 informs us, the devil receives his final doom after the millennial reign, and that final outbreak of rebellion incited by the great deceiver after his liberation from "the pit," or abyss, where he will be imprisoned during the thousand years. This punishment of his is NOT annihilation, but "torment," as ver. 10 tells us. And those named in Matt. xxv. 49, go into *that* punishment which is prepared for the devil and his angels. How can it mean annihilation? The Greek word, "Kolasis," here rendered "punishment," is only once again found in the N.T., and is there translated "torment" (1 John iv. 18), as any English reader may prove, by consulting Young's or Wigram's Concordance.

To say the Lord has "not spoken with definiteness" on this solemn and awful subject is nonsense, as any unprejudiced reader of the Lord's words in Mark ix. 43-48; John iii. 36, and kindred portions, will surely admit. But where there is false doctrine to mask, it is the fashion to say this or that is not taught "with definiteness." In other words, that the Bible may mean anything except what it says. Then, its perversion or denial, is to be regarded only as a "difference of judgment." And so vital error spreads and the unwary are deceived. May the "group of young Bible students" be preserved from the evil influences of such men. And our counsel to them would be: Give all such teachers a wide berth, cease to hear their ministry, leave their books severely alone and read your Bibles on your knees.

Answers to Correspondents.

ANON.—Thanksgiving, personal and collective, is surely in season for the Divine deliverance from war and its horrors. But there is no need to join with the world or with man's religion in expressing it. This will be a snare, and should be warned against.

BELIEVER.—It would surely indicate a low spiritual condition and an utter lack of godly order in an assembly, to call in the aid of the "powers that be" to prevent disorder. High time they were examining their spiritual whereabouts, when such a course is even named. In olden time, they called in God, (Acts iv. 24) when troubles arose. And He never fails those who do.

A. M., GORBALS.—A meeting over which a man presides and arranges the ministry, does not answer to the Scripture pattern of God's assembly. It is a sect, or party, with or without the name.

WIDOW.—You must not brood over the "second causes," which, as you think, brought about your husband's death. Better to leave these with God, until you get His full explanation, which one day you will. Your peace of heart and mind (Phil. iv. 7) will, be the fuller, in seeking to bow to the Divine will, in the same spirit as King Hezekiah of old, when he was able to say of all his afflictions, "Himself hath done it" (Isa. xxxviii. 15).

G. M'D., FIFE.—The lack of helpers is no doubt a serious drawback in certain kinds of aggressive Gospel effort. But one form of it, not so much in practice as in earlier years, is still open to you, and should be vigorously maintained, that is Kitchen Meetings. Many of the unconverted willingly give their houses, and you generally get a congregation of the very class you want to reach there. Try this for the winter months.

C. H., SUNDERLAND.—If a Christian has to work on the Lord's Day at times, in obedience to his employers' demand, the least he can do is to give the remuneration he receives for his work that day, to the Lord. This is not so valuable as his presence and participation in the worship and work of God, but it is due to the Lord, and should be willingly handed to Him. Is this a habit among those Christians who get "extra pay" for Sunday labour?

ALFRED S.—If you are not in a position to assemble with fellow-saints in united worship, you can surely spend the Lord's Day morning hour in praise, prayer, and meditation on the Word. Do not on any account rob the Lord of His portion, or your soul of its spiritual food.

A. G., ULSTER.—The same brother who gives thanks for the bread, surely MAY do so for the cup. But you cannot insist that he MUST. That the Lord did both is true, but then there is nobody now who would assume to take His place. In the original institution of the supper, the Lord did all. None of the disciples, so far as we know, took any audible part. But there never was another such assembling, never will be. The Lord is now personally absent; but the Spirit—who was not then in the church as now—is present, "dividing to each one severally even as HE WILL" (1 Cor. xii. 11 r.v.). His guidance is to be sought and owned, and no human rule introduced or enforced, which would operate against it.

Fallen Asleep.

