

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.

A Monthly Magazine.

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the **Word**, that ye may grow thereby."—1 PETER II. 2.

"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the **Word** with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. **Therefore** many of them believed."
—ACTS XVII. 11, 12.

"The **Word** of the Lord endureth for ever."—1 PETER I. 25.

VOL. XXVIII.

LONDON :
THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPÔT,
12 PATERNOSTER ROW.

1911.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
"Maran-atha"—1911	1
Be Careful for Nothing	4
Bible Talks—	
Safety and Sanctification	7
Grace and Discipleship	61
Israel and the Church	234
Worship and Service	261
Election and Free Grace	311
Fallen Away	18
Answers to Correspondents—	
23, 52, 81, 109, 132, 162, 190, 221, 246, 277, 301, 326	
The Christian's Good Fortune	29
Three Beatitudes	35
"When the Shadows Flee Away" (Poetry)	46
Accepted or Acceptable	47
The Sickness and Death of Missionaries: Why Allowed?	57
The Giving Away of Tracts	73
"Who Loved Me" (Poetry)	76
Letter to a Roman Catholic	77
Wonderful Conversions	85
Questions of Interest 88, 125, 149, 174, 274, 296	
The "Higher Critics" and their Methods	97
Hints on Open-air Preaching	102
"Sanctifying Doubts"	113
A Steeple-jack's Maxims	115
The Essential Thing	131
Qualifications for Christian Service	141
Justification	148
The Hands of Christ	156
"I, Jesus"	159

	PAGE
God's Ways (Poetry)	161
The Crowning Day that's Coming	169
Be True	184
The Day of Trouble	185
That Blessed Hope (Bible Dialogue)	197
The Morning Star and the Sun	203
Signs of the Times	204
The Missionary's Question	213
A Selfish Thought	219
The Eternal State	220
In His Name	225
The Inspiration of the Bible	228
Christianity in Korea	253
Panchiapu, or Deadly Cold	258
Peace in Trial	272
The Exceeding Riches of Grace	276
Joy in the Lord	281
The Christian's Power	286
Four True Incidents	292
Henceforward	300
Work for Eternity	309
A Letter from China	323
To the Uttermost	324

SIMPLE TESTIMONY.



“MARAN-ATHA”—1911.

OUR brethren, in the early days of the Christian era, were wont to greet one another with the word that stands at the head of this paper. It simply means, “The Lord is coming,” and the use of it as a word of salutation served as a constant reminder of the bright hope set before the hearts of the people of God.

The practice has been dropped. We no longer remind one another as a matter of course, when we casually meet, that our Lord is coming. So this paper is written to greet every Christian reader, at the threshold of the new year, with the ancient watchword, “Maran-atha.”

Pay a visit, in thought, to an orchard, when the fruit is ripening upon the trees. Do you see those few apples lying upon the ground? They have fallen from the boughs, and by and by some one will come with a basket and gather them up.

But before long the day will come for gathering the crop. Hundreds remain upon the tree, and they will all reach the storeroom without touching the ground at all.

Do you catch the meaning of my parable? As the years hasten by, Christian after Christian fades and falls from health and vigour. One

by one they are laid to rest beneath the sod, while their happy spirits are with Christ.

But by and by the day of “harvest home” will dawn. Then, without “falling asleep,” without dying, the saints will be gathered up to meet the Lord in the air.

It is for this we look. It is the Christian’s proper hope.

“O Lord, ’tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait ;
The sky, not the grave, is our goal.”

Are you not glad, dear reader, to be reminded that now, in the beginning of 1911, the coming of the Lord is nearer than it ever has been before ? And nearer and nearer it gets as the days fly past.

We *may* have to die. To say that we *must* die would be to contradict the plain emphatic statement of 1 Corinthians xv. 51. But even here, while our spirits still sojourn in these mortal bodies, we are brought into a region where everything is *living*. We have to do with a *living* God. By Him we are begotten unto a *living* hope (1 Peter i. 3). He has brought this to pass by means of the *living* Word (v. 23). As *living* stones, having come to Him who is the *Living* Stone, we are built up a spiritual house, etc. (chap. ii. 4, 5). Our souls are already established in a realm of *life* through the resurrection of Christ, and we wait for the moment when our bodies will be wrought upon by the power that has already saved our

“MARAN-ATHA,” 1911.

3

souls. Then every longing hope will find fulfilment, and every desire of the heart be more than satisfied.

How paltry, how insignificant, do the things of earth appear in comparison with the glory that awaits us! God grant that 1911 may find us *living for eternity*, with the coming of the Lord ever in view.

David Brainerd, the devoted missionary to the Red Indians, wrote, “Oh, to live on the verge of eternity! Would that I could continually dwell on its borders, in studying and following out every avocation.”

Another God-honoured missionary, David Sandeman, of China, wrote in his notebook in large letters, “Eternity! Eternity!” and afterwards, “Let me act more as if I were now in the next world, looking back to see how I should have acted for the glory of Jesus.”

“Stand,” writes another, “on the margin of the ocean of eternity, and listen to the murmur of its waters, till you are deaf to every other sound.”

How soon time for us may be changed into eternity, by the coming of the Lord! Will it take place during 1911? While none can affirm that it *will*, none can deny that it *may*.

Think of it. *The Lord is coming*, and before the present year has spent its course He may have come! May God give us, in view of this, to be “like men that wait for their Lord.”

H. P. B.

BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 6.

IF this word stood alone it might seem impossible to carry it out, for there is so much to cause care in everybody's path. Among the many who will read these lines there will be some whose lives are darkened by heavy clouds—a sick husband, a dying wife, a stricken child, slender resources that pinch at every turn, want of work, old age creeping on with its inevitable infirmities. Taking a wider survey, there are the sins and sorrows of the Church, the spread of deadly doctrines, the poverty of conversions, the unrest in the world, perplexity of nations, the sea and the waves roaring. With all these before our eyes it seems almost incredible that a voice should be heard bidding us in quiet, tender, assuring accents to be careful about *nothing*. But so it is.

Who is it that bids us by the pen of the Apostle in nothing to be anxious? It is God—our Father—without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground, who has numbered the very hairs of our head, who sees and knows everything—it is He who bids us to be careful about nothing. It is He—the One who spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us

BE CAREFUL FOR NOTHING.

5

all, from whose love nothing in heaven or earth shall ever separate us, it is He who calls upon us to be careful about nothing. Can this be His call? Yes, indeed it is. And that word "nothing" takes everything in. Whatever may come, we are enjoined in *nothing* to be careful.

We may feel things deeply. It is right that we should. The Christian is no stoic, unmoved by joy or grief. Far from that; it is his privilege to rejoice with those that rejoice, and to weep with those that weep. But our God would have us without carefulness. Our shoulders are not broad enough to bear the burdens of life. He therefore bids us cast them all upon Him, and in nothing to be anxious.

What then? He is near to us. His ear is open, His heart is tender, His hand is strong. He invites our confidence. "Come to Me," He says, "tell Me everything, pour out your heart to Me and unbosom all your griefs." Nearer, dearer than the dearest earthly friend is this One whose ear is never closed, and whose arm can bring salvation. We tell Him all—our cares, our sorrows, our fears, our disappointments, our blighted hopes and thwarted plans. We keep nothing back, our hearts empty themselves out before Him. And there we rest knowing that all things are possible with Him.

And so

“We leave it to Himself,
To choose and to command.”

What a comfort to have One so accessible, at whose door we cannot knock too often, who is never wearied with our frequent calls. And we trust Him. We place ourselves and everything that concerns us in His hands and leave them there. He knows the way we take, and we know, too, that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” To us there is much that is inexplicable—much that we would have ordered otherwise had the arrangement of things been left to our discretion. But God is infinitely wise. He makes no mistakes, and though everything seems to take its own course, yet it is not really so. His eye is upon all, nor is anything hid from Him. Strong, then, in the sense of His love, we go on our way, guarded by His own peace which passes all understanding. Strength for to-day He gives, and strength for the morrow shall be ours when the morrow comes. And be the way rough or smooth, it leads towards *home*.

“Lord, 'tis enough, we ask no more;
Thy grace around us pours
Its rich and unexhausted store,
And all its joy is ours.”

SAFETY AND SANCTIFICATION.

A BIBLE TALK.

WHEN God called Israel out of Egypt, the first thing He did was to ensure their safety from judgment by sheltering them beneath the blood of the slain lamb. Next, to sanctify the firstborn who had been sheltered. Exodus XII. gives us details of the one, and Exodus XIII. starts with the other. "Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn."

This is the Old Testament type, and in the New Testament safety and sanctification are again connected. In John XVII., for instance, the Lord Jesus declared the *safety* of His own. As to the *past*, He said, "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept." As to the *future*, He prayed, "Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me" (vv. 11 and 12). Immediately following this He prayed concerning their sanctification (vv. 17 and 19).

With these scriptures before us, we shall see that it is God's wish that the believer should be both safe and sanctified. Let us not, however, connect our safety with our growth in grace, neither let us so widely separate them as to make them a first and second blessing, with possibly years of experience rolling between. To understand the proper relation

between safety and sanctification we need to know the scriptural meaning of the terms, and upon what each of them depends.

No one who reads these lines will have any difficulty as to what is meant by "safety." With "sanctification" it may be otherwise. Not many words in the Scriptures are more widely misunderstood.

To some sanctification means just *sanctimoniousness*. It really means nothing of the sort; nor does it even mean *becoming very holy*, save in a secondary sense. The primary meaning of sanctify is to *set apart*—to separate from base uses to the service and pleasure of God. For example:—

"Thou shalt anoint the altar . . . and sanctify the altar . . . thou shalt anoint the laver . . . and sanctify it" (Exod. XL. 10, 11).

"I [Jesus] sanctify Myself" (John XVII. 19).

"Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts" (1 Peter III. 15).

In what sense can an object constructed of wood or metal be said to be sanctified? It cannot be made *holy* in the ordinary sense of that word. Inanimate objects have no qualities of mind or character. They can, however, be solemnly *set apart* for divine use. Moses did so set altar and laver apart, and they were thereby sanctified or made holy in the Scripture use of the term.

Again, how can we conceive of God Himself

SAFETY AND SANCTIFICATION.

9

or the Lord Jesus as being *sanctified*, in whose presence the angels cover their faces crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts"? In this same sense alone the Lord Jesus has *set* Himself *apart* in heaven for our sakes, and we can *set* God Himself *apart* in our hearts, ever giving Him that place of supremacy and honour which is His by right.

So too, when sanctification is connected with us believers, it has just this primary meaning. The above-quoted scripture, Exodus XIII. 2, shows that sanctification is God claiming for Himself those whom He has sheltered by blood. We are thereby separated, or set apart, for the pleasure and service of God.

We must carefully note, however, that for us sanctification has two aspects. The first *positional* and *absolute*—an act of God with which we start our Christian career; the second *practical* and *progressive*—continuing and deepening through all our pathway upon earth.

Those scriptures which speak of the believer as having been already sanctified, naturally fall under our first heading. For instance, Paul wrote to the Corinthians in his first epistle as unto "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus" (chap. I. 2). And again, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (chap. VI. 11). These are striking sayings, for the

10 SAFETY AND SANCTIFICATION.

Corinthian Christians were in many respects very blameworthy. They had not advanced far in the way of *practical* sanctification, yet the Apostle does not hesitate to remind them that in the name of the Lord Jesus and by God's Spirit they *had been* sanctified as truly as they had been washed and justified. They had been set apart for God.

Again, in Hebrews x. we read, "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (v. 14). Who are these sanctified ones? Are they believers of special attainments in holiness? *No*. They are all Christians without distinction or class—set apart for God in virtue of the one sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But there are other scriptures where sanctification is presented as an object of attainment and desire. We read, "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. iv. 3). "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it" (Eph. v. 25, 26). "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use" (2 Tim. ii. 21).

In these scriptures, sanctification is clearly viewed as something which is God's intention for His people; as something which Christ—not has done—but *is doing* for His Church to-day; as something which we

SAFETY AND SANCTIFICATION. II

are to individually seek after. In a word, it is sanctification of a practical and progressive sort.

Now let us inquire, upon what do these things depend? *Safety*, in Scripture, ever stands related to the infinite worth and value of the atoning work of Christ, and to His power to keep. Our attainments in practical holiness after conversion, important as they are in their place, have nothing to say to it. On that fateful night in Egypt no firstborn son would have been spared if the head of the household had tacked a paper to the lintel of the door, narrating his boy's excellencies of character or his progress in holy behaviour. The safety of every spared firstborn depended solely upon the sprinkled blood and on nothing else. So it is for us. Our safety, our forgiveness and justification hang entirely upon the precious blood of Christ. We are forgiven "through His name" (Acts x. 43), we are justified "by His blood" (Rom. v. 9).

But upon what does *sanctification* depend? In its positional aspect it is founded on the work of Christ. By His one offering we are sanctified. It also stands connected with the Holy Spirit. We are "elect . . . through sanctification of the Spirit" (1 Peter i. 2). By the Spirit we are born again, and finally, in believing the truth, we are sealed by that same Spirit. In virtue of all this, we are set apart for God.

12 SAFETY AND SANCTIFICATION.

In its practical and progressive aspect sanctification depends upon the truth. "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth" (John xvii. 17). Hence the sanctifying of Ephesians v. 26 is "by the word." This being so, it is easy to see that diligence, and purpose of heart in departing from iniquity, are very necessary in this connection. If we "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. vi. 16) we do not fulfil the wishes of the flesh. Christ is before us as our Object, and we are brought under the influence of the truth of the word, and thereby practically set apart for God in mind and affections. This practical sanctification goes on through all our pilgrim days.

If we disconnect safety and sanctification, will not people think they may be saved and yet live as they like?

We will not disconnect them ; far from it. Scripture makes it abundantly plain that those whom God shelters from judgment, He separates unto Himself. That one should be sheltered and yet left in the world under the power of sin, is simply unthinkable to the Christian mind. The unregenerate alone would entertain such an idea.

But though we do *not* disconnect we do distinguish, for Scripture does so. Some there are who hopelessly confuse these two things. In their great desire to keep us humble and walking in the way that is right, they would

SAFETY AND SANCTIFICATION. 13

have us believe that the degree of our attainments in practical sanctification determines the degree of our safety.

Is this so? Is our sanctification of such a doubtful character that we must be kept in perilous uncertainty lest we should shatter it? Let an analogy answer. Is it necessary to terrify little children in order to make them behave themselves? Is this method—sometimes practised by ignorant nursery-maids—the *only* way to reach that desirable end, or even the *best* way? Why then should we suppose that God treats His children on such lines? The truth is that all right conduct flows from the knowledge that we *are* sheltered and from the right understanding of *what* we are separated to.

Does good progress in practical sanctification improve the believer's title to a place in heaven?

Not in the smallest degree, though without holiness no man shall see the Lord. Near the close of his strenuous life, marked by so high a degree of holy living and devoted service, the Apostle Paul wrote: "to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. i. 23). To a dying robber, just converted, but without many hours of holy living to his credit, Jesus said, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke XXIII. 43).

Which of these two had the better prospects

14 SAFETY AND SANCTIFICATION.

of heaven—that heaven which is summed up in the words “with Christ,” “with Me”? Paul? Nay, their prospects were good alike, and as sure and firm as the finished work of Christ and the sure Word of God could make them.

Fitness for heaven is not something the believer works up to—he starts with it. We give thanks to the Father “who *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. 1. 12). *HATH*, mark you! It is not something He is doing, but something that *He has done*.

When does this progressive or practical sanctification take place? Do we receive it by an act of faith?

It is impossible to name a certain day or hour and say, “Then I was sanctified in a practical sense.” For then, how could it be progressive? Nor do we receive it by an *act* of faith. Faith, of course, there must be, faith in the fact that we are already set apart by God for Himself. And faith is not an *act* merely to which we attain by a kind of supreme effort. Faith truly *acts*, but it is itself an abiding and continuous thing. I *believed*. Yes, but I *do* believe. I believe to-day!

Taking Scripture as our guide we learn that the Truth sanctifies, and that God’s Word is truth (John xvii. 17). Further, that the Spirit of God sanctifies. He is the sanctifying power,

SAFETY AND SANCTIFICATION. 15

inasmuch as He it is who guides us into all truth (John xvi. 13). The truth presents CHRIST to us, it opens out to our souls His glory, and as by faith we behold Him we are changed into His image, from one degree of glory to another (2 Cor. iii. 17, 18). That is progressive sanctification indeed !

Can you tell us when a Christian is entitled to speak of himself as sanctified ?

Every true believer *is* sanctified. To each it can be said, " Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption " (1 Cor. i. 30). So that if truly converted and " in Christ Jesus," you may speak of yourself as sanctified with as much confidence as you would speak of yourself as redeemed.

If, however, your question refers to practical sanctification, the answer is—*Never !* Those in whom the largest measure of sanctification is found, who—in other words—are most Christ-like, are the last people in the world to say so. CHRIST, and not attainments, fills the vision of their souls. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord (see Phil. iii. 8) is their pursuit as it was Paul's, and if they speak of themselves at all it is to say, "*Not as though I had already attained*, either were already perfect " (Phil. iii. 12).

We read in Scripture about the believer being sanctified wholly. Would not such a believer be perfect and beyond the reach of temptation ?

People who do not observe the setting of scriptural expressions sometimes suppose that to be sanctified wholly is to have the old nature completely eradicated. A glance at the passage will, however, help us to seize the meaning of these words. It runs thus :—

“ Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ” (1 Thess. v. 22, 23).

The Apostle Paul desired, in regard to each of his converts, that the whole man might be practically set apart for God. Each of the three parts that go to make up a man—spirit, soul, and body—was to be affected, and to such an extent that he not only kept separate from evil, but also from all appearance of it. Nothing less than this should be the object of our prayerful desire even now. But “ if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us ” (1 John 1. 8). It goes without saying that if the old nature be not eradicated, no believer can consider himself perfect or beyond the reach of temptation.

Why does the Bible lay such stress on this positional or absolute sanctification which all believers possess to begin with ? Of what practical benefit is it to us ?

It is of the greatest possible importance. The law may, indeed, set before us an ideal to which we are to strive to attain. God's way

SAFETY AND SANCTIFICATION.

17

in grace is to show us what we ARE in His own sovereign choice, that we may practically be consistent with it.

Two boys are born on the selfsame day : one is the son of a king, set apart from his birth to high estate and office ; the other is the son of a pauper. Why is it that continually the young prince has it impressed upon him that he is the son of a king ? Is there any practical benefit in it ? Indeed there is. The two boys may often walk the same streets, but their practical life and behaviour are as different as can be. The prince is practically separated from many low and vulgar ways, because by birth he was absolutely set apart to kingly estate.

So it must ever be with us. Never can we be too often reminded that by the redemption work of Christ, by the Spirit's work and indwelling, we *have been* set apart for God. Nothing will prove more truly conducive to holy living.

F. B. H.

“Your responsibility is not mixed up with your acceptance, but with your glorifying God. Quickened and born of God, you are responsible to act accordingly. If you were my children, I should expect you to behave as my children : but you must first be children. All our responsibilities, whatever they be, flow from the places we are in. When you are a child of God, your duty to act as one begins.”

J. N. D.

FALLEN AWAY.

HEBREWS VI.

IN a Sussex cottage an aged Christian was bemoaning her spiritual state. She had lost all her happy feelings, and feared she had fallen away beyond all hope of recovery, like those described in Hebrews VI.

Her conscience accused her of declining from the Lord's ways, and she sorrowed almost to despair as she dwelt upon the statement in verse eight, "That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Let us try to help her.

You say you are a backslider, and that your case is hopeless. Do you really think a backslider cannot be restored?

No, indeed, she replies with a shake of the head, for we had a prayer-meeting the other evening in the village chapel to pray that backsliders may repent of their ways and turn again to the Lord.

If Hebrews VI. refers to a backslider, such a meeting would be useless.

Why do you say that?

Because that chapter tells us that it is *impossible to renew them again to repentance*—that is, the individuals of whom the chapter speaks.

Eh! I never thought of those words. What, then, does the chapter mean?

Clearly not what you have hitherto believed. For is it not true that you gather from it that a true believer may be lost after all?

Does it not teach that?

I will answer you by asking another question. Can God lie, or His Word contradict itself?

Of course not.

Turn then to a plain positive statement in John v. 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Again, "I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish" (John x. 28).

What does God say here about those who hear and believe?

That they have *everlasting life*.

What does Christ say of His sheep in John x.?

They shall never perish.

How then can the end of such be "to be burned"?

I begin to see that those verses in Hebrews vi. cannot refer to a true believer, but I am quite at a loss to understand what is really meant.

That is because you do not see that all the things named there may be true of a mere professor. The Apostle was writing to Hebrews who professed to embrace the Christian faith,

and he warned them as to the result of apostatizing from it.

What is the meaning of apostasy ?

It is a wilful, deliberate giving up of Christianity, and in their case a going back to Judaism.

But surely "once enlightened" means more than profession ?

When the sun rises the earth is enlightened. Light shines where darkness reigned. Just so when Jesus, the true Light, came into the world, He shone for every one. But all who saw Jesus were not truly converted.

But how could they taste the "heavenly gift" and be made "partakers of the Holy Ghost," and the "good word of God" ?

God has given two great gifts ; first of all He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He also sent forth the Holy Ghost, not to condemn the Jew for crucifying Jesus, but to announce full forgiveness.

The "good word of God" was the gracious announcement that instead of wrath there was mercy for those who had betrayed and murdered their Messiah. This message was first of all to be proclaimed in Jerusalem and to the people who had said, "His blood be on us and our children." It was indeed a "good word," and many of them had "tasted" both it and the gracious influence of the heavenly

gift. But a thing may be tasted and yet refused. Many enjoy hearing a loving gospel who have never been truly converted. It is those who *eat* the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man who have eternal life.

But how can we be "partakers of the Holy Ghost" and yet not be truly saved?

Just as everybody partakes of the air which surrounds us and basks in the rays of the sun. When the Holy Spirit came down He shed an atmosphere of blessing all round. These Hebrews were "partakers" of the gracious effects of His presence, but not a word is said about their having been "born again." Nor is there a word about their being children of God and indwelt by the Holy Ghost, or that their sins were forgiven. The verse simply shows that Christianity brings blessings which even a mere professor may taste and partake of, and especially in those early days.

What is meant by the "powers of the world to come"?

The "world to come" was an expression well understood by the Hebrews, and refers to the millennial reign of Christ, when miracles shall be wrought for the healing and blessing of the nations. You remember how miracles were wrought by the apostles, and the sick were brought so that even their shadow might fall upon them. These are samples of "the powers of the world to come." Those miracu-

lous acts were a little foretaste of that age when sickness and suffering shall be banished under the benign reign of Christ.

Do you mean to say these expressions refer to Hebrews who made a profession of following Christ and who might fall away if persecution arose—like the stony-ground hearer of Matthew XIII. 21 ?

Yes, but now let me ask you a question. Do you wilfully intend to do despite to the Spirit of Grace and trample under foot the Son of God, and give up the glorious blessings the Spirit of God is dispensing ? In other words, are you going to give up Christ and say the Jews were right in crucifying Him ?

Give Him up ! No ; my fear is He has given me up because of my unfaithfulness. My one grief is that I have wandered so far away, and I am full of sorrow when I think of my ingratitude to Him in return for all His love to me.

The Corinthians had sinned, but they had not renounced Christianity, and had not apostatized like those spoken of here. So, sorrowing with a godly sorrow and repenting truly, God graciously forgave even the worst man among them, and restored him to Himself and His people.

Do you really mean to say that Hebrews VI. and X. do not refer to one in my state ?

Yes ; the very fact of your sorrowing for

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 23

your sin is a proof they do not, for how could you sorrow for sin if you could not be renewed to repentance?

“If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Again, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

If you have wandered from God, now seek to find out *how*, *when*, and *where* the first declension set in, confess it to God, judge it in yourself, but do not imagine that your case is hopeless, for God’s Word says there is mercy for those who confess and forsake their sin. So clearly the scriptures which have troubled you are not applicable to your case, but refer to a mere professor renouncing Christianity and going back to Judaism.

H. N.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

N.—In reply to your question we can only offer one or two general observations without any specific reference to the case of which you speak. It is assuredly both the privilege and duty of God’s children to care for any of their needy brethren. On that point Scripture is abundantly clear. “If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in thy

24 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother : but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth " (Deut. xv. 7, 8). So said the Law—and certainly under grace the standard is not lower. It is vain for any of us to speak of the love of God dwelling in us if it be in our power to help a needy brother and we do not help him. Such love is only in word, and is worthless. On the other hand, the one in need should be careful to look to God alone for deliverance. " My soul, wait thou *only* upon God ; for my expectation is from Him " (Ps. LXII. 5). Let him mark that word **ONLY**. We are all of us so prone to expect help from some creature source, and then we are often disappointed. Better, infinitely better, to trust in the living God.

W. A. L.—1 Peter III. 19, 20 ; IV. 6.—To bolster up divers and strange doctrines recourse is often made to texts around which a measure of obscurity seems to hang, while clear and lucid scriptures are utterly ignored. Now all kinds of theories have sought support from those texts of which you invite us to give " a plain and simple explanation." Observe, then, first of all, verse eleven of chapter one. Notice the expression, " The Spirit of Christ." The Spirit of Christ was in the prophets of old, and bare witness through them to " the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." They were His pen and His mouthpiece. The same Spirit preached through Noah to the

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 25

unbelieving generation of his day whose spirits are now in prison awaiting their summons to appear before the last great assize. If it be urged against this interpretation, that the text says: "He *went* and preached," Yes, we answer, but not in person. For see a similar mode of speech in Ephesians II. 17: "He *came* and preached to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Did Christ, then, come in person, and preach peace to Gentile and Jew after His death? Assuredly not. He did so, however, by the Holy Spirit through His messengers. Why, then, should we have one mode of interpretation for one passage, and a different mode for another? If the words "He *went* and preached" are to be understood as implying that He went personally, why should not the words "He *came* and preached" be understood in the same way? And if there is not a particle of foundation for the latter, is there any for the former? We say No.

Besides, if Christ went after His death and preached to the spirits in prison, is it not strange that He only preached to those who were disobedient in Noah's day? What about all the rest? Why were these chosen, above all others, to enjoy this singular privilege? The theory, like the soap-bubbles of our childhood, breaks in pieces the moment it is touched.

Examine the passage further. These spirits in prison "were sometime disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." Disobedient to what? To the preaching of Noah, who is spoken of in 2 Peter II. 5 as "a

26 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

preacher of righteousness." To his preaching, to the testimony of the Spirit of Christ in and through him, they yielded not the obedience of faith. But God's long-suffering was great, for they were "*sometime* disobedient." But His patience has its limitations. For how long were they disobedient? Let Genesis VI. 3 answer: "The Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The preaching should have an end. "Yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." The "*sometime*" lasted as long as that, and then the flood came and carried them all away save eight persons safely sheltered in the Ark.

But why is all this brought in here? What was its bearing upon these converted Jews to whom the epistle was addressed? Since embracing Christianity they had been called to suffer, Note, by the way, how frequently the word *suffer* occurs in the epistle both in relation to Christ and to His people. But were not the eyes of the Lord over the righteous, and His ears open to their prayers? Was not the face of the Lord against them that did evil? The Scriptures everywhere say so. How, then, could these protracted sufferings be explained? And why was it that so many of the favoured nation of Israel remained unbelieving? Hard questions these! The Apostle answers them by this reference to Noah. God's long-suffering is great. He is patient even with those who are a long time disobedient, but judgment comes at length. And as to the nation remaining disobedient to the heavenly call, and

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 27

those who believed being comparatively few, let them remember that only eight persons were saved in the Ark, all the others perished in the waters of the flood. No strange thing then had happened to these believing Jews.

But what about your second passage (iv. 6): "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit"? What is the meaning of that? Observe the preceding context. The reception of the gospel had wrought a great change in the lives of those who had received it. They walked no longer in those evils that marked the heathen around. Folks thought it strange. Their old companions could not understand it, and spake evil of them. But, adds the Apostle, "they shall *give account* to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." Now, with the judgment of the living the Jew was very familiar, not so in relation to the dead. But there is a judgment-seat before which the dead shall stand to give their account. For they, too, had had the gospel preached unto them—he is keeping up the link with their fathers (see Hebrews iv. 2)—with the same happy end in view, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh," and, bowing to that judgment and turning away from the sins that characterize "men in the flesh," should "live according to God in the Spirit." If no such result followed, they would have to give account when the day of reckoning came.

We can well understand "Millennial Dawnists" falling back on these texts in their bold endeavour to palm off their tenets on the unwary. How any lover of Christ can listen for a moment to these men, much less buy their books and read them, passes our comprehension. What can this system be that denies the deity of our Lord and His present manhood? The denial of these fundamental truths brands the system as anti-Christian and of the devil. Beware of its agents who call at people's houses, and with smooth and honeyed words seek to sell their books. As to how we should carry ourselves towards such men, the Second Epistle of John affords ample instruction. Let us act upon it.

INQUIRER.—I Corinthians xv. 35-38.—We do not think the doctrine of the resurrection of the body involves the belief that "every atom" of that which is laid in the grave will be raised again. The subject is beyond our finite understanding, but to faith it is all plain and sure. The Apostle alludes to the analogy of nature—the grain cast into the earth. That which comes up is not in every respect the identical seed that was sown, though not separated from it. But the certainty of the resurrection of the body is not founded on any analogy, but on the resurrection of Christ Himself. As surely as He was raised, so shall His people be. If the latter be denied, so must the former, for the Apostle will not allow them to be separated. His glorious resurrection is the pledge and pattern of that resurrection in which the dead in Christ shall have their happy part.

THE CHRISTIAN'S GOOD FORTUNE.

IF any one were to knock at your door, saying that he had brought you tidings of a vast fortune that had been bequeathed to you, would you not grant him ready admittance and earnestly listen to his story? Would not all other things be forgotten in your eagerness to hear about the wealth that was now yours?

Allow me then, Christian reader, to take the place of such a bearer of good news. By means of this paper I knock at your door; I want to tell you of a vast fortune that is yours, yours to appropriate and enjoy to the full. Can you afford to be indifferent to my story?

Some years ago a young Irishman left the land of his birth to seek his fortune in America. Not long after he arrived there he was converted to God, and wrote to the friends that he had left behind: "*I have found my fortune.*" His words had a larger significance than possibly he intended. Probably in his mind there was no further thought than that his sins were all forgiven, and that his feet were now upon the narrow road that leads to glory. This, in itself, is surely a matter for great rejoicing. But it is not exactly what I mean when I speak of the Christian's *fortune*.

30 THE CHRISTIAN'S GOOD FORTUNE.

In the town of Ayr, in Scotland, a hardened criminal was sentenced to death. It had pleased God to bring him to repentance while in prison, and he became a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. When led out to the place of execution, he was so full of God's mercy that he could not help crying out to the people: "Oh, He is a great Forgiver! He is a great Forgiver!"

This witness is true. God is indeed a "great Forgiver." But the object of this paper is not so much to remind the reader that God is a great Forgiver as to show that He is a great *Giver*. He has not only *forgiven* us our many sins, but as a *Giver* He has heaped untold wealth upon us, with a liberality that words are too feeble to set forth.

But to three wonderful facts I desire to call your attention. If our souls do but lay hold of them in faith, they will enable us to realize, in some measure, the vastness of our fortune.

FACT NO. I.

God's gracious design was to have you near to Himself, for His own pleasure.

In proof of this we read that "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might BRING US TO GOD." Again, we learn that in Christ Jesus, we "who sometimes were far off are MADE NIGH by the blood of Christ."

THE CHRISTIAN'S GOOD FORTUNE. 31

Think for a moment what this means. A Red Indian chief, Mackaroo by name, had a large number of horses and cattle which his son and several servants used to tend. One of these servants, in an evil hour of temptation, murdered the chief's son and sold the horses that were under his charge. Then he returned to Mackaroo with a story of the horses stampeding and his son losing his life in endeavouring to stop them.

Some time afterwards a man who had been an unsuspected eye-witness of the foul deed told the grief-stricken father the true story of his son's death. The murderer had left his employ, but Mackaroo swore by all that he held sacred to be revenged.

Years passed, and the glad tidings of God were brought by a devoted missionary to that wild district. Amongst those in whose souls the Spirit of God wrought was the chief himself. He was truly converted, and learned that it was unchristian to cherish a desire for vengeance upon one's enemies.

In the course of time the chief, now an old man, and his faithless, wicked servant, the murderer of his son, stood face to face once more. Mackaroo told the trembling wretch that he knew all about his cruel crime. "But," said he, "I forgive you ; only you must *never show your face in our country again.*"

We can all understand this. But how

32 THE CHRISTIAN'S GOOD FORTUNE.

differently God has acted. He has freely forgiven multitudes who have shared in the guilt of murdering His Son, who have committed offences without number against Him. And not only so, but He desires the company of those He thus forgives. He makes them suitable for His presence, in perfect righteousness. He imparts to them a nature capable of enjoying His holy love, and He brings them near to Himself, for His own eternal delight. Oh, what a God is our God ! How high are His thoughts and ways above the thoughts and ways of men !

FACT NO. 2.

You are loved by God even as Christ was loved !

Said an old man to a servant of the Lord one day : " I have made a wonderful discovery ! "

Thinking that he was referring to his conversion, the visitor replied, " Indeed, I think you have. "

" But I don't mean my conversion, " said the aged man. " I have found out that *I am dear to the Father even as His Son is dear !* "

" How did you make such a discovery ? " asked his friend.

" It is in the seventeenth of John, " he replied.

Sure enough, on turning to that chapter, we find the wonderful words. They are in verse 23. The Lord Jesus, speaking to His Father about His loved ones, says : " Thou . . . hast loved them, *as Thou hast loved Me.* "

THE CHRISTIAN'S GOOD FORTUNE. 33

Ponder these marvellous words. Dwell upon them till their prodigious meaning begins to get a grip upon your soul. What is their import? This, that until you can find a line long enough to measure the Father's love to His Son, you cannot find one long enough to measure His love to *you*! The love that rests in infinite, unclouded fullness upon Christ is the love that rests also upon you. What a theme for wonder and worship!

“So dear, so very dear to God,
 Dearer I could not be;
 The love wherewith He loves His Son,
 Such is His love to me.”

FACT NO. 3.

You have been placed in the relationship of SON with regard to God, and He is your Father.

Familiarity with this stupendous truth has largely robbed it of its amazing significance. But picture, if you can, the effect produced upon the mind of one who learns it for the first time.

The Danish missionaries at Malabar employed some of their converts to translate the Gospel of John into their native dialect. When they came to the passage which declares that it is the privilege of believers in Christ to take the place of *sons of God* (I. 12), one of them was so startled by the astonishing words that he threw down his pen, exclaiming, “It is too much! Let me rather translate it, ‘They shall be permitted to kiss His feet!’”

34 THE CHRISTIAN'S GOOD FORTUNE.

But the place He has given us is not the place of mere subjects, waiting at His footstool, though *that* would be a favour that would deserve our everlasting gratitude. He has made us His own children. We are "sons of God" and have received the Spirit of sonship, so that we can cry, "Abba, Father." We are "children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ " (Rom. VIII. 14-17). No angel has such a place as this. No shining seraph, no mighty celestial being can claim such a relationship. Nor can they know, as it is given to us to know, the Father's love to the Son as the measure of His love to them. *That* place is reserved for those who once were rebels against God, but who have been brought nigh to Him by the precious blood of Christ.

These three facts are true of *you*, my fellow-believer, and have been ever since your conversion. Do you not agree with me that they are most marvellous facts ? Our knowledge and realization of them may be feeble ; but *facts are facts*, and these three tremendous and glorious facts are true of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Shall we not take these three facts with us into the presence of God, and pray to Him to make them, as we meditate on them, *present realities to our souls* ?

H. P. B.

THREE BEATITUDES.

PSALM LXXXIV.

NEITHER this Psalm nor any other of the Psalms rises to the full height of Christianity. Yet there are rich experiences found in the Psalms, and spiritual affections find utterance, but more, perhaps, in the way of desire than of true satisfaction. The reason, of course, is this: Christ had not come, redemption was not accomplished, and the Holy Ghost had not been given.

Notice, by the way, the heading of the Psalm. It really is a sort of introduction. "To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah." Now the very mention of Korah awakens all kinds of memories. His was an awful history (Jude 11). But grace overrules all that, and the sons of Korah are brought into a place of wonderful blessing. This Psalm, then, is for them and for us.

First, the Psalmist unfolds a state of heart that is very blessed, but not the highest that can be reached. There is great appreciation of the Lord's presence, although it is not a thing possessed. The desire to have Christ is good, but to possess Him is infinitely better. "How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord

of hosts " (v. 1). The soul describes in these words the unspeakable blessedness of the spot where the Lord is, but it is a matter of desire, and not of enjoyment.

" My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." But, properly speaking, this is not Christian experience, though it is the experience of many Christians. If it is yours, I do not say you are not a Christian, but I do say there is something you have not got. Now God has blessed us " with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." There is nothing His counsel could devise, His word furnish, or His hand pass over to us, that is not made ours in Christ now. I do not deny there are a great many unsatisfied hearts to-day. Yours may be one of them. But if you get out of the state of desire into that of enjoyment, it will be an immense change. And that is what the Spirit of God labours for. He seeks to bring the soul into conscious touch with Christ and into the enjoyment of His presence and love.

" My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God " (v. 2). Beautiful is this desire, but it is not satisfying. God is not content with that merely. He has revealed Himself fully, so that there might be the most profound enjoyment of His love. " The love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them " (John xvii. 26). Many a heart is

THREE BEATITUDES.

37

only in the condition of, what I may call, unsatisfied desire. It is a beautiful thing to have desires that only Christ can satisfy, but the real and deep enjoyment of Himself, ah ! that is another matter.

“ Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God ” (*v.* 3).

Has it ever occurred to you why the Psalmist alludes to those two birds ? I do not doubt there is a beautiful hidden truth in it. If there are any birds under the sun that picture the condition of a heart not yet in the enjoyment of divine love, they are the swallow and the sparrow. The sparrow is never satisfied, and the swallow is never at rest. All the livelong day the sparrow will eat. It is never full. And as for a swallow, who ever knew it to be restful ? This is a wonderful figure of the deep dissatisfaction and restlessness of the human heart. If you have been a worldling like the woman in John IV., you have found out that the world does not satisfy, and never can. The Lord said truly, “ Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again ; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst [for ever] ; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” What is that ? It is life

known in the power of the Holy Ghost, the indwelling Spirit, who connects the heart with a glorified Christ, so that it is always bubbling up with joy and praise. It is really what everlasting life is, fellowship with the Father and with the Son, and the soul brought into it now. You have a fountain, even the Holy Spirit in you, ever telling you of Christ, and ever making Christ precious to your heart. But more.

“Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house : they will be still praising Thee. Selah ” (v. 4).

Yes, God loves that it should be so. Praise gratifies Him. “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving.” I have been asking hundreds of young people the last few years how they can best please the Lord. I could not tell you all the different answers:—“Work for Him,” “Serve Him,” “Love Him,” and a hundred different things—things that are connected with a little bit of energy in themselves. Look what it says here: “I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs ” (Ps. LXIX. 30, 31). What is the meaning of the bullock ? You may say, “Sacrifice.” There is more than that. It is a figure of patience, endurance, constancy, and service. Now remember,

THREE BEATITUDES.

39

you will not get a bit of reward from Christ, by and by, for laziness. Let us not deceive ourselves that way. But there is something better than service. What is it? Ah! he says, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving." That will please Him better than all the service that could be rendered to Him. He does not make light of service. He says, "Occupy till I come." And I shall not get your reward, and you will not get mine. The reward is to each one as the work shall be. But there is, however, something sweeter than that. It is the song. Thanksgiving.

"Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house : they will be still praising Thee." The heart is in the deep and blessed enjoyment of God, and it flows out. Worship is a wonderful thing. It is the overflow of a full cup. It is the heart overwhelmed with the greatness of God, and the goodness and love of God. Thanksgiving is for that which is received. Worship is deeper. It is the enjoyment of Himself. It is the soul absorbed and controlled by the blessedness of His presence, and nearness and intimacy. The soul is there in delight. May the Lord give us to know more of this.

Look now at the second place of blessing. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee ; in whose heart are the ways of them " (v. 5). "Ah!" you say, "mine is a difficult

life." So is mine. "But mine is a very peculiar life, and so you would say, if you only knew the difficulties of my pathway." Very likely, but do notice what the Psalm says: "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee." You and I have no strength. But remember what Paul said: "When I am weak, then am I strong." He said more: "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities." Infirmities are not sins. They may be weakness of body, sickness, or circumstances—things connected with your human life. He says, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." For the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Cor. XII. 9, 10). And do not forget, dear young fellow-Christian, that the secret of real strength is to know that you have none. Own your weakness and cling to the Lord. And what will be the result? "My strength is made perfect in weakness."

"Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them." You see the Psalmist now speaks of walking through the valley of tears, where your path is and mine; but he walks through it in the enjoyment of God, and in the strength and sweetness of all that is heavenly. "In whose heart are the ways of them." Ways of God, ways of Christ, the moral traits of

THREE BEATITUDES.

41

the Lord Jesus. That is what "the ways" are.

"Who passing through the valley of Baca" (a valley of weeping). And is not this passing world a valley of weeping? Widows and orphans, and broken hearts are met at every turn.

But the valley of Baca becomes a well, and "the rain also fills the pools." It overflows. That is, you are able, like Elijah, in the midst of dearth to bring in rain, refreshment. It is somewhat in figure similar to John vii.: "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (v. 38). Instead of dearth and dryness, you carry blessing with you, wherever you go. What a grand thing to be thus in touch with God.

But more. "They go from strength to strength," from company to company, if you will. Passing on, preserved by the Lord, and sustained by the Lord. "Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God" (v. 7). What had they touched? Zion. What is that? It is the city and rule of grace. It is the spot where all the mercies of David are known.

"O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah" (v. 8). The soul that is in the enjoyment of the Lord is always prayerful. You will find a person that is in the happy intimacy and love of

Christ is used of God for blessing to others. Prayer and dependence upon God mark that man, and he becomes a blessing in the scene of sorrow.

But now he goes on and says, "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine anointed" (*v.* 9). The eye is turned to Christ, and the heart reverts to the house of the Lord. And now he says, "I would choose rather to sit at the threshold in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness" (*v.* 10). You have got to go through a wicked world. But there is holy separation, sanctification—the practical sanctification of the soul. I must be near the Lord to be kept from being ruined by the scene through which I have got to pass. This state is very beautiful, it is divine, and spiritual, and heavenly. It is what the Spirit of God labours to work in all our souls.

And then he adds, "For the Lord God is a sun and shield." Aye, it is a great thing, a sun and shield. A sun to give light and warmth. Who is the sun? Christ. "Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof" (*Ps.* XIX. 5, 6). The point is this: the sun gives light and warmth. Bask in it. Keep in the

THREE BEATITUDES.

43

warmth and light of the love of Christ. "The Lord-God is a sun and shield." And in the day of the east wind a shield is a great thing. When everything is against you, or when the darts of the enemy come, a shield is of use then. "The Lord will give grace and glory." These are two fine bits in a Christian's pathway. The first bit is grace, and the second bit is glory. There is nothing in between. It is grace all along the road. Nothing but grace. You and I may have grumbled. He has dealt with us in grace. We have not always dealt in grace with each other. It is an immense thing for the heart to be established in grace. I do not mean lightness or levity ; but the sense of the immeasurable grace of God. "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. II. 1). What is grace ? It is the sense of the unconditional favour of God. It is love that has put on a new colour in the presence of evil. "Oh," you say, "I am so bad." Do you expect to be any better ? Never. I know some have been very disappointed, thinking they should get a little better. And many a soul gets dejected. What met you and me in the beginning ? Grace. What meets us all along the line ? Grace. Well may the Apostle say, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while,

make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you " (1 Peter v. 10). He is the God of grace.

"The Lord will give grace and glory." Now you know we need not wait for the glory ; in a certain sense we have it now. We know a glorified Man. The glory of God shines upon His face. Where is the glory of God now ? In His face. What has God given us ? The glory ; and our hearts are brought to the spot, into the enjoyment of it, even now. " Ah ! " you say, " I do long for the glory." Tell me, are you enjoying the grace ? Is the grace strengthening you, filling your soul with the fatness of God's house ?

But now, in the meantime, what is ours ? " No *good* thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly " (v. 11). One or two things, which I would have liked, have been held from me in my life. This Psalm is a wonderful interpreter—it shows why I never got them. It would not have been good for me. If I had got what I wanted very much, it would have been a very bad thing for me. Many a thing would have brought me trouble. God has kept it out of my road. People sometimes get all that they set their foolish hearts upon. " He gave them the desire of their heart ; but sent leanness into their soul." Some men set their hearts on money. And what do you see ? Empty hearts and miserable faces. What is the end of it ? They have often more bother than the folk

THREE BEATITUDES.

45

that have none. They are afraid they will lose it. "No *good* thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." Lots of bad things He keeps back, but not one *good* thing. He has kept back what would harm us. You and I may have thought it good. But He says, "I love you too much to allow you to have that." And if you look back perhaps thirty or forty years, you can say, "How wise, how good, how gracious He is!"

And now the last verse: "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee" (v. 12). That is not very high. No. But it is a very happy thing. Some of the high people get an awful tumble. The higher you are on the ladder, the more bones you will break if you fall. The Lord loves reality. "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

Well, there are three characters of blessing. First of all, the blessing of dwelling in His house inside; then there is the blessing connected with having Him as your strength outside; and then, last of all, there comes this continuous blessing in your pathway here when in the ups and downs of human life. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

The Lord give us to know more and more of these three blessings for His name's sake.

W. T. P. W.

“WHEN THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY.”

FELLOW-CHRISTIAN on life's pathway,
Art thou weary, sad at heart ?
Know'st thou not thy Lord is with thee ?
Naught thy soul and Him can part.
Do the storm-clouds gather round thee ?
Dost thou see no bright'ning ray ?
Oh, remember naught shall grieve thee
“ When the shadows flee away.”

We are pilgrims on a journey,
Trav'ling thro' an alien land ;
Here have we no right nor title,
All our hope's at God's right hand.
When the billows surge around us
To our Father we will pray ;
All shall be unclouded sunshine
“ When the shadows flee away.”

In this scene of sin and sorrow,
Crushing grief, o'erwhelming care,
Our belovèd Lord has left us
Witness true for Him to bear ;
Then, when fearful for the future,
Let us ev'ry fear allay
By rememb'ring we shall see Him
“ When the shadows flee away.” W. H.

ACCEPTED OR ACCEPTABLE.

“To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us **ACCEPTED** in the Beloved.”—EPH. I. 6.

“Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be **ACCEPTED** of Him.”—2 COR. V. 9.

THE reader will observe that the word *accepted* occurs in both of these passages. Apparently they contradict each other. *God* accepts the believer in the first. *The believer* labours to be accepted of God in the second. If God has accepted me, how then have I to labour to be accepted? one may well ask.

A reference to the Englishman's Greek Concordance solves the difficulty at once. We discover that two entirely different *Greek* words have been translated by the one *English* word “*accepted*.” “*Karitoō*” is the word used in Ephesians I. 6. *Uarestos* is the word used in 2 Corinthians V. 9.

Karitoō is only twice found in the New Testament. Once in Luke I. 28, where the angel addresses the Virgin Mary, “Hail, thou that art *highly favoured*, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou ^{among} women”; and again in Ephesians I. 6, “*accepted* in the Beloved.”

In the New Translation of J. N. Darby it is rendered, “*taken us into favour* in the Beloved.” And this is assuredly right, for “accepted” is too cold a word. It means that

and more. It embraces the idea of warmth and favour and delight. "In the Beloved"—"the Beloved" meaning the Lord Jesus Christ—adds a thought making it richer and fuller to a very wonderful degree. For if God accepts the believer "in the Beloved," the acceptance can only be measured by the delight and favour in which Christ stands before the Father. We are lost in the contemplation of such a wondrous fact.

Ὡαρεστος occurs nine times in the New Testament. In four instances it is translated "*acceptable*," in other four "*well-pleasing*," and only once "*accepted*"; that is in the passage under consideration (2 Cor. v. 9). Why the translators in this one case should have so translated it, I do not know. We may well take our pen and strike out the word "*accepted*," and substitute the word "*well-pleasing*." This has been done in the Revised Version, where the passage runs thus: "Wherefore also we make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto Him."

Why do we then labour to be well-pleasing? For 2 Corinthians v. begins right dogmatically with "WE KNOW." Not a trace of doubt lingers in the Apostle's mind as he thus writes in undoubted assurance of the end being reached in safety; of the believer having a body of glory in glory. What more can we want?

Ah! there rises up before the Apostle's

mind a vision of the judgment-seat of Christ. "Yes," you say, "there comes in the doubt. He began with a dogmatic 'WE KNOW,' and goes on to tremble as he thinks of the judgment-seat, before which he and all believers must appear."

Not so, gentle reader. Inspiration is never contradictory. Paul in his inspired letters never contradicts himself. Your hasty conclusion arises from a misunderstanding as to the judgment-seat of Christ for believers. There are two kinds of judgment-seats with which we are familiar, two kinds of objects which come under judgment, and two kinds of results issuing therefrom. For instance:—

(1) There is the Judge of the assize courts.

(2) There is the Judge of the picture competition.

In the former case the *persons* of the accused are brought up before him for judgment. Incidentally the Judge may have to acquit those who are accused falsely, but the real object of his court is to judge the *guilty*.

In the latter the Judge examines the *works* of the competitors. In no case does he judge their persons. The anxious inquiry of the prisoner before the Judge of assize is, Shall *I* have to go to prison? The earnest inquiry of the competitor in the art school is, Will *my work* earn a reward? No thought of punishment arises.

Thus we see in No. 1, *persons* are judged, and *persons* punished.

In No. 2, *works* are reviewed and *their doers* rewarded.

In short, the judgment-seat of Christ is for manifestation and rewards. The solemnity of this would tend to check all lightness and laziness, and make us anxious to respond to the grace that desires to reward all that may have been done according to the mind of the Holy Spirit. To this end we need earnestness in the study of the Word, and diligence in prayer, so that we may know and be led into right activities. No wonder, with all this in the Apostle's mind, he could write, "Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be *well-pleasing* to Him."

A very striking passage, confirming what we have just indicated, is 1 Corinthians IV. 5. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: *and then shall every man have praise of God.*" Mark, nothing is said of condemnation. The only result of this manifestation the Apostle sees is "*praise of God.*" No doubt much will be condemned and set aside when the hidden things of darkness are brought to light, many a counsel of the heart will be judged in that day; but the Lord has one object in it all, and

ACCEPTED OR ACCEPTABLE.

51

that is to award *praise* to each and all. How this should stimulate our desire to be well-pleasing to Him !

To sum up. The whole energy of the word "*Karitoo*" = "taken us into favour," is first *downward* in grace from God to us, lifting us up and accepting us in all the cloudless favour that rests on the Beloved. Bengel puts it beautifully : "To embrace us in the arms of grace in the Beloved." It is all God's activity on His side ; it is all receiving on ours. Blessed truth !

On the contrary, the whole activity of "*Ūarestos*" = "well-pleasing," is *upward*, from the believer to the Lord, from our hearts and lives, to Him who loves to reward all that is of the Holy Spirit.

May these thoughts encourage and stimulate us to deeper devotedness to the Lord !

A. J. P.

God's Love Shed Abroad.—I would that the shedding abroad of the Love of God were more deeply and joyfully experienced. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God." What a word ! There can be no place of rest for the heart but *love*, and that place of rest is found, and found only, in *God*. "Perfect love casteth out fear." Faith stands at the door, and if a single touch of fear, or suspicion, or reserve, or distance, if a single breath of the spirit of bondage come to the door, and seek admittance, faith lets these travellers know that there is no room for them, the place is preoccupied, and occupied by such an inmate as will certainly be anything but disposed to make room for them.

J. G. B.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. H. M.—1 John 1. 3.—Nothing of an ecclesiastical nature enters into the fellowship here spoken of. It is different from that named in 1 Cor. 1. 9. There we are “called *unto* the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” Here “our fellowship is *with* the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Mark the italicized words. Within the fellowship of 1 Cor. 1. 9 every Christian stands. There is but one fellowship in the sense in which the word is here used, just as there is but “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” And this fellowship embraces “all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” But that is not the idea of 1 John 1. 3. Concerning this latter we quote the words of another: “What can we have more than the Father and the Son? What more perfect happiness than community of thoughts, feelings, joys, and communion with the Father and the Son, deriving all our joy from themselves? And if it seem difficult to believe, let us remember that, in truth, it cannot be otherwise; for in the life of Christ the Holy Ghost is the source of my thoughts, feelings, communion, and He cannot give thoughts different from those of the Father and the Son. They must be in their nature the same. To say that they are adoring thoughts is in the very nature of things, and only makes them more precious. To say that they are feeble and often hindered, while

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 53

the Father and the Son are divine and perfect, is, if true, to say the Father and the Son are God, are divine, and we feeble creatures. That surely none will deny. But if the blessed Spirit be the source, they must be the same as to nature and fact." Such is the fellowship of 1 John i. 3.

P. R.—John xii. 37-40.—It is quite true that the responsibility of their unbelief rested entirely on the shoulders of those who, having seen the Lord's miracles and listened to His teaching, nevertheless believed not on Him. It was also true that their eyes were blinded and their hearts hardened, so that they could neither see nor understand. The light that was in them had become darkness. This latter followed the former. It was not until they had rejected Him and discredited the witness of His words and works that their unbelief was allowed to work out its inevitable result—blindness and hardness of heart. Such was the hopeless state into which *the nation of Israel as such* had fallen. Of course, we do not forget that when the messengers of the risen Christ were sent on their great and glorious mission they were to begin at Jerusalem. Thank God, under their preaching thousands were "pricked in their heart," and cried out in their alarm, "What shall we do?" It ended, as we know, in their conversion. Blindness and hardness of heart never come upon any one without a cause. In this connection 2 Thessalonians ii. 7-12 is particularly solemn, as it shows that judicial blindness shall fall on Christendom itself, men shall believe a lie, "*because* they received not the love of the

54 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

truth, that they might be saved." Thank you so much for your very kind and encouraging letter.

J. R.—Luke xvii. 22.—Some, whose judgment we greatly respect, believe "the days of the Son of Man" to be the days when our Lord was here on earth. Commenting on this passage one of them says: "Trying as the position of the disciples might now be as the companions of His rejection, the days would come when they would long in vain for one of those days when they had enjoyed blessed and sweet intercourse with the Son of Man." More trying days were before them, from which there would be no relief, though there would be abundant compensation.

J. A.—Heb. ix. 23.—Is not the emphasis placed on the word "better"? The blood of calves and goats sufficed for the purification of "the patterns of things in the heavens," but the heavenly things themselves called for *better* sacrifices. These better sacrifices are all found in the great sacrifice offered by our Lord Jesus. But why is the word sacrifice used in its plural form? Why sacrifices and not sacrifice? you ask. The answer seems to be that the various sacrifices of old did but present the all-various aspects of the sacrifice of Christ. Is a burnt-offering in question? a trespass-offering? a sin-offering? Christ is each and all. His sacrifice was the better "sacrifices" inasmuch as all sacrifices offered by the law found their fulfilment in Him. As to your other question, there is no reason to doubt that the High Priest did go "once every

year " into the Holiest, according to verse 7 and Leviticus XVI.

C. D.—So far from thinking that the 144,000 of Revelation VII. are "a company of watching Christians," we do not regard them as Christians at all—redeemed, saved, blessed, but not Christians any more than saints of Old Testament times were Christians. Is it not distinctly said in Revelation VII. that the sealed ones are of "*all the tribes of the children of Israel*"? They are, then, a godly remnant from among the Jews, called out after the Church has been taken to heaven. Indeed, the Church is nowhere seen in the Book of the Revelation after chapter V. till we reach chapter XIX. Nor is the sealing of the 144,000 with the seal of the living God upon their forehead to be confounded with the sealing with the Spirit in Ephesians I. 13, and of which all believers are the subject.

Referring now to your second inquiry, as to whether, when the Lord comes, any true Christians will be left behind to go through the great tribulation. We believe there will be none. There are those who hold that only the watching ones will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and the rest will have to pass through the great tribulation. We think them greatly mistaken. In I Thessalonians IV. 13-18, which of all passages is the one that gives the fullest details as to the coming of the Lord, there is not a hint of such a thing. There we read that the dead in Christ shall rise first—then we who are alive shall be caught up—not a syllable about a certain class of Christians being taken

56 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

who are more watchful than the rest. To lift the translation of the saints at the coming of the Lord off the ground of pure grace, and to place it on the precarious basis of our individual faithfulness, is a fatal error.

As to Revelation XIII. 18, we do not pretend to have the understanding of the wise so as to "count the number of the beast." No doubt when the man appears God's people will have the needed wisdom given to them to count his number. Till then the least said the better. There have been many conjectures, but what are they worth in the things of God?

One word must suffice on 1 Peter i. 9. We receive now the end of our faith—the object faith has in view—even *soul*-salvation, as distinguished from the temporal deliverances which their fathers had known. For we must not forget that the Apostle writes to converted Jews.

And may we ask you kindly to notice that our Magazine is now published at *The Central Bible Truth Depot, 12 Paternoster Row, London?*

MARANATHA.—We do not remember any Old Testament scripture that can be said to distinctly refer to the coming of the Lord for His saints as revealed at the close of 1 Thess. iv. There are passages that speak of His coming, as Messiah, to fulfil the promises made to the fathers of the Jewish people, and to bring in world-wide blessing. But all that, as you well know, is different from His return to raise the dead in Christ, and to call His living saints away to meet Him in the air. This, we thought, was entirely a New Testament revelation.

THE SICKNESS AND DEATH OF MISSIONARIES: WHY ALLOWED?

HOW utterly mysterious it seems to *us* that God should allow any of His choice and honoured servants to fall sick and be incapacitated for service for weeks or months together ! And how perplexing that some of the apparently most needed are entirely taken away from the harvest-field, where their places are so hard to fill !

It is not that we would yield to any temptation to doubt either the wisdom or goodness of God. We know perfectly well that what He does is always the very best ; His wisdom is unerring, and His goodness infinite. But do we not sometimes feel disposed to ask, “ *How* can unerring wisdom suffer this most useful labourer to be laid aside ? ” And “ *How* can infinite love deprive its objects of the services of one who seemed to be in a better position to serve them than any one else ? ”

It may help us to answer such questions if we consider two authentic incidents which are not so well known as they deserve to be.

In 1838 four servants of the Lord, Dr. Kitto, Dr. Black, Robert McCheyne, and Andrew Bonar were travelling in the East with a view to finding favourable localities for missionary work among the Jews.

In Egypt Dr. Black had a very bad fall from his camel, sustaining serious injury. It was necessary for him to abandon the work for which he had left home, and to return overland, in company with Dr. Keith.

On reaching Pesth, in Austria, they halted for a few days, and here Dr. Keith was laid low with cholera, followed by fever and ague.

Hearing of his illness the Archduchess Maria Dorothea, who was a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, came to see him, and, learning the object of his travels, promised the protection of the Archduke to any missionaries that might be led to come to Pesth.

This remarkable chain of events led to work being commenced among the Jews of that city, numbers being converted, among them such illustrious servants of God as Dr. Alfred Ederheim and Dr. Adolph Saphir.

Would Dr. Black have regretted his accident, or Dr. Keith his prolonged illness, if they had been able to see that they were links in a chain that would end in the conversion of an Edersheim and a Saphir? Would they not rather have joined in a chorus of praise to Him whose infinite wisdom and goodness had permitted these apparently untoward events?

.

Mr. S. L. Chase, of Melbourne, had for a long while been seeking an open door for the gospel among the black aborigines of Australia. But

MISSIONARIES : WHY ALLOWED ? 59

their language was terribly difficult for a white man to learn, and they themselves were in a state of such abject degradation and darkness that the task of reaching them seemed almost hopeless.

In 1850, however, an event occurred which gave Mr. Chase some reason to hope that the fast-closed door was about to open. He found a young black lad wandering about the streets of Melbourne, evidently lost. He befriended him and very soon won his confidence. Some months later, he took the youth to England, where he was truly converted to God. On baptism he received the name of William Wimmera—Wimmera being the district in Australia from which he had come. After his conversion, William manifested an earnest desire to return to his own people with the glad tidings of salvation. In view of this he studied and prayed as the months flew by.

Mr. Chase and others interested in the Australian aborigines were full of hope that at last the way was being opened for them to hear the gospel. But alas, in 1852, William Wimmera took sick and died, and was buried at Reading.

In his grave all hope of reaching his countrymen seemed buried too.

But a short paper was prepared, giving an account of his life and death, a copy of which fell into the hands of two brethren, Hagenauer

60 SICKNESS AND DEATH OF MISSIONARIES

and Spieseke, who were passing through London on their way to Australia. The result of this was that these two brethren were led to definitely seek an opening for work among the aborigines.

On their arrival in the Antipodes, a Christian settler, Mr. Ellerman, invited them to visit his estate. He turned out to be William Wimmera's old master, and many of William's relatives were living in the district. Meetings were held and the gospel preached to these natives, and before long (1859 and 1860) a great awakening broke out, numbers of the aborigines being converted, among them the well-known Nathaniel Pepper, who, in his turn, was used to bring many others of his fellow-countrymen to Christ.

William Wimmera's untimely death must have sorely perplexed his Christian friends. Their hopes for the Australian natives centred upon him. He seemed to have been raised up so providentially, and to be so necessary for the work.

But God, in infinite wisdom and goodness, took him home. Subsequent events have shown that William Wimmera accomplished more by his death than he would probably have done by his life. And his case surely strengthens our confidence in the love and wisdom of Him who does *all* things well !

H. P. B.

GRACE AND DISCIPLESHIP.

A BIBLE TALK.

THE very essence of the grace of God is that it is free and unconditional. The way of its reception—repentance and faith—is plainly laid down for us in Scripture, but though there may be *conditions* for its reception, grace itself is unhampered by any such thing. Some *men* are adepts at the art of giving with one hand and taking away with the other, of bestowing gifts so hedged about with restrictions and conditions as to be positively useless to the recipients; but this is not *God's* way.

“The free grace of God” is a common expression, rightly used, and most of us believe in it. Yet it is puzzling to many when, opening their Bibles, they light upon passages in which they are unexpectedly confronted by an “IF.” For example, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke ix. 23).

What does it mean? Is salvation, after all, as free as we had supposed? Must we make a kind of bargain with the Master, after these terms, ere we can be enrolled as His?

Let us answer these questions by turning to Luke xiv. and reading the paragraph, verses 25 to 35. The same thoughts reappear here:

“ IF any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.” Those four closing words are thrice repeated (*vv.* 26, 27, and 33). Not, mark you, “ he cannot be saved,” but “ he cannot be My DISCIPLE.”

Now of all the four gospels Luke's is the one which emphasizes grace. Indeed in Luke XIV. the very paragraph which precedes the one referred to contains the parable of the “ great supper ” (*vv.* 15 to 24), which is a marvellous unfolding of the grace of God. Is it not worthy of note, then, that, having unfolded divine *grace* in such a way as to bring great multitudes about Him eager to hear, the Lord turns round upon them and tests their reality by proposing to them the terms of *discipleship* ; and shall we not do well, while observing the distinction between them, to keep them together in the order in which He put them ?

They may be distinguished as follows :

Grace is a special form or character of divine love. It is the shape it takes when it stoops to flow forth to the utterly undeserving, adapting itself to their need, though far transcending the need in the wealth of its full supplies.

Discipleship is the special form taken by the love that springs up responsively in the heart of a believer. It is the backward flow of divine love to its Source. To be a disciple is to be a

GRACE AND DISCIPLESHIP.

63

learner, and not a learner only, but a *follower*; and when the grace of God grips a soul and new life begins, its first instincts are to learn of the Saviour and to follow Him.

Granting this, it is easy to see that grace is the mainspring of discipleship, and it is not without reason that they are linked together in Luke XIV.

In the parable of the great supper we find the door of salvation swung widely open and the very worst invited. No demand is made upon them, no condition imposed, no bargain struck. Grace shines forth undimmed by any tarnish of that kind. But He who spoke that parable was well aware of two things.

1. That many would profess to receive grace, without being real in their profession.

2. That those who really receive it have thereby had begotten in their souls a responsive love that draws them irresistibly after the One from whom it comes; and such must understand what is needful if they are to follow Him.

Therefore it was that He followed up His declaration of grace with instruction as to discipleship, and added two short parables to show the importance of counting the cost.

"It costs too much to be a Christian," said a gloomy-looking man one day. Was he right?

Did he mean, "It costs too much to be *saved*"? Then he was totally wrong. The untold cost of salvation has fallen upon One

who was able to bear it, and He being made sin for us has borne it all. To us it *costs* nothing.

Ah, but he used the word "Christian" in its proper sense, for it was the *disciples* who were called *Christians* first in Antioch (Acts xi. 26). He meant, "It costs too much to be a disciple." Again, then, he was *wrong*. It costs to be a disciple, but it does not cost too much! The fact is, our gloomy-looking friend was not saved, he had never tasted grace, and therefore had nothing to spend. When a man goes to market with no money in his pocket everything costs too much! He was putting discipleship before grace, which is equivalent to putting demand before supply, and responsibility before the power that meets it—in everyday language, "putting the cart before the horse."

What does discipleship cost? It costs sacrifice in every direction, and therefore the little parables come in here. It costs a good deal of labour in fortifying one's position, and a good deal of energy in fighting one's foes.

"Which of you intending to build a tower . . ." Have you any such intention? Certainly you have, if you propose to really follow the Lord. A tower speaks of protection; and such we need. Nothing is plainer in Scripture than that though we are kept by the power of God, it is "*through faith*" (1 Peter i. 5). The responsibility to build up ourselves on our most holy faith rests upon *us*, therefore "pray-

ing in the Holy Ghost " is the only attitude that becomes us, and the result is to keep ourselves "in the love of God" (*see* Jude 20, 21). With the love of God enveloping us as our tower of defence we are well fortified indeed!

"Faith" is the hand that builds. "*The faith*"—and we find it in the Word of God—is the mighty foundation on which we build. Prayer is the attitude best suited to these building operations. The love of God, *consciously known*, is our tower of defence.

But all this is the means to an end. We are well furnished defensively that we may act offensively against the foe. The trowel truly comes first, but after that the sword.

"Or what king going to make war . . ."

Have you any thought of such an aggressive movement? If a disciple you *ought* to have. Notice, the king with ten thousand proposes to take the *offensive* against the king with twenty thousand. A bold movement that! Ah, but behind his back was a well-fortified base of operations, his tower was built. This is ever God's way. David's tower was built in the wilderness experiences of meeting the lion and the bear, and hence Goliath has no terrors for him. Luther, "the monk that shook the world," advances with his tiny book into the hot-bed of animosity at Worms. Yes, but this was his battle cry:

"A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing."

Discipleship means all this. It means prayer, and the study of God's word. It means exercises otherwise unknown and the shock of battle with the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Sit down and count the cost. Do you tremble? Then recount the cost in the full light of the power of God and the weighty stores of *grace*, and you will begin to "rejoice in Christ Jesus," and yet more deeply have "no confidence in the flesh."

Thus grace and discipleship go hand-in-hand. Just how, the case of Bartimæus well illustrates (Mark x. 46-52). Grace stood still at his cry and gave him all he desired freely. "Jesus said unto him, *Go thy way.*" Then, Bartimæus, no terms are imposed upon you; go north, south, east, or west, as you desire. You are free! Which way did he go? "Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus in the way." Impelled by grace he entered the path of discipleship. *He followed Jesus.*

Is every Christian a disciple, or is it only certain favoured ones that have this distinction?

There are no "favoured ones" in Christianity. True it is that the world having invaded and conquered the Christian profession, clergy and laity in numerous grades, corresponding to worldly society, are found on every hand. The Christianity of the Bible, while admitting spiritual gifts and office,

knows nothing of these things. The early Christians were believers, saints, disciples, all of them (*see* Acts I. 15 ; VI. 1 ; IX. 38 ; XIX. 9 ; XX. 7). And the very foremost of the apostles was just a believer, a saint, or a disciple along with the rest, though gifted from heaven and clothed with an authority that was indisputable.

We may be sure, therefore, that it is a fatal mistake to consider that discipleship belongs only to a few—a kind of clergy—and that we more ordinary folk may rest content with being saved and getting to heaven presently and need bestir ourselves as to nothing else. Shame on us if like Bartimæus we receive our sight, and then, unlike him, go strolling off to amuse ourselves with the novel sights of Jericho !

Yet there is a tendency in that direction, and therefore it was that the Lord said to certain Jews who believed on Him, “ If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed ” (John VIII. 31).

Discipleship does truly belong to *all* Christians, yet many believers there are who are not “ DISCIPLES INDEED.”

Can you summarize for us the conditions of Christian discipleship ?

Read carefully Luke IX. verses 23 to 26 and 46 to 62, also chapter XIV. verses 25 to 33 again, if you would gain some idea of them.

The gist of it all seems to be contained in

XIV. 26 and 33, where we find the one absolutely indispensable condition to be that Christ must be *first* and the rest—relations, possessions, and particularly one's self—*nowhere*.

We "hate . . ." not absolutely, but in a comparative sense, of course. Our love to Christ should so transcend the natural love we bear to our relations that the latter appears as hate when compared with the former. (Luke ix. 59, 60 gives an illustrative case.)

We "forsake . . ." i.e. the affections are severed from our possessions; they are no longer ours, but our Master's, to be held for Him. It *may* mean parting with everything, as in the case of the early Christians, or, like Levi, we may *leave all* and yet still have. Levi's house was still "his own," and his money was used to make a great feast for Christ and draw sinners to Him (Luke v. 27–29). A very good example for some of us!

But if Christ is to be first, self must go, and so we find that the disciple has to deny himself and to take up his cross daily.

"Deny himself," i.e. say NO to self. Accept death—be as a dead man—as far as the working of will is concerned. An inward thing.

"Take up his cross daily," i.e. an outward thing. Accept death as cutting off from the world and its glory. Say no to the love of reputation and popularity.

Stern work this. Bitter to the flesh. Sweet-

ened by the love of Christ. These are the conditions of discipleship.

It is easy to see what discipleship meant for the early Christians. We live in different days. What does it mean practically for us to-day?

It means precisely the same now as then. The only difference is one of surface details. It means saying *no* to our own wills as much as ever. It means the cross—disallowance by the world—as much as ever. The world disallowed them by cross or sword, by wild beast or flame ; it may disallow us by silent contempt, a well-timed snub, or social ostracism. The thing is the same ; but in their case an *acute* attack, short, sharp, and all was over ; in ours, *chronic*, not severe, but lingering and protracted.

It means walking in the spirit of self-judgment, and separation from the world, even in its religious forms. It means giving up many things lawful in themselves for the sake of His name. It means making THE question at all times and under all circumstances, not “What do I want?” but “What does He want?”

It looks then as if the true disciple stands to lose a good deal in this world. What does he gain?

He gains “manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting” (Luke XVIII. 30). The profit will not be of the nature that appeals to the man of the world,

who estimates chiefly by the amount of his balance at the bank. It is more real than that. Here are words which indicate its character: "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John XII. 26).

Companionship with Christ; honour from the Father. Who can estimate the gain of those two things? A glimpse of them was granted to the three disciples, when, having been plainly told what discipleship would involve, they witnessed the transfiguration (Luke IX.)—when they were "with Him in the holy mount" (2 Peter I. 16-18).

Small wonder, then, that Paul—who stood in the front rank of disciples and suffered the loss of all things for Christ—when he fixed the eye of faith on eternal things dismissed the *loss* side of the discipleship account as "our light affliction," and hailed the profit side as "*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*" (2 Cor. IV. 17, 18).

Is there any difference between a disciple and an apostle? If so, what?

There is a very distinct difference. We read, "He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose twelve whom also He named apostles" (Luke VI. 13). The word "disciple" means "one taught" or "trained." The word

“apostle” means “one sent forth.” Every true follower of the Lord was a disciple, only the twelve were sent forth by Him as apostles. Theirs was a peculiar place, therefore, of authority and service.

Moreover, the apostles had to do with the foundations of the Church (Eph. ii. 20), and have long since passed away; but ever since then and unto this day disciples of Christ are to be found on earth.

Where does the power for discipleship come from, and how can we keep it up?

The necessary power is not to be found within yourself, nor can it be worked up by religious exercises. It is in God alone. It reaches us, however, in a very simple way. Dr. Chalmers it was who spoke of “the *expulsive* power of a new affection.” We may just as truly speak of “the *impulsive* power of a new affection.” Let the bright rays of the love of God break into any heart, however dark, and straightway a new impelling power is known and discipleship begins.

That which *starts* it *sustains* it. Read John, chapters XIV.–XVI. They are a perfect manual of discipleship. You will find that *love* is the spring of everything. The Comforter, the *Holy Spirit*, is the power, and *obedience*, the keeping and the doing of Christ’s commandments, is the pathway into which the disciple’s feet are led.

Can you give us any hints to help us, as we seek to live as disciples of the Lord Jesus?

I should just say three things :

1. You will need wisdom and discretion. Therefore you must give the Scriptures their proper place. The will of our Master and Lord is therein expressed ; our business as disciples is to search out that will in dependence on the Holy Spirit's teaching. The Scriptures must therefore be to us the Word of God, and we must make them our careful study.

2. You must maintain a spirit of dependence upon God. Therefore prayer is necessary. The disciple must needs ever cultivate the prayerful spirit.

3. You must ever seek the pathway of obedience. As disciples our great business is to obey rather than to do the greatest of exploits. Prince Rupert, of historic fame, performed great exploits in the service of Charles the First. But his exploits in large measure contributed to the smashing defeat which Charles suffered at the hand of Cromwell's Ironsides at Naseby, and led to the loss not only of his master's crown, but his head also. If he had thought less of his individual exploits and more of the leader's plan of campaign, results might have been different.

Obedience to God's word is our first business. Let us lay aside every weight that would hinder us, remembering the words of the great Master Himself : " If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them " (John XIII. 17). F. B. H.

THE GIVING AWAY OF TRACTS.

OUR recent article on the decay of tract distribution has aroused some attention and given rise to interesting communications from one and another of our readers, to whom our observations seemed most just. Did you happen to read the article in question? If not, and you can lay your hands on our December issue, kindly run your eye over "*A Neglected Field*," and you will see what we say. One of our correspondents writes thus :

" I well remember my dear father telling me that during all the twenty-eight years in which he had travelled over England and Scotland, from Land's End to Caithness, and over several parts of Ireland, no one had ever spoken to him about his soul in any shape or form, except on two occasions and only then when he was reading his Bible !

" His words greatly impressed me at the time, and I determined from that moment to labour—if such it can be called—in that direction. My efforts have been weak enough, but I trust they have not been without some result."

So some good came out of the sorrowful experience of those twenty-eight years !

But think of it. Eight-and-twenty years ! And no fellow-traveller ever gave a tract or

74 THE GIVING AWAY OF TRACTS.

said one word to him about his soul save twice, and only then when they saw his Bible in his hand and concluded that he had some interest in the things of God ! Ought not a fact like that to be laid to heart ?

Another correspondent sends us the following remarks. They are not original, but in passing them on to us he hopes they may stir up some to labour in this too much neglected field.

“ So far as you can afford them, NEVER be without tracts. Personally I have found much blessing in using them, and speak from an experience of nearly thirty years. I believe we should regard tract distribution as the sowing of seed.

“ In earthly husbandry, if we are to have a good harvest, we must do five things, viz. :

“ Watch for good ground.

“ Prepare the ground for the seed.

“ Choose the right seed to put in.

“ Sow bountifully.

“ Water the seed sown.

“ So with tracts ; we must *watch for good ground*, that is, for people who are ready for the message. To do this we need to be in the habit of thinking about others as we move about ; and then we shall learn much from watching their faces and actions. Generally speaking, if people are alone they are more likely to be receptive than when in company

THE GIVING AWAY OF TRACTS. 75

with others (except in the case of children). If we watch we shall often find those who are evidently in temptation, in perplexity, pressed down with care, in suffering, in sorrow, or bereavement.

“ *Prepare the ground* by prayer, both before and when you give the tract.

“ *Choose the right seed.* To do this we should read our tracts through beforehand, and take for use only such as we believe are likely to be effectual in bringing to men the truths which we feel they most need. We must, of course, also above all seek for our Master's guidance and use sound judgment. If we go to the uneducated we ought to take clearly printed tracts in simple words, and if possible with homely illustrations. If, on the other hand, we go to the highly cultured we should take tracts which are so expressed and so got up in every way as to be likely to appeal to them.

“ *Sow bountifully.* ‘He that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully ; he that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly.’ Have the needful variety, and plenty of them with you. Always sow—by the wayside, in station waiting-rooms, railway carriages, amongst cabmen, carmen, and drivers whilst they are kept waiting ; amongst workmen and women during their dinner hour, in hospitals, workhouses, etc. ; in villages and country places, wherever an opportunity is given ; wherever we are.

Many of those to whom we give a tract may in their turn help on the sowing, if we ask them after they have read it to 'pass it on.'

"*Water the seed sown.* Pray that the tract given may be a message from God to the soul. Be careful in your own conduct to do nothing that would be apt to hinder that message. Be often in prayer for those to whom you have handed tracts during the day."

Helpful remarks! May they stimulate us to increased activity in this happy line of service.

"WHO LOVED ME."

GALATIANS ii. 20.

THREE little sunbeams, gilding all I see,
Three little cords, each full of melody,
Three little leaves, balm for my agony.

"WHO."

HE loved me, the Father's only Son;
He gave Himself, the precious, spotless One;
He shed His blood, and thus the work was done.

"LOVED."

HE LOVED, not merely pitied. Here I rest;
Sorrow may come, I to His heart am pressed;
What should I fear while sheltered on His breast?

"ME."

Wonder of wonders! Jesus loved ME,
A wretch, lost, ruined, sunk in misery;
He sought me, found me, raised me, set me free.

My soul, the order of the words approve;
Christ first, me last, nothing between but love.

LETTER TO A ROMAN CATHOLIC.

A request having been received from a friendly Catholic for a copy of the Bible, we gladly sent him one, and with it the following letter :—

“ INKONGO, CENTRAL AFRICA.

“ MY DEAR Mr. W——

“ . . . As I hear that a steamer is expected almost immediately, I will have this letter ready, and the small book packet to go with it. . . .

“ In reading my own Bible, I have found considerable assistance from knowing that it is a complete series of photographs from history, from the creation of man downward. It includes all that can be discovered in man from a *moral* standpoint ; hence we find that every kind of human sin is recorded, as well as every form of righteousness which men can follow when taught and empowered by God.

“ The objections which so frequently are urged by ill-disposed persons (who contend that the Bible contains bad records) fall to the ground, since it would not be true history if it gave not the bad as well as the good.

“ It gives the history of how men were tested in every way before God, and failed to meet His requirements. At first they were left to

78 LETTER TO A ROMAN CATHOLIC.

themselves from Adam's time to Noah's; without any distinct revelation from God. But this period ended disastrously, for at the flood there was but a single family remaining who feared God. Subsequently the people born of Noah and his sons fell into idolatry, and God called upon Abraham to be the head of a separate race, who should have every favour shown, and every possible education bestowed in contrast to the Gentiles around them. I refer, of course, to the children of Israel. But the result was the same. Under priests, and kings, and prophets, the chosen people only became worse until their guilt reached its awful climax in the rejection and murder of their own Messiah, Jesus the Son of God.

“The sample race having thus failed, we may see in the Cross the expiration of the time of testing; and the present period is more one of longsuffering on God's part than of probation. Every man on earth forms part of a race already condemned. ‘All have sinned and come short of the glory of God’ (Rom. III. 23).

“But this clean sweep of all idea of saving merit from our side only brings out more fully, and I may say more beautifully, the worth and suitability of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Hence the Old Testament (closing with its last word, ‘a curse,’ because

LETTER TO A ROMAN CATHOLIC. 79

God's laws were all broken) is followed by the New Testament with its lovely gospel about ANOTHER MAN—JESUS (but that one withal God's holy Son). He was born of woman ; truly a woman, or else *He* would not have been truly a Man ; but yet conceived by the Holy Spirit, and so truly the Son of God. His words and works proved who He was. Then being truly the Lamb of God, He became the victim for sin, sustained its judgment and died for us. Rising again from among the dead, He was saluted in heaven with acclamation ; enthroned at the right hand of God ; and declared to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins.

“ You cannot read the New Testament without seeing one thing. It is that, however we may value the names of holy men and women as saints of God, there is but ONE NAME whereby we might be saved. The Apostle Peter's voice should be heard throughout the whole of Christendom, and, indeed, in all the world, saying : ‘ There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved ’ (Acts IV. 7–12).

“ If, then, we believe on the divine Saviour, the alone Saviour, the all-sufficient Saviour, we are saved by Him, and are then prepared to study the Epistles, and to practise the conduct enjoined there of holiness in private and public. We learn to purify our hearts by

80 LETTER TO A ROMAN CATHOLIC

faith, to order our houses aright in God's sight, to behave justly and unblamably in the world and also among God's redeemed people—His Church. Moreover, we anticipate the return of the Lord Jesus to set up His kingdom on earth, seeking meanwhile to do good to all men.

“As I have said, these things are helpful to me in reading my own Bible every day; but it is important to ask God to make us teachable, so that when we read we may have our hearts and minds ready to hear His voice in the Scriptures. We may be thankful, like the eunuch in Acts VIII. 26–40, if we come across a Philip to help us; but if he be a true Philip and not a false one, he will ‘begin at the same scripture, and preach unto us JESUS.’ No other Name, you see!

“I cannot apologize for thus writing, although some might not like it; but I love the Bible as God's word to my soul, and I value its teachings about the Lord Jesus Christ. If I could commend its perusal to you, I would do so with my whole heart, dear Mr. W——, praying that the same present and eternal benefit which is my portion through God's grace may be verily yours also.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Sincerely your friend,

“W. H. WESTCOTT.”

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. L. F.—We thank you for your kindly criticism of the “*New Birth and Sealing of the Spirit*,” in our December issue. Such criticism is always welcome. It is a proof that our articles are read and that our readers are not disposed to relinquish cherished opinions without some show of Scripture. We observe that you agree with our esteemed contributor in distinguishing between the New Birth and the Sealing of the Spirit. But you differ from him when he places a possible interval between the two. Your contention is that God’s word *never* does anything of the kind. Now we believe you go too far. Look at the case of the Samaritans in Acts viii.: “When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” No one doubts that these souls were born again. But they did not receive the Spirit till some time afterwards, not until Peter and John came down from Jerusalem and prayed and laid hands upon them. You may say that theirs was an exceptional case. We believe it was, but it entirely disposes of your contention that God’s word *never* shows an interval between the New Birth and the Sealing of the Spirit. So with the devout and God-fearing Cornelius of Acts x. Who can question that he was born again long before Peter preached to him and to his friends the gospel of forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ? Believing that gospel he received the Holy Spirit. In the face of these examples can it be maintained that there is *never* a pause between the action of the Spirit resulting in New Birth and

82 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

the sealing of the believing soul with the gift of the Spirit? If it be said that these cases belong to a transitional period, we admit it, but they prove what you declare can never be proved at all.

Let us come closer to the point by asking whether such a thing is possible now? May a person be born again and not immediately receive the Spirit? We believe he may, though if a clear gospel be preached there is no reason why he should not at once receive the Spirit and thus be sealed (Eph. i. 13). If any deny this we think him as much astray as another who holds that the New Birth and Sealing of the Spirit are always simultaneous. Now until a person has received the Spirit of Christ he is not in the true Christian state, or in other words "*he is not of Him,*" as Romans VIII. 9 reads in the New Translation of J.N.D. This does not mean that he is not converted. Surely he is, but if he has not received the Spirit he is not yet in the true, *abiding* state that is properly called Christian. Look at that chrysalis yonder. Observe its movements. Life is there or it would not move at all. Watch it still further. Mark the efforts of the imprisoned insect to get free. See! it breaks through its cell, and after a while you behold it fly away—a golden moth! But we should ever remember that divine things refuse to be too rigidly defined, they are too great, and every illustration is imperfect. Truth is always larger than our statement of it. We can only define according to the measure of our understanding, and when our understanding expands or is found to be at fault our definitions have to be either modified or enlarged.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 83

As to the well of water of John IV., which springs up into everlasting life, we believe it refers to the Holy Spirit, even as John VII. 38 does. But not the Spirit separate from Christ—the One whom He delights to glorify, nor from the Father either. For in what does everlasting life consist but in the knowledge of the Father and the Son? And here we are launched on a shoreless sea. Christ satisfies indeed, and so does the Spirit, for He takes of the things both of the Father and the Son and makes us know them in living power. Beyond this we cannot go. The spring of everlasting satisfaction is there.

W. R.—Laying on of hands is a very ancient practice. It is named in Hebrews VI. as one of the things belonging to the Jewish system from which the Hebrew believers were exhorted to go on to perfection—that is, to things belonging to ripe spiritual manhood. In old days when a man brought a burnt-offering he laid his hands on the head of it (Lev. I.). On the great day of atonement the high priest laid his hands on the head of the scape-goat (Lev. XVI.). These Old Testament examples show that laying on of hands was the mode of expressing the offerer's identification with the offering presented to God. In New Testament days the hands of the brethren were laid on Barnabas and Saul when they were sent forth by the Holy Ghost on their first great missionary journey (Acts XIII.). It denotes oneness—fellowship with the persons on whom hands were laid in respect of the work to which they had been called. But possibly your question has particular reference to the laying on of hands when the Holy Ghost was

84 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

given. There are but two instances, so far as we remember, of this being done—that of the Samaritans, in Acts VIII. 17, and that of the disciples of John Baptist in Acts XIX. Ordinarily, there was no laying on of hands. In the two cases cited there were special and obvious reasons for it. Between Jews and Samaritans there was plenty of bad feeling on both sides, and both sides had to learn a lesson. God had sent His gospel to Samaria and many had been converted. But He had withheld from them the characteristic blessing of Christianity, namely, the gift of the Holy Spirit. For two reasons—first, that Jerusalem should see and be obliged to acknowledge that God had received the Samaritans—Peter and John must go down and see and lay hands on them. Second, Samaria must be made to feel that it was not independent of Jerusa'em and that till the two apostles came the Holy Spirit should not be given. How admirable the wisdom of God ! How gracious of Him by such means to show to both that the Christian faith knew nothing of Jews or Samaritans—that they were all one in Christ Jesus. As to Acts XIX., God was pleased to take care that *Paul's* apostleship, on which some were casting doubt, should lack no feature that the apostleship of others might seem to possess. Therefore when His hands were laid on these disciples, after they had believed the gospel, the Holy Spirit was received. But as we have already said, the Spirit was given without laying on of hands. This was the rule. It was so when the thousands were blessed in Pentecostal days, it was so when Cornelius and his kinsmen were blessed, and it is so still.

WONDERFUL CONVERSIONS.

IT sometimes happens that a feeling of discouragement is produced in the soul of an unestablished believer when he listens to the thrilling narrative of some "wonderful conversion."

"Such experiences have never fallen to my lot," he says to himself. And perhaps he begins to suspect that something is wrong, because his conversion was of a very prosaic kind, unattended by anything of an extraordinary nature. He was not plunged into an abyss of mental agony when the seriousness of his sin dawned upon his awakened soul. He saw no glorious vision; he heard no mysterious voice. No sudden flood of joy, no ecstasy of relief was his.

He simply felt that he was a sinner and needed forgiveness and cleansing. He knew that the Lord Jesus Christ had died for such as he, and that He is ready to welcome and save all that believe on Him. In childlike faith he put his trust in that all-sufficient Saviour, and rested with calm assurance upon the written Word which affirms that "all that believe are justified from all things."

But since then he has heard and read of the marvellous conversions of others, and he has

begun to ask himself why he did not experience anything of a similar nature. He may even go so far as to entertain doubt as to whether his conversion was a real one.

For the help of any who may be troubled in this way, let me point out that *conversion* and *the circumstances that accompany it* must never be confounded. The essential features of conversion are the same in every instance. The accompanying circumstances are probably never exactly alike in any two cases.

What could be more diverse than the circumstances accompanying the conversion of the Philippian jailor, and those attending that of the Thyatiran purple-seller, both recorded in the same chapter, Acts xvi.? In the one case there were the earthquake, the drawn sword, the purpose to commit suicide, the arresting voice of the prisoner, the calling for a light, the anxious inquiry, the apostolic answer.

In the other case all such things were lacking. We simply read that the Lord opened Lydia's heart so that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

The circumstances were utterly different. The story of the jailor's conversion is extraordinary to a degree. That of Lydia's is of the most ordinary description. Yet in her case conversion took place as really and truly as in the case of the jailor.

WONDERFUL CONVERSIONS.

87

When the lofty palm of Zelian unfolds its flower, the sheath bursts with a report that re-echoes through the forest. But thousands of flowers, of equal beauty, open without the slightest sound.

At the grave of Lazarus, the Lord Jesus cried with a loud voice for the dead man to come forth. By the bedside of Jairus's daughter He quietly said, "Maid, arise." The result was the same in each case. Resuscitation was effected as easily by the softly spoken word as by the loudly uttered command.

Even so may it be when two sinners are converted. With the one there may be a great spiritual upheaval, floods of tears, inability to eat or sleep, impairment of health. Then, like a lightning flash, a sudden comprehension of the way of salvation, a shout of praise, and an immediate testimony to all around. With the other there is nothing but the quiet lifting of the eye to Christ in secret, the expression of the heart's confidence in Him, the simple reception of Him as Saviour by faith in the soul. And the result is as real as in the former case. It is just as true that the sinner has passed from death unto life, has been cleansed by the blood of Christ, and has become a child of God.

The one essential feature of conversion is faith, faith that goes hand in hand with repentance, faith that receives the testimony of God's Word as to one's own ruined con-

dition, and as to the efficacy of the Saviour's atoning blood. It is by faith we are saved ; not by faith and a wonderful experience ; not by faith and a deep realization ; not by faith and feelings of any kind whatever.

Faith shows itself by works. When a soul turns to God through faith in Christ, the result is apparent, and others can see that genuine conversion has taken place whether attended by extraordinary circumstances or not.

H. P. B.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

Why do the sons and daughters of Christian parents often remain unconverted and go right into the world ?

FOR an answer to this question we appeal to Scripture. In Ephesians VI. 4 we read : " And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath ; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

We must remember that there are two sides to the question : the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of parents. The first does not come within the scope of our inquiry. Sovereignty is God's secret, and with it we have nothing to do, though with adoring hearts we can praise God that we are the subjects of it, and pray that the same may be true of our children, if they have shown hitherto no clear sign of being the Lord's.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

89

As to the second, we may be sure that there is good reason for fathers being exhorted not to provoke their children to wrath, before the positive side, that of bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, is presented.

When parents expect old heads upon young shoulders, and look for their unconverted children to take the ground they themselves take as Christians, the result is generally disastrous. If children, with no taste for spiritual things, are forced to attend a multiplicity of meetings, what must be the consequence? Though if the parents say how pleased they would be for them to attend, filial affection will often lead them to go with better grace.

Again, parents often adopt too Calvinistic a view as to their children's salvation, and consequently fail to maintain that prayerful solicitude and earnest watchfulness that is so needful. It is true that by virtue of their relationship the unconverted partners and the children of believers are relatively "holy" (1 Cor. vii. 14), and that a principle runs through Scripture that households are more or less bound up with the heads thereof for blessing *or for judgment*. In Acts xvi. the whole household, wakened no doubt by the earthquake, would in all probability be present when Paul and Silas gave their memorable

answer to the jailor's question. The way of salvation was presented to them all, and all believed. We are surely not to understand that the parent believed, and could then hold God to that verse for the salvation of his household. Such an interpretation is too mechanical. Nor is it justified by facts, else the converted descendants of Christian parents would increase by arithmetical progression. But that this is not so, we know, alas, too well.

Christian parents have been heard to scoff at the idea of their children needing to be converted. They consider that they should grow up naturally and insensibly into Christianity. Untold harm has been wrought by this notion, as well as by the opposite mistake of forcing young children into a mere mental assent to the way of salvation, just as they are taught that two and two make four. Parents should pray and look for a real work of the Spirit in the souls of their children.

Above all, they should be themselves consistent with their Christian profession, and should be careful to avoid disparaging remarks upon their fellow-believers in the presence of their children.

Turning to the positive side of Ephesians VI. 4, it may be remarked that the word *nurture* comes from the same root as "nurse" and "nourishment," and carries with it the thought of constant care. From their earliest

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

91

years parents should seek to teach their children the Scriptures, and store their minds therewith, encouraging them to learn certain portions. All this, however, is like laying the paper and wood in the grate. God, by His Holy Spirit, must strike the light that shall produce the fire. In other words, God must work in their souls so that what they learn may take root in their hearts.

We associate ideas of patience, care, wisdom and love with a true nurse. Children need to have a cheerful, loving Christianity put before them. They should have cause to feel that their parents are their best friends and most deeply interested in their welfare.

All this makes very large demands on Christian parents. If they wish to keep their children from evil companions and doubtful associations, they will need to make up for the loss of these by giving them more of their own time, entering into their pursuits and pastimes.

The parents that I have observed to be most successful are those who have entered heartily into their children's pleasures. One father devoted Saturday afternoons to watching his sons play cricket or football with companions that came from Christian homes. Another was accustomed to take his seven sons on long geological expeditions, thus thoroughly interesting them with what was instructive and healthful. Each member of these large

families was in due time converted. Let parents lay themselves out to win their children, with the object of training them for the Lord. This ought to be one of the main businesses of their lives.

With all this there must be constant dependence on God, and unceasing prayer for His blessing. Who shall say what He will not do for those believing parents who in real faith cast their children, the greatest of all their cares, upon Him ?

A. J. P.

The study of Prophecy : what is its value to Christians ?

True prophetic study is an inquiry into the unsearchable counsels of God, the deep riches of divine wisdom and knowledge. In the light that it brings, the Scriptures are seen to be no mere heterogeneous compilation of religious books, but a harmonious whole, from which no part can be omitted without destroying the completeness of the revelation.

Yet this study is often disparaged as being of no practical importance. If Christendom is leavened with unbelief, the neglect of prophetic study in this its true and broader aspect has done more than all the rationalism of Germany to promote the evil. Sceptics may boast of learned professors and doctors of divinity in their ranks, but we may challenge them to name a single one of their number who has given proof that he knows anything whatever of these deeper mysteries.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

93

But the neglect is not confined to such. Though no words ought to be necessary to enforce the importance of the subject, yet ignorance of the prophetic Scriptures, even on the part of those who profess to believe that they are inspired of God, prevails to such an extent that it has become proverbial.

Putting the matter on the lowest ground, it may be urged that if a knowledge of the past be important, a knowledge of the future must be of still higher value, enlarging the mind as it does, and raising it above the littlenesses produced by a narrow and unenlightened contemplation of the present.

Besides this, in our own day especially, prophetic study claims peculiar prominence in that it affords testimony to the divine character and origin of the Scriptures. The Bible is far more than a text-book of theology and morals ; nor is it a mere guide to heaven. It is the record of the progressive revelation God has vouchsafed to man, and the divinely given history of our race in connection with that revelation. Ignorance may fail to see in it anything more than the religious literature of the Hebrew nation, and of the Church in apostolic times, but the intelligent student will find there mapped out, sometimes in clear, bold outline, sometimes dimly, yet always discernible by the patient and devout inquirer, the great scheme of God's counsels and workings in and for this

world, and for the introduction of a glorious universe in which everything shall be headed up in Christ.

The study of prophecy, rightly understood, has a range no narrower than this. Its chief value is not to bring us a knowledge of "things to come," important though this may be ; but to enable us to link the future with the past as part of God's great purpose and plan revealed in Holy Writ.

The facts of the life and death of Christ were an overwhelming proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament. But many a promise had been given, and many a prophecy recorded, which seemed to be lost in the darkness of Israel's national extinction and Judah's apostasy. Their fulfilment depended on Messiah. But He was rejected, and His people cast away.

Are we to conclude, then, that the past is wiped out for ever, and that God's great purposes for the earth have collapsed? In the opinion of multitudes, Christianity is nothing but a "plan of salvation." How different was the attitude of heart and mind displayed by the Apostle Paul! To his view there opened up a wider and more glorious purpose, which should include the fulfilment of all the prophetic utterances of bygone days. Rapt in the contemplation of this he exclaims : " O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How un-

searchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. XI. 33).—*Adapted.*

God is perfect in wisdom, love, and power. Why then did He not design a state of things to subsist in eternity that should not involve everlasting punishment for many? Why will not such a God as our God have a glorious universe free from suffering and remorse?

If God is perfect in wisdom, love, and power, we may rest assured that He will always act in consistency with these attributes, and must therefore conclude that eternal punishment is not incompatible with the revelation which He has given of Himself, but is in perfect harmony with it. It may be difficult for us to grasp the fact, but we may be quite certain that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

After all, we are creatures of very limited understanding. We begin our history with God in the consciousness that we know nothing, and indeed the confession of this is the first evidence that we have begun to know anything aright. It is by His teaching alone that we get any clear idea of our own ignorance, and from that point we are led on in the true knowledge of Himself. Whether or not we are able to see how He will harmonize all His ways with what He is in His nature, we can always fall back upon this great truth that He will in the end be justified in His words, and overcome when He is in judgment (Rom. III. 4).

The idea of a creature who is also a re-

sponsible being is beyond our comprehension, because one would naturally conclude that man is whatever God made him ; and indeed that is just what men say. But man is not a mere machine. He is, as I have said, a responsible being ; and when viewed in this way he must be held to be master of his own actions, and responsible to God for those actions. I do not think any man can understand this, for it is the work of God, and men are not God, though they may have the notion lying at the bottom of their hearts that they are. Were our minds not unbalanced, these questions would never occur to us. As it is, nothing but the Spirit of God, working by the revelation which He has given of Himself, can enable us to take our place according to truth.

God has certainly created beings who are responsible for their actions, and these actions involve eternal punishment. The consequences of sin are appalling to contemplate ; but this gave occasion for the revelation of His love. The less I make of sin, the less I make of the judgment which must fall upon man on account of it. The less I make of the judgment, the less I make of the cross of God's Son. The less I make of the cross, the less I make of the love which came to light there. It is always so : those who make little of the judgment make little also of the cross, and in consequence of this the love of God is depreciated in their

thoughts. Do away with eternal punishment, and you do away with the necessity of the cross; and the strong crying and the tears of the Son of God, that He might be saved out of death, become the expression of the mere weakness of human nature, and the result of an exaggerated idea of the consequence of sin. You lose the greatness of the Person who accomplished the work of redemption, the value of that work itself, and the love of God of which the cross is the one mighty and perfect expression in the sight of the universe. God Himself is degraded in all His attributes and in the love of His heart.

I know no other way than the way He has taken by which He could have enlightened the universe with the knowledge of Himself, nor do I believe that any other way was possible even to God (Luke XXII. 39-46). J. B—D.

THE "HIGHER CRITICS" AND THEIR METHODS.

SOME time ago a correspondent sent us a cutting from a Croydon paper giving an account of a lecture delivered at the Park Lane Adult School. The lecturer chose for his theme "Babylon and the Bible," and permitted himself to indulge in the most rash and un-

warrantable assertions. According to the newspaper report, he stated that

" discoveries in Babylon had completely revolutionized the conception of the Bible: the Babylonian account of the Creation, the Fall, the Tower of Babel, and the Deluge being almost the same as that in Genesis. The Deluge was a local one and did not cover the whole world. In 1902 a complete code of laws was discovered which included nine out of the Ten Commandments, and 200 other laws embodied in the Mosaic code. These laws were said to have been given to Hammurabi, a Babylonian king, by the Sun god, 2250 B.C. Precisely the same idea is repeated 800 years later, with Moses on Sinai, concerning the same laws."

He further affirmed that

" the theory of a special revelation to the Jews and a special inspiration of the Bible was one that could not be maintained in the light of modern research and discovery."

These bold words serve as an example of the unscrupulous methods by which speakers and writers of the " Higher Critical " school mislead the unwary. Very likely the majority of those who listened to this lecture received it as gospel. They were probably not sufficiently established in the truth of God to be able to discern the fallacies with which it teems.

It is to be feared that up and down the country, and in lands beyond the seas, lecturers of this type are to be found. We therefore bespeak the earnest consideration of our readers for the following paper, vindicating as it does the authority of the Scriptures. (ED.)

The infidel assertions of Mr. Silver in his lecture at Croydon on "Babylon and the Bible" are easily made. The disproof of even one of them would take more space than it is possible to allot to such subjects in this periodical. But surely he must have been counting on the probability that few of his audience would trouble themselves to refer to the original documents, when he said that the Babylonian account of the Creation, the Fall, the Deluge, and the Tower of Babel were almost the same as that in Genesis. As to the first, Professor Sayce will be allowed to be an authority, and he says :

"The resemblances and differences between the Biblical and the Babylonian accounts are alike striking. The polytheism which underlies the one, with the thinly veiled materialism which overlies it, is not more profoundly contrasted with the devout monotheism of the other, than is the absolute want of mythological details in Genesis with the cosmological myths embodied in the cuneiform poem. Where the Assyrian or Babylonian poet saw the action of deified forces of nature, the Hebrew writer sees only the will of the one supreme God."

But these traditions were not confined to Chaldea, although the fullest come from thence. Traces of them are found in Phœnicia and India, as well as among the Greeks and Romans. "There are statements in them that are the distinct anticipations of modern science, and which men in the first ages could have known only by communications from

One who knew the facts. Among these are the statements as to the production of the earth and of the heavenly bodies, of vegetation and of animal life *in successive stages*. Science makes that very communication to us as one of her most valued discoveries," as one says, well qualified to speak. How could these facts have been known save by revelation?

As to the Deluge, the universality of it as stated by Scripture is confirmed by the traditions of every race of mankind. To record them would fill a volume. But here too science, especially geology, has come more and more to acknowledge the truth of the Biblical narrative that it once denied. As to the Babylonian account of it, while the resemblances are striking between it and Genesis VI.-VIII., it has been truly said:

"It contains distortions of the truth grave enough to make us sensible of how much we owe to Genesis. The truth was there; but it was inextricably mingled with error which spread darkness not only over the earth's past, but also over heaven."

For the geological witness, Professor Sedgwick says:

"The facts brought to light by the combined labours of the modern school of geologists seem, so far as I comprehend them, completely to demonstrate the reality of a great diluvian catastrophe, during a comparatively recent period in the natural history of the earth. . . . a catastrophe which has left traces of its operation in the *diluvial detritus*, which is spread out over all the strata of the earth."

True, he fell under German influences so as to weaken this testimony later. But Sir H. Howorth, who is not a believer in revelation, has sustained this conclusion by an enormous mass of evidence gathered from every part of the world, though it was entirely foreign to his purpose to vindicate the Bible account of it. Sir J. W. Dawson's *Historical Deluge* will be more readily accessible than these other authorities.

What has been said of his earlier assertions will suffice to show how little Mr. J. Silver is to be credited as to his account of the Code of Laws of Hammurabi, the Amraphel of Genesis XIV.—not otherwise known to history. To one who has the code, as now translated into English, it is apparent at once that nothing could be more misleading than his remarks as to it. Some 700 lines (out of 3614) of the inscription are devoted by the king to setting out his titles, his glory, his veneration for his gods and his care of his subjects. One of the laws only may be quoted as a specimen of radical differences that abound: "If she (wife) has not been economical, a goer-about, has wasted her house, has belittled her husband, that woman one shall throw into the waters." That anything that was just and good in the patriarchal or early laws and customary rights of the people should receive the inspired sanction of God in the law of Moses is not to be

102 HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

wondered at. But to make Hammurabi's the origin of the law of Jehovah given from Sinai, only betrays the animus of the lecturer. The whole progress of modern research and discovery has been to vindicate the testimony of the Word of God in the most remarkable way, against position after position taken up by the naturally infidel mind of man with the utmost confidence of assertion, but now abandoned without confession of such serious error. No such confirmation is needed by the faith of the simplest believer, but it leaves the infidel without excuse.

J. A. T.

The reader who desires further details on the confirmation of Scripture by modern archæological discovery is recommended to consult *The New Biblical Guide*, by John Urquhart.

HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

THERE is a numerous class in the church of God whose gifts are not marked, who yet can sometimes speak half an hour or less at the street corner to edification and profit. These may not be called to leave their earthly callings, but preach as opportunity offers or occasion requires.

It is to this class that we address ourselves. And we have the young or new be-

HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING. 103

ginner's primarily in view. How fine it is to see Christian young men stand up to tell that wonderful story of redemption that angels might covet to proclaim! To such we would offer, in the spirit of meekness, a few practical suggestions.

I.

BE SOBER. A spirit of lightness ill becomes those who stand forth to speak on solemn themes—death, judgment, heaven, hell, eternity! How unseemly to hear them jokingly ask each other, Have you got your sword? Have you your sermon ready? and like flippant expressions, with which some of us are not altogether unfamiliar. And in preaching, our language, whatever else it lack, should be always solemn, though not sanctimonious, cheerful but not light. A brother told us of a stranger he once heard preaching on the street. He was a young man, and was preaching the gospel fairly well, and our friend was arrested. But when the too smart preacher said, "I have heard sinners say they were seeking the Saviour, but I never knew the Saviour was lost," he turned away deeply grieved. Alas! these are the "dead flies" which cause the otherwise sweet-scented "ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour." Such attempts at cheap wit may catch the ear of an undesirable few, but the men most

104 HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

likely to be benefited by our preaching are those to whom such expressions from the lips of one who stands forth as an ambassador for Christ are repugnant. *Be sober !*

II.

BE BRIEF. This advice is not necessary, perhaps, to those just beginning to speak in public. Such are so timid and words with them so hard to find, that the exhortation, "Let thy words be few," would be lost upon them. It is the somewhat practised speaker, who has perhaps a natural fluency of language (which is never an evidence of real gift), who needs to remember that long sermons, like "long prayers," are not always the most effectual. Ten or fifteen minutes is about as long as most men can hold the attention of an audience in the open air. And in a hall or room there are not many who can continue more than thirty minutes to edification. How often we have noticed a brother's discourse to be edifying up to a certain point (when it was evident that he ought to have stopped), but he *would* go on, and so undid much of his good, and wearied his audience up to the straining point. As a rule, brief discourses edify most. Gifted men are generally brief. No rule, however, can be laid down as to length of time. Most unconverted people (and

HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING. 105

to these we preach the gospel) would prefer to have a speaker, however gifted, stop under forty-five minutes than to exceed that limit. "Five words" to edification are better than "ten thousand words" of a man who imagines he shall be heeded for his much speaking. We remember a brother who used to continue to preach in the open air until he saw the back of his last auditor. When remonstrated with by his brethren, he replied: "Oh, it seems a pity to stop *while there is anybody listening!*" Whose failing follow not. *Be brief!*

III.

BE POINTED. Do not attempt to cover too much ground. We have listened to preachers who ranged through the fields of Scripture "from Dan to Beersheba," and "from the river to the ends of the earth." They rambled in an aimless fashion through almost every book in the Bible, and one might think they were labouring to give an epitome of all that the Scriptures contained, historical, doctrinal, prophetic, and preceptive. They appeared to wish to give their patient listeners a complete body of divinity—creation, redemption, sanctification, justification, regeneration, and all. They quoted freely from patriarchs, apostles, and prophets. Their knowledge of Scripture seemed amazing; and

106 HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

it was—it put all in *a maze* who attempted to follow them in their Biblical intricacies and theological subtleties. It was like a soldier on a modern battle-field attempting to kill off the enemy with a large-bore, flare-muzzled, short-barrelled shot-gun. It may make a deafening, reverberating roar, but it is the short, sharp crack of the carefully aimed rifle that does the work and wins the day. Let us speak to the point, and press home upon the consciences of sinners a few plain facts of the gospel, and not bewilder them with a mass of Biblical information. *Be pointed !*

IV.

BE WISE—"wise as serpents." Avoid as much as possible stands in the open air where the preaching will be likely to create disturbance. Do not continue singing after a crowd has gathered, but get to preaching at once. Singing is but the bell-ringing to gather your congregation. Let the helpers stand *before* you. This forms a little nucleus for a crowd, and the larger the crowd of listeners appears to be the more likely are passers-by to stop. Do not, in preaching, shout at the top of your voice, or pitch it four or five times higher than usual. It is penetration and distinctness that is required rather than volume. The more natural one can be the better ; and do

HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING. 107

not fear to be a little colloquial as you go along. Use illustrations frequently and fittingly. It helps to hold attention, throws light on your subject, or clinches what you are saying. As soon as you notice the crowd getting restless and beginning to move on, stop at once. Have your "lastly" ever at your tongue's end, ready for instant use. Sing a rousing hymn rousingly, and when the crowd is again somewhat settled let another speaker begin. If the wind is blowing, stand with your back to it in speaking. Always, if possible, face a wall while speaking. It will save your lungs wonderfully. Do not distribute tracts until the meeting is over, or the tracts will *distract*. If they will do it, it is better to have the people come to you for the tracts. They will appreciate them more than if thrust upon them. *Be wise!*

V.

BE GENTLE—"harmless as doves." Avoid harshness of tone and asperity of manner. Your language may be forceful without being fiery, you may warn without anathematizing, and be faithful without being fierce. In speaking of future punishment (as you surely must), do it with tenderness; and be sure you feel in your own soul the force of what you say. The successful surgeon must needs probe deep

108 HINTS ON OPEN-AIR PREACHING.

at times and with the sharpest of instruments, but how gently he goes about it. How tenderly he touches the wounded spot, even as with velvet fingers, and where the knife cuts into the place that is most painful his voice is softest. Avoid the word "hell" as much as possible. Other words will answer equally as well or better, and will not be so likely to grate upon the ear. "Everlasting punishment," "The lake of fire," "The blackness of darkness for ever," etc., are expressions more startling and quite as scriptural. Persuade men urgently, constantly, fearlessly, as you know the "terror of the Lord," but be sure it is "the love of Christ" constraining you. A college boy told us that he was once moved almost to the point of yielding himself to the Lord by the tears he saw in the eyes of a loving young Christian who was urging him to come to Christ. A single tear will sometimes move a soul when sermons are lost upon it. *Be gentle!*

VI.

BE PATIENT—patient with your fellow-workers, patient with your critics, and patient with the cold, callous world to which you preach. They may malign and persecute you, but preach on; do not allow yourself to become soured, as some, alas! have done and

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 109

now sleep, prophet-like, beneath the juniper tree of depression, in whose branches their silver trumpet of redemption hangs unused. Courage, brethren ! your work is glorious and your reward is sure. “ But ye have need of patience.” “ In due season ye shall reap if ye faint not.” *Be patient !* C. K.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

“ MUCH PUZZLED.”—You will find your questions answered in an article called “ The Higher Critics and their Methods,” in our present issue.

A. W. D.—(1) Rightly understood, Hebrews vi. yields great encouragement to the believer. It speaks of “ strong consolation,” based upon “ two immutable things,” and of the soul’s anchor, “ sure and stedfast.” Yet, strangely enough, it is the chapter which is quoted, perhaps more than any other, by those who seem to desire Scripture support for their misgivings. In order to find such support, however, it is necessary to woefully misread the passage.

It is helpful to observe that from the ninth verse onward, true believers, those who have “ fled for refuge,” are in view. But in the earlier verses, where the hopelessness of apostasy is the subject, it is not so. To quite a different class belong those who, after sharing the privileges enumerated in verses 4 and 5, fall away beyond all hope of recovery.

110 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

If it be asked, How then can such verses be relevant in an epistle to "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling"? we reply that the Hebrews were addressed on the ground of their profession. It does not by any means follow that all who stood in the ranks of the Christian profession were truly converted. This was not the case in apostolic times any more than it is to-day. If doubt be expressed as to whether what is stated in Hebrews VI. 4, 5, can be predicated of persons who have never been born again, we ask, Why not? Is not many a man "enlightened" by knowledge of the truth without being converted? Has not the "heavenly gift" (that which has come into the world with Christianity) brought privileges too numerous to name to thousands besides the true children of God? If a man stands within the circle of the Christian profession, is he not a partaker of, or, more correctly, a "companion" of the Holy Ghost, just as Judas Iscariot was a companion of Christ?

Then notice the argument of verses 7 and 8. There are two kinds of ground: that which "bringeth forth herbs," and "that which beareth thorns." Upon both the rain from heaven falls. Yet one kind receives "blessing from God," while the other is "rejected." In the same way there may be two individuals, equal in every respect, as far as the outward privileges of Christianity go. One, however, being a true believer in Christ, is the subject of divine blessing; the other, though equally privileged, is a mere professor, and his end is to be burned. Such a one is in danger of apostatizing, and is warned of the irreparable con-

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. III

sequences. But these warnings had a peculiar application to those who had lately turned their backs on Judaism, and had embraced Christianity as light from God.

(2) The teaching of 2 Peter II. 20, 21, is somewhat similar. The chapter deals primarily with certain "false teachers." But there is doubtless a wider application, as in the verses which you ask us to explain.

On the one side stands the world, with its "pollutions"; on the other, "the way of righteousness." If a man chooses the way of righteousness to-day, and deliberately reverses his choice to-morrow in favour of the world, does it not prove that he has never been the subject of the saving grace of God? "The *knowledge* of the Lord and Saviour" is one thing. To have a personal link with Him by faith is quite another. He who takes for granted that he is on safe ground because of his "knowledge" will one day discover his mistake. And if he gets tired of his empty profession, and becomes entangled again in the world, what is it but a dog returning to his vomit, and a sow (made clean externally, but with a nature unchanged) going back to her wallowing in the mire?

(3) The Galatian Christians seem to have suffered considerably for the truth's sake. Their sufferings came upon them not merely on account of their faith in Christ, but because they had been led, through the preaching of Paul, to renounce "the works of the law," and to turn their backs on such Jewish ordinances as circumcision and the observance of days. Under the influence of Juda-

112 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

izing teachers, they had, however, returned to some of these things. But if they were right in this, their sufferings had been in vain ; they had suffered for the sake of that which they were now renouncing. This is the evident meaning of Galatians III. 4.

But no explanations of texts like these will suffice to set the doubting mind at rest. What is needed is an apprehension of the grace of God, and of the efficacy of the atoning work of Christ. If one rests his soul upon this foundation, why should he fear ? If his confidence is in the Saviour, will he be left to perish in his sins ? Weak, failing, full of imperfection he may be ; but it was for sinners that Christ died. God's gracious offer of forgiveness is addressed without reserve to all. Then surely no one need hesitate to avail himself of this grace, nor to rest with assurance upon the divine declaration that " by Him all that believe are justified from all things."

N. S.—We really do not know why any one, in giving out a hymn, should read it right through. The habit is probably a relic of the times when comparatively few could read, and when hymn-books were more costly. Under such circumstances the reading of a hymn would refresh the memory of those present, and enable them to join in the singing. This reason, of course, no longer exists, and it is difficult to say why the practice should be continued. No doubt it is sometimes the case, as you remark, that a beautiful hymn is marred by slovenly reading. But we cannot make rules for other people.

“SANCTIFYING DOUBTS.”

A PREACHER of the gospel called to see an old Scotch lady who had been a constant attendant at some meetings that he had held. She spoke of the pleasure and profit she had derived. “But for a’ that,” she added, “I’ll nae gi’e up my sanctifeein’ doots !”

Evidently she imagined that her doubts helped to keep her humble and promoted her sanctification. In this she is by no means alone. There are many who seem to think that there is some virtue in entertaining fears as to their salvation, even though they be true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. To be certain of their security would, in their opinion, be a mark of spiritual conceit ; to speak with assurance of their acceptance with God would be the most unwarrantable presumption.

In dealing with certain men it is perhaps wise to be not too sanguine as to the fulfilment of mere promises. It is often necessary to bind the parties to an agreement by written documents, couched in language of unmis-takeable clearness.

But in dealing with a person of proved integrity, who has gained the respect and confidence of all who know him, and of whom it is currently said that “his word is as good as

his bond,” we should have no misgivings. And if, in addition to his word, he were to give us a written undertaking, duly signed, promising to do a certain thing, surely we should have every ground for complete confidence. We should have no hesitation in speaking with perfect assurance as to the engagement being carried out.

Would this be presumption on our part? Would it be taking any credit to ourselves? Should we be better advised were we still to entertain doubt as to whether our friend would fulfil the obligation into which he had entered?

May it not be truly said that to mistrust a man of unimpeachable honour when he gives his word is to cast a slur upon him, and that to doubt a statement that is set forth in writing, above his signature, is presumptuous folly?

“ Sanctifying doubts ” forsooth ! With whom is it that we have to do ? With an unreliable person who will take advantage of any quibble in order to evade the fulfilment of his promise ? No, indeed. The God upon whose word we are invited to rely is One who cannot lie. His desire is for our eternal good. He came in the Person of His Son to seek and save the lost, thus proving His longing wish to have us happy in His presence for ever. The way He has taken to secure our blessing, the way of the cross, will be the wonder-inspiring theme of the redemption song.

A STEEPLE-JACK'S MAXIMS.

115

Can any one doubt, in view of love that has manifested itself thus, that God desires to have us at perfect peace with Himself? Then where is the difficulty when He assures us that believing in Christ we are freely forgiven, justified from all things, made heirs of eternal life and children of God? May we not rest with assurance upon His plain, unmistakable Word? Is it reasonable that we should hug our doubts, imagining that they have a "sanctifying" effect upon our hearts, whereas in reality they are an insult to our God?

Shall we not rather bow before Him in grateful worship, knowing His love, believing His Word, and assured that we are His by ties that no power in heaven, earth, or hell can break?

R. W—E.

A STEEPLE-JACK'S MAXIMS.

IN Colorado, U.S.A., lives one of the most noted steeple-jacks of the day. He has been climbing steeples, chimneys, and towers for more than thirty years, and during all that time has had but one serious accident—a fall of seventy feet from a church spire. He was saved from death by catching hold of a projecting cornice. One of his highest climbs was to the top of the cathedral at Ottawa, three hundred feet above the pavement.

He supports himself by a single tackle. His method is to make a slip-noose in a coil of strong, supple rope. With one foot firmly secured in the coil and the noose around the steeple, he manages the pulley with his hands, and so works his way up.

A man of such experience, who has climbed nearly every difficult dome and steeple in the land, should have sound advice to give with reference to heights, and falls likely to result therefrom. Here are a few of the maxims which he originated himself and keeps in mind while at his perilous work :—

“ Forget what is below ; keep climbing up.”

“ Pay attention to the place where you are.”

“ Remember, it's the little slip that makes the big fall.”

“ Don't give up hope ; there's always some place to catch hold.”

“ Keep looking up ; you get scared when you begin to look down.”

“ If a man's heart is right, his head is right ; and if his head is right, his feet will be right.”

“ Stick to the rope that you know will hold you ; don't try anything else because it looks good.”

The Christian in this world is in much the same position and danger as the steeple-jack following his perilous work. His calling is an exceedingly high one ; he is said to belong to heaven and to be seated in the

heavenlies in Christ (Phil. III. 14 ; Eph. II. 6). If the saint of Old Testament times could speak of walking upon his "high places" (Hab. III. 19), how much more the believer of this present age. And while it is perfectly true that the Christian can never fall *from* his high place in Christ and be lost, it is equally certain that he may (and will, if he is not careful) fall *in* his path of responsibility on earth ; in fact, he is in constant danger of doing this. And with this possibility and peril in view, let us consider briefly the steeple-jack's maxims.

These maxims are not mere theory with him, but borne always in mind and put into everyday practice while following his calling. A man suspended by a single rope three hundred feet above the street, has no use for theories ; he must trust to proved realities, for his very life depends thereon.

"*Forget what is below ; keep climbing up.*" Do not these words form a close parallel to what the Apostle Paul says with regard to spiritual things ? "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Phil. III. 13). A Christian can never make progress while occupied with past events, whether viewed by him as victories or defeats, triumphs or failures. If failure and defeat, we but invite further overthrow by brooding over

battles lost and temptations succumbed to. If victory and success, dwelling on the fact, and perhaps unconsciously glorying in it, begets vanity, and results in a self-congratulatory frame of mind. In either case it is unprofitable, if not positively evil.

To forget what is below and behind and keep climbing up, pressing, with the prize in view, upward toward the goal, this is what we are exhorted to do. Not one of us has yet attained, nor are any of us perfect ; in fact, there is large room for improvement in us all. We should therefore seek earnestly to make progress. This is one very good safeguard against falling. Peter, in his second epistle, where he speaks of the coming apostasy and false teaching in the church, says : " Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." But how may we be preserved from these perils ? The next verse supplies the answer : " But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ " (2 Peter III. 17, 18). This is a most excellent antidote against all the heterodox cults and false theologies abroad to-day. It is the plant that has ceased to grow that first takes the disease and upon which the poisonous fungus fastens. Let us see to it, then, if we wish to be immune

from the many forms of error that are running like wildfire through Christendom, that we are found constantly growing in grace.

“ Pay attention to the place where you are.” Very important this. We need to keep a sharp look-out lest we unconsciously wander from the path marked out for us by the Lord. It was by not paying attention to the place where he was that Samson, in the lap of Delilah, was shorn of his locks, and deprived of his God-given power and consequent liberty. David too, at the time that kings went forth to war, paid no attention to the place where he was, but remained at home, behind the armies of the Lord, and fell into the trap of the enemy. What a fall, and from what a height—“ the man after God’s own heart,” “ the man who was raised up on high.” Peter too paid no attention to the place where he was when he warmed himself at the enemy’s fire ; and how deep and grievous was his fall, denying with oaths and curses the Christ on whom hung his and all Israel’s hopes.

Pay attention to the place where you are, Christian, and if you see that your position is one of compromise and, consequently, of danger, forsake it at once. Abandon immediately the path, the business, the friendship, the pursuit, the association, or whatever it is that leads you into or keeps you in any place but that of whole-hearted obedience to Christ.

"Remember, it's the little slip that makes the big fall." How true, but how often forgotten! Because the offence committed or the sin indulged is not open and glaring, we imagine that we still stand firmly on our feet. We fail to take account of the hardening process brought on by the "deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. III. 13). If the little slip is not quickly judged and a firm footing in communion with God again secured, the "big fall" will occur all too soon. Abraham made a little slip when he went down into Egypt: he took one step without God. And he ended with lying. His disgraceful expulsion and humiliating rebuke by the pagan ruler of the land proclaim the "bigness" of his fall. "Take us the foxes, the *little* foxes that spoil the vines," advised the wisest man of his times. If we fail to take them we may expect to see the unclean "boar of the wood" following on their heels, to waste with his ravages the vine that was planted to give fruit to the King.

"Don't give up hope; there's always some place to catch hold." A cheering word, this, for those already fallen. It is a sad and bitter thing to have fallen; but to remain down when you might be up is worse. "Return, ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you," said Jehovah to fallen Israel. And to fallen Peter the Lord of love holds out hope.

He says, "Go tell My disciples, *and Peter*." Peter might have been saying in his heart: "The message is to His *disciples*; but how can I now claim to be one of these? Was I ever really and truly one?" But that supplementary message, "and Peter," settled the matter, and he, with the others, was speedily restored. Similar questions may be making their voice heard within your troubled heart. But lose no time trying to decide whether or not you were truly converted previous to your fall. "There's always some place to catch hold." If you cannot catch hold of the restoration for the fallen saint, you may, thank God, seize the redemption that is in Christ Jesus for the unconverted sinner. It is Christ you take hold of, or come to, in either case. Lose no time, therefore, in trying to classify yourself. You have sinned. This you are sure of; and repentance is repentance, whether it be in a backslidden Christian or a benighted wanderer on the broad road. And this is what is demanded where the soul has sinned, whether it be the soul of saint or sinner. The main thing is to lay hold of Christ.

So "don't give up hope," as so many are tempted to do. Satan would persuade them that there is none, that they may be plunged into despair and throw themselves headlong into the vortex of sin. Thus it was with backslidden Israel when she said: "There is no

hope : no ; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go " (Jer. II. 25).

" *Keep looking up ; you get scared when you begin to look down* " is a very good maxim to follow what has just been said. For many, restored in soul to God, or earnestly desiring it, dread the future and wonder fearfully if they will not soon fall as before, or perhaps more lamentably still. But no saint ever fell while looking up, his eye fixed trustfully on Christ. " You get scared when you begin to look down," especially when the look is directed down into that abyss of deceit and untrustworthiness, the human heart. It is enough to scare any one. " I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," wrote one, after taking his last look down ; and from that hour he kept *looking up*, and was ever diligent to exhort others to do the same. Look up, then, fearful soul, and *keep* looking up. Look only to Him who says, " My grace is sufficient for thee ; for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

" *If a man's heart is right, his head is right ; and if his head is right, his feet will be right.*" The heart is right that feels its sin ; the head is right that is not filled with high and lofty thoughts of self ; and this keeps the feet right. They never slide, though they may often stand in slippery places. Such an one can say, like Habakkuk, " The Lord God

is my strength, and He will make my feet like hind's feet, and He will make me to walk upon mine high places." "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint," was written of Israel. It is little wonder, then, that their feet were treading so many forbidden paths. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," is a text which the writer learned when a boy in Sunday-school, and over and over again it has proved itself true as God who uttered it.

Then "*stick to the rope that you know will hold you ; don't try anything else because it looks good.*" The Christ of God never yet failed anybody, and never will. Cleave to Him, Christian, with purpose of heart. Don't try anything else because it looks sound or feels good. The New Theology may appear broad and up-to-date, but it will prove a rope of sand to all who trust it. It has no Christ, no gospel, no foundation of fact upon which its fine-spun theories may be built. It is an utterly false hope for sinful and sinning men. Stick to the Christ of the gospel and the inspired Scriptures which testify of Him. A man forsaking the Christ of the Bible for the speculations and high-sounding pronouncements of the destructive critics would be much like the originator of our maxims exchanging his tried and trustworthy manilla coil for a gaudy, rotten piece

124 A STEEPLE-JACK'S MAXIMS.

of cord offered him under some grandiloquent name. Foolish indeed are they who are giving up evangelic truth for the pitiably poor substitutes palmed off upon them as something much in advance of and decidedly better than anything dreamed of by our godly forefathers, or by saints of bygone days. A taste of this pretended new wine constrains us to say, The old is better. For ourselves we mean to continue clinging to the rope that we *know* will hold, and have no thought whatever of committing our souls' eternal welfare to any new untried substitute.

Or you may be tempted to try the so-called "holiness" rope. Its advocates assure you that this is what you really need to prevent further backslidings, and even possible loss of salvation. "The second blessing," "a second work of grace," "the higher Christian life"—all these things sound so good. But "don't try anything else because it looks good." The reformers were spiritual giants in their day, yet neither Luther, Tyndale, Knox, nor Calvin claimed to have anything apart from or better than Christ. It is not some "blessing," second, third, or fourth, that we want, but Christ. Christ must preserve me now as it was necessary in the beginning that He should save me. There is no other preservative against sin than Christ, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, Christ

delighted in, Christ gloried in, Christ waited for.

Our friend's maxims have done us a good turn. We have used them as hooks on which to hang our words of encouragement for those whose goal is the glory of God. May His gracious blessing attend them. C. K.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

What is the difference between joy and peace?

PEACE is that quiet rest and assurance which results from the cessation of warfare, or from the absence of any disturbing element. Thus *peace with God* is the quiet rest of heart which flows to the believing sinner from the settlement of the sin-question by the cross of Christ (Rom. v. 1).

Again, the *peace of God* is the tranquil rest which the saint obtains when lifted by prayer above the disturbing circumstances of life into the presence of God (Phil. iv. 6, 7).

Joy is more than this. It is the very delight of heaven overflowing into the heart of the believer by the power of the Spirit.

Both have been counterfeited by Satan. There is the so-called "peace" of false religion (Jer. vi. 14), as well as the worldly ease enjoyed by multitudes who are "in peace" under the influence of his soporific wiles

(Luke XI. 21). Moreover, there is the mirth and laughter of the gay and thoughtless world (Eccles. II. 1, 2), which is not true joy. But the counterfeits only prove the existence of the real things.

True peace and joy are intimately connected. The former is the basis of the latter. Righteousness has procured them, and faith obtains them. The divine order is *righteousness*, established on the sinner's behalf at the cross; *peace*, because righteousness is established; *joy*, the outward expression of the inside peace. "The kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. XIV. 17). "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. XV. 13).

But there is a further very practical difference between these two things. Peace finds in the redemption work of Christ a basis more stable than the everlasting hills, and once really possessed by faith is as enduring as the work on which it rests.

Joy, on the other hand, though impossible apart from peace, is "in the Holy Ghost." He it is who takes the things of Christ and shows them to us. Let the Spirit of God be grieved and the joy fades.

Nothing is more unalterable than the work of Christ on which *peace* depends. No one is more sensitive to sin than the *Holy Spirit* of

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

127

God, who is the Source of *joy*. A very small breath of evil is sufficient to bring a cloud upon the blue sky of a Christian's happiness.

Yet peace and joy cannot be entirely divorced the one from the other. The latter can no more be produced apart from the former than cream can be obtained without milk. Pour out some new milk and let it stand. Visit the dairy a little later and look at the pans. Nothing is *seen* but cream, though beneath lies the milk. When the new-born soul has received blessing from that land of salvation that flows with milk and honey; what then? How the *joy* of salvation wells up to the surface! But depend upon it, the *peace* of salvation is underneath. There would never be the joy without it.

"But," says some sorrowful heart, "I have lost my cream! My soul is saved, I have peace as to that, but my joy is gone."

Well, with you it is indeed a case of skim milk! What thief has robbed you? Bestir yourself and find out. When you have discovered the sin that has robbed you, put it away in self-judgment.

Happily for you, at this point the illustration fails. If the cream be once taken from the milk it is gone for good. Not so with joy. Let there be self-judgment, let that which grieves the Spirit be removed, and once more the joy is there.

May each reader have not only—

“ . . . the peace of simply knowin
On the cross that all was done,”

but also the joy which springs from an un-
grieved Spirit indwelling us until the day of
redemption (Eph. iv. 30). F. B. H.

**What does it matter whether a Christian is sound in
doctrine or not, so long as he uses his influence in the
world for good?**

This question supposes, on the part of
the one who propounds it, a mental out-
look most seriously defective. Men only are
in view. The thought of *God* does not seem to
enter into the questioner's mind.

But the parties concerned are not two,
but three: God Himself, the Christian, and
those in the world who are in the Christian's
sphere of influence for good or evil.

Consider first how God is affected. *He
has spoken*, and that a man be sound in
doctrine simply means his acceptance of
what God has said in His written Word,
the precious Spirit-inspired volume of God-
breathed words. That Word God has magni-
fied above all His Name (Ps. cxxxviii. 2),
and he who refuses its teaching, whether in
little or much, thereby deprives God of the
undivided faith and allegiance of His creature's
heart. He robs God of the glory due to Him,
and belittles that which He has highly exalted.

This is no small matter, for it is with Him, beyond all others, that we have to do.

Secondly, what about the man himself? Many to-day who bear the Christian name deny the truth in that which is fundamental, the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, the fall and ruin of man, the nature and efficacy of the atonement, and other great Bible doctrines. Yet they are busy trying to induce men to live what they call Christ-like lives. Does any one say, What does it matter? It matters to himself in the profoundest degree, for he who does thus, even though he were to win the whole world to the "good" which he advocates, must inevitably lose his own soul, for salvation is declared to be through "belief of the truth" (2 Thess. II. 13)—a solemn consideration indeed.

But what if he be not an outright apostate, as we have supposed, but a believer who, perhaps without seeing all that it involves, is yet denying God's Word in parts? To meet such a case it may be remarked that the truth is a unity, perfectly marvellous in its construction. If one part be touched, the whole is affected. For instance, if the divine revelation as to eternal punishment be denied, at once the truth is perverted on every side, the true nature of sin is no longer clearly seen, the holiness and glory of God cease to be rightly apprehended, and the stupendous character of Christ's work in atonement is under-

estimated, and with that all else is involved. The results may not all be manifest at once ; but let a man become unsound in any part of the truth, and time will show that his view becomes distorted as to the whole.

What does it matter? It matters much, because it is true of every man that “as he thinketh in his heart, *so is he*” (Prov. XXIII. 7). He *is* what he thinks. No one can think and believe a lie and yet be in accordance with Christ, who is the Truth. He will be formed by the lie he believes. Let the Christian ponder this, for the issues are far-reaching. Beyond a doubt, our place in the millennial kingdom will be determined by our Lord according to the measure of our faithfulness now (Luke XIX. 17) ; and it would seem that what the believer does to-day in even the most trivial matters has results which reach on even into the eternal state (Luke XVI. 9). The results are thus most serious. God is dishonoured and the Spirit of truth is grieved within the believer, who loses not only his joy and comfort, but also his grasp of the truth as a wonderful whole. To that extent the Christian, warped in his view of every part of the truth, ceases to be formed after Christ, to his own irremediable loss, now and through the ages yet to come.

Little need be said on the third head, for “if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall

THE ESSENTIAL THING.

131

into the ditch " (Matt. xv. 14). So far from influencing others for good, he who is unsound in doctrine can but lead men away from the truth, though it may be in a moral and religious way. True, God may in sovereignty use His Word through the lips even of such. But that is another matter altogether ; it is no question of influence which springs from what a man is, according to what he thinks in his heart.

H. D. R. J.

THE ESSENTIAL THING.

RICHARD CECIL, wishing to impress on some young preachers the importance of ever making prominent in their testimony Christ and His atonement, related how he went to consult a physician, who, after hearing him describe his sufferings, said : " My dear sir, there is only one remedy for such a case as yours," mentioning a particular medicine.

Mr. Cecil then rose to leave, but the doctor said : " We must not part so soon. I have long wished for an opportunity of conversing with you." So they spent an hour together, mutually delighted with each other's society.

On returning home Mr. Cecil said to his wife : " I have been to the doctor's. What an agreeable man he is, with such a fund of

132 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

anecdote, such originality of thought, such a command of language."

"What did he prescribe for you?" Mrs. Cecil inquired.

There was a pause, then Mr. Cecil exclaimed: "I have entirely forgotten the remedy. His charm of manner and conversation put everything else out of my mind."

"Now, young men," said Mr. Cecil, "it may be very pleasant for you if your congregation go away saying, 'What eloquence! What original thought! What an agreeable delivery!' But *take care that they do not forget the remedy*—Christ and His atonement, Christ and a free pardon through His Name."

SEL.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. H.—Matthew XVIII. 34, 35.—Not every one who takes the place of a servant of God is truly converted. But whether converted or not, he incurs the responsibility that belongs to the place he assumes, and will be dealt with on that ground. It is important to bear this in mind when reading the parable to which you refer. A proof that one has received the forgiveness of his own sins is that he forgives those who trespass against him. To be unwilling to do so would show that he has never opened his heart to the grace of God, though he may have taken the place of a *servant*. Upon such a man, knowing divine grace without

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 133

profiting by it, standing in external relationship to God without being born of Him, the sentence of judgment will be stern indeed. Is not this the evident meaning of the last two verses of the chapter? The principle is the same, both for the Jew in the past dispensation and for the professed Christian to-day.

P. W.—We have forwarded your questions as to Dr. Campbell Morgan's article in "The Fundamentals" to the Editor. As he is in Australia, his answer will not appear in an earlier issue than that for August.

H. A. M.—So your Roman Catholic friend fails to understand how any can "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh," according to Hebrews vi. 6, as "He is now a spirit, and a spirit cannot feel." Perhaps we should hardly be surprised at the amazing ignorance that gives rise to a statement like this, since Rome discourages the reading of the Scriptures by her children. If your friend could be persuaded to study the New Testament, he would soon discover the falsity of his premises. The Lord Jesus Christ is not a spirit. He is as truly a Man to-day as when He sojourned on earth.

When He appeared to His disciples after His resurrection, they were at first terrified, *supposing that they had seen a spirit*. Their fears were hushed, however, when the Lord showed them His hands and feet, and said, "Handle Me and see; for a *spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have*." Naturally, their hearts were filled with joy, but as they still looked upon Him with incredulous

134 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

wonder, He asked for food, and proved the reality of His manhood, though risen from the dead, by eating a piece of broiled fish, and of a honeycomb. The narrative is found in Luke xxiv. 36-43.

But what connection this has with the passage in Hebrews vi. it is difficult to see. Surely no sane person imagines that an actual fresh crucifixion, entailing suffering, is meant! If any, after embracing Christianity, should turn back to Judaism, their action would brand the Son of God as an impostor. They would thereby declare their belief that He was rightly condemned to death, and would in this way crucify Him for themselves. Such is evidently the force of the words.

R. H. M.—You know—everybody knows—that the first verse of Romans viii. ends with the words “in Christ Jesus.” The remaining words should be omitted. They are rightly found in verse 4, but not here. In saying this we are not dealing with a doubtful point or even a disputed one. The words are left out by common consent. The statement, therefore, of verse 1 is to be received without reserve. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”—a most blessed fact which nothing can ever shake.

It should be observed that in speaking of those “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” the Apostle has before his mind two classes. What is characteristic of the one? They walk after the flesh. What is characteristic of the other? They walk after the Spirit. All believers, all saints, all who are “in Christ Jesus” do so. It is characteristic of them. It should be carefully

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 135

observed that the Apostle does not enfeeble his argument by pausing to speak of the failures which even the most godly and devoted have to acknowledge.

W. H. D.—The lecture by Mr. C. Blay reported in the newspaper cutting which you were kind enough to send is in itself a sign that the days are upon us to which the lecturer, quoting 2 Timothy III. 1, 2, referred. Among the perils against which we are warned Christadelphianism is assuredly to be numbered. We hold no brief for the defence of the “popular theology” which this lecturer attacks. But we cannot for a moment admit that Christadelphianism, in its onslaught upon what is unscriptural, is upon the side of truth. We believe it to be a system sodden through and through with soul-destroying error.

The great test of every scheme and system, every creed and cult, is *Christ*. How does the doctrine set forth by Mr. Blay answer to this test? He accuses “popular theology” of teaching that there are “Three Gods in One, and One in Three.” In contrast to this, he states his belief that there is “One God, the Eternal Father, dwelling in heaven, in light of glory inconceivable.” His meaning is, in plain English, that the Lord Jesus Christ is not God. But the Bible teaches that He is “over all, God blessed for ever.” When John attempted to worship an angel, the angel rightly forbade him to do so. But when Thomas, with all the unbelief cast out of his doubting heart, saluted the risen Christ as his God (John XXI. 28),

136 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

the Lord Jesus received such homage as His due. Moreover, who is it to whom the title "Everlasting Father" is given in the Scriptures? To the Child that was born, the Son that was given in grace to Israel. "*His name,*" we read, "shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, *The Everlasting Father*" (Isa. ix. 6). Christadelphianism denies this, the divine glory of the Lord Jesus, and thereby exposes itself as anti-christian in character.

The lecturer further committed himself to the assertion that "the 'devil' is the personification of sin," and that "there is no such being as a personal 'devil.'" In this he is in agreement with "popular theology" rather than against it. But let us apply the test. How does this doctrine affect the glory of the Person of Christ? Think for a moment of His temptation in the wilderness. Three distinct temptations to *sin*, to act in independence of God, were presented to Him. Whence came they? The Bible says He was "tempted of the devil" (Luke iv. 2). If the "devil" is a mere poetic term for sin personified, where was the sin from which these temptations came? Was it in the heart of the One who was tempted? If Christadelphian teaching be true, it must have been. But if that were so, we have lost our Saviour. If He had sin within His heart that could appeal to Him as the "devil" is said to have done, He Himself would have needed a deliverer. Perish the thought! Born of a virgin by the direct power of the Holy Ghost, He was as to His manhood holy, spotless, perfect. The Christ of the Bible is not

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 137

the Christ of the Christadelphian creed. In denying the personality of the devil, that creed assails His spotless humanity, just as we have seen that it attacks His Godhead glory.

May it be ours, as far as in us lies, ever to maintain the truth as to the Person of the Son of God, equal in Deity with the Father, yet truly Man. Let us also seek, by the grace of God, to declare the efficacy of His atoning blood, and the reality of the salvation which is the present portion of those who put their trust in Him. These are the great verities with which the eternal blessing of men is bound up. They will endure when the clashing creeds of these "latter times" shall have had their day and shall have perished for ever.

D. R. H.—Since the paper on "The Giving Away of Tracts" appeared in our March issue several correspondents have written suggesting various methods. Some, who have been much blessed in this work, follow no method, but hand out their tracts, wherever they are, to whomsoever they meet. But much may be said in favour of your plan, which might with advantage be followed in many places. Our readers, we feel sure, will be glad to profit by your experience, so we give your account in full:—"I find a system of house-to-house visiting, at least once a month, with gospel books (stamped with the place and hour of preaching) helpful as inspiring confidence. I rarely ask any to the preaching in doing so, but only leave the books and drop a word where possible. I learn how much the books are appreciated. This week I was told of a person feeling hurt that I

138 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

always passed his door and did not leave one. I knew he regularly went to chapel, and took an active part in the work there, so I thought I would not intrude, but have since left a magazine. Having continued this work for over a year, I had confidence in asking people to come and hear Mr. V. preach, and found *many* ready to come."

"ANON." writes that she has for several years spent many weeks in Germany, and some time in Holland, and that while the people of those countries readily accept tracts, very little distribution is carried on. Will any of our readers who may be visiting the Continent this coming summer remember this, and provide themselves with a parcel of good gospel literature in the language of the countries whither they are going?

A. E. C.—We wonder if the good brother whose lines you enclose really thought that he was writing poetry! We have no quarrel with the sentiments which he expresses; but when will people learn that to write poetry some little knowledge of grammar and of the laws of verse is necessary?

ANON., Swansea.—With the general principles of the tract you send we are in full accord. But we do not remember reading in the Scriptures of such persons as "members of a local assembly." The only membership of which the New Testament speaks is that of the *one body*. And of that body—the body of Christ—*every* believer is a member.

C. D.—Matthew xxv. 1-13.—We believe that

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 139

these verses form part of a parenthesis, beginning with verse 45 of the preceding chapter and running on to verse 30 of chapter xxv. The prophetic history relating to Israel and the coming of the Son of Man with which chapter xxiv. largely deals is resumed in chapter xxv. 31. The parenthesis takes up that which belongs to the period of the Lord's absence. In the parable of the Ten Virgins the Lord is not spoken of as the Bridegroom of the church. The church does not appear in the parable at all. The subject is the spiritual state of individuals, wise or foolish, in view of the Lord's return. We quite agree that the *Rapture*, or His coming for His saints, is never spoken of as the advent of the Son of Man. That title suggests other connections. It will be noticed that while it is used five times in Matthew xxiv. and again in xxv. 31, it does not occur in the parenthetical portion which refers to the present period. For it is generally known, we suppose, that the last six words of chapter xxv. 13 are not found in the best Greek texts. We see no force in the argument that because the parable represents the five foolish virgins as being spoken to by the Lord after the door had been shut, they must therefore be Jews. Will not Christendom be disowned by Christ? Will not the professing church be spued out of His mouth? (Rev. iii. 16).

D. D. B.—The practice of polygamy was enjoined by the Mormon "prophet," Joseph Smith, and proof is ample that it exists among his followers to-day. *The Mormons: Whence Came They?* by Mr. Bartlett, of Liverpool, is a book

140 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

that would probably suit your purpose. It contains a wholesome exposure of the nefarious aims of this evil sect. It can be obtained of our publishing depot.

E. L.—Your question as to the expression “the Man in the Glory” has been submitted to one whose opinion will be received with respect. His reply is as follows: “All appearance of familiarity or levity is to be deprecated in speaking of divine Persons, and the more closely we adhere to Scriptural terms, the less danger will there be of irreverence, or of weakening the truth as to the majesty, greatness, and glory of the divine Persons in the Godhead.

“To speak of the blessed Son of God as Man is not derogatory to the glory of His Person, seeing that He became Man according to the will of God, in order to be obedient unto death. As such, God has highly exalted Him (Phil. II. 9).

“*The Man in the Glory* is not a Scriptural expression, yet it is assuredly true, for Christ is truly Man and He is in glory. ‘Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?’ (Luke XXIV. 26). ‘God . . . raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory’ (I Peter I. 21).

“Scripture does not speak of Christ as a *Man* in the glory. Such an expression would suppose one amongst other men. ‘*The glorified Man*’ or ‘*the Man in the glory of God*’ would preserve His pre-eminence and be more reverent. When He is spoken of in connection with others His place of pre-eminence is always guarded (Col. I. 18).” (J. S. O.)

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

An Address to Sunday-school Workers, by the Editor.

IT is taught clearly enough in the verses that we have read (Isa. vi. 1-9) that before we can rightly do anything for the Lord, there must be a divine work in our own souls.

Now this is too often forgotten. If we went through the Sunday-schools of the land and had some talk with those who teach, we should find that scores had put their hand to the plough who know nothing of this preliminary work of God.

How can we speak to others of the love of Jesus, if we do not know that love ourselves? how invite them to come to the Saviour, if *we* have not come? how call on them to flee from impending wrath, if *we* have not fled? how speak to them of the precious blood of Christ if *we* are not under its shelter and cleansing power?

There must be, therefore, a work of God in our own souls before we can rightly set heart or hand to the service of the Lord. In the personal experience which the prophet narrates in the opening of this chapter, we notice two points.

First, he realizes by divine teaching his unfitness for the presence of God. "Woe is me! for I am undone." He comes to the con-

I42 QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

clusion, so to speak, that there is no room in the same place for God and for him.

Having made this heartfelt acknowledgment, he is brought into contact with the altar. The live coal touches his lips, and he learns that his iniquity is taken away and his sin purged.

Is it not evident, then, that before we can serve the Lord we should ourselves know the power of the precious blood of Christ, and thus be at home in the presence of God? But are we perfectly at home there? Have we known, first of all, what it is to be unsuitable so as to exclaim with the prophet, "Woe is me!"? Do we so know the cleansing power of the precious blood that we can stand before God's holy throne, where all His glory shines, without misgiving?

No one can serve the Lord with freedom unless there be first that blessed work of God in heart and conscience. I am persuaded that there are not a few who wear smiling faces in the company of their fellow-Christians, whose conscience needs to know the value of the precious blood of Christ which perfects the believer for ever, and gives him boldness to enter into the holiest.

.

All of us here have set our hand to the work of the Lord. Our spheres of service may be different, but all are surely interested even

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE. 143

if not actively engaged in this happy work among the young.

There are certain things so necessary to be borne in mind in connection with this and anything that we may seek to do for the Lord.

First, ere we can run, we must get His command to go. As the eyes of the Lord look down on the vast wastes of humanity to whom He would have His salvation sent, He says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" And the ready answer is, "*Send me.*" The emphasis is on the "send," not on the "me." He is the Lord's willing servant, ready to take his Master's message at his Master's word. But he must be sent.

Secondly, we need to remember what the Lord says in the early part of John xv.: "Without Me ye can do nothing." He was speaking to His own immediate disciples who were about to be entrusted with the most important commission that had ever been committed to men. But ere they went forth the Lord pointed out that no matter what the power they would receive, they were absolutely and entirely dependent upon Him, as the vine branches upon the vine. So with us; we may labour and toil, we may talk and teach, but without Him we can *do* nothing—nothing that will last. That is the lesson we have to learn. Oh! that God would grant us an adequate sense of our absolute dependence upon the

144 QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

Lord Jesus Christ, so that we might never forget those words, "Without Me ye can do nothing."

Another point, in John vii., we shall do well to bear in mind is that, if living waters are to flow from us on the right hand and on the left, we must go to the Lord Jesus and drink. We must go to Him, not to fill our empty pitchers to satisfy the thirst of others, but for ourselves. What a poor thing it is to search our Bibles simply for other people! We need to read His Word for our own souls' blessing, and to get it woven into the very texture of our spiritual being. Do you thirst to know more of His love, and of His great salvation? Do you thirst to know more of Jesus in the various offices He fills? Do you thirst so to have the Holy Ghost revealing more of His beauty that out of an overflowing heart you may be able to say, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely"? Then do not neglect to come unto Him and drink.

Again, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. vi. 9). What a word of encouragement! Surely if anything can be called well doing, it is to gather the young together and speak to them of a Saviour who is so dear to our own hearts. But we are apt to grow weary. We sow the seed; we pray

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE. 145

and watch for it to shoot up. But the earth that covers it is hard, and we see no springing blade. Then perhaps we say, "I have sown the good seed and would water it with tears if I could, but I see little or no result." Dear discouraged worker, be not weary in well doing, for in due season you *shall* reap, if you faint not. Oh, that your faith may lay hold of that faithful and encouraging word!

Once more, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters" (Isa. xxxii. 20). Not simply, blessed is the man that sows beside Sunday-school waters, but beside *all* waters. How many opportunities of blessed service for Christ do we miss! I often feel sorry to find myself in a railway carriage without some gospel books to give away. "Oh!" says some one, "nothing comes of that." Don't be too sure! Only ten days ago I received a letter from an unknown correspondent telling me something of his spiritual history. He had been converted in childhood and made a public profession of religion in his youth. But as years rolled on he wandered far away from God into paths of worldliness and sin. Traveling by train, not so very long ago, there sat in the same compartment a man, evidently in the humbler ranks of life, who was not ashamed of Christ nor afraid to distribute among his fellow-passengers the gospel books he had. That man's example and fearless consistent

146 QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

ways were instrumental in the restoration of this backslider. Precious fruit for God ! What an incentive to sow beside all waters !

Lastly, let us be careful how we live. The apostle Paul, writing to the Philippians, said, "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." What did he mean ? Did he mean that since the gospel of Christ had been made a blessing to their souls and had brought them the knowledge of salvation, they had now to walk according to it ? Although that is true, it is not quite what the verse means. The apostle speaks of himself as having been set for the defence of the gospel. But not the apostle alone. The Philippians stood for its defence likewise. If the apostle was one of the captains in the army of the Lord, they were private soldiers ; but whether it was captain or private soldiers, they all alike stood for the defence and confirmation of the gospel. Now, says the apostle, if you are identified with this glorious testimony which God is sending through the world, see that it receives no damage by an inconsistent life. Oh ! let us be careful if we have set our hand to the gospel plough that our individual life shall commend that testimony and cast no blot upon it.

Only a day or two ago I received a letter from some one living miles from here. Words of anguish are in that letter, and the spiritual

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE. 147

sky of the writer is black with clouds. How did it come about? Here is the story briefly told. Converted young, brought to know God as his Father, the heart was filled with the joys of God's salvation. Christian companionships were formed and confidence given to Christian persons. But the individuals in whom this confidence was placed broke down; their life was not as it should have been. Then the devil succeeded in occupying the writer with the failings of other people. Darkness came in between the soul and God. The lips became sealed against prayer and there was no reading of the Bible. Then the devil said, "Give it all up." "But if I give it up, what will the other dear members of my family say, and what will Jesus think? I cannot do that, but how can I get back? How can the joys of God's salvation be restored to me?" Do you see, all this began by the inconsistency in the life of another? We have to be watchful over ourselves, that no inconsistency on our part be used by the evil one to the damage of souls and of the testimony of God.

To this exhortation *all* believers will assuredly do well to give heed. But it applies in a very special way to us who seek to serve the Lord. Many eyes are upon us. God grant that in all our ways we may bring glory to His Name, and honour to the gospel which we proclaim.

JUSTIFICATION.

CHRIST *risen* is the grand *witness* that every requirement of God's righteousness respecting our sins is satisfied, and that our justification is perfect and complete.

Christ's *death* is the sole *means* by which we are justified—the one procuring cause apart from all that we can do.

God Himself is our Justifier. Our justification flows from the grace of His heart, His love to the sinner.

It is the *ungodly* whom He justifies, *without works*. In believing on God, who delivered Jesus for our offences, and raised Him again for our justification, we have peace.

Justification, we venture to repeat, is God's own act, which can never be annulled.

Would we know the blessedness and measure of our justification, we must ever fix our gaze on Jesus—dead and risen—and receive the witness of the Holy Ghost, who testifies that “all that believe ARE *justified from all things*” (Acts XIII. 39).

Those justified by God show by their good works that they have been thus blessed. It is the practical demonstration to others, of the inward and unseen faith of those who have Jesus as their Saviour and God as their Justifier.

H. N.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

Are all men children of God? Can a man be a child of God as far as *relationship* is concerned, yet a "child of the devil" *characteristically*?

ALL are the *creatures* of His hand. We are the offspring of God, inasmuch as "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts xvii. 25). Malachi asks, "Have we not all one father?" Does this suggest the idea that all are the children of God? No, for the very next words are, "hath not one God *created* us?" (Mal. ii. 10). But we affirm that all men are not *children* of God.

Creatorially there is no difference between man and man. All alike are His offspring. But the relationship of *children* stands connected, not with creation, but with redemption. They who are born of God, who receive Christ, believing on His Name, and they alone are children of God. Let us quote in full the important passage which plainly says so.

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 11-13).

In keeping with this the apostle wrote to

certain Christians, "Ye are all the children of God *by faith in Christ Jesus*" (Gal. III. 26).

To be a child of God, then, one must be born twice. Born into the world according to natural laws "of blood . . . of the will of the flesh . . . of the will of man," one thereby becomes one of the Creator's offspring. Then, if one is born of God and in faith receives Christ, one becomes a child of God on the ground of redemption.

Can such an one be in any sense of the word "a child of the devil"? No. He may sin, grievously, and belie the character of the One who is now his Father and God. He should indeed be a child of God characteristically (Matt. v. 44, 45). He may appear hardly to be such. Still, such strong terms as "child of the devil" (Acts XIII. 10), "child of hell" (Matt. XXIII. 15), "children of disobedience" (Eph. II. 2), "son of perdition" (John XVII. 12), are uniformly used in Scripture of those who were very manifestly not the children of God. And the use of these terms shows clearly enough that the popular notion of the universal Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man is but an empty dream, having no foundation in fact. F. B. H.

Do temptations all come from the same source? If not, are they to be resisted in a different way according to their origin?

There are three sources of temptation,

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

151

Satan above, the world around, and the flesh within. Each kind has its special antidote. The attacks from *Satan*—and under this head wicked spirits are included—are to be resisted in two ways. First, we are to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Then we are to put on the whole armour of God, the various parts of which are enumerated in Ephesians VI. 11–18. Clothed in these, covered by the shield of faith, we are invulnerable. If we resist Satan, he will flee from us.

The world is a seductive and ensnaring system suited in its pride and lust to fallen human beings. Opposed to this vast system, John's first epistle shows us the knowledge and love of the Father as its great antidote. It is in beholding the manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that our affections are drawn away, and set upon a scene where the world has no place. To keep ourselves in the love of God, our Father, is the way to keep the world out.

The flesh is to be overcome in three ways. We are to *reckon* ourselves dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God. We are to walk in the Spirit, and ever to look to Christ as a Saviour from temptations. To walk in the Spirit is the opposite of self-occupation. His mission is to engage us with Christ, and make His things known to us. In this, and keeping the finger of self-judgment on ourselves, and walking in obedience to God's Word, is the true secret of

deliverance from the power of temptation from within. The flesh will remain in us unchanged as long as we are in the body, so we shall need to the end of our journey the power of the Holy Ghost within us, and the priestly grace of Christ without us. When tempted we must look instantly to Christ; the very act of turning to Him turns us away from the temptation, and brings His power in to overcome. It is His present work to save us from the thralldom of sin. If we look within (to see if we are walking in the Spirit) the result will be self-occupation. If we look to Christ as our Shepherd and Priest, we shall find safety in the pathway to glory. He is able to keep us from stumbling.

H. N.

What is meant by the "law of liberty" in James i. 25?

It is the Word of God which directs a man who has been begotten by the Word of truth, urging and cheering and strengthening him in the very things that the new life delights in. Consequently it has an action exactly opposite to that exercised by the law of Moses on the Israelite. The law spake on this wise: "Thou shalt not do" this, "Thou shalt not do" that. Why these prohibitions? Because the human heart desires to do what God forbids, and the law puts its veto on the indulgence of the will. It was necessarily negative, and not positive, in character. The law forbade the

very things to which man's own impulses would have prompted him, and is the solemn means of detecting rebellious, fallen nature. But this is not the law of liberty, but the law of bondage, condemnation, and death.

The law of liberty brings in the positive for those who love it—the exercise of the new life in what is according to its own nature. Thus it has been often and very aptly described as a loving parent who tells his child that he must go here or there, knowing perfectly well that it is what the child would like to do. Such is the law of liberty. It has not at all the character of resisting the will of the child, but rather of directing him. The child is regarded and led according to the love of the parent, who knows what the desire of the child is. So is it with the true Christian. God has given him a life that loves His ways and Word, that hates and revolts from evil, and is pained most of all by falling through unwatchfulness under sin, if it seemed ever so little. The law of liberty, therefore, consists not so much in restraining the gratifications of “our old man,” as in guiding and guarding the new. For the heart's delight is in what is good and holy and true; and the Word of God exercises us in cleaving to that which is the joy of the Christian's heart, and strengthens us in our detestation of all that we know to be offensive to the Lord. Such is the law of liberty. W. K.

154 QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

Are all Christians called to definite service for Christ?

“ To *every man* his work ” (Mark XIII. 34), affords a decisive answer. Every Christian is not a distinct gift, as evangelist, pastor or teacher, but all are *saved to serve*, as Romans XII. 3 shows. After speaking of the measure of faith which God has dealt to *every man* (i.e. every Christian), the chapter, under the figure of “ one body in Christ,” deals with different kinds of service. The very figure used shows that every member is called upon to serve.

In the human body there is not a member, seen or unseen, that does not serve. As I write these lines my thumb and forefinger hold my pen, they in turn are controlled by the hand ; the hand supported by the wrist ; the wrist, by the arm. The brain directs the fingers to write, and the eyes to assist. And all the while the heart is beating, the lungs breathing, the blood circulating, each member of the body contributing to one common end. I Corinthians XII. 11 confirms this. “ All these *worketh* that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to *every man severally as He will*,” “ *every man* ” again referring to every Christian.

Never did the Lord's people need more help than at the present, never was there more need for the earnest spreading of the gospel. No one can fail to find work to do pleasing to the Lord, even though he may not be called to fill any prominent place.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

155

Matthew XXV. 14-30 will help us here. One may receive five talents, another two, a third but one. But there is as much need for the possessor of one talent to trade with it as he to whom five talents were entrusted. See also Luke XIX. 12-27. While in Matthew the *talents* signify ability imparted, which differs with each individual, in Luke the *pounds* signify opportunities which all in their measure possess alike.

Whatever it be, let our service be simple, unaffected and the result of communion. Let no one copy another, but get his orders from the Lord. One may preach to thousands, another may read to a blind woman ; one may travel to distant lands, another may serve at home ; one may write tracts, another may distribute them.

It is always refreshing to hear of simple, original methods of service. I have never forgotten the pleasure with which I heard years ago of an aged man, whose heart was in so precarious a condition that he could not preach or do anything that involved physical labour. He used to search the newspapers for the addresses of families lately bereaved. To these he sent a gospel booklet and one full of comfort for those in sorrow. This he did for years, till he went to be with the Master he loved to serve.

The spirit of true service was grasped by an

aged woman in the Southern States of America. When the Confederate troops were marching through her town, she tied a red handkerchief on a poker, shouldered it, and marched some distance with the soldiers. When asked what she was doing, she replied, "If I cannot fight for my country, I can encourage those who do." A spirit like that amongst those who belong to Christ is greatly to be desired. A. J. P.

THE HANDS OF CHRIST.

SOME believers are not as happy as they might be. This is deeply to be regretted, not only because it mars their testimony, and hinders their general usefulness, but because it is dishonouring to God.

Would a wealthy, loving father like to have his son as uneasy regarding temporal things as some Christians are regarding spiritual matters? If he found that his son doubted his affection, or the sufficiency of his means to maintain him, would he not do all in his power to satisfy him on these points, by giving him proofs of his love, and showing him the extent of his resources?

Now, what ails many of God's children is that they do not understand their relationship with Him, nor the intensity, constancy, and endurance of His love. They require instruction as to these great matters. I desire

to help in this direction by calling attention to three figures employed by the Holy Ghost in the Word to show believers how they are loved, and how safe they are for eternity.

I. GRAVEN ON HIS HANDS.—“*Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands*” (Isa. XLIX. 15, 16).

A mother's love is the strongest and most enduring of all human love. How many stories can be told to illustrate it! We have heard of a Highland widow who sacrificed her own life that she might save her child during a snowstorm, by stripping herself of clothing in order to keep him warm.

When the s.s. “London” went down, a few years ago, the last thing seen was a newborn baby, held overhead by its mother, who seemed resolved that if all should perish, her babe should be the last.

For all this, however, a mother *may* forget her child. But the Lord will not forget those who are His. He will never forsake them, for He has “graven them up on the palms of His hands.”

II. HELD IN HIS HANDS.—Have you ever weighed these golden words in John x. 28, 29? “*I give unto them [My sheep]*

eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." Could language be more positive as to the eternal security of Christ's sheep ? Impossible ! The honest soul can desire nothing plainer. There is, blessed be God, no such thing as getting out of the hand of God the Son, or God the Father. John xv. 6 does not contradict this. There the subject dealt with is not salvation, but fruit-bearing. Unless we abide in Christ, enjoying His love, living near Him, having constant fellowship with Him, we cannot be happy, useful, fruit-bearing Christians. This is a serious matter in its place, but does not touch salvation. Let "never perish" and "eternal life" have due effect upon your soul, and keep them in mind when considering more difficult passages.

Some may say, "Yes, that is clear enough ; but how am I to know that I am one of Christ's sheep ?" Well, notice that the Lord Jesus says, "The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep" (v. 11). Have you seen your own life forfeited because of sin ? ("The wages of sin is death.") And have you heard His voice calling you ? If so, you may assuredly conclude that you are one of His sheep, and as safe as He can make you. You

“ I, JESUS.”

159

will then delight to follow Him, in walk and in worship, seeking to act in accordance with His mind and word.

III. MEMBERS OF HIS BODY.—I have heard a remark to this effect: “ Though none can pluck us out of His hand, we may slip through His fingers ! ”

This brings us to the third and last figure. We read in Ephesians v. 30: “ *We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.* ” May we then “ slip through His fingers ” ? May the members sever themselves from the body ? Do you not see how impossible such a thing must be ? Instead, therefore, of giving room to doubts and misgivings, drink in the comfort of these precious words, and you will be as happy as a bird on a summer morning.

L. L.

“ I, JESUS.”

IN a closing and tender address to the churches the personal Name of the Lord Jesus is introduced in a most touching way. “ I, Jesus,” He says, “ have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.” This is exquisite. When He announces Himself in His Jewish associations as the Root and the Offspring of

David there is absolute silence on the part of the bride. She knows Him after another fashion; but, when He styles Himself the Bright and Morning Star, at once the Spirit and the bride say to Him, “Come.” The glad declaration of the “Morning Star” fills her heart with the desire of seeing Him. Before the mighty orb of day rises with healing on His wings, its harbinger, bright and welcome, shines forth, and the Bridegroom summons to His heavenly home His bride. “I, Jesus!” What sweet associations attach to that precious Name. He gave Himself for His bride, and now He says He is coming, in person, for her. His love has never waned during the long centuries of her frequent forgetfulness of Him; and now His coming draws near, and the Spirit in her gives the suited note of welcome. The Spirit and the bride say “Come.”

Further, let the saint who hears the note say “Come,” and let the poor thirsting soul come; whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Christ is welcome to the believer, and the unbeliever is made welcome to Christ. It is the last, lingering, lovely call of grace, so that to the final moment the Name of Jesus is replete with pity and love.

I commend that dear Name to you, reader, in all the wealth of its grace. None like the blessed Lord Jesus; none worthy but He!

J. W. S.

[161]

GOD'S WAYS.

GOD'S ways are not like human ways,
He wears such strange disguises ;
He tries us by His long delays,
And then our faith surprises.
While we in unbelief deplore,
And wonder at His staying,
He stands already at the door,
To interrupt our praying.

He takes a leader from the Nile,
Where mother-hands have laid him ;
Hides him in palaces the while,
Till He has right arrayed him.
He sends him to the desert's hush,
With flocks and herds to wander ;
Then meets him in the burning bush,
New mysteries to ponder.

Why should we doubt His care or grace,
As though He had forgotten ?
As though time's changes could efface
What love had once begotten ?
As though He'd lost us from His thought,
And moved on now without us,
Whose love has always goodness wrought,
And constant been about us ?

J. E. R.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. A. M.—Poisonous indeed is the literature that has been circulated in Banbridge if the copy of *The Watch Tower*, which you so kindly send, is to be taken as a sample. You rightly brand its contents as “sophistries.” But we have no need to wade through its thirty dreary pages in order to ascertain the true character of this new-fangled American religion. We have but to ask: “*What think ye of Christ?*” This question serves as a sure test. “Millennial Dawnism” exposes its anti-christian character by its answer. Christ, it tells us, was created, just as truly as any one else. He was but a creature. But He has been “raised to a higher plane” and has *become* divine. This we repudiate with all our hearts. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ from all eternity was God, equal in power and glory with the Father. When in the appointed time He became Man, He did not cease to be what He ever was, the everlasting God. He entered into the condition of manhood, and became truly Man, yet remained truly God. This is a great mystery. We cannot fully explain it or understand it. Who can? But we can believe it, since it is what the Scriptures assuredly teach. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh” (John 1. 1, 14).

“Millennial Dawnism” being utterly wrong as to the Person of Christ, degrading Him from an Omnipotent Creator, creating all things and upholding them by the word of His power, to a mere creature, must necessarily be wrong throughout

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 163

its whole system of teaching. And so indeed it is. Let all who love our Lord Jesus Christ beware !

A. H. S., Nova Scotia.—(1) Acts II. 37-41.—It would not be scriptural to say that those who were pricked in their heart and said to the apostles “What shall we do?” were already saved. For this would set aside what Scripture means by being saved in the full sense of the word. It is often used as if it were equivalent to being converted or turned to God. But Cornelius’ case (chap. x.) and Peter’s narrative in chapter XI. show the force of it. That the devout centurion had been born again no one can doubt, for he manifested the fruit of this work of grace in his prayers and alms, which would not otherwise have been acceptable with God. But according to the angel’s direction, he had sent for Peter to tell him words whereby he and his house should be saved. We turn, then, to Peter’s address to find what these words were. He had hardly begun to speak, he tells us, when, having adduced the testimony of all the prophets to Christ, “that through His Name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins,” the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard.

To be *saved*, then, is to be brought consciously in the faith of the soul on to the ground of accomplished redemption through believing the glad tidings of the remission of sins. And this is accompanied by the Holy Ghost taking up His dwelling-place in the forgiven person.

In the type (Exod. XII.) the children of Israel were safe enough from the judgment of God within the blood-stained lintels of their houses in Egypt.

164 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

But it was in view of deliverance from all the power of the enemy through the Red Sea—a figure of the death and resurrection of Christ for us—that the word “Stand still and see the *salvation* of the Lord” was given (XIV. 13). There had been safety for the sheep in the Jewish sheepfold into which the Lord entered (John x.) to call out His own. But it was by Christ as the Door that those who had heard His voice entered into the first characteristic of the new blessing: “By Me if any man enter in, he shall be *saved*,” though much more lay beyond.

Nor was it otherwise in Acts II., when the Jews were brought to deep concern of heart by the testimony of Peter to the One whom they had crucified being raised and made by God both Lord and Christ. The question was, What were they to do? The answer came, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Thus they would save themselves from the guilt of that untoward generation. Three thousand of them received the apostle’s testimony, and were baptized, the Lord forming them as the saved remnant of His ancient people into the assembly.

The Philippian jailor was a similar case of the conviction of conscience essential to any real work of God in the soul. The case of the disciples at Ephesus (chap. XIX.), in connection with what the apostle recalls in Ephesians I. 13, confirms what we have seen to be the force of salvation. They had been truly converted through John the Baptist’s testimony to a Christ who should come

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 165

after him. Paul brought them the tidings that He had come, and of His finished work, "the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also having believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise."

(2) 1 Corinthians xv. 23.—The apostle was addressing Christians at Corinth, and not dealing with abstract questions. In speaking of the order of the resurrection, "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming," we need not suppose that he was thinking of any but Christians. But there is nothing in the expression to exclude any of the redeemed of a past dispensation. It is true that without us they could not be made perfect (Heb. xi. 40), that is, have their place in bodies of glory according to God's counsel. With us they shall; though the place of those who have been called in this present time will ever be distinct.

As to children of irresponsible years, how could they be excluded of whom it is expressly said (Matt. xviii.), "The Son of Man is come to save that which was lost," and that they have their representatives before His Father's face in heaven? Not a hoof was to be left behind when redemption from Egyptian bondage was in view. Would it be like God's ways to leave the little ones, for whom Christ died, when He comes for redemption in power?

The confusion may have arisen from thinking that it is as the assembly we are raised at His coming. It is not so as Scripture presents it. The assembly is composed, as Ephesians ii. shows, of those who are quickened together with Christ, raised up together, and made to sit together in the

166 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

heavenlies in Christ Jesus. The assembly as such is not raised. The resurrection of 1 Corinthians xv. is of individuals who as to the body sleep, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; though, as Christians, our proper expectation is not death at all. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye—all that is mortal swallowed up in the power of the life we already possess in Him. (See verses 50-53; 2 Cor. v. 4; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17.)

(3) As to the different aspects of the kingdom expressed by "kingdom of Heaven" and "kingdom of God," help may be found in *The Kingdom in Various Aspects as presented in Scripture*, which may be had of our publishers. J. A. T.

CONSTANT READER, N. Tawton.—Your question is answered in the reply to A. H. S. above.

J. H.—(1) Luke xxiii. 43.—The word "paradise" was made familiar through the use of it in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to describe the garden that God planted for Adam. Nor is it ever used to describe anything else than a garden, orchard, or the like, whether of that brightest spot in all the fair scene of God's creation where He put the man that He had formed, or of what man could make for himself in his own little measure of the same character. Centuries later the memory of Eden survived to express what was rich and beautiful (see Gen. xiii. 10, and Ezekiel's allusion to it in chaps. xxviii. and xxxi. of his prophecy). It is never found once in connection with the under-world, heart of the earth, or Hades.

The New Testament use is consistent with what

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 167

we have seen, if it is transferred from earth to heaven as we might expect. Paradise is identified with the third heaven by Paul in 2 Corinthians XII. In Revelation II. 7 the Tree of Life is there, a reminiscence of the earthly paradise, but filling the whole scene.

The paradise, then, where the converted robber went to be with Christ that day was the brightest spot in all the heavenly glory: absent from the body to be laid in the grave, he was present with the Lord. The statement to which you rightly take exception arises from seeking to localize *hades*, a purposely vague term to express the unseen. It is that condition of things into which the dissolution of the body leads all alike, answering to the Hebrew *sheol*, into which the blessed Lord passed, but would not be left (Ps. XVI. 10). For a fuller consideration of this part of the subject refer to the volume of *Simple Testimony* for 1904, pp. 80 to 82.

(2) Acts xx. 28.—One is deeply thankful to hear of the divinity of Christ being maintained in a day when such efforts are being made to undermine the truth of His Person. But it is not necessary to found that truth, which enters into the whole structure of the testimony of God, upon a passage where critical authorities differ as to the true reading. The original, as we have it, and that I do not doubt is the only true reading, may be rightly translated as in the Authorized Version; but unquestionably it is open to another rendering more according to the analogy of Scripture, as in the New Translation of J. N. D., by "the blood of His own." We find the usage in John xv. 19, "the

168 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

world would love his own." Again, "He spared not His own Son." It is no question of the true Deity of the Lord, but of the fitness of speaking of the blood of God. Scripture hardly warrants the expression that God suffered and died, though He whose blood was shed was "God, blessed for ever."

On the other hand, nothing could be more appropriate than the rendering mentioned above, as the editor of the New Translation points out that God purchased the Church with the blood of His own, as of Him who was nearest and dearest to Him—a deeply touching expression. J. A. T.

R. T., Iowa, U.S.A., writes that after giving away tracts on Sunday afternoons for more than a year, and hearing of no result, he grew somewhat disheartened. But one day, while driving to a neighbouring town, he met a young man to whom he had given a copy of *Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment*, and who had been brought to God by reading it. "Let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

W. H. D.—We have sent your letter on singing out of doors to the writer of the article to which you refer. As he is in Honduras, there may be some delay in receiving his answer. Meanwhile, can you give us any well-authenticated instances of sinners being converted through open-air singing?

R. RILLIE.—We can give you the information you ask for if you will send us your address.

THE CROWNING DAY THAT'S COMING.

MANY Christians are uncommonly fond of singing about themselves. When the hymn "Our Lord is now rejected" is given out, they join gladly and vociferously in the chorus:—

"Oh, the crowning day is coming!
Is coming by-and-by!"

Ask them *whose* crowning day is coming, and with a look of surprise they will say, as if no other answer were conceivable, "Why, ours of course!"

No one doubts that a crowning day is coming for the Christian. The day of reward and honour will surely follow the present time of reproach and suffering. A crown of righteousness awaits all who love the Lord's appearing. The persecuted saints at Smyrna were cheered with the promise: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. II. 10). The four-and-twenty elders of Revelation IV., representing, no doubt, the saints in heaven after their translation from earth, are described as wearing crowns of gold. Yes, the Christian's crowning day is most certainly coming.

Is it not good, however, to give Christ a place in our thoughts in this connection, and

170 THE CROWNING DAY THAT'S COMING.

to sing the afore-mentioned hymn with reference to Him? Does it not gladden our hearts to know that *His* crowning day is coming by-and-by?

It is true, of course, that He is already crowned with glory and honour in heaven. Hebrews II. 9 tells us so. But it is not to this that I refer. The Scriptures affirm that the day will come when the One who was rejected and despised shall reign in triumph, and that the government of the world shall be upon His shoulder. Creation's crown shall deck His once thorn-torn brow. His pierced hand shall wield the sceptre of the universe. He whose words of grace were once slighted and disbelieved shall give law to the nations.

Since God is righteous, this must be so. Could He allow the holy, devoted life of the One who in infinite grace took up a path of dependence and obedience to pass unrequited and unacknowledged? If King Ahasuerus delighted to honour the man who had faithfully served him, will not the God of glory delight to heap honour upon Him whose meat it was to do His will?

Think for a moment of what the earthly life of Christ must have been to the heart of God.

The engineer of the great Brooklyn bridge was confined to his bed when it was in process of construction. Day by day, looking from his window, he saw its massive piers rise and the

THE CROWNING DAY THAT'S COMING. 171

network of cables skilfully formed. When it was finished, being asked what he thought of it, he replied, "*It is exactly what I wanted it to be.*"

May we not say that this is just how God regarded the devoted life of obedience and untiring service lived by Christ on earth? It was just what He wanted. All that His heart desired that man should be, Christ was. Perfection was found in Him. Well might the heavens be rent, that God might proclaim His delight in His beloved Son. Who can tell what it must have been for Him to look down and see, for the first time in the world's history, a Man whose every desire was to do His will, who lived altogether for His pleasure?

Shall He not vindicate that holy life, so ruthlessly "taken from the earth"? Shall He not exalt, in the very scene of His rejection and humiliation, the One who so perfectly glorified His Name? Assuredly He will do so. The crown will be bestowed upon Him "whose right it is" (Ezek. xxi. 27). Might and dominion shall be His. And He is worthy!

.

What will that day, the crowning day, mean for those who have shared the reproach and rejection of Christ? Let the answer be given in the very words of Scripture: "Joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him,

172 THE CROWNING DAY THAT'S COMING.

that we may be also glorified together " (Rom. VIII. 17). " If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him " (2 Tim. II. 12). " To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne " (Rev. III. 21).

When Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, expressed a hope that Caligula might some day sit upon the imperial throne, the Emperor Tiberius, in his anger, threw him into a loathsome dungeon. There he languished as the weeks and months rolled slowly by. But when, in course of time, Caligula ascended the throne, he went in person to set the prisoner free. He robed Agrippa in royal purple and gave him a palace for his residence. He took the heavy chains which he had worn and for every link of iron he gave him one of gold, of equal weight.

Even so will it be in the crowning day. When the King comes into His kingdom not one who has borne loss and reproach for His sake will be forgotten. Rich will be the rewards that He will heap upon them.

" What a day will that be when the Saviour appears !

How welcome to those who have shared in His
cross !

A crown incorruptible then will be theirs,

A rich compensation for suffering and loss."

.

The thought of this should lead us, in true loyalty to our rejected Lord, to refrain from

THE CROWNING DAY THAT'S COMING. 173

seeking honour and popularity in the world. At the coronation of an English king, the nobles in attendance wait till the crown is placed upon the monarch's head. Then, and not till then, do they place their coronets upon their own heads. It was a reproach to the Christians at Corinth that they were antedating the crowning day. They were already "reigning as kings" (1 Cor. iv. 8). The apostles, on the contrary, were "made as the filth of the world," and "the off-scouring of all things" (v. 13). Surely, theirs was the happier and truer portion. And theirs will be the brighter crown in the coming day of glory. Godfrey of Boulogne, the Crusader, when named the first Christian king of Jerusalem, refused to wear a crown of gold in the place where his Saviour had been crowned with thorns. God grant us more of this spirit.

What honour can possibly compare with the honour of sharing the triumph of Christ and being mentioned by Him as having been faithful during the day of His rejection?

General Howard, one of the heroes of the American civil war, said: "There was one proud day of my life, and that was when a vote of thanks was moved to me on the floor of Congress for my stand at Gettysburg." And what will it be for the believer, now scorned and looked down upon, as his Master was before him, to have his name mentioned in the

presence of the assembled universe, and be acknowledged as Christ's in the crowning day? The Lord Himself has said: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God" (Luke XII. 8). Again: "He that overcometh . . . I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels" (Rev. III. 5).

Who would not seek grace from God, then, to be an overcomer and to share in the glory of "the crowning day that's coming by-and-by"?

H. P. B.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

Is there any reason why we should, or any good reason why we should not, expect a world-wide revival before the end of the present age?

GOD'S ways are "past finding out" (Rom. XI. 33), and therefore without any plain declaration of His intentions it is impossible to say what it may please Him to do. The general trend of Scripture evidence on this point, however, seems to lead to the negative conclusion.

The addresses of the Lord to the seven churches (Rev. II. and III.), if viewed prophetically, point to revival of some kind in Philadelphia before the end of the age. But this, probably an already accomplished fact, is

hardly a "revival" in the ordinary usage of the word.

Apart from this passage Scripture appears to lend no support to such an expectation.

Paul predicts for the last days "perilous times," and says evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Tim. III. 1, 13). Peter tells us that "there shall come in the last days scoffers," who will ridicule the hope of the second advent (2 Peter III. 3, 4). John corroborates their witness, and not only predicts the coming of the personal Antichrist at the end of the age (Rev. XIII.), but declares the spirit of Antichrist to be an actually existing thing in his own day (1 John IV. 3).

With this the epistles of James and Jude agree. Nowhere do they predict revival. It is rather of apostasy than of world-wide revival that they speak.

Moreover, God does not seem to have ever worked in the way of *world-wide* revival. Many a time did He previously grant revivals to Israel, as Scripture witnesses. They were always sporadic and sectional. If history is to be trusted, He has also granted many during the Church period, but always of the same nature. The Reformation was, perhaps, the greatest of all revivals since the apostolic age, but it was practically restricted in its influence to northern Europe.

If the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is deferred, it may please God in His mercy to grant here and there revivings to His saints and awakenings amongst sinners. But I venture to express the fear that the more "revival" is talked and written about by well-meaning believers, and the more it becomes the great object before them, the less likely are we to witness one of real power.

The manufacture of so-called revivals has in these days been reduced to a science, and worked with the precision of a mathematical problem. We need increasingly to beware of "revivals" which do not bear the stamp of a heavenly origin.

When Christians think less of "revivals" and more of Christ and His glory, when they are more zealous for the salvation of souls and less keen in the counting of converts, then surely may we expect that revival will visit us from on high. Though just what form it may take it is impossible for any man to say.

F. B. H.

Second Answer.

May we expect a world-wide revival before the coming of the Lord? Huge, enthusiastic conventions have answered this question with a vociferous "Yes!" and the echo has reverberated to the ends of the earth. But what say the Scriptures? Their reply will be one of unerring precision, unbiased by pride

in human achievement. But we shall need a prayerful and diligent spirit in order to read their predictions aright.

What do the Scriptures lead us to expect? On the one hand, that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," that "they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to them teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. III. 13; IV. 3, 4). This the Holy Ghost declared nineteen centuries ago, and "Higher Criticism," New Theology, Theosophy, Millennial Dawnism, Seventh Dayism, Mormonism, Christian Science, etc., with their hosts of adherents, have fulfilled the word to the letter.

From such a mass of spiritual corruption and apostasy no revival can be looked for. The evil leaven will work with its baneful influence until the professing church is spued out of the Lord's mouth as an unclean thing (Rev. III. 16). The outlook could not be darker for Christendom, for the profession which has the form of godliness without the power. There is not a feature of it that is acceptable to God. Its sole aim is the glory of man, and God has declared that no flesh shall glory in His presence.

Yet, in spite of all this, those who love the

Lord have a glorious hope. The bright and morning star shining amid the deep gloom casts its beams into their hearts. The Lord is coming again, quickly coming, and in *connection with this hope we may expect revival.*

To His disciples, before He left them, the Lord Jesus said, "I will come again." These words were as balm of Gilead, administered by the great Physician, to their broken hearts and troubled spirits. From the day of His departure from earth they longed and looked for His return, because they loved Him. Just as the hope of His coming again had a prominent place in the hearts of His people at the beginning, even so, if we read the last book of the Bible aright, will it be immediately before His return. The prospect of His coming will be precious to them according to the measure of their love for Him.

It is a revival of this kind, of love to the Lord Himself on the part of His own and of earnest longing for Him, that we may expect, rather than a world-wide gospel movement. Such a revival seems to be involved in the fact that the Bride, in concert with the Spirit, cries "Come" in response to the Bridegroom, and that the final word of all is—"Even so come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. XXII. 17, 20).

This revival of earnest longing for the Lord may not be widespread, nor attract the attention of the world, nor be chronicled in the

columns of the newspapers ; but it will be a great reality in the lives of those who come under its gracious influence. It would appear that three things will result from it : (1) *Separation from the world* : there will be a going out to meet Him (Matt. xxv. 6). “ Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself ” (1 John III. 3). (2) *Faithfulness to the truth* : there will be a holding fast to the Word, a cleaving to the Name of the Lord (Rev. III. 8, 11). (3) *Evangelistic zeal* : for it is written, “ Let him that heareth say, Come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely ” (Rev. XXII. 17).

Those who are thus revived will surely be maintained by the grace of the Lord and the power of the Holy Ghost, and will continue quietly, and perhaps unnoticed, to witness for Christ. Undoubtedly He will bless their testimony now, as He will assuredly recompense them with an abundant reward in the day of His appearing.

J. T. M.

Is it possible for a tradesman in the twentieth century to conduct every detail of his business on Christian principles ?

Let me answer this question in Scotch fashion by asking another. Why accentuate the twentieth century ? It may be said that the conditions under which business is trans-

acted now are altogether different ; that the pace is faster, and the standard of commercial morality lower. This may be, but the truth of God is unalterable ; and for the Christian tradesman who accepts the Word of God as his guide there can be but one answer to this inquiry : *YES !*

Before proceeding further, let us dispose of a fallacy that has found currency in certain quarters. It has been stated that the spiritual and the everyday life are quite distinct one from the other, and that therefore we must not bring the Lord into our business. I have heard of some saying that they could not make their business a subject of prayer, because if they did they would be obliged to alter their methods. Such notions are, I believe, largely responsible for the manifestly changed attitude of the unconverted towards professing Christian tradesmen.

In former days the knowledge that a man in business was a Christian inspired confidence ; to-day, alas, it not infrequently arouses suspicion. Such ideas as those referred to open the way for practices that are not only disreputable to the shopkeeper, but dishonouring to the Lord.

The person who takes that Holy Name upon his lips, and whose dealings with his fellow-men will not stand the searching scrutiny of the judgment-seat of Christ, is, so far as his useful-

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

181

ness for God is concerned, like " salt that has lost his savour " (Luke XIV. 34, 35).

For a direct answer to our question let us turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians, where we have the truth as to Christian blessing presented in its highest aspect. In chapters I. to III. our hearts are made glad as the blessings that are ours in Christ are recounted. We are conducted in thought to those heights of glory where we are associated with Him, and finally pointed on to that day when all things shall find their centre in Him. In chapters IV. to VI., however, we have a sharp reminder that we are, as to our circumstances, still on the earth, surrounded by contrary elements. The great desire of the apostle was that the truth should produce corresponding practice.

Thus, in chapter IV. 28, we read : " Let him that stole steal no more : but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

There are other ways of stealing than putting one's hand into another man's pocket. James V. 1-5 describes a thief of a different kind. The man who burns the midnight oil, and rises almost with the dawn of day, who is behind the counter from early on Monday morning till late on Saturday night, who writes up his books on the Lord's day, who sweats his employés, and undersells his fellow-tradesmen, robs God, his

own body, his wife and family, his assistants, and his fellow-tradesmen. I do not suggest that a real Christian would do this. But there are many who answered to the description in their unconverted days, and the most convincing proof that they can offer to the world of the mighty transformation which the grace and power of God have wrought is that they "steal no more." When a man gets converted his business is affected. The change is apparent, and thus God is glorified.

This does not imply that a Christian will not attend diligently to his business. Scripture does not put a premium on laziness. On the contrary, it condemns it in the strongest possible terms (2 Thess. iv. 10). But the converted business man will no longer grind from one year's end to another to amass wealth. He will labour that he may have to give to him that needeth. His object will be to be like his Lord, who "went about doing good" (Acts x. 38). And inasmuch as he is running his business for the Lord, he will conduct his every transaction in a way worthy of Him.

We do not ignore the fact that this *may* entail suffering. It may involve smaller returns, and may bring reproach. But there is another side to the story.

In 1 Samuel ii. 30 we read that "the Lord God of Israel saith . . . them that honour Me I will honour." This is as true to-day as ever.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST.

183

There are noble instances of business men whose motto is "GOD FIRST," and of whom He knows that the more they get the more will they give. Such He prospers abundantly.

May a word of personal experience be permitted, that the reader may be assured that the foregoing is not mere arm-chair philosophy? It is the privilege of the writer to represent a firm, the head of which is a devoted Christian. In our line of business competition is fierce, underselling is rampant, and "low-down" tactics notorious. This gentleman has consistently refused to countenance any *modus operandi* unworthy of his Christian calling, and while, in not a few cases, orders have been lost and contracts have gone elsewhere, business has increased by leaps and bounds, and there is the satisfaction of knowing that the profits gained are the result of clean methods and fair dealings. I therefore unhesitatingly answer the question in the affirmative, and would seek to encourage all my Christian fellow-tradesmen to *trust in God and do the right*. W. B. D.

"THINK AND THANK" was the motto on the family crest of Sir Moses Montefiore, the Hebrew philanthropist. These two words, differing only in one vowel, have the same derivation. In the old Anglo-Saxon language thankfulness meant *thinkfulness*. Thinking of all God's goodness draws forth our gratitude. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits" (Ps. CIII. 2).—J. W. H. N.

[184]

BE TRUE.

A YOUNG Christian solicitor in Dublin, later than usual at his office, was walking leisurely homeward one evening when he met an acquaintance.

"Hullo ! how are you ?" the other cried. "Whither bound ?"

"I am going home, I have been late in the office," said the solicitor.

"And I am going to the theatre," said his friend.

"Well, as I am in no hurry, I'll turn and walk with you in that direction." They walked together to the theatre door.

"Good night," said the Christian ; "I am off home now."

"Indeed, you are not," said his friend. "Come in with me."

"No, thank you."

"Oh, man, come along ; what a shame to walk with a fellow to the door and turn. Come in."

"Indeed, I will not," said the young solicitor. "I have never been in a theatre in my life, and I am not going in now."

"You'll be in one to-night," said the other, as he gripped his arm and pulled him to the door. There were some iron railings which the young Christian laid hold of and held fast. Suddenly he jerked himself free and ran.

Some days later he met his friend, and said to him, "I say, X., you know I am a Christian, do you not ?"

"Yes, I suppose you are."

"Well, if I had gone with you to the theatre the other night when you wanted me to, what would you have thought of me ?"

"What would I have thought of you ? To tell the honest truth, if you had gone in with me I should not have had an atom of respect for you during the whole course of your earthly existence."—*Communicated.*

THE DAY OF TROUBLE.

“The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble ;
and He knoweth them that trust in Him.”—NAHUM i. 7.

THE judgment of God, voicing itself in earthquake and desolation, has, many a time in this world's history, swept all before it. It will do so again on a scale greater than ever. But above the murmur of storm and tempest are heard these words of the Lord, reminding us of what a resource His people have in Him. Six things are to be noticed in this verse :—

(1) Sovereignty, (2) Goodness, (3) Strength, (4) Trouble, (5) Knowledge, (6) Faith.

SOVEREIGNTY

is implied in the divine title with which the verse begins. The Lord, Jehovah is sovereign in might. He controls the universe. None in heaven or earth can say, “What doest Thou ?” Angels and men must do His bidding. Created things are His servants. “He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings” (Ps. cvii. 35). He can speak by the fury of the whirlwind, or by the still small voice. He can make men tremble, or by gentleness can win them and calm their fears.

GOODNESS.

He "is good." How well to know that no matter how great the stress of circumstances, He, in all His ways with us, works to make known His goodness. No one fears goodness. It calms our fears and hushes them into peace.

When He asserts His sovereignty, we may sometimes tremble. But when we learn that it is His goodness bowing our hearts and breaking our stubborn wills, what different thoughts take possession of our minds! We are then able to welcome the discipline, and kiss the rod.

When we remember that He who loves us comes riding upon the storm in sovereign goodness to bless us, we can say from our hearts, "All is well."

STRENGTH.

"A stronghold." Weakness marks us all. We are weaker than a bruised reed, or than water spilt upon the ground. Every time we bend our knees in prayer we confess it. At the same time we realize the almighty strength which is made perfect in weakness.

A stronghold, or a strongly guarded fortress, supposes that we are in a place of possible danger, in an enemy's country exposed to his malicious power. If permitted, he would take great pleasure in bringing trouble upon us.

How well to have a stronghold, a well-guarded fortress, where we may be sure of

THE DAY OF TROUBLE.

187

perfect safety whatever arises. "In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion ; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me ; He shall set me up upon a rock " (Ps. XXVII. 5).

Storms may rage, but the sovereign power and goodness of the Lord are as a wall of fire, through which no shaft of the enemy can penetrate. He can still the proud waves of trouble, and say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further."

TROUBLE.

"*The day of trouble.*" In one sense it is always a time of trouble. It was so in Paul's day, in Luther's, in Whitefield's. It is the same in our day.

Nevertheless, special seasons of trouble fall to the lot of all. There are times when mentally, physically, and spiritually we are strained to the utmost.

The health of a beloved father gives way, or a fond mother sinks in death. A darling child, the light of the house, is taken away. A business reverse comes ; retrenchment must take place all round, or bankruptcy will ensue. Some one starts a lying report which circulates with amazing rapidity, stinging a sensitive nature to the quick. While sin is here, trouble of one kind and another will spring up. We cannot escape it. Without it we should never need comfort. Not having experienced the

need ourselves, we could not learn the sympathy and grace of Christ. We could not be used to succour others in their trials.

Many have testified that it was worth passing through trial to have the comfort of God's presence and support in a special way. We learn in our troubles what a true and tender-hearted Friend He is.

KNOWLEDGE.

"*He knoweth.*" Does He not know everything? Of course He does. From the crawling worm to the angel's flight, nothing escapes the vigilance of His searching eye. "He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" But this is knowledge of a special kind. It is like that other word, "Thou hast known my soul in adversity." People in trouble have said, "Nobody knows me," meaning that no one seems to understand their special case or circumstances. There are times when lover and friend are put far from us. But there is One who knows us through and through, and sees our uprising and down sitting, who has searched us and *known us*.

When the biting winds of adversity blow, *He knows*. He never denies us. He tells us our faults to our face, and covers our failures from the eyes of others. Nothing proves true friendship more convincingly than this. As His tender, searching eye looked into Peter's

THE DAY OF TROUBLE.

189

heart, all that Peter could say was, “*Thou knowest* that I love Thee.”

How much is wrapped up in these appealing words from the backslider’s broken heart: “*Thou knowest.*” The others may have wondered, after all that Peter had said and done, if he were a true disciple, but he as much as says, “Whatever others may think or say, *Thou knowest* that I love Thee.”

FAITH.

“*Trust in Him.*” Faith is like the Alpine plant that grows best in the storm. It will not be needed in heaven, because eternal calm will be there. Then it will give place to sight.

Faith is the substantiating, or making real, of things not seen. It is the *power of faith* that brings the brightness of heavenly things into the present and gives us the enjoyment of them, as if we were in actual possession.

No difficulty is too great for *faith*. It can pierce every obstacle that would obscure its vision. It can meet a lion, and stop his mouth, or endure banishment, torture, fire and sword. It laughs at impossibilities. It can feed thousands of orphans daily, or cheerfully starve in a garret, saying, “Poor? I am not poor; I have Christ: what want I more?”

Difficulties afford opportunity for faith to show itself. Our path is beset with entanglements, which faith surmounts as on eagle’s

190 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

wing, soaring aloft on its mighty pinions to the God who creates it, and who never disappoints its desires.

Billows may roar, and breakers of trouble may threaten to engulf our little bark, but faith is still and peaceful. When the thunders crash and the lightnings flash, and the earthquake of calamity shakes all that men count stable, faith rests in the knowledge that God is behind the scenes ordering all for His own glory and our good. "Lord, increase our faith!"

P. W.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. M. H.—We heartily thank you for your interesting letter as to our article on *The New Birth and the Sealing of the Spirit*. Yes, indeed! it is our earnest desire that our readers should test every statement in these pages by the Word of God, and we again beseech them to receive nothing that is not in accordance with the teaching of that blessed Book. The Holy Scriptures are the only court of appeal to which our conflicting opinions must be taken, and their judgment is final and decisive. We acknowledge the authority of no other.

You state your question very clearly: "*Is there a class of born-again people at the present time who are not indwelt by the Holy Ghost?*" From the whole tenor of your letter we conclude that you would say, No.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 191

That there were such cases in the early days of Christianity you do not appear to doubt. Indeed, none can question it with the Acts of the Apostles in their hands. The Samaritans, converted under the preaching of Philip, to say nothing of Cornelius or of the disciples whom Paul met in the upper coasts of Ephesus, prove it beyond denial. But your query is, Are such cases still to be found ?

We see no reason to deny it. But at the same time we frankly acknowledge that such a state is not contemplated in the epistles of the New Testament, unless we may take Romans VII. as an exception. The true Christian state is marked by the indwelling of the Spirit, and that assuredly supposes faith in Christ.

Even in addressing the Galatians, who had fallen from grace, or were in danger of so falling, the apostle never raises any doubt as to their having received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Nor does he when writing to the Corinthian saints whose practical state was so deplorably low. But certain results are said to follow the indwelling of the Spirit : “ Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty ” (2 Cor. III. 17) ; the love of God is shed abroad in the heart (Rom. v. 5) ; and the soul cries “ Abba, Father ” (Gal. iv. 6). Now if there be no liberty ; if the love of God is not shed abroad, and there be no cry of Abba, Father ; if in place of liberty there is bondage, fear and dread ; if instead of “ Abba, Father ” being the soul’s delightful cry there is trembling lest it should come under wrath and everlasting condemnation, how can it be said that the Holy Spirit dwells in that person ? Born of the Spirit such an one may be, but the

192 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

sealing of the Spirit is yet to come. At least, so we believe.

We observe what you say as to Nicodemus in John III., and the woman of Samaria in John IV. But do you not think that in the Gospel of John we get a good deal of anticipative Christianity? See, as an example, John VII. 37, 38. And mark the evangelist's comment on our Lord's words in the verse that follows. No doubt in coming to Him the soul would find His words to be spirit and life, but the full fruition of the Saviour's promise could not be till He should be glorified. That is what we mean by *anticipative* Christianity. He, the good Shepherd, had come, not to kill and to destroy, but that His sheep might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John X. 10.) The more abundant life awaited the coming of the Spirit. So in the light of that fact we must interpret our Lord's words to the woman of Samaria in John IV.—[ED.]

F. L. F., Philadelphia, and A. T., Lonsdale, U.S.A. —Your letters of inquiry as to New Birth and the Sealing of the Spirit have been forwarded to the Editor in Australia. His answer will be forthcoming in due course. Meanwhile may we refer you to his reply to W. M. H. above?

H. J.—You would do well to give heed to a saying of Robert Hall's: "In matters of conscience *first* thoughts are best; in matters of prudence *last* thoughts are best."

S. B., Lowestoft.—Does your neighbour believe that when a sinner is saved, through faith in Christ,

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 193

it is *God* who saves him? There is not only the step taken, the decision made, the faith exercised by the sinner, but there is an act of God, so that we can speak of "*God*, who hath saved us" (2 Tim. I. 9).

We are assured also, in the same verse, that He has "called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace." These wonderful words are true of every believer, whether he understands them or not. God has saved us and called us, without reference to any works of ours, because of His own purpose.

Now we read that "whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccles. III. 14), and that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. XI. 29). He neither undoes His work nor goes back upon His word.

Moreover, the believer in Christ has been born of God (1 John v. 1) and stands on an altogether new footing with regard to Him, the footing of *relationship*. He has received a new life and nature and is sealed with the Holy Ghost against the glorious day of full redemption for which we wait (Eph. IV. 30). He is viewed by God no longer as "in Adam," involved in all the ruin consequent upon Adam's sin, but as "in Christ," beyond the power of death and the reach of condemnation, sharing all the blessing that belongs to the new place taken by Christ in resurrection, as Man in perfect acceptance with God. This, we repeat, is true of every believer, whatever may be the measure of his intelligence.

If it is forfeited when the child of God sins, then

194 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

there is not one of us that has not forfeited it again and again. "For we all often offend" (James III. 2, N.T.). But, thank God, it is beyond all possibility of forfeiture. If we sin, provision is made for our restoration. "We have an Advocate with the Father." Chastisement may be inflicted; for God is holy, and cannot overlook the sin of His child. This, however, is another matter. If your neighbour will allow his mind to dwell on the great truths to which we have referred, remembering that we are God's workmanship (Eph. II. 10), and that He Himself has saved us, begotten us, sealed us, and set us before Himself in all the acceptance of the Beloved (Eph. I. 6), there will be little room left for his misgivings.

H. A. M.— You ask: "If the purpose of God was that Christ should come into the world to make atonement for sin, how could Israel receive an offer of the kingdom and the King, when the setting up of the kingdom was an impossibility until the work of the cross was accomplished?"

The setting up of the kingdom was not "an impossibility until the work of the cross was accomplished." During the first four thousand years of fallen man's history he was on probation. The last test which was applied was the sending of Christ into the world. He, the Shepherd of the sheep, entered by the door, the appointed way, marked out by prophetic testimony. Born King of the Jews, He was presented to Israel, bearing unquestionable credentials. The common people, in their selfishness, would have made Him a king, that they might have their slothful and godless souls surfeited

with bread ; but they had no desires after God, and He who “ knew what was in man ” would not trust them. The leaders from whom He should have received the kingdom were hostile to Him from the outset, and therefore the only crown they gave Him was one of thorns, the only throne He received at their hands was a cross. He could have taken the kingdom by power, as He will do in the coming day, but that would have interfered with the responsibility and probation of the creature, and therefore He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before her shearers, He opened not His mouth. This test, applied to man, brought to light the great truth that there was no good in the flesh, and that man would not have God even in grace and love.

This left room for the accomplishing of the purpose of God, and for putting everything on the ground of propitiation. The blessing of man no longer depends upon the creature's fulfilment of his responsibilities, but upon the power of God witnessed in raising Christ from the dead. Even Israel will be taken up again on the principle of resurrection, though they will not live in the resurrection sphere, but in flesh and blood.

Another thing. Had the world received Christ, it would have proved man to be good at heart, and not a fallen, God-hating creature. But this is supposing an impossible case. Man was evil, and God knew it ; and hence we find, all through the prophets, “ the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.” Supposing man had received Christ, and propitiation still was a necessity on account of sins committed, this could have taken

196 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

place at any time, for with the making of propitiation man had nothing whatever to do. Man's rejection, scorn, spitting, scourging, was no part of that work. It was done between God and Christ alone. Man did not need to crucify Him in order that that should take place.

That it was done in connection with man's rejection of Christ is true; for it pleased God to manifest in that one cross the enmity of the human heart and the love of His own. Both are set before us in the death of the same blessed Person. But man being what he is, and God being what He is, no permanent blessing could have come apart from the work of redemption.—J. B—d.

W. H. D.—“Your criticism of my statement, ‘*Singing is but the bell-ringing to gather your congregation,*’ in the April number, is entirely just, and I fully agree with all that you say. It was not my purpose to speak slightly of the use of hymns in the work of the gospel. My point was that when a crowd is once gathered it is wiser, instead of continuing singing, to begin the more direct work of preaching at once. Where the singing is good it can certainly do no harm to continue for a while, or even to give most of the time to it if there are no specially gifted speakers. Good singing is certainly better than poor preaching, though the best of both is not too abundant anywhere to-day. But, good or indifferent, let us put forth an honest effort when we undertake either, and leave it with God to use the weak and despised things, even as His Word declares that He does.”—C. K.

[197]

THAT BLESSED HOPE.

A BIBLE DIALOGUE.

Questions by T. M. C.; Answers by H. A. M.

THE return of the Lord Jesus Christ is not a mere doctrine to be discussed, nor a study to be taken up as we might take up astronomy. Prophetic knowledge is good, but the supremely important thing is that we may be attracted to Christ Himself, filled with His love, and consequently watching for His coming.

| There are many who never give a thought to the subject. Yet in the New Testament the second coming of Christ is referred to in one verse out of every thirteen; in the epistles, in one verse out of ten. D. L. Moody once admitted that he had been much opposed to the truth of the Lord's coming, until, through constantly finding it mentioned in Scripture, he was constrained to accept it. It then became one of the most precious truths in the Bible to him.

What are the objects of the coming again of Christ?

There are six that we may mention :

1. To have His redeemed with Him in bodies of glory.
2. To rule this world, now in rebellion.
3. To gather Israel and place them in their own land.

4. To execute judgment on the rejecters of His grace.
5. To swallow up death in victory.
6. To bind Satan.

What is to be the manner of the Lord's return?

He is coming personally. He promised, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself" (John XIV. 3), and this was corroborated by the two who appeared to the apostles after His ascension, and said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

We learn from many Scriptures that He may come at any time; and we are exhorted to be ready, and to watch for His coming. Not only the day, but the hour is unknown (Mark XIII. 32).

Is not death the coming of the Lord?

No. The two are contrasted in Scripture. Death comes to all, to saint and sinner, to Christian and heathen. About one hundred thousand deaths take place every day. Suppose that one death out of every hundred is that of a Christian. To say that death is the coming of the Lord would mean, therefore, that He comes a thousand times a day.

Peter was told that he was to die; but when he asked about John, the Lord said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to

thee ? ” The disciples did not understand His coming to be death, but just the contrary, as a reference to John XXI. 23 will show.

Some think that the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is what is meant by the coming of Christ. Does Scripture teach this ?

No, for the Thessalonian believers had received the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. iv. 8), yet they were still waiting for God's Son from heaven. The Holy Ghost came on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 33, and it was not until twenty years after that the first epistle was written. Yet that and nearly all the others refer to the coming of the Lord as still future, while the book of Revelation, the last message from the Lord, in its closing words, gives us His promise, “ Surely I come quickly.”

When a person is converted, does not the Lord then come to him ?

In a sense, yes. Christ comes to dwell in believers by His Spirit, to keep, lead, instruct, and sanctify them. But this spiritual coming must be distinguished from that coming in Person when the sleeping saints will be raised and every believer translated to the Father's house above.

It was an integral part of the faith of the Thessalonian Christians, that not only had they turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, but also *to wait for His Son from heaven* (1 Thess. i. 9, 10).

Is not the world to gradually get better, and a time to come when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea?

It is true that a blessed time of peace and glory is foretold, and Scripture clearly indicates the means by which it is to be brought to pass.

There is not a line in the New Testament to warrant the idea that the world is to gradually get better. The Lord Jesus, in Luke xvii., compares the days that precede His coming with the days of Noah and Lot, when ungodliness abounded. Matthew xiii. gives us an outline of the history of this age, ending with the angels gathering out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. Besides, facts are against this theory. Every year there are twelve million more births than deaths. Of these, eight millions take place in pagan and Mohammedan lands, and as a million conversions have never been reported in a year, it is clear that the church is not keeping pace with the world. While there are more Christians in the world to-day, there are two hundred and fifty million more heathen than in 1811. London is the best evangelized city in the world, yet a census has revealed the fact that of five million persons there are three million five hundred thousand who never attend a place where the gospel is preached.

The time of blessing spoken of is to be introduced by *judgments*. In the meantime the

THAT BLESSED HOPE.

201

long-suffering of God tarries, and the gospel is still the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.

Will the Lord come before the heathen have all heard the gospel?

You are thinking, no doubt, of Matthew XXIV. 14, but this verse refers to the proclamation of the good news that the kingdom is again at hand by a Jewish remnant before the end of the age. This must not be confounded with the gospel of the grace of God as preached to-day.

What is the order of events in connection with the Lord's return?

The first thing will be the coming of the Lord for His people. By special revelation to the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians IV. we learn that He will come into the air, raise every sleeping saint, and change all the saints who shall be then alive on the earth. So shall we ever be with the Lord. Then will follow a time when various judgments will be poured out upon the earth, details of which will be found in Revelation VI.-XIX. God will, in the meantime, resume His dealings with the Jews; and they will pass through the great tribulation, spoken of by the prophets. The Antichrist will be in power and will sit as God in the temple at Jerusalem, which will have been rebuilt in unbelief. The Lord Jesus will then appear with all His heavenly saints. He will

destroy the Antichrist, bind Satan for a thousand years, and bring in a millennium of blessing for the earth.

After these thousand golden years have passed, the judgment of all the wicked dead will follow. They, with Satan, will be cast into the lake of fire. There will be new heavens and a new earth, and God will dwell with men.

Will there be any hope of salvation for those who are not ready when the Lord comes?

The present moment is significantly called "the accepted time" and "the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). It is a day in which God is offering forgiveness and peace, beseeching sinners to be reconciled to Him, and commanding all men everywhere to repent. His very goodness is a motive to that end. But when the Lord comes the day of salvation will close, and be followed by the day of vengeance. Those who know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall then be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord (2 Thess. i. 8-10).

There will be no possible escape for those who have rejected the gospel, and who are left on earth when the saints are taken up. I would earnestly warn the unsaved, and beseech them to repent and believe the gospel. There is a more urgent reason why they should do so than the possibility of sudden death.

THE MORNING STAR AND THE SUN. 203

The unanswerable question of Hebrews II. 3, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" should be weighed in the light of the speedy advent of Christ.

Can any date be fixed for the Lord's coming?

No. There is no date given. It would be right to say that the Lord *may* come to-day, to-morrow, or next year. It would be unscriptural to say that He *will not* come to-day. To fix a date is to profess oneself wiser than Scripture (Mark XIII. 32).

 THE MORNING STAR AND THE SUN.

"I am . . . the bright and morning *Star*. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come."—REV. XXII. 16, 17.

"Unto you that fear *My* name shall the *Sun* of righteousness arise."—MAL. IV. 2.

EARLY one morning the writer enjoyed a sight long to be remembered, which made the truth of the Lord's coming, and of His appearing, very real to him.

In the distance, low down on the horizon, was to be seen a star, small and reddish in appearance. At first it did not particularly arrest his attention, but, as it rose higher and higher in the heavens, it grew brighter and larger, and shone with great brilliancy. It was a beautiful sight, that lone star shining in all its glory in the early morning sky; so beautiful that the writer could not help calling others to witness it.

But he had not beheld it long before another object attracted him. The horizon began to glow with the beams of the rising sun, and soon he appeared in all his majesty, and the morning star faded from view, lost in the splendour of the opening day.

E. A.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

Should Christians be on the look-out for signs of the times ?

WE Christians need no signs, but if God is pleased to give them, surely we shall accept them with thankfulness. If we were in a train bound for London, and were told that before the metropolis was reached we should be met and taken out of the train, we should need no sign. But if we went on till the lights of London were seen through the windows, we should then be quite certain that the end was very near, and that our removal, being before the end, must be almost immediate.

S. L. J.

[The application of the above parable is simple. "The end of the age," so often referred to in the Gospels, is not exactly the end of the *Christian* era. It is not coincident with the coming of the Lord for His church. After the great translation has taken place God will work in the hearts of a remnant of His people Israel, and amid unprecedented tribulation "the age" will run its short and stormy terminal course until "the end" is reached at the appearing of the Lord Jesus with His mighty angels (Matt. XIII. 41, 49 ; 2 Thess. i. 7).

The signs of which Scripture speaks have reference to *this* event. But just as the travellers see the lights of the city to which the train will go after their removal, so we Christians may already perceive the glimmerings of the signs that indicate that the terminus of "the age" is not far off. Let us be on the alert. Any moment the signal may be given for our translation to glory.]

Are there any "signs of the times" to which you can point, as indicating that the Lord's coming is at hand, and that the present age is near its close?

The signs of the coming of the Lord and the end of the age are thickening rapidly on every hand.

But we must distinguish clearly between the coming of the Lord for His people and His subsequent appearing, the rapture of the saints and His visible display in glory. Both these truths are embraced in the general term, "the coming of the Lord."

No sign will herald the rapture; none is needed. In reply to His closing words, "Surely I come quickly," the one, deep, heartfelt cry of His people was, is, and ever will be, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." That desire shall be gratified "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," without any premonitory sign whatever. "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout . . . the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which

are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord " (1 Thess. IV. 16).

The words " caught up " denote the rapture. Where will it take place ? " In the clouds," apart from the earth and its environment, " to meet the Lord [who has come thus far] in the air," the divinely appointed rendezvous. Saviour and saints, Bridegroom and bride, will then be for ever together. Longed-for culmination !

" He and I in that bright glory
One deep joy shall share,
Mine to be for ever with Him,
His that I am there."

How sweet is the anticipation. Once more the heart would say, " Even so, come, Lord Jesus," and would linger in longing hope for that glad moment.

The *appearing* is something quite different from this. It is visible display, and is preceded by unmistakable signs and portents. Can we discern any of them to-day ?

Have we any historic precedents ? Yes. Prior to the Flood the people generally were devoted to pleasures. Their days and nights were taken up with eating, drinking, buying, selling, marrying, and so on, and all thought of God was scoffed at. Nevertheless, " the flood

came and destroyed them all," Noah and his family alone escaping.

A state of things exactly similar will obtain when "the Son of Man cometh." Does it exist to-day? There is a prophecy as to the last days in 2 Timothy III. 1-5, which may most appropriately supply the test. Form a careful comparison between its statements and the actual features of our days, and see whether or no the description is not accurate to the letter.

Take one feature for example: "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," a burning characteristic of the day, and yet, notice, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Is not this seen on every hand, the shell without the kernel—much profession, but the power of life lacking? We see around us the exact antitype of the antediluvian days that were immediately antecedent to the judgment of God.

Again, in 2 Peter III. 3, 4, we read that "there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?"

Are not these "last days" upon us? Do not men loudly affirm to-day that things continue as they were since the beginning of the creation, that seasons go and come, and that there is no sign of any change such as is predicted? Is not the question contemptuously

asked, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Where? In the Bible, repeated again and again!

"But," say some, "we do not attach any importance to the Bible! To us the book is nothing but a collection of fables!" Quite so. But your very scoffing is a proof of its truth. The Bible predicted your words and ways, and spoke of them as distinguishing the "last days."

The moral indications of the end of the period are ripening rapidly; to say nothing of those mysterious movements, in almost every circle of activity, all of which point to the evolution of a huge central and godless power, which will assume a strong anti-Christian form, and which, when fully developed, will call forth the judgment of the Lord at His coming (2 Thess. II. 1-10).

We live in days as privileged as they are serious, and should pray for a quickened apprehension, so that instead of being inert and slothful, we may be "like unto men who wait for their Lord."

J. W. S.

Has the present rapid return of the Jews to Palestine any significance as indicating the approaching end of the age?

While there are no prophecies to be fulfilled prior to the Lord's coming *for* His people, when He will translate His church and bring to a close the present dispensation, there are events that must take place before He comes

with His people, to set up His millennial reign over the earth. Among these events, one of the most important is the return of the Jews *in unbelief* to their own land. Isaiah XVIII. 7 prophesies: "In that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto." The rapidity with which their unbelief will vanish, when once they are gathered, is indicated in Isaiah LXVI. 8: "Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." The nature of this travail is strikingly foretold in Zechariah XII. 10: "And I will pour upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for an only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

It is easily seen that if Judah is to be restored as a nation to the place God has given her, her people must go back to their own land in unbelief. If they became believers in Christ they would belong to the church, and would therefore be taken to heaven when the Lord comes according to 1 Thessalonians IV. 16.

But in going back in unbelief this coming of the Lord does not affect them, but being

once gathered as an earthly people, and God working in their hearts by His Spirit, giving them "the spirit of grace and of supplications," they will be prepared to receive Christ their Messiah, when He comes to reign.

That the rapid return of the Jews to their own land affords the most significant sign of the approaching end of the age there can therefore be no doubt.

Fifty years ago not a Jew was allowed to live within the walls of Jerusalem, nor were there fifty thousand Jews in the whole land. To-day there are one hundred and fifty thousand in the land, with over fifty thousand residing in Jerusalem. A modern railway runs into the city, a contract for an electric tramway system has been signed within the last few months. New ports have been opened to cope with the rising tide of immigration.

A little while ago land in Palestine could not legally be owned by a Jew. To-day that restriction has been removed, Jews own large tracts of country, and the value of land has quadrupled. The latter rain, absent for centuries, is beginning to reappear. Indeed, the return of the Jews to their land is highly significant and full of the deepest interest. Never was there a day when prophecy was being more rapidly fulfilled.

A. J. P.

Is it of any significance as a sign of the times, that universal peace has been the theme of so many recent speeches and sermons?

It would certainly seem so. Peace amongst nations is an eminently desirable thing, and every Christian can pray that it may continue. We make supplication for kings and all in authority, "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. II. 2). We pray "Thy kingdom come," knowing that when the Prince of Peace is on the throne the discords and strifes of earth will be hushed to silence. But "universal peace" as at present discussed is another matter entirely.

"Universal peace" is the goal at which politicians and reformers hope to arrive when by mutual arrangement amongst nations all wars shall cease. That which prompts the desire was pretty clearly declared in the City Temple the other day when the speaker declared that "civilization could not much longer afford to carry the burden which selfishness, materialism, and the mutual distrust of nations imposed upon it." It is then, obviously, at the bottom, *a money question*. People would prefer to economize upon armaments that they may spend in works of public utility or in pleasure, as the case may be—probably the latter.

On the same day the preacher in St. Paul's

Cathedral alluded to the subject, saying that "the mountain of suspicion and distrust which had confronted the nations of Europe for years might, if we would only allow our faith in God to lead us on to larger faith in our fellow-men, be rapidly removed and cast into the sea."

Here we have a significant indication of the basis on which this movement rests in the minds of its promoters. *Faith in man* is the foundation on which this imposing structure is to be built.

If man were holy, and altogether in tune with his Maker, we might allow faith in God to lead to larger faith in man. But since he is fallen and degraded, though, alas! self-righteous, the more truly God commands our confidence the less do we trust in man. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" (Isa. II. 22).

It is not difficult, therefore, to perceive that universal peace is only the dream of those who would fain make the world a pleasanter place to live in without submission to the authority of Christ, and glorify man in its realization. The indulging in such dreams is a mark of the last days. Writing to the Thessalonian converts, Paul said: "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden

THE MISSIONARY'S QUESTION. 213

destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape " (1 Thess. v. 2, 3).

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that no millennium of universal peace will arrive without Christ and absolute submission to Him, an end which will not be reached until an hour of judgment has swept over the world. "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. xxvi. 9). But before this, upon the horizon of the immediate future, there looms the dark apostasy of Christendom foretold upon the sacred page, and reaching its awful climax in the days that follow the coming of the Lord Jesus for His saints.

Meanwhile, the very fact that men are talking of "universal peace" as a result of human progress and beginning to whisper, "Peace and safety" one to the other, makes us feel that the end is not far off. We believers may well lift up our heads, for the hour of our redemption by the coming of the Lord draws nigh.

F. B. H.

THE MISSIONARY'S QUESTION.

WE were sitting by the fireside, my friend and I, having a cosy chat. He was home on a brief furlough from India, and our talk naturally turned upon matters of mis-

214 THE MISSIONARY'S QUESTION.

sionary interest. In the course of our conversation, the Lord's coming was mentioned.

"I can hardly understand how any one can expect the Lord to return just yet," said my friend. "Scripture affirms, does it not, that the gospel must first be preached to all nations. How, then, can we look for His coming while Afghanistan, Tibet, Nepal, and large tribes in the Sudan remain unevangelized?"

Has this question ever occurred to you, Christian reader? You know very well that the world will not be converted by the preaching of the gospel, but must it not be proclaimed to every nation *for a witness* before the Lord comes?

May I invite you to do what my friend and I did when the question arose? We fetched our Bibles and observed with care what is actually said. In Matthew xxiv. 14 we read:

"And this ***gospel of the kingdom*** shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

In the parallel passage in Mark xiii. we also find "the end" spoken of (v. 7). Various things are mentioned as taking place previously, and it is stated (v. 10) that:

"The gospel must first be published among all nations."

Notice particularly the reference to the "gospel of the kingdom." We shall be much mistaken if we regard this as equivalent to the

THE MISSIONARY'S QUESTION. 215.

gospel of the grace of God, as preached in this Christian era.

When John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness, the burden of his message was that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matt. III. 2). His hearers would be at no loss to understand what he meant, for they were familiar with the glowing prophecies of the Old Testament in which it was foretold that a king of David's line should come, and should reign not only over the land of Israel, but from the river to the ends of the earth, and that his kingdom should be an enduring one, never to be superseded by another.

The advent of the promised King was now an accomplished fact. There had been One born at Bethlehem who was "King of the Jews," and of whom an angel had announced that "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David : and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever " (Luke I. 32).

This was good news indeed, and John was raised up to herald it far and wide, and to call for repentance on the part of those who would share in the blessings of the coming kingdom. This was also the burden of the early ministry of the Lord Jesus. He preached, "Repent : for *the kingdom of heaven* is at hand " (Matt. IV. 17).

Later on, He sent His twelve disciples to deliver the same message (chap. x. 7).

216 THE MISSIONARY'S QUESTION.

But when the moment came for Him to present Himself to the responsible heads of the Jewish nation as their promised King, they rejected His claim with scorn, and began to plot His destruction.

After the Lord Jesus had died and risen He bade His disciples go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Luke xxiv. 47 adds to this that repentance and remission of sins were to be proclaimed.

But after the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost further developments took place. Christ was revealed as seated in heavenly glory, and it was declared that in Him all that believe are justified from all things. Not only so, but they become co-heirs with Him of all that He inherits, and are linked up with Him in the most intimate way as members of His body. Not now as Israel's Messiah, but as the Son of God He is preached among the nations, and the mystery, kept secret since the world's foundation, is made known to all, for the obedience of faith (Rom. xvi. 25, 26).

All this, and more, is wrapped up in what the Apostle Paul speaks of so expressively in these verses as "my gospel." A very different gospel this from the "gospel of the kingdom," of which we read in Matthew.

Not that the preaching of the kingdom has no place in connection with Christianity. It

THE MISSIONARY'S QUESTION. 217

surely has. Paul, for instance, was two years at Rome "preaching the kingdom of God" (Acts xxviii. 31). But to preach the kingdom of God in this way, that the hearts of men might be brought under the sway of His grace, is entirely different from the announcement that the King had come and was prepared to establish His government over the nations, with Jerusalem as His metropolis!

Reading Matthew xxiv. with care, it becomes evident to which kind of preaching verse 14 refers. "This gospel of the kingdom" can only mean the announcement of the coming reign of Christ.

But the question may be asked, How then can it be affirmed that this announcement must be made "to all nations," when it has long ago given place to the story of the Saviour's Cross and of His exaltation at God's right hand? The answer is, that when the Lord comes for His church, thereby closing this dispensation of grace, the testimony of former days will be resumed. The Spirit of God will work in the souls of many of His ancient people, the Jews, and cause them to turn in deep repentance to their once crucified Messiah. Then they will be sent out to preach "this gospel of the kingdom." To all nations they will declare that their King is coming, to reign in righteousness, to deliver the oppressed, to extend His beneficent dominion from sea

218 THE MISSIONARY'S QUESTION.

to sea, to bring peace to this weary, war-stained earth, and to make men's hearts glad with the knowledge of the true God.

This, then, is the gospel which is yet to be preached for a witness unto all nations. When this has been accomplished, *the end* will come, that is, the end of the age. The present era of Christianity fills in what is really a break in the age of Israel. When the Christian day has run its course, the thread of the former age will be picked up, and the various events mentioned in Matthew XXIV. will take place before its end. These events are placed after the Lord's coming *for* His people and before His coming *with* them to reign in glory.

The passage in Mark has the same "end" in view: the end, not of the present dispensation, but of the age which will be brought in after the Lord has come, and which is really a resumption, after long interval, of the age that is past.

There is therefore no Scripture that affirms that the gospel *as preached to-day* will be proclaimed to all nations, even for a witness, before the Lord comes. The fact that Afghanistan and other nations have not been evangelized does not warrant our ceasing to have the expectation of His return before our hearts as a daily hope.

H. P. B.

A SELFISH THOUGHT.

DO you say, "The coming of the Lord is nothing to me. What does it matter, if I only get to heaven, whether the Lord comes or I die?" Consummate selfishness! What would you think of a wife whose husband was in a distant land, saying, "The return of my husband is nothing to me"? Where would be the affection of one that could receive a letter announcing that his return might be expected every day, and yet could lay it aside with indifference, saying, "It does not concern me"?

The Spirit of God is arousing the cry, "Come, Lord Jesus." A voice is heard from heaven, "Behold, I come quickly." Is it possible for you, knowing the love of Christ, to say, "That voice does not speak to me"? If you are a Christian, it speaks to your very heart. It is your *heart* Christ wants, not your head filled with prophetic theories. He counts on hearing the bride say, "Come, Lord Jesus." And again He says, "Surely I come quickly." Oh, that the whole church of God may be aroused to cry from the heart, "EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS."

The late C. S.

"The more we *love* the Lord, the more we shall *miss* Him. And the more we miss Him, the more we shall long for His return."

[220]

THE ETERNAL STATE.

REV. XXI. 1-8.

GOD has revealed in these verses the wonderful fact that, time having ceased, and the present heavens and earth being dissolved, He will make a new heaven and a new earth, but that the sea shall exist no more. In this glorious, eternal scene, the church of God, the bride of Christ, is seen in her distinctive glory and blessing. She is viewed as the holy city, *new* Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven in all the same freshness and loveliness of the day of the espousals of the Lamb. As the tabernacle (or dwelling-place) of God, she shall be with men. We are not told who these men are. They may be the saints of the millennial era preserved at the close by the power of God for eternal blessing on the new and eternal earth. This Scripture seems to point out that there will be a close alliance between the heavenly and the earthly inhabitants of the new heaven and earth, God Himself being the living and eternal source of all their blessing; tears, death, sorrow, crying, and pain having passed away for ever.

And then, in view of the glories of that eternal day on the one hand, and the eternal doom of the ungodly on the other, God closes the description with two blessed promises and an awful threat.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 221

First, a precious word for any poor, thirsty sinner: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxi. 6).

Secondly, a blessed word of encouragement for His own tried, loved ones: "He that overcometh shall inherit all [or these] things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son" (v. 7).

Lastly, all classes of the wicked shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone (v. 8).

E. H. C.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. D.—If you will open your Bible at Daniel ix. we will study Gabriel's wonderful prophecy of the "Seventy Weeks." First let it be understood that the word translated "week" does not necessarily mean a period of seven days. It *may* mean that, but it may equally mean a period of seven anything else—months or years. It is generally agreed that in this passage weeks of *years* are intended. This conclusion is quite in accord with prophetic usage. We have, therefore, seventy periods of seven, or seventy weeks of years; in other words, 490 years, referred to.

Then notice that Daniel's people, the Jews, and the "holy city," Jerusalem, are the subjects of the prophecy. Verse 24 states this plainly enough. The same verse tells us what is to take place at the

222 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

close of the 490 years : an end will be made of sins, everlasting righteousness introduced, and the most holy place anointed. Need we say that nothing of this kind has yet come to pass in Jerusalem ? This part of the prophecy still awaits fulfilment.

When did the 490 years begin ? Verse 25 tells us. They started to run their course when the decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem was issued. We have the record of this in Nehemiah II. We are therefore able to date the commencement of this long period from the twentieth year of the Persian king, Artaxerxes.

Next, let us observe that the 490 years are divided into three lesser periods of 7 weeks (or 49 years), 62 weeks (or 434 years), and 1 week (or 7 years). We need not stop to discuss why the 49 years are spoken of separately from the 434. They go together in verse 25, and give us the lapse of time between the decree of Artaxerxes and Messiah the Prince, who, of course, is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now a question arises. At what particular moment in the life of the Lord Jesus on earth are we to look for the close of the 483 years ? His birth ? The commencement of His public ministry ? His crucifixion ? His ascension ? The answer to this question is found in verse 26. When the 49 years had been followed by the 434, Messiah should be cut off. The crucifixion is therefore the great event which marked the end of the 483 years.

Did the crucifixion take place exactly 483 years after King Artaxerxes issued his decree ? This question cannot be answered as briefly as might

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 223

be desired. Time was reckoned differently in the days of old. The year of many ancient nations consisted of but 360 days. (Compare Genesis VII. 11; VIII. 3, 4, where five months contain 150 days.) To give full chronological explanations pages would be necessary. Sir R. Anderson, in *The Coming Prince*, deals with this matter, and calculates 483 years *to the very day* between the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem and the entry of her King on the eve of His crucifixion.

But other statements remain to be examined. What was to follow the cutting off of Messiah? The city and temple were to be destroyed by a people who are described as "the people of the prince that shall come." We know that some years after the crucifixion Jerusalem was laid in ruins and the temple burned to the ground by the Romans. They, therefore, are the people referred to in verse 26; and "the prince that shall come" will consequently be a Roman.

In connection with this coming prince, mention is made of the last "week," the closing period of seven years, and light is thrown upon the reason for its separation, in such a marked way, from the 483. *The final seven years are yet future.* The whole of the present era, the day of the glad tidings of grace, is an interval, forming a long gap between the 483 years and the seven.

We learn from verse 27 of our chapter that the coming Roman prince will conclude a treaty or agreement for the seven years with the majority of the Jewish nation (the "many" as contrasted with the comparatively small number constituting the godly remnant); but that in the middle of

224 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

this period he will assume a hostile attitude, and enforce the cessation of the sacrifices resumed after long centuries by the Jews upon their return to their own land.

In other Scriptures we find ample confirmation of all this. The future prince of the Romans is referred to again and again. The period of seven years, its first half marked by agreement, the second half by antagonism between the Roman prince and the Jewish leaders, is described in detail. But the outline we have given is all we have space for.

E. T., Pudsey.—We have a certain amount of diffidence in giving advice upon such matters. Individual faith and conscience enter largely into the question, and sometimes what might be right for one would be wrong for another (Rom. XIV.). For ourselves, we should be sorry to join a trades' union club, in order to procure or retain a situation. We recognize the great difficulty which nowadays meets the Christian workman, often confronting him with the alternative of joining a union or losing his employment. But the Word of God distinctly forbids the unequal yoke, the linking of the believer with an unbeliever. There is no hint in the passage (2 Cor. VI. 14-17) that the prohibition applies merely to the marriage relationship. We believe it has a much wider application. But the living God may be trusted. He can open up unexpected paths for the feet of those whose confidence is in Himself. He will surely honour the faith that prefers to do His will, even though it entail reproach and loss, rather than take the easier path of expediency.

IN HIS NAME.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”—JOHN XVI. 23, 24.

HERE is a passage that grows in wonderfulness the longer we look at it. There are some things in nature just like that. When first seen we do not discern how great and grand they are, but as we keep on looking they grow upon us, and then they excite our wonder and admiration.

It is so with our text. When our eyes are first fastened upon the gracious words we do not apprehend the fullness of their meaning, but as we meditate upon them and realize the greatness of the privilege which they confer, we are amazed. And then in the wonderment of our souls we exclaim, Can it be possible that we are allowed to attach the name of the Lord Jesus to our petitions? May we ask *in His name*? Is this sober fact? Then we read the glowing words again, and find it to be even so.

Suppose we had one friend who was dearer to us than all others—one to whom we owed everything. If some one were authorized to ask us, in his name, to do a certain thing, how gladly would we do it, even if the one who

asked were a stranger, unknown and unloved. Thank God, it is not exactly so with us, for "the Father Himself loveth you," our Lord says in verse 27 of this same chapter. But to us it is given—think of it, my soul—to ask in that name which is sweeter in the Father's ear than every other. What strong confidence this gives that anything we ask the Father *in His name* will be granted unto us!

At the same time how careful it should make us as to how and for what we pray. Not to any random request would we attach the holy name of the Lord Jesus. Will the thing we pray for be for His glory, for the furtherance of His kingdom? If so, then we may affix His name to it without reserve.

If we gave any one leave to use our name, we should expect it to be used in no unworthy way, not loosely, but with care and discrimination. And so, in the intensest degree, should we make use of His name. If thus used the Father will give us whatsoever we shall ask. There is no room for doubt.

There are things which we may take to God in prayer to which we might hesitate to attach His name. We are not quite sure about them, and perhaps they more concern us and our comfort and happiness than the direct glory and interests of Christ. The fourth chapter of Philippians comes in here. "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and

supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." We are thus graciously encouraged to be frank, open, unreserved in speaking to God about *everything* that would make us anxious, no matter what. And this indeed is no little privilege. No burden need we carry alone, no grief need be hid in our bosom, no carking care. We may tell all to God, and having told it, we may leave the issue to His perfect love and wisdom. Our requests in this case do not take the form of definite prayer in Christ's name. They may or may not be answered according to our wishes. We leave that to Him. Meanwhile "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding," keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. This is very sweet. God's own peace, profound and utterly beyond all our poor limited thoughts, keeps us in peace. The rest is in His hands.

And with this agree the words of Psalm LXII. 8: "Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us." Precious words these, and full of comfort and encouragement. They are balm for wounded hearts and rest for anxious ones. In every lot there are burdens and cares—thorns that pierce and inward griefs that fill the eyes with tears. Then Someone silently draws near, and we hear a voice that is not unknown, bidding us to

228 THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

trust and fear not, directing us to empty out before our God and Father all that is in our heart, and to make Him our refuge. And thus we find that word fulfilled which says, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee : because he trusteth in Thee ” (Isa. XXVI. 3).

Let us once more recall the wonderful words of our Lord Jesus when He said : “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name : ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” May they never be forgotten, and let us make use of this great privilege more than ever as the days go by.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

WE do not in this paper attempt to prove the inspiration of the Bible. Such an effort would be entirely gratuitous, and did we undertake it, it might be asked of us, in the language of the Book itself, “Who hath required this at your hand ? ”

The Word of God has ever proved its own inspiration by the effect it has had upon the human race from the beginning. It is a tree, known by its fruit that can be seen, if not tasted, by all who have eyes to see. It comes

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE. 229

as an envoy fully accredited from God, and needs no other witness than that which it possesses in its power over the hearts, consciences, and lives of men.

Its effect upon the human race as a whole may be understood by imagining what the condition of the world would be if God had never given a written revelation of Himself. What gross spiritual darkness would cover the earth! Some semblance of civilization might possibly have been attained, as in the case of the Greeks and Romans before Christ, though how much these were influenced by remnants of divine tradition lingering in their midst we hardly know. But even these were not much elevated beyond a sort of refined barbarism. According to Demetrius Falero there were in Attica in the year 309 B.C. twenty thousand citizens and four hundred thousand slaves, treated, in most cases, by their masters like dogs. Women had no more rights before the law than slaves. Morality was almost unknown among them. Their vaunted military campaigns were little more than plundering expeditions on a large scale. Their only religion was a system of superstition, of which neither morality nor ethical teachings of any kind formed part. Their much-lauded poets, artists, and philosophers brought pleasure to a select few only and happiness to none. This was the con-

230 THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

dition of man at his best without a revelation from God.

By the superior position in which it has placed those nations that have received it as having come from God, the Bible has proved itself to be no mere production of the human intellect. Take, for example, that "nation terrible from its beginning," the Jews. What was it that elevated them above the peoples around them, and raised them in a comparatively short time from a race of slaves to one of the most powerful and intelligent nations of antiquity? Was it not because they received from God's hands on Mount Sinai the "lively oracles," and later, through the prophets, further revelations of Himself?

What has made the foremost nations of the day what they are? Is it not the Bible? I do not, of course, refer to their present attitude toward it; this may be one of utter indifference or even of veiled hostility. But the foundation of the present greatness of Britain, Germany, and the United States is the Bible. The Pilgrim Fathers stepped on the shores of America with the Bible in their hands and its truths livingly impressed upon their hearts. They were, above all things, men of "one book," and that book the Bible. England became great by leaps and bounds from the moment that the Bible began to circulate freely amongst her waiting people.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE. 231

Germany, from the day that she permitted herself to become the nursing mother of the Reformation (which meant the Bible for every one), commenced to go forward. How comes it that the Bible has exercised so marked an influence on nations if it is only a fraud and not what it claims to be, the Word of God? If a fraud, it has proved a most profitable one to the deceived—a very unusual result with imposture.

And the Bible is daily proving itself to be God's Word by the moral miracles it works in the lives of countless individuals. Some of them, once confirmed drunkards, are now sober men. Others, but a short time ago thieves, now steal no more, but rather labour honestly with their hands that they may have to give to those that need. The once proud and overbearing have been made meek as babes. The cruel have become tender, and the merciless merciful. Easy to be entreated now are those who once were harsh and unbending. And in a multitude of ways, best understood by those who have themselves been the subjects of these mighty transformations, the Bible has proved and is proving itself to be in deed and in truth, not the empty, powerless sayings of man, but the potent word of the mighty God, accomplishing His holy purposes in the hearts and lives of those who receive its heavenly teachings.

232 THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.

No, the Bible is no pretender, concocted by false prophets and apostles to deceive the multitudes, nor the composition of dreamers or men of perverted conscience who thought they did service by palming off their pious fictions as revelations from God. The effect produced precludes the supposition. We apply the time-honoured test of cause and effect, and according to this unalterable law the Bible stands before the world exonerated from every charge of imposture. It has not invited man's confidence under false pretences. It has proved itself capable of accomplishing such wonders of beneficence that no right-minded person would impeach its authenticity.

During the American civil war General Grant came into prominent notice by gaining notable victories after most of the other generals had failed. Some of these, jealous of Grant's rising fame and consequent promotion, began to accuse him to the President of drinking to excess. "Well," said Lincoln, in his droll way, "find out the name of the brand he is drinking, and we will give all our generals some!" Do its critics, jealous in their impotence of the victories won by the Bible, accuse it of mendacity? They would do well to drink deep draughts from its wells of grace and truth. Man, routed and overthrown by the enemy, certainly needs some-

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE. 233

thing to enable him to stand. And this necessary something is revealed in the Bible. By the grace of God and through the blood of Christ, it makes man a conqueror where he would otherwise suffer constant and utter defeat. He has a mighty foe to meet, and woe to him if he casts from his hand the only effective weapon he possesses.

Yes, the Bible has fulfilled all its claims. Here we rest our case. What has infidelity done for man? What does its more pretentious twin-brother, the Higher Criticism, propose to do for him? Is it willing to be judged by its fruits as we have judged the Bible? Alas! its evil effects are already seen. The increasing irreverence for all things sacred, disobedience to parents, divorce, lack of respect for authority, the rapid spread of various anti-christian movements—all these and more, go hand-in-hand with, if they are not the direct results of the influence of the critics, in destroying in the public mind the authority of that “imperishable rock of inspiration”—the Word of God, commonly called THE BIBLE.

C. K.

EUDOXUS was so affected with the glory of the sun, that he thought he was born only to behold it. Much more should a Christian judge himself born to behold and delight in the glory of the Lord Jesus.

ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH.

A BIBLE TALK.

A KNOWLEDGE of “dispensational truth,” as it is often termed, is indispensable for the intelligent reading of the Bible. Yet many Christians seem to have hardly given it a thought.

God has been pleased to deal with men at different times in various ways. Fresh revelations of Himself and of His will have ushered in new modes of dealing with men, new *dispensations*.

“Dispensational truth” teaches us to rightly distinguish these changes, and to discern their nature, so that the salient features of each may not be obscured. The importance of this for us Christians is that we thereby learn the true character of the calling wherewith we are called from on high, and of the age in which our lot is cast.

Up to the time of Christ a dispensation ran its course in which the prominent feature was Israel, the chosen nation of the stock of Abraham. The period in which we live, from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord, is marked by altogether different features. Not Israel, but the church is prominent in God’s thoughts to-day.

Before dwelling on the important dis-

tinctions between the two, let us be quite sure that we understand exactly what we are speaking about.

By ISRAEL we do not mean the Jews, the scattered nation as they are to-day, nor as they were in the time of our Lord, a remnant still clinging to their ancient capital, Jerusalem. We do not allude to them as they actually existed at any time, but rather to what that nation was *according to God's original plan for them*.

When we speak of THE CHURCH we do not refer to any ecclesiastical building nor to any denomination, nor to any number of professed Christians banded together into what is called nowadays "a church." We use the term in its scriptural sense. The Greek word rendered "church" simply means "called-out ones." Those who are called out of the world by God during this period of Christ's rejection are by this means, and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, banded together into God's assembly, the church.

It may be helpful to notice that in Scripture the term "church" is used in three ways:—

1. As denoting the aggregate number of the Christians in any given place (1 Cor. i. 2 ; Col. iv. 15, etc.).

2. As the aggregate number of all Christians upon earth at any given time (1 Cor. x. 32 ; xii. 28 ; Eph. i. 22, etc.). In this aspect the

church is like a regiment which abides the same, though the units which compose it are constantly changing.

3. As the aggregate number of all Christians, called out and sealed with the Spirit between Pentecost and the coming of the Lord (Eph. III. 21 ; V. 25, etc.).

Of these the last is the sense in which we use the word in this Bible Talk ; though, if we speak of the church as it exists on earth to-day, we obviously allude to it in its second aspect.

Be it remembered, however, that we refer, as in the case of Israel, not to what the church actually is, or has at any time been, but to what it is according to the original design and thought of God.

Having defined our terms, let us observe a few necessary distinctions.

1. John, the forerunner of the Lord, was the last of the long line of the prophets of the past dispensation. With him, God's utterances under the old covenant reached their full stop. With Christ, the new utterances began. " The law and the prophets were until John ; since that time the kingdom of God is preached " (Luke XVI. 16).

The advent of Christ into the world was described by Zacharias as the coming of the dayspring (or, as the margin reads, " sun-rising ") from on high. His appearance on earth heralded the dawn of a new day. Not

that this new day was there and then inaugurated. The Lord Jesus had a mission to fulfil in the midst of Israel, and He must needs present Himself to that nation as their long-promised Messiah. Moreover, the broad foundations of purposed blessing must be laid amid the sufferings of Calvary. But when all this was past, when the Son of God had died and risen again, when He had ascended to heaven and sent down the Holy Ghost, then was inaugurated a dispensation that was new indeed, utterly different from all that had gone before.

2. The characteristic feature of the old dispensation was *law*, that of the new is *grace*. The giving of the law at Sinai ushered in the former. God formulated His demands upon men. He was to receive, and they were to give, that which was His due. The fact that failure came in immediately, failure so great as to amount to a total collapse, did not relieve men of their newly incurred responsibilities in the smallest degree. God, however, announced to Moses that He would have mercy (Exod. xxxiii. 19), and withhold the threatened destruction in view of the coming of Christ. The law still held sway as "schoolmaster," and continued so to do until Christ came (Gal. iii. 24).

In Christ a power mightier than the law was present. The case of the sinful woman in

John VIII. beautifully illustrates it. Under the potent influence of grace, the hypocrites were convicted far more effectually than under law, and the sinner was forgiven, a thing which the law never professed to do. Now God *gives* and man *receives*. The new dispensation is marked by *grace* reigning through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. v. 21).

3. The old dispensation centred round Israel, the new is connected with the church.

The law was given not to everybody, but to one nation, Israel. Upon that *nation*, therefore, God's attention was focussed. The privileges of the children of Israel belonged to them nationally rather than individually. God always had His own secret dealings with the souls of individuals, and these dealings came into greater prominence in the days of national apostasy. But at the beginning God took them up nationally without reference to the spiritual state of individuals, and their standing before Him was on a national basis.

On the other hand, there is nothing national about the church. Peter declared, corroborated by James, that the divine programme for this dispensation is the visiting of the nations by God, "to take out of them a people for His name" (Acts xv. 13, 14). God is now making an election from all

nations, and those thus gathered out for His name compose "the church."

The church, then, is not national, nor is it international, it is rather extra-national, i.e. altogether outside of all national distinctions, and totally independent of them. Instead of being constructed on a national basis, it is represented in Scripture as "one flock" (John x. 16, R.V.), as "one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13), as "a spiritual house, an holy priesthood" (1 Peter ii. 5), as a family composed of the children of God (1 John ii. 12 ; iii. 1, etc.), but never as a nation.

Moreover, in connection with the church God begins with the individual. It is composed of those who have personally been set in right relations with God. Only as forgiven, and as having received the Spirit to indwell them, do they become members of the one body, and "living stones" in the spiritual house.

4. Connected with Israel was a ritualistic worship, the value of which lay in its typical significance. The church's privileges are connected with the eternal realities themselves, with the substance rather than with the shadows. Her worship does not consist of sacrificial offerings, symbolic ceremonies, and the like, but is "worship in spirit and in truth."

The law had only a shadow of good things

to come, and not the very image of the things '' (Heb. x. 1). The good things have come, and are realized by Christians to-day. Christ has established them (Heb. ix. 24 ; x. 12), the Spirit has revealed them (1 Cor. ii. 9, 10), and the believer may gaze upon them with the eye of faith (2 Cor. iv. 18).

5. Israel's blessings and privileges were largely of an earthly and material order. The church's are heavenly and spiritual.

In the Old Testament instructions were given as to the way in which the children of Israel should return thanks to God when they were actually in possession of the promised land. They were to take the first of all their fruits and set them in a basket before the Lord their God, with an acknowledgment of His goodness on their lips (Deut. xxvi. 1-11).

Is the Christian to approach God in this way? On the contrary, when Paul wrote to the Ephesians as to the heavenly inheritance of Christians, far from speaking of material things, he said, " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all *spiritual* blessings in *heavenly* places in Christ '' (Eph. i. 3).

How complete the contrast !

6. While Israel's destiny is to be the channel of blessing to all nations, during the golden years of the millennial age, the church's destiny is association with Christ in heaven.

Isaiah LX. well describes the future of Israel. Revelation XIX. and XXI., under various figures, presents to us the destiny of the church as "the Lamb's wife."

Was there a definite time when God's ways with Israel ended and when the church period began?

It has already been pointed out that the death of Christ marked the close of God's dealings with Israel as a nation; and that His resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost inaugurated the present dispensation. Compare Acts II. 41-47 with I Corinthians XII. 13.

Two qualifying remarks must, however, be made.

Firstly, that though God's ways with Israel reached their great climax in the cross, He, nevertheless, continued certain supplementary dealings with them until the death of Stephen, and perhaps even until the destruction of Jerusalem. Nor were the full designs of God as to the church made known in their entirety at the very outset of the present age. They were gradually revealed through the apostles, particularly through Paul, though the church itself began its corporate existence as stated.

Secondly, that God's ways with Israel have only ended *for a time*. Later on, in a day still future, they will be resumed, and the glorious promises made to that favoured nation be

literally fulfilled. Israel has been side-tracked, as it were, while the church occupies the rails. When the church has been transferred to heaven, Israel will again be brought out upon the main line of God's dealings.

In Acts vii. 38 Stephen speaks of "the church in the wilderness." And the headings to many Old Testament chapters refer to the church. Does it not appear from this that the church was in existence before Christ came?

Israel was undoubtedly "the assembly in the wilderness." Is there anything in this which would warrant our identifying Israel with the church of the New Testament? No more than the use of the same word in Acts XIX. 41 warrants our confounding the church in that city with the unruly mob of Diana's worshippers.

The application to the church of prophetic utterances in Old Testament headings of chapters (which are no part of the original text) is due to the mistaken views of well-meaning men.

But the mistake is a serious one, because it is by the confusion of Israel with the church that men have sought to justify the introduction into Christianity of Jewish elements and principles.

Were not such men as Abraham, Moses, and Elijah in the church? Does it not put a slight upon these honoured men to deny them a place therein?

By no means. Their lot was cast in the

dispensation that is past. Viewed *morally*, these men tower as giants, while many of us Christians are but pigmies. Yet even John the Baptist, than whom none was greater, was, when viewed dispensationally, less than the least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. xi. 11). He belonged to the age of servitude, we to the age of sonship (see Gal. iv. 1-7).

The Lord's words in Matthew xi. concerning John were followed by those of Matthew xvi. 13-18 concerning Himself. He was not a mere prophet like Elijah, Jeremiah, or John, but the Son of the living God, and on that rock, said He, "I will build My church." Mark those two words: "*will build*." It was a future work of which the Lord spoke, and one in which these great men of old had no part.

What was God's object in calling out Israel into the special place they occupied?

They were called to take possession of the promised land for God, as a kind of pledge that the whole earth belonged to Him, in spite of the fact that Satan had usurped dominion over it. When they entered they crossed the Jordan as the people of "*the Lord of all the earth*" (Josh. iii. 11, 13).

Further, they were to preserve in the world the stock "of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. ix. 5).

Incidentally also, in that nation as a sample separated from the corruptions of the sur-

rounding peoples, and privileged beyond all others, was made God's last trial of the human race. The records of their own law as cited in Romans III. 9-18 testified to their irremediable failure, and proved in this way the hopelessly fallen conditions of all. If, as Romans III. 19 puts it, the law utterly condemns the sample nation who were under it, then *every* mouth is stopped, and *all the world* is "guilty before God."

What is God's object and purpose in connection with the church?

The church is Christ's body (Eph. 1. 23). Therefore in it He is to be expressed; just as your body is that in which *you* live and express yourself.

It represents Him here during the time of His rejection and personal absence in heaven. Satan has got rid of Christ personally from the earth, but He is here as represented in His people. To touch the church or any who belong to it is to touch Him. Do not His own words to Saul imply this: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (Acts IX. 4).

It is God's house, the only house He has upon earth at the present time. God will not be turned out of His own world! He dwells, therefore, to-day in a house which no Nebuchadnezzar, no Titus can burn to the ground, and which no Nero, no Torquemada has been able to destroy.

God's ultimate purpose is to have a bride for Christ (Eph. v. 25-27), a people who, sharing now as heavenly strangers His rejection, find their eternal portion as sharers of His heavenly glory.

Can you enumerate some of the blessings we Christians have, which even the best in Israel had not before Christ came?

The knowledge of God as Father, fully revealed in Christ, is one of the greatest of these blessings. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John I. 18).

Another blessing is, instead of *promises*, we have the *fact* of accomplished redemption. The promissory bank-note has been exchanged for the fine gold of the finished work of Christ.

Further, the Holy Spirit now *indwells* believers (see John XIV. 16; Acts II. 1-4). Though He had always exerted His influence upon earth, His abiding presence here is a new thing.

Lastly, our relationships with God are on an entirely new footing in Christ. We are no more servants, but sons (Gal. IV. 4-6).

Much more might be added, but these four facts will serve to show the wealth of blessing that belongs to the Christian.

Shall we not thank God that our lot is cast *on this side of the cross of Christ?* F. B. H.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. L. F. and A. T.—In dealing once more with your difficulties on the subject of the *New Birth and the Sealing of the Spirit*, we regret to be unable to use simpler or clearer terms than those already employed in our recent answers. We observe that you are one with us in distinguishing between these two things. They are indeed to be distinguished. In the one case it is the Holy Spirit planting in the soul the seed of divine life; in the other it is the Holy Spirit who is given to the believer, marking him off as now belonging to Another and being Himself the earnest of glory yet to come. Thus far we see eye to eye. And we also heartily believe, as you do, that the phrases “In Adam” and “In Christ” are the antitheses of each other, and that Scripture views every believer as being *in Christ*, even as every one who is not a believer is *in Adam*. But your contention is that we are “in Christ” solely as the result of our having been born of the Spirit, and that the gift of the Spirit has nothing whatever to do with it. Much depends, however, on what is meant by being “*in Christ*”—what the rich and full meaning of that great Pauline term. If it means no more than the communication of a new life and nature, then we have nothing to say against what you advance; but if we differ from you it is because we believe that the Holy Spirit given to us, and not the new birth alone, characterizes the Christian state. In this connection it is well to observe how the Spirit is spoken of in Galatians IV. 6; v. 16, 25.

Possibly the lack of entire agreement between us may be the result of mixing up the Spirit's teaching through Paul with the same Spirit's teaching through John. Not that it can ever be contradictory. Now it is in Paul's epistles that we particularly read of our being "*in Christ Jesus*"—the risen and glorified Man—and he, so far as we remember, never speaks of the new birth at all. His teaching involves it, no doubt, but in terms he does not name it. On the other hand, the Spirit's teaching through John does not lead us to view believers as being "*in Christ Jesus*" in the Pauline sense. John speaks of them as "*in the Son*," as born of God, as having passed from death unto life, as those to whom God has given of His Spirit—children in His family, who know that they have eternal life, for "*he that hath the Son hath life.*" Paul tells us of justification, of peace with God, of our old man having been crucified with Christ, of a new creation, and of the gift of the Spirit who, in His relations with the individual believer, sheds abroad the love of God in his heart, and enables him to cry, "*Abba, Father,*" as being a son. Now all these truths that reach us through the ministry of the apostles John and Paul, though simply stated, are indeed profound. Know them as we may, we know them but in part. And it is the attempt to make Pauline truth to fit into Johannine moulds that obscures the spiritual vision and confuses the understanding. Moreover, let us shrink from making a rigid system of theology—a creature of cast-iron—and while holding fast to what Scripture predicates of *all believers alike*, whether through

248 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

John or Paul, let us not overlook the moral processes by which truth becomes substance in the soul, and what we hold in terms becomes ours in actual and enjoyed possession. Weigh that last sentence ; there is something in it. You may think at first that it does not touch the point on which you differ from us, but our impression is that it touches it more closely than you suspect. We cannot close our remarks without thanking you for the kind and brotherly spirit in which you write, and which we value exceedingly.—[ED.]

S. B., Crewe.—“ Sin ” is a general term, including transgression, unrighteousness, iniquity, etc. “ Iniquity ” in Scripture generally has reference to *religious* matters, as in Luke XIII. 27 ; Acts VIII. 23 ; 2 Timothy II. 19. But in Romans and Hebrews the word is a different one, and is better rendered “ lawlessness.”

G. R. G.—If we heard any one speak of being “ gathered around the Person of the Lord,” we should know what was meant, and should not regard the words as calling for comment. But if a question as to the accuracy of such an expression arises, we must test it by Scripture. We read in 2 Thessalonians II. 1 of “ our gathering together *unto Him*.” This, of course, refers to the coming of the Lord, when we shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and be indeed gathered around Himself.

Meanwhile, there is the gathering *in*, or to, His name, spoken of in Matthew XVIII. 20. Even two or three thus gathered may count upon His

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 249

presence. He is in their midst. Faith recognizes this, and we can understand one who tastes the joy of the Lord's presence speaking of being "gathered around Himself." But it is always better and safer, in these things, to adhere to the language of Scripture.

R. W., Sheffield.—In 2 Corinthians v. the apostle groans under the burden of his earthly human nature. Something far better filled the vision of his soul, and his body was a hindrance, tending to depress the divine life and withhold him from the full enjoyment of the glorious state that lay ahead. In Romans VIII. 22, 23, his outlook is a wider one. The whole creation, involved in the consequences of man's sin, groans until the day of its release from this bondage. With this fallen creation we, by our bodies, are linked. But, on the other hand, we have the Spirit, and with the intelligence that He gives as to God's purposes, we groan while waiting for the redemption of our bodies. The glory that is coming for the children of God will mean emancipation for the whole creation, and the groaning is in view of that day. There is no reference to the groaning of a sinner under conviction. Nor do we think that sinners, as such, are looked at as part of the creation that groans.

E. S. G.—We are by no means in agreement with the views about which you write so strongly. If the occasion arose, we should feel it necessary to combat them with voice and pen. But we should be sorry to join in the vituperation (we

250 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

can use no other word) in which you indulge. Why dip your pen in vitriol? Why attack a brother for mistaken views of this kind as if he were an enemy seeking to undermine the citadel of our faith?

May we commend to your notice a paragraph from the very book which you criticize? "Truth should never make us proud. We may be very confident that we hold the truth; but the surest way to deny its power is to be bitter and unloving towards those who differ from us. . . . All the wrangling, ostensibly for the sake of truth, which has split and divided certain sections of the church, until men therein scarcely know where they stand, is evidence that truth has never been properly understood by them. Truth should not be stored as a commodity, or as something of which to boast. While we feel that the teaching of the Word of God is very clear, let us remember that we are only scholars spelling out the alphabet in the school of Jesus Christ."

A SUBSCRIBER.—I Cor. XI. 1-16.—In these verses the assembly is not in view and the principles laid down are of general application. How wonderful it is that great truths as to God and Christ should be introduced in order to regulate what might be considered a very unimportant matter. In reality, nothing is unimportant in the sight of God if it concerns the people whom He so dearly loves. The apostle is evidently seeking to correct abuses that had crept in amongst the Corinthian Christians, and shows that for women to usurp the place assigned

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 251

to men is contrary to the truth of God, to the order of creation, and to what nature itself teaches as to propriety of conduct. A covering on a woman's head is the recognition on her part of the place assigned to her, in the wisdom of God, in relation to man. What makes this so important is that even angels have something to learn by what is set forth in the church. Hence the reference to them in verse 10. For a Christian woman to regard as trivial or antiquated the principles expounded in this passage is to impugn the wisdom of the divine order for the people of God. In days like these, when there is an increasing tendency for women to take upon themselves functions of leadership, etc., which in the ways of God are reserved for men, our sisters will do well to give earnest heed to this teaching of the Holy Spirit. The ways of the world are often reproduced in the church, to the shame of the latter. It was so at Corinth in A.D. 59. It is still more so, alas, in the Christendom of A.D. 1911.

C. F. R., Rochester, U.S.A.—The matter as to which you inquire was dealt with briefly in our reply to E. T. last month. But let us assure you of our most sincere sympathy in your exercises as to whether it is right for a Christian to join a trade union. We are thankful that you desire to do the will of God, whatever others do, even though it may mean privation and loss.

It is true, as you observe, that Christians are to be found in the various unions. This, however, does not make it right, even though such Christians be very estimable persons. The man of God who

252 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

was forbidden to eat and drink in idolatrous Beth-el allowed himself to be persuaded to do so by an "old prophet," presumably a man of experience, whose words should command respect. Disastrous were the consequences of this yielding (see 1 Kings XIII.).

The Scripture you quote (1 Peter II. 13) is hardly relevant. For the reference there is to the ordinances of constituted authorities : kings and governors, who, as Romans XIII. teaches us, are ordained of God. The regulations of trade unions stand in quite a different category. The principle of forbidding a man to follow his employment unless he joins a union will no doubt develop in the direction indicated in Revelation XIII. 16, till ultimately none will be permitted to engage in trade unless he bears the mark or name of "the Beast." Towards this terrible climax things in the industrial world seem to be hastening with ever-increasing rapidity.

But who can place the children of God beyond the reach of their Father's care? What power can separate them from His love? If David, looking back upon his long and eventful life, could truly say that he had never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread (Ps. XXXVII. 25), need we fear that God will forsake *us*? You yourself quote that precious promise : "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." What is the effect of these gracious words on the mind of him who rests thereon? Let the following verse tell us : "So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. XIII. 6).

CHRISTIANITY IN KOREA.

OUR readers will have heard from time to time of the work of God in the kingdom of Korea. It may interest them to know how things go on there at the present moment, so we give a few particulars drawn from a recent report—not issued by any one labouring in Korea, but by one who went there to see with his own eyes the true state of things, and whether the accounts that had been given were borne out by actual facts.

The Koreans are passing through a period of national humiliation owing to their country having come under the control of the Japanese. Poor they have long been—made so by the long-continued exactions of the official class—so that the majority of the people live from hand to mouth. And recent changes tend to intensify their poverty rather than relieve it. Yet these troubles, instead of embittering their lives, are accepted as being the will of God for them, working for their good, and fitting them for the high spiritual destiny to which they believe they are called. Not their eternal destiny, of course, but the place they are destined to fill in connection with the work of the Lord in their own and other lands.

The Korean Christians—those of them who, for various reasons, travel through the country—proclaim everywhere the gospel they have

received and wherein they stand. The persecuted Christians of Pentecostal days who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word. In like manner, these Koreans, some of whom are traders and pedlars, in pursuing their ordinary callings, preach the glad tidings even to the utmost boundaries of the kingdom. They cannot help doing so: the love of Christ impels them.

A striking feature of the spiritual life of the Koreans is their intense love for the Holy Scriptures. They study the Bible as God's message, and seek to fashion their lives according to its high and heavenly teaching. Besides this individual love for the Word of God, it is the habit of many congregations to devote the early part of the Lord's Day to *united* Bible study. We have seen, says the writer of the report, as many as two thousand women gathered together in one building for this purpose. On asking where the men were, he was told that when the women had finished and were gone two thousand men would take the vacant seats. Nor was this a solitary instance. Six other places in the same city were visited on the same day, and the same sight was seen, with this difference—the numbers were limited to eight or nine hundred persons owing to the seating capacity of the buildings not being great enough to take more. And this is not all. Many of the Korean

Christians arrange to spend from two to four weeks together at some convenient centre for the prayerful study of the Scriptures, availing themselves of the help of some foreign servant of Christ better instructed than themselves. Last year, at different centres, nearly ninety thousand Koreans came together for that purpose. It seems almost incredible. But such was indeed the case, and those competent to judge attribute the vigorous life of the Korean Christians to their great love of the Bible. And doubtless they are right.

Nor is prayer neglected. They pray as few others do, and they pray as a child prays, with the simplest and fullest faith in their God and Father's power and will to answer the prayers of His children. One striking example may be given. A certain congregation agreed to unite in prayer that a million souls might be gathered in during the year. By some means they calculated that their share in the million would increase their number five-fold. Accordingly they pulled down the building where they were wont to meet and built another five times as large. Then they gave themselves to prayer and personal work, and within a year the huge building was filled to the very doors with those who had been won from heathenism. And may we not hope and believe that most of them, if not all, were won also to Christ?

The week-night meeting for prayer (the barometer of a rising or falling church, as it has been well called) is not forgotten. On one bitterly cold night in December, with snow falling thick, some eight hundred people were found gathered together at their customary weekly prayer-meeting. And there would have been many more had it not been that an epidemic of influenza was raging. No Christian ever dreams of being absent, and many who have not yet confessed Christ will not keep away.

Another happy feature is their interest in the Lord's work in other lands. To this, in their deep poverty, they contribute largely. They believe that God is training many of them for evangelistic service, especially in China and Japan. Nor is this their own thought alone. Many servants of Christ believe that the Korean Christians are destined to play an important part in the carrying out of God's purposes of grace in reference to those adjacent lands. God grant that it may be so!

This account is necessarily brief, but it suffices to show how much there is that calls for profound thanksgiving to God for having granted repentance unto life to many in Korea. And let us also fervently pray that these, our Korean brethren, members of Christ even as we are, children in the same family and indwelt by the same Spirit, may grow up into Christ

in all things, and that God may be abundantly glorified in them and by them.

It has been said by some that the day of the heathen has not yet come. Perhaps not, at least not so fully as when Isaiah LXVI. 19 shall be fulfilled. But the day *has come* for these thousands of Korea who have been brought to Christ. And who can tell but what there are thousands more, now lying in heathen darkness, who shall be won for Christ—jewels to shine in His crown of glory by and by? Oh, that God would stir our cold and sluggish hearts to care more for those to whom the Saviour's name is as yet unknown! Oh, that He would raise up devoted men who will not count their lives dear unto themselves, and who will go forth to *live* Christ and to preach Him in lands where death and darkness reign!

SYDNEY.

ED.

THERE is a strong tendency in all human teaching to be one-sided. The truth of God, like the city of God, "lieth four square"; but men are evermore altering that perfect shape, and making it, instead, all length or all breadth, all lines or curves or angles, instead of that full and fair proportion which God the heavenly Architect has assigned to His work.

258 PANCHIAPU, OR DEADLY COLD.

PANCHIAPU, OR DEADLY COLD.

“THERE’S nothing really wrong with Panchiapu, only we are *deadly cold*.” So said a brother from the village of that name, at a united meeting for prayer, at which Panchiapu had been specially prayed for.

Does the reader know of any other place of which a similar confession might be made? “Nothing really wrong”—an orthodox position, a correct creed, decorous conduct—*only* “deadly cold.” No warmth of divine love, no unction of the Holy Ghost, no fervent zeal for the interests of Christ, no importunate prayer for the conversion of sinners, no burning desire to make headway in the knowledge of the truth; a deadly coldness prevailing, and holding all in its freezing grip.

Is there “nothing really wrong” with such a company? Would it not be nearer the mark to say that they are wrong all over, through and through, and from head to heel? Did not just such a state of things make it necessary for the Lord to threaten the assembly at Ephesus with forfeiture of their place as a witness for Him, unless they repented? (Rev. II.).

Surely it is one of the most alarming symptoms of a terrible disease when deadly coldness is looked upon as a mere exception, of secondary importance, to a general statement that “there’s nothing really wrong.”

PANCHIAPU, OR DEADLY, COLD. 259

In any case, it is good to confess the existence of coldness, wherever it is found. With so much to warm our hearts, to cause them to thrill and glow with triumph and gladness, to set them dancing for very joy, is there any excuse for coldness? Is it not a shame? Is it not a *sin*?

Let us confess it as such. Let us throw our whole souls into the words of the hymn we so often sing :—

“O pardon us, Lord, that our love to Thy Name
Is so faint, with so much our affections to move !
Our coldness might fill us with grief and with shame,
So much to be loved, and so little to love.”

Confession is the first step towards recovery. Mr. James Webster, in his thrilling story of the revival in Manchuria, tells us how Panchiapu was visited by a wonderful wave of heavenly blessing. Why should not a similar visitation come your way? Ask yourself this question thoughtfully, pausing between the words :
Why—should—not—a—wave—of—heavenly blessing—come—to me,—to the company of Christians with whom I meet,—to the place where I live?

The late David Dodge was talking with a devout fellow-believer about the prevalent apathy among the Lord's people, the strange dullness and sluggishness that existed on all sides, the lack of spiritual warmth and zeal that was evident everywhere. They agreed as

260 PANCHIAPU, OR DEADLY COLD.

to the need of more prayer, a greater measure of personal devotedness, and so forth.

At length the brother with whom Mr. D. was speaking broke in with, "Friend Dodge, suppose you and I make a beginning!"

That is the way. It is not by waiting for any miraculous movement of the Spirit, but by believers in ones and twos giving themselves to earnest prayer and personal consecration, that seasons of reviving begin.

This sort of thing is happily infectious. It spreads. If you caught fire, others would soon begin to get warm. Why not make a start to-day? Seek the presence of God, unburden your heart by a confession of coldness, and remain there long enough for the love of Christ to take fresh possession of your soul. Not once, nor twice, nor thrice repeat the act. Make it your daily practice. Pray not for yourself alone, but for others. If you know any like-minded, pray *with* them as well as for them. Do not be content with prayer-meetings. Have some *meetings for prayer*, without limitations as to time or procedure.

God's arm is unshortened. What can He not, what will He not do for those whose confidence is in Himself?

"O kindle within us a holy desire

Like that which was found in Thy people of old,
Who tasted Thy love, and *whose hearts were on fire*,
While they waited in patience Thy face to behold."

H. P. B.

[261]

WORSHIP AND SERVICE.

A BIBLE TALK.

CHRISTIANITY in its practical workings is a well-balanced combination of the passive and active sides of divine life in the soul. Every Christian is of necessity a receiver, not only at conversion, but all through his career. He must daily sit at Jesus' feet and hear His Word (Luke x. 39), cultivating that quiet passivity of soul which ensures a receptive state. Otherwise he has nothing to impart.

On the other hand, having received, he finds himself constrained to give. Is he rejoicing in the knowledge of sins forgiven? His joy will not be complete until he has told the news to some one else. Has some fresh truth of Scripture burst upon his view? It will not be fully his until he has acted upon it. To practise any truth is to possess that truth indeed.

So the two things go hand in hand. A Christian resembles a reservoir, inasmuch as he must have an inlet and an outflow. If he becomes so enamoured of the activities of Christianity that he is always attempting to give out without stopping to take in, spiritual emptiness and bankruptcy are the result. If he degenerates into a dreamy mystic, decrying

all forms of Christian activity under cover of zeal for larger reception of divine truth, spiritual surfeit will supervene, and his ultimate loss will be great.

“From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath ” (Matt. xxv. 29). This was said of the servant who *received* a talent, but did not *give* it out to usury.

“For we must share if we would keep
That good thing from above ;
Ceasing to give we cease to have,
Such is the law of love.”

All activities of a distinctly Christian character flow from one source : LOVE, the love of God known and produced in the soul. They range themselves under two heads. First, there are those activities which have God alone for their object and end. Second, those which, though God's glory is their end, have man in some way as their immediate object.

Let us briefly consider these two things.

WORSHIP must stand first. It is a spiritual activity which, having God alone as its object, confers no tangible benefit upon any one in the world. Therefore in this utilitarian age it is greatly neglected, and its true character little understood. Let Christians, be they few or many, assemble together, drawing consciously into the presence of God and pouring out their hearts in thanksgiving and worship, and there

will be not a few ready to rebuke them and say, "Why was this waste of the ointment made?" They will be told to go out and do something that will confer a practical benefit upon somebody, and abandon that which does nobody good.

But things have gone even further than this. There are many professed ministers of Christ who so fully "mind earthly things" (Phil. III. 19) that they have no thought for "the things which are above" (Col. III. 1), which the believer is bidden to seek. Their aim is limited to the benefit of men, and that in the most material way. Mark the pitiful spiritual degradation to which they have sunk as witnessed by their activities. Here is a flagrant example.

"By training people in music, developing orators and athletes, starting 'Bible classes—with heaps of fun,' and making the church a social centre, the writer has created a new community spirit, and as a result land-values are going up."

Thus an article in an American magazine describes how a church may be "run" so as to benefit the whole community.

Such activities are neither worship nor service. There is nothing in them for God, and nothing for the spiritual benefit of man. Such "ministers" and "churches" must have long ago practically banished the word *worship* from their vocabularies; the idea which the

word properly conveys they probably never had.

What, then, is worship? In the Old Testament the term frequently occurs and is often used in a purely ceremonial sense. The Hebrew word most frequently used means literally "to bow oneself down." In the New Testament the word gets the inward and spiritual meaning with which we are concerned, and signifies the up-flow of responsive love, in adoration, from the believer to God, now known as Father.

In John iv. the Lord Jesus, speaking to the woman of Samaria, carefully distinguishes between the "true worshippers" and the worshippers according to the ancient rites, whether at Jerusalem or Samaria, and instructs us as to the essentials for true worship. After speaking of *the Father* as the object of worship, He adds: "God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Do not these words plainly show that it is God *as Father* that we are to worship? and, further, that He is only to be worshipped according to what He has revealed Himself to be?

"*In spirit*," for "Spirit" is what God Himself is. True worship, then, is not a matter of religious emotions roused by impressive ritual or sensuous music. "Spirit"

is the highest part of man, and unless we worship in spirit we do not worship at all.

“*In truth.*” What is truth? We may answer Pilate’s famous question thus: The realities of God Himself, that which God has revealed Himself to be: this is truth. The One who stood, crowned with thorns that day, in the judgment hall was Himself the truth, though Pilate knew it not, nor cared to know. He, and He alone, could say: “I am . . . the Truth” (John xiv. 6), for He alone is the perfect revelation of God, and it is as Father that He has revealed Him. Therefore He said: “He that hath seen Me hath seen *the Father*” (John xiv. 9).

The Father, then, is to be worshipped “in truth,” in the light of that revelation which has come to us in Christ. That which does not give Christ His right place is no true worship. Worshipping God and rejoicing in Christ Jesus go hand in hand (Phil. iii. 3).

All this is of great importance. Let the soul firmly grasp the fact that true worship is “in spirit” and it will be delivered from the ritualistic idea which supposes that God can be worshipped by men’s hands, that the more imposing the ceremony, the more gorgeous the surroundings, the more acceptable the “worship” is.

On the other hand, to know that only worship “in truth” is acceptable to God is to

have the rationalistic idea dispelled. Neither the torchlight of science nor the study of God's handiwork in nature gives rise to worship. The knowledge of God Himself, revealed in Christ, is essential.

After worship comes SERVICE, the outcome of the gracious activity of divine love in the hearts of believers, leading them to an endless variety of labour for the glory of God and the good of souls.

Let us make no mistake here. The very essence of true service is that, while undertaken that others may be benefited, it is done *for the pleasure and under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

In service our one motive should be to please the Lord, who has in this Himself become our great Example. Speaking of the Father, He said: "I do always those things that please Him" (John VIII. 29). To do right things is not enough. Right things done with a wrong motive are wrong in the sight of heaven.

Neither is it enough to act even with a right motive, if we are acting simply on our own initiative and doing what seems right in our own eyes. A man employed in a workshop may be a good workman, but a poor servant. If he is opinionated and independent, he will be continually running counter to his master's wishes and will give no end of trouble. Again,

the Lord Jesus comes before us as our Example, saying : “ My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work ” (John iv. 34). Service, then, is not merely work, not even though it be good work, Christian activity of the most scriptural sort, but such activity under the direction of the Lord.

If an illustration of our theme be wanted, John xii. 1-9 presents us with an excellent one. “ Martha served.” There was hard work connected with that supper, and many benefited by it, but she performed it *for Him*. “ They made *Him* a supper.” That was true service done out of a full heart of gratitude to the One who had brought her brother from the tomb.

Lazarus “ sat at the table *with Him*,” a type of that communion with the Master which alone gives point and colour to either service or worship.

Mary took the costly ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus. Upon Him she lavished it all. It was the outflow of a heart concentrated upon Christ, though the odour of the ointment filled the house. The worship of the heart is fragrant everywhere.

The Father is seeking worshippers (John iv. 23). The Lord has need of servants (2 Tim. ii. 1-7). May we respond to both desires !

In speaking of worship, do you intend to refer to your form of worship as compared with that of other people ?

Not at all. I have no form of worship, whatever other people may have. To the Jews of old God gave what might be termed a "form of worship." But it was of a national, outward, ceremonial sort, though acceptable to God, if carried out with all the heart. Alas ! it was not so, and soon Jehovah had to say : "In vain do they worship Me."

But the shadow dispensation has passed away and the substance has come. Christian worship is not national, not a mere matter of the lips, not a thing made up of certain ceremonies and observances. You can no more confine worship in forms than you can keep new wine in old bottles. The thing has been attempted times without number, for again and again have even true believers drifted back in mind and understanding to pre-Christian days. The result, however, must either be that if true worship be retained the forms are burst and discarded, or that if the forms be rigidly adhered to the new wine of true worship is spilled and quickly disappears.

You speak of worship and service. Is there such a very great difference between them? Ought we not to worship God whenever we go to a service?

There is a very distinct difference. But just as we are speaking of worship and not "a form of worship," so we are speaking of service, and not "a service." The fact is, in

the minds of many the whole subject is obscured and confused to a surprising degree, until no clear scriptural idea is left.

We have heard of a preacher who rose from his seat one Sunday morning and said : “ Let us commence the worship of Almighty God by singing the hymn—

“ Come ye sinners poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore.”

To him “ worship ” evidently meant any kind of religious meeting. But it does not ! It may be a true service to the Lord on the part of the preacher to conduct a meeting for the edification of believers or the conversion of sinners. It is no service (in the proper sense of the word) for the listeners. And for neither preacher nor hearers is it worship. Worship is not hearing sermons nor preaching them. Nor is it praying, or singing gospel hymns. It is that up-flow of adoration which rises from a redeemed soul to God.

**Are worship and service confined to any particular class,
or may all Christians have part in them ?**

All Christians are both priests and servants. We read, for instance :

“ Ye also . . . are built up . . . an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ ” (I Peter II. 5).

And again :

“ Ye are . . . a royal priesthood . . . that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light ” (1 Peter II. 9).

These words were written not to clergy, but to Christians. All such are a holy and a royal priesthood. Mark their activities ! In the one character they OFFER UP spiritual sacrifices to God, i.e. worship. In the other they SHOW FORTH the praises of God, i.e. service.

In connection with service it is, of course, true that not every Christian has a gift according to 1 Corinthians XII., or is an evangelist, pastor, or teacher according to Ephesians IV. Yet every Christian can serve according to Romans XII. If he cannot prophesy or teach, he can show hospitality, or mercy ; he can bless his persecutors or weep in sympathy with a weeping saint, and thus be “ serving the Lord.”

Are there any special qualifications needed for us to rightly worship or serve God ?

As to worship, Hebrews X. 19-22 speaks of “ boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,” and we are exhorted to draw near with “ a true heart in full assurance of faith.” These are two important qualifications. Faith must be in active exercise, so that there is full assurance based upon the work of Christ, not a doubt or fear left. Then a true heart

would indicate that sincerity and transparency of soul which is the result of a tender conscience and self-judgment.

As to service, read Acts xx. 17-35. Here is one of the most eminent of Christ's servants reviewing his career. Our service may be of the most insignificant description, yet the things that marked him should characterize us. Here are some of them: "humility of mind"; "many tears"—expressive of much exercise; "none of these things move me"—stability of soul; "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel"—the strictest possible righteousness before the world; "I have shewed you all things"—the practice of what is preached. These are important qualifications indeed.

F. B. H.

RECIPE FOR KEEPING MOTHS OUT OF CLOTHES.—Look over your wardrobe and bring out all that can be spared: coats, skirts, blouses and underwear. Send them to the poor. See if you have any superfluous blankets or shawls. Let the widow and the destitute have them before the moths begin their inroads. This plan will be found more efficacious than all the cedar closets and camphor cakes in the world. And in this way you may "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt."

[272]

PEACE IN TRIAL.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

BY THE LATE MRS. S. L. JACOB.

[I relate the following incident, as nearly as possible in Mrs. Jacob's own words, as told me by herself in India in the year 1887. Those who knew our beloved sister are here let into the secret of the calm and peace that marked her in a life that was by no means exempt from trouble. That secret is open for all God's children to know and experience. May others hereby be led into the enjoyment of the peace of God.—T. C. M.]

SOON after our eldest boy was born he had a very long and tedious illness and began to pine away. As you may imagine, we did all we could for him. The doctor attended him daily, while I nursed him day and night. But apparently it was to no purpose ; in fact, the more care and attention he had, the worse he seemed to get. At last the thought that we were about to lose him began to weigh heavily upon me, and I allowed myself practically no rest, but watched and cared for him incessantly. Soon matters came to a crisis. I noted every symptom carefully that night, and told the doctor when he came in the morning. He seemed to take little notice of what I was saying, but looked at our little darling seriously all the time ; and when I had finished he just shook his head dubiously, and said :

“ I am afraid it is all useless. I cannot see how it is possible for him to get better.”

Oh, how my heart sank as I heard those words ! And as the doctor left me I completely broke down. But just then a voice seemed to say to me :

“ You have been very careful to tell the *doctor* everything, and you find no relief from it. Why not go to *God* and tell Him everything, just as you have told the doctor ? ”

My first thought was to answer, “ Oh, He knows.” But then that text came before me :

“ Be careful for nothing ; but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.”

I at once went to my own room, and there I told God everything, just as though He knew nothing at all about it. As I rose from my knees the very peace of God seemed to pervade my heart. Every care, every bit of anxiety, was gone, and the next verse seemed to flood my soul:

“ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

From that moment my boy began to get better, and there he is now, a fine sturdy little lad. I have him, but, better still, I have had an experience of how God can keep the heart in perfect peace, even while it is passing through the most depressing circumstances.

A QUESTION OF INTEREST.

Can you propose any test which would enable a Christian to judge what is worldly and what is not ?

THE word "worldly" occurs but twice in the Bible—Titus II. 12 and Hebrews IX. 1. There is nothing necessarily evil attached to it in its original meaning. On the contrary, we see from the passage in Hebrews that it may be applied to holy things, as the tabernacle, to which the apostle there refers.

But we have to do with the word as it is commonly used to-day ; and I doubt very much if in this sense any infallible test can be given. For what may be worldly in one case may not be so at all in another. For example, a Christian may fall heir to some ancestral mansion, luxuriously furnished. He may not feel free to make any radical changes in the old home of his progenitors, and his living in a house so furnished cannot be called worldliness. But suppose some Christian tries to ape the world's grandeur and fashion, and deliberately furnishes his house with all sorts of costly and unnecessary things, to please himself, his wife, or his children. It is the lust of the eye and the pride of life, and in this case worldliness of a very decided type. It is almost impossible to suggest any test that would apply to all cases and still leave room for those modifying and often excusable cir-

cumstances that completely change the colour of an act or mode of life.

But we have a text that furnishes us with something like a test for every conceivable case that may occur: "All that is in the world . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John II. 16). Christ revealed the Father. Those that saw Him saw the Father. He ever did that which He saw the Father do, the things that pleased the Father. The will of His Father governed all His actions: His one object was the Father's glory. So we take Him as our model, not by asking "What would Jesus do?" but by studying His blessed life as set forth in the Gospels and seeing what He did, how He did it, and what were His governing motives. In this way we learn that nothing is of the Father that is not after Christ. All else is of the world, worldly and to be refused as such. So the test for this, as for everything of a spiritual nature, is Christ. He is the infallible touchstone, and we need no other. Oh, to know Him better and to love Him more! This would save us from all legal questioning as to whether this or that thing is right or wrong, consistent or inconsistent, worldly or otherwise. This is a thousand times better than having everything laid down for us in black and white, so that any unspiritual mind could decide without exercise, and obey with that mechanical and legal obedience character-

276 THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF GRACE.

istic of the law and of every religious system outside Christianity. C. K.

THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF GRACE.

“ I AM going to get you a winter jacket to-day,” said a lady to her little six-year-old daughter.

“ I don’t think you had better, mother dear,” replied the child, with a note of doubt and protest in her words.

“ Why, we were talking about it the other day, and you seemed to think it would be very nice.”

“ Yes, mother, but they cost a great deal. I don’t think you can really afford it.”

The lady smiled. “ Not afford you a new jacket ? I think I can manage it.”

The child flushed up. “ Please, mother, I don’t think you can, *really*. I’ve looked in your purse, and there was very little in it ! ”

Do we not sometimes think like this of our gracious God and Father ? We look with anxious concern at the things that we can see and handle, and consider no more about the exceeding riches of His grace and the surpassing greatness of His power to us-ward who believe than this little girl did about the bank account that lay behind the purse !

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. T. D., Bhagalpur.—To affirm that the Lord Jesus had to die *because He became Man* is a most serious error. If He, in unspeakable grace, came into manhood, He did not thereby become liable to the penalty under which *sinful* man lay. Ever holy, and without taint of sin, He might at any moment have returned to the glory that had been His throughout the past eternity. But apart from the atonement which He made upon the cross, He would necessarily have returned alone. The “much fruit” could only be brought forth by the corn of wheat dying (John XII. 24). Though death was not a personal necessity for Himself, it was a necessity if He was to save sinners and win them as loved companions to share the joys of His Father’s house. Therefore, when found in fashion as a Man, though death had no claim on Him, He humbled Himself and became obedient to it (Phil. II. 8). Blessed Saviour! How our hearts well up in adoring gratitude as we think of the love that made Him willing to stoop so low for our sakes!

H. M.—Let us guard our pen with jealous care when writing about the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, for with the best intentions we are liable to go astray. That He was truly Man, though “over all, God blessed for ever,” we devoutly believe. He knew hunger and thirst and what it was to grow weary. He looked for comforters, too, and for some to take pity, when the scorn and hatred of those He came to bless assumed

278 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

their most trying form. All this is witnessed to in Holy Scripture. But in our frail humanity sin had sown seeds of mortality, and so death had passed upon all. Not so with Him, the Holy One of God.

Nor in becoming incarnate did He unite Himself with fallen man. He was the precious "corn of wheat" that abode alone. But when He had accomplished the work of redemption, and had gone back to glory, then those who believed on Him could be united to Him by the Spirit as members of His body—not before. Let us be content with this, remembering that "no man knoweth the Son, but the Father." The personality of the Son is too profound a mystery for us to fully fathom with our creature limitations. It is here that faith finds its holy and happy sphere, and we adoringly believe what is beyond our power to comprehend.

W. H. D.—We thank you for your further letter as to singing out of doors. The cases which you mention of conversion through hymns are most interesting and encouraging. But none of them, according to your letter, occurred at open-air meetings. The case of the gentleman in Glasgow who was attracted by a hymn which he heard when passing on the top of a tram would rather support our correspondent C. K.'s suggestion as to singing being useful for attracting hearers.

H. R.—(1) The coming of the Lord is presented in Scripture in such a way as to constitute a present, living hope for believers of all generations to cherish. This would not have been so if it had been revealed in apostolic times that cen-

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 279

turies would intervene before hope gave place to fulfilment. Do you not see a very great gain in having this blessed hope burning in our hearts, even though none of us can say we *know* that the Lord will come before we fall asleep? One result of cherishing it is that the world becomes less attractive to us, and our hearts are drawn out in responsive affection to Him for whose return we look. Whenever this hope has become dim in the souls of the saints of God, increased worldliness has been the consequence.

(2) Do you know of any reason why we should not expect numbers of the sons and daughters of Christian parents, the children of many prayers, to be converted, through a special action of the Holy Spirit, just before the Lord comes? Nothing is impossible with God, and He surely will not let those earnest, pleading supplications fall to the ground, even though, for some wise and gracious purpose, He may see fit to delay the answer. Real confidence in God will lead the Christian to say from his heart, "Come, Lord Jesus," even though his children are apparently as far as ever from being converted. We say *apparently*, for there is often a work of the Spirit of God going on in souls of which there is little or no outward evidence.

J. P. D., California.—The love of God in Romans v. 5 is evidently *God's love to us*, of which our hearts are made deeply sensible by the Holy Ghost, who indwells us. The following verse refers to the way in which this mighty love has manifested itself. Does any believer desire to

280 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

know whether God really loves him? Let him look for evidence, not within his own heart, though it is there that the Holy Ghost sheds that love abroad, but to Calvary, where love's crowning proof was given in the death of Christ for us, helpless and ungodly as we were.

Of course, it is also true that by the Holy Spirit's work *love to God* is begotten in our hearts, so that in chapter VIII. 28 Christians are spoken of, characteristically, as "them that love God." But this is not what is brought before us in the verse as to which you inquire.

P. J. R., British Columbia.—We can well understand the horror with which the sister to whom you refer regards the use of alcohol. Is there anything that has caused more misery, or is accountable for more crime? But it is surely going too far to refuse to partake of the Lord's Supper because wine is used therein. It is well known that the "fruit of the vine" commonly used in Palestine was a fermented drink. We have heard of Christians who in their unconverted days had been terrible drunkards, fearing the taste, and even the sight, of that which once possessed such power over them. But their confidence in the Lord that He would not suffer temptation to assail them through the act of remembering Him in His own appointed way has not been disappointed.

S. K.—We do not think your reasoning is sound. It has been well said that the true test of a man is not what he does, but what, with the principles he holds, he would do.

JOY IN THE LORD.

“**R**EJOICE in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice,” is the ringing note of the apostle as he lies bound in his prison with a martyr’s death before him. In the face of all his sufferings, and whatever awaits him in the future, he is dauntless. There is no evidence of the least discouragement, but every mark of spiritual triumph.

They are remarkable words, and well calculated to encourage the saints at all times, especially if we consider the circumstances under which they were written. Paul was bound with a chain to a Roman soldier, and deprived of the liberty which is almost as dear as life itself. Within the church there were those who tried him much, preaching Christ from unworthy motives, thinking to add affliction to his bonds.

But of all such things he says: “This shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.” All the difficulties that surrounded him, and which he might have to face in the future, were but bread to nourish and strengthen his confidence in the Lord, who would overrule all for the blessing of himself and the saints.

Such a man could truly say, “I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall be

continually in my mouth.” In the power we derive from the Lord, who may not see fit to remove our difficulties, but who gives us inward strength to face them, we rise in spiritual triumph above all that would otherwise dishearten us. Instead of complaining, we praise the One who allows them, so that we may learn His power supporting us in them, and thus be able to magnify His grace before others.

There is plenty to discourage, and the Lord allows this that we may put no confidence in any but Himself. His unfailing faithfulness abides the same at all times, and He would have us exercise faith, to prove the power of His unchanging love. It is the joy we derive from such confidence that becomes our strength for conflict. “The joy of the Lord is your strength.” “The Lord is the portion of my cup.” “My cup runneth over.” This is more than being filled. Others are helped and encouraged as the result of an overflowing cup.

Paul might have said as he looked back, “My work is being spoiled by these corrupt teachers, and here I am shut up in prison, deprived of my liberty, unable to withstand these men.” He says of such, “I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.” Though his tears tell how very

painful it all is to his tender heart (for he deeply loved both the truth and the saints), yet he is not cast down. He holds the colours and hoists the standard in the face of the foe, and says, "Stand fast in the Lord, dearly beloved." What he exhorted Timothy to be he truly was himself, "a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Nothing could move him to yield to the enemy by a single hair's breadth. He stood fast when all forsook him. If prosperous with regard to his circumstances, he was not elated; if abased, he was not disheartened. What was the secret of such triumph? Is it not contained in the words, "I have strength for all things in Him that gives me power" (N.T.)? Because of this strength working in his weakness he could say, "I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound: everywhere, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

In a day of difficulty like the present, when outwardly things are far from bright, we have the same resource as Paul. We may not have the same kind of trials as he, but we have the same Lord in all His faithful love, power and wisdom. He is as accessible to our faith as to Paul's. We have only to call upon Him at any time to prove the reality of this. In turning to Him we find

salvation from ourselves and from all that would oppress and hinder us. "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." "Call upon Me in the day of trouble [whatever that may be] and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."

All power is in His hand, and in the deep, unchanging love of His heart He is ever ready to exercise that power for those who invoke it. If He does not see good to remove our difficulties by changing our circumstances, He draws near to us in His priestly grace, and gives us to realize His sympathy in such a way that we get lifted in spirit above the trial.

Therefore, though we may be tasting sorrow, He enables us to rejoice. As we enjoy His sympathy and inward support in our trials, we learn Himself as a true Friend in a way we could not otherwise do. He thus endears Himself to our hearts, and by this means makes Himself more to us than all besides. In this way our confidence is increased, and our faith strengthened to count upon Him in further trials. It is in this way that we gain what is so lacking in many, *soul experience*, a thing with which mere theoretical knowledge cannot for a moment be compared.

It is in difficulty and sorrow that we learn who are our true friends. It is in sorrow we need comfort, the comfort of the love of Christ. We ought not to think when we pass through

trouble that we are not deeply loved ; trial is but the proof of love. “ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.” “ Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.” A beloved brother once said, when he had lost all his cattle by disease, that it was because the Lord loved him that He had taken them away. This saying surprised many, but it was true, and the loss was a great spiritual blessing to him.

Love is proved as much by what it withholds or allows to be taken from us as by what it gives. We are long in learning that this is so, but when we learn it we are not surprised that we are called to suffer. Paul was the greatest saint and servant, but he was one of the greatest sufferers, and he seemed to take pleasure in this for Christ's sake. We may be sure that if we had been in company with Paul for two weeks we should not think or speak much of our petty trials.

Faith, in Hebrews XI., is shown as much in what it endured as in the exploits it accomplished. It subdued kingdoms, but it was seen in sustaining those who were afflicted and tormented. “ They be bread for us,” said a man of God in another day. Bread is for nourishment and strength. Difficulties are used of the Lord for the same purpose. Like the tree cast into the bitter waters, the enjoyment of His love in them sweetens all. P. W.

THE CHRISTIAN'S POWER.

Questions asked at a meeting at Stockport.

I have noticed that you never urge people to leave off bad habits such as drinking and swearing. Is this intentional, or is it an accidental omission?

I PURPOSELY abstain from urging my hearers to give up their drinking, their quick tempers, or whatever besetting sins they may have, for the very simple reason that, on turning to my Bible, I never find that any of the early preachers of the gospel did so, or that salvation is offered upon any such conditions.

Go into your garden when the frost of winter has everything in its grip. Icicles inches long hang from the trees. You may break them all off, but you do not change winter into summer by so doing. You may induce a sinner to give up his bad habits and say good-bye to the companions that mislead him, but you do not change him into a saint after that fashion. That is why I have not urged my unconverted hearers to give up their bad habits. For the Christian, however, it is another matter. I would affectionately beseech all who have believed the gospel to abandon everything in their lives that would bring dishonour upon the name that they bear.

THE CHRISTIAN'S POWER.

287

What is the power that will enable the Christian to do this? And how can it be obtained?

For an answer, read Acts i. 8. The Lord Jesus, risen from the dead, says to His disciples, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Power, then, for the believer lies in the Holy Spirit.

We may not be called to preach the gospel publicly, but it is our privilege to serve the Lord in connection with the details of everyday life, whether in the mill, the shop, the office, or the home. But in order to do so we need a new power, just as truly as if called to missionary service thousands of miles away. We need the power of the Holy Spirit for a godly life, for happiness, and for testimony.

Is not every one, converted or otherwise, more or less under the guidance of God's Spirit? Does the Holy Ghost act differently in the Christian and in the unbeliever?

The Holy Ghost sometimes knocks at the door of an unbeliever's heart. He strives with the sinner, and may be resisted. But we read in Acts v. 32 of "the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to *them that obey Him*." It is to these that God gives His Holy Spirit. He dwells not in everybody, but in those that obey God.

Does this mean those who are trying to obey the ten commandments? No; obedience to *the gospel* is meant. Two things are

thereby enjoined. First, "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Second, "This is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ." To obey these two commands is to obtain the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Turn also to John XIV. 17, where the Holy Ghost is spoken of as "*the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive.*" On the one hand, there are those who obey the gospel; on the other hand, those who are of the world. The Lord distinctly says that these latter cannot receive the Holy Spirit: only they who are believers in Christ receive Him.

In what way does the Holy Spirit help us to live a holy life?

He turns our hearts to Christ, and thus leads us to forget ourselves. In ourselves we have no strength, but through Him we can do all things.

Have you heard the story of Alexander the Great and his horse Bucephalus? This spirited creature had resisted all attempts to tame it. Alexander discovered the secret of its restiveness. It was afraid of its own shadow. So he simply turned its face towards the sun, and then its shadow, the thing that caused all the trouble, was behind it.

There are many people that are, as it were, afraid of their own shadow. They are constantly bemoaning their weakness and faith-

lessness. If only they would turn round with their face towards the sun, their heart's gaze fixed upon Christ, then the shadows of disappointment and doubt would be behind. This the Holy Spirit helps the believer to do, and herein lies the secret of a happy, holy life.

How may I know whether or not the Holy Spirit dwells in me?

Besides the passages already referred to, John vii. 39 shows what kind of people receive Him. "This spake He of the Spirit, which *they that believe on Him should receive.*"

So also in Acts x. 43, 44: "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." The Holy Ghost fell on all who heard this word. They must have been listening with open-mouthed attention to what the preacher was saying about the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ, and we may be sure that they were taking the glad news to their hearts. Without delay God gave them His Holy Spirit. These two things therefore go together: believing in Christ for the remission of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit.

Notice that God does not give us His Holy Spirit in order to make us His, but because by faith in Christ we *are* His. When I marked this handkerchief with my name I did not thereby make it mine. The money I paid for

it made it mine. I marked it so that it should be known as mine. In like manner God seals us with His Holy Spirit, not in order to make us His, but to mark us as His.

Is this indwelling permanent, or conditional on our behaviour? Does the Holy Spirit leave us when we misbehave ourselves?

Turn to Ephesians iv. 30. I will read it first as people often quote it: "Grieve not away the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." It is not thus in the Word of God. It does not say, "Grieve not *away* the Holy Spirit," but "Grieve not the Holy Spirit." This is a sufficient answer to the question. Our very bodies are going to be redeemed. Meanwhile we are sealed with the Holy Spirit, and because He has come to *abide* with us we should be very careful not to grieve Him.

What effects are produced in the believer by the presence of such a remarkable Companion and Guide?

The lovely results of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us are set forth in Galatians v. 22: "Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." These things are not produced in us by our trying to be good. We may try hard to love God and our neighbour, and to get that joy which we see that others have; but these things are not the result of determined effort. They are the fruit of the Spirit. His delight is to pro-

THE CHRISTIAN'S POWER.

291

duce in us these lovely features, which were seen to perfection in Christ Himself.

If believers are permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit, why do they not always act as Christ would?

Though, as believers, we have the Holy Spirit, we have also something in us mentioned in the same chapter, Galatians v. In verse 17 we read: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other." The "flesh" here does not mean the flesh of our bodies, but the evil principle within. The Christian, though he has God's Holy Spirit dwelling in him, has also this evil thing in him, and finds it to be no better now that he is converted than it was in his unconverted days.

The Spirit and the flesh will no more agree than fire and water. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit; all its desires are contrary to the will of God. And the Spirit lusteth against the flesh: all the desires which the Holy Spirit produces within us are contrary to those of the flesh.

The reason we do not always manifest the fruit of the Spirit is because we allow the flesh in us to act. Everything that comes out of us is either of the flesh or of the Spirit of God. If of the flesh, it is an abomination in the sight of God. If of the Spirit of God, it is a little bit of *Christ* produced in us by His power.

H. P. B.

FOUR TRUE INCIDENTS.

IF a friend to whom you are greatly indebted should ask you to speak a word to your acquaintances in favour of some cause in which he was interested you would do it readily enough.

Your Saviour, who has done so much for you, asks you to preach His gospel wherever you can. Do you comply as readily with His wish as with that of an earthly friend? It requires little effort to speak if your heart is warm with love for Him, and no one can estimate the good you may do to souls that are perishing for want of a friendly word of warning.

I.

Two young men stopped at a wayside brook to water their horses. They were strangers, travelling in different directions in more senses than one. As they paused a moment, one addressed a kindly word to the other about the interests of his soul. Then they both passed on, never to meet again.

But the young man addressed could not shake off the impression of those words, but turned them over and over during his solitary ride. This circumstance led to his conversion, and, though a young man of great wealth and brilliant prospects, he renounced all in order

FOUR TRUE INCIDENTS.

293

to preach the gospel in a foreign land. Not till some one sent him *The Life of James Brainerd Taylor*, with a portrait, did he learn who it was to whom he was so much indebted.

II.

Just try the experiment of speaking a word for the Saviour to the acquaintances whom you meet so often who have no hope in Christ. They expect it of you.

A young lady at a boarding-school seemed so utterly indifferent, so studiously cold, that though it was a time of awakening among the girls, no one felt willing to address her. At length one who had long mourned over her case determined to make at least one direct appeal. That appeal brought a gush of tears from the seemingly haughty girl.

“ I thought no one cared for my soul,” she said, with deep feeling. She was soon rejoicing in the knowledge of forgiveness, and her case taught me a lesson I can never forget.

“ If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand ” (Ezek. xxxiii. 8).

III.

On one occasion the late Charles Simeon was summoned to the dying bed of a brother.

Entering the room, his relative extended his hand and, with deep emotion, said, "I am dying, and you never warned me of the state I was in, and of the danger to which I was exposed through neglecting the salvation of my soul!"

"Nay, my brother," replied Mr. Simeon, "I took every reasonable opportunity of bringing the subject before your mind, and frequently alluded to it in my letters."

"Yes," exclaimed the dying man, "you did; but that was not enough. You never came to me, closed the door, and took me by the collar of my coat and told me that I was unconverted, and that if I died in that state I should be lost. And now I am dying, and but for God's mercy I might have been for ever undone!"

No wonder that this affecting scene made a lasting impression on Mr. Simeon's mind.

IV.

A young lady at school was urged to attend to her soul's salvation. "I was much interested in this subject a few months ago," she replied. "Miss L—— was to spend a night with me, and I was very glad. I had often heard her voice in the girls' prayer-meeting, praying for the conversion of the scholars, and I felt sure she would talk with

me about my soul. But she said not a word about it. All her conversation was about some new dresses we had, and about the merry evening she had spent. I tried to introduce the subject once by saying that I had been laughed at for being so sober, and that some one had said they believed I should get converted if I stayed in Miss S——'s school, and that I had answered I hoped I might. Miss L—— only remarked, 'I hope you will too, Julia,' and then she returned to the dresses again. To tell you the truth, I have not troubled myself much about the matter since that evening."

And I fear the poor girl has given no further thought to it. When last I saw her, she seemed as insensible as a rock. Even a sister's dying in all the agonies of remorse for a godless life was not sufficient to arouse her. At whose hand will her blood be required?

Communicated by W. J.

"WHILE you sit idle, do you think
 The Lord's great work sits idle too?
 That night dare not o'erleap the brink
 Of morn, because 'tis dark with you?
 While yet your valleys skulk in night
 In God's ripe fields the day is cried
 And reapers, with their sickles bright,
 Troop singing down the mountain side."

A QUESTION OF INTEREST.

If Christ died for everybody, how can
any one be finally lost?

FAR be it from us to prescribe theology instead of ministering Christ, but we must learn to distinguish between things that differ. The more intelligent our faith, the stronger will it be.

The question is best answered by showing the difference between the propitiatory and the substitutionary aspects of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, these two aspects of the one work cannot be separated in fact, but they can and ought to be distinguished.

Propitiation is the work of Christ in offering Himself a sacrifice to God so as to render it possible for God to righteously forgive the sinner. It is that satisfaction rendered to divine justice which made mercy available for all. God, we may say with all reverence, was confronted with a problem. His love wanted to forgive man, but His justice stood in the way. One of His attributes seemed to militate against the other. How could He forgive the sinner and at the same time remain just? The difficulty presented by His own perfections He solved in the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not to extract mercy from an unwilling God that He died. On the contrary, it was the expression

of the love that God had already for the sinner. Nor was it an inferior being sacrificing himself to appease the anger of an offended Deity. No less a Person than the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, took upon Himself the issues of human guilt and quenched them in His own death.

Thus God's character was fully vindicated, and His unsullied holiness and inflexible righteousness manifested to the whole universe. The sin question was taken up and settled once for all. And now God, on the ground of that glorious work accomplished at Calvary, offers a free pardon to all. The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ is the righteous basis upon which salvation can be proclaimed world-wide. It is the channel through which alone the mercy of God can reach the lost.

Substitution has reference rather to the relation borne by each individual saved sinner to the One who carried his sins. We may rest on the work of Christ on the cross as that which satisfies God, and so have peace and joy in believing, without entering into the inner meaning of Christ as our very own Substitute. But having trusted Christ for salvation, we can say : " He was wounded for *my* transgressions ; He was bruised for *my* iniquities ; the chastisement that brings *me* peace fell upon Him ; He was bearing *my* load of guilt ; He was cancelling *my* debt ; He was

discharging *my* liabilities ; He was thinking of *me*, *my* name was in His mind, *my* name was on His heart while He was taking *my* punishment ; what God did to my Surety was reckoned to have been done to *me* ; what He suffered was as if *I* had suffered it."

What assurance such language as this implies ! " Particular redemption " is the family secret of God's children. It is bound up with the other doctrines of grace. The believer at first may rejoice in the knowledge of sins forgiven through trusting a living, almighty Saviour. But afterwards his thoughts go back 1900 years to the time when all his sins were laid upon His adorable Substitute, who bled and died to put them away for ever. Then still further back to the past eternity his faith may travel, and rest upon the unchanging purpose of the Father who chose him before the foundation of the world, who 1900 years ago laid all the sins He foreknew on his Surety, and who in due time called him with an effectual calling by the Holy Spirit to a knowledge of what had been done for him.

The value of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ is made ours on believing. That is one side of the truth. But it is only the believer who can truly say, " He bore *my* sins in His own body on the tree." There need be no confusion. We can say to every one we meet, " Christ died in order to make it righteously

A QUESTION OF INTEREST.

299

possible for God to forgive you ; there is no barrier on God's side to your salvation ; the work that enables you to be forgiven is accomplished ; the gate of mercy is open wide ; you have but to enter in." But we dare not say to just any one, " Christ cancelled your debt ; your very sins were laid to His account ; He took your punishment," for this is true only of those who are His own.

E. A., *London*.

THE devil's greatest successes are usually his imitations of God's realities, and their name is legion in these latter days. The love of humanity, which grows out of the love of God, is mimicked by a lot of work for men's bodies that is full of peril for their souls, and by a lot of efforts for their present apparent comfort that are dead against their eternal welfare. The miraculous gift of tongues, so much needed and so helpful in the early church, is to-day imitated by a fool's gabble that turns Christianity into a laughing-stock, and destroys the usefulness of people whose chief need is not 'tongues,' but grace to keep their tongues quiet. And the world of God-taught spiritual realities, and the power of the Spirit of God over the souls and bodies of the saved, are mimicked and hindered by the devil's counterfeits — Spiritualism, Christian Science, and Theosophy.

T. W.

[300]

HENCEFORWARD,

By God's grace, let us—

Journey more cheerfully (Acts xxvii. 22).

Walk more carefully (Eph. v. 15).

Stand more firmly (Dan. iii. 17, 18).

Watch more vigilantly (1 Peter v. 8).

Cleave more closely (Acts xi. 23).

Rest more calmly (Mark iv. 38 ; Acts xii. 6).

Pray more thoughtfully (Eph. i. 16 ; iii. 14).

Read more diligently (1 Tim. iv. 13 ; Acts xvii. 11).

Listen more attentively (Luke x. 39 ; iv. 20).

Think more soberly (Rom. xii. 3 ; 1 Peter iv. 7 ; v. 8).

Live more consistently (Phil. ii. 5 ; iii. 20).

Love more fervently (1 Peter i. 22 ; 1 John iv. 11).

Act more kindly (Rom. xii. 20, 21 ; Col. iii. 13).

Look more expectantly (Titus ii. 13 ; Heb. ix. 28).

Bear more meekly (Num. xiv. 11 ; Gal. vi. 17).

Rejoice more constantly (Phil. ii. 28 ; iv. 4).

Sing more joyfully (Eph. v. 19 ; Col. iii. 16).

Speak more gently (Col. iv. 6 ; James iv. 11).

Preach more earnestly (Acts xxiv. 25 ; 2 Cor. v. 11).

Beseech more lovingly (Rom. xii. 1 ; 2 Cor. v. 20).

Teach more patiently (Col. i. 28 ; 2 Tim. ii. 24).

Serve more readily (1 Chron. xxviii. 9 ; Acts xxvii. 23).

Praise more continually (Ps. xxxiv. 1 ; cxix. 164).

Worship more adoringly (Luke xvii. 16 ; Rev. iv. 10, 11).

R. H.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LATTER RAIN.—(1) *Why* should the signs and miracles of Pentecostal days be repeated? If you once place your signature, or the impress of your seal, upon a deed or lease, will any lawyer ask you to repeat the act from time to time? Once done, will it not possess lasting significance? In the same way God attested Christianity at its beginning. It was inaugurated with the hall-mark of its divine origin. The word preached was confirmed with signs following. We fail to see where lies the necessity for these signs to be perpetuated through the centuries, or repeated at the present time.

Ambassadors to a foreign court present their credentials upon arrival. There is no need for them to do so again. Nor is it otherwise with Christianity. It was started upon its course with God-given credentials in the shape of miracles, gifts of healing, speaking with tongues, and so on. How can it be said that "common sense demands" that these credentials should continually be used? We should have thought that common sense would have led to a very different conclusion. Moreover, we search the Scriptures in vain for any passage to warrant our expectation of a revival of speaking with tongues, and other sign-gifts, at the close of this dispensation.

We are surprised that any one should seriously interpret passages which speak of "the latter rain" as if they referred to things of this kind. In Deuteronomy XI. 11 "the rain of heaven" is mentioned as one of the characteristic blessings

302 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

enjoyed by the land of Canaan. This was in contrast to the state of things in Egypt, where no rain fell, and where irrigation had to be carried out by toilsome effort. The continuance of this heaven-sent boon was made to depend upon the obedience of the sons of Israel. If they hearkened diligently to God's commands He would ensure to them "the first rain and the latter rain," so that corn for man and grass for cattle might grow. All this is surely to be taken literally. The actual land given by God to the Israelites is meant, and actual rain, actual corn, actual grass.

There can be no doubt, however, that rain is sometimes spoken of in the Scriptures in a figurative way. An instance of this is to be found in Isaiah v., where Israel is likened to an unproductive vineyard, and where Jehovah declares that He will "command the clouds *that they rain no rain.*" In this way He expresses His determination to withhold His blessing. In promising future restoration, a promise to be fulfilled in another dispensation, similar imagery is employed. So in Hosea x. 12 we read: "Seek the Lord, until He come and *rain righteousness* upon you."

Referring now to Joel, in chapter i. desolation and drought are said to prevail "because joy is withered away from the sons of men." Chapter ii., after speaking of still more terrible judgments to be inflicted upon the land by means of an invading army from the north, calls upon the people to repent. Then God graciously promises to intervene, to rid His land of the invader, to put an end to barrenness and drought, and to give, as in former times, both the early and the latter rain.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 303

But it is to the "children of Zion" that all this is promised. The prophecy refers to the restoration and blessing of *Israel*. To seek for its fulfilment in Christianity is to utterly misread the passage. And to quote it as affording warrant for expecting a "revival of speaking with tongues" at the close of the present era is to display an ignorance of prophetic and dispensational truth for which there is no excuse.

It is equally vain to turn for any such purpose to James v. 7. Why should a meaning be read into this verse other than that which most evidently belongs to it? The husbandman sows, but he does not immediately reap. Long patience is called for, the seasons must run their course, the early and the late rains must fall. Then comes the harvest, with its rich reward. With the Christian the present is a time of waiting. He labours on in faith that the day of fruition will dawn. He looks, not for a repetition of what was at the beginning, but for the coming of the Lord. In view of this he is exhorted