Adam Dunlop, Ardrossan, October 27, aged 76, for over forty years a true helper in assemblies of Saltcoats and Ardrossan. In feeble health for a number of years. **Sir Robert Anderson**, London, passed suddenly and peacefully to his rest with Christ, on November 15, aged 77. A noble witness to the great truths of the faith, which he loved and lived to defend. **David R. Walker**, Toronto, from influenza, saved in Glasgow, in assemblies in Wallsend-on-Tyne, Peterborough, and Toronto. A good man who will be missed. **W. J. Thomson**, Springburn, Glasgow, saved in Co. Antrim in 1886. **Margaret L. Gray**, Keppochhill, Glasgow, aged 25, in Christ 13 years. **Mrs. Gray**, Possilpark, October 9, in her 81st year. **J. T. Dean**, of Dallas, Texas, killed by street car in Houston, Texas, October 28, while attending Conference there. He was a diligent preacher, and publisher of evangelistic literature. **Etta Munro**, Perth, formerly of Ballater, Aberdeenshire, aged 29. **John Henderson**, Burnbank, October 26, aged 80, for many years in the assembly. **James Simpson**, Valleyfield, formerly in Inverurie, of pneumonia, October 29, esteemed by all. **William Smith**, Bessbrook, Co. Armagh, a true helper in the little assembly whose welfare was his care. "A faithful man above many." **Robert Jemphrey**, third son of David Jemphrey, Bessbrook, on September 30, at Camp Devens, Mass., U.S.A., saved in early years. **William Neilly**, Camelon, Falkirk, formerly in Barrmill, November 13, of influenza, a faithful brother, who loved the truth. **Mrs James Holmes**, Friar's Croft, Irvine, November 23, in her 86th year, for over 45 years in the assembly.

The Believer's Magazine for the Coming Year.

WE close our TWENTY-EIGHT year's issue of "The Believer's Magazine" amid events of unprecedented interest, in which the people of God in all nations have their share, events which must, in a manner and measure which none can at the moment estimate aright, affect thousands who read these pages, alike in their personal and collective testimony for the Lord's Name, and in their service toward the spreading of His Gospel and His truth among His fellows. It is therefore more than ever indispensable—in our brief lifetime at least—that a clean-cut and clear-ring testimony be given to the whole Word of God, and especially to those truths which through neglect in public ministry have fallen into disuse, and are practically unknown to the greater number of the Lord's people of the present generation. It was with this object in view that the first number of **The Believer's Magazine** was issued in 1891, and this has been ever kept fully in view throughout the twenty-eight years of its existence. It goes without saying, that this is not pleasing to all, but we have had far more genuine help than rancorous criticism, and much more practical fellowship than petulant opposition. So that the service of preparing, publishing, and passing on the 336 numbers to fellow-saints in all parts of the world, whose friendship we enjoy, and of whose fellowship in this service we are constantly assured, has been to us a labour of true delight

and of unremitting satisfaction. The last four years have had their special burdens, and with the ever-increasing cost of all materials and labour, we may say in all frankness, that the Magazine has been issued at considerably less than it cost to produce it. And although the war is now over, its effects will remain in higher cost, for a good while. We had thus to face the problem at this year-end, whether the size of the magazine would have to be reduced, a cheaper paper used in its production, or the price to its subscribers doubled, and the size and quality maintained, with a full and fresh flow of all its ministries, to meet the special needs of the present time. And from all classes, in all countries, the unanimous answer came, "Continue the Magazine in its present form, and we will pay whatever price is necessary, ungrudgingly." So from January, 1919, until further notice, the magazine will be issued in its present size, on toned paper, in clear type—which all may read with comfort—and its price will be **Twopence** net. We shall greatly value and welcome the help of all who are in sympathy with the truths taught in these pages, in making the magazine known among fellow-believers in the districts where they reside, and on an early Lord's Day in intimating to the assemblies in which they are, their readiness to receive orders from all who desire to become subscribers for the coming year. Specimen copies will be supplied, **FREE**.

FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS OF THE COMING YEAR

We have in hands and in promise, a fresh and full supply of sound and spiritual Expository Articles on Vital Topics, Plain and Practical Papers on truths bearing on Daily Life and Conduct; Timely Truths dealing with the Assembly Life of God's People, restating, in clear and simple terms, much that is seldom taught in public, and which the present generation need to know, with a clear and certain testimony to neglected truths which, because unpopular with the crowd, are not allowed in the columns of magazines which cater chiefly for sectarian readers. Among the papers to appear are the following:—

When the Lord Comes: What will happen? Who will go? By William Hoste, London.

The "Coming" and the "Day." Sir Robert Anderson, K.C.B. His last testimony on this vital theme.

The Existing Authorities, and the Christian's Relation thereto.

Expository Notes on the New Testament, from the

Interleaved Bible of William Lincoln, used by him for private study and in public ministry for over twenty years, and presented after his death to the Editor. Original, fresh, and full of "the finest of the wheat."

Assembly Experiences. A series of Twelve Letters by an Octagenarian, who for over fifty years has gathered simply in the Lord's Name. Full of valuable counsel and warning for our days.

Plain Papers on Special Subjects by our esteemed contributors, John S. Anderson, Italy; W. J. McClure, California; and others.

Conference Addresses which brought comfort and cheer to many, taken in shorthand notes for us.

Refreshing Streams from the ministry of J. G. Bellett, of Dublin, supplied by one who shared it, hitherto unpublished.

Questions Answered on Present Day Difficulties, in Personal and Collective Life. **Concise Notes** on Contested Truths of the Word. **Counsels to Young Believers** on Practical Points for General Profit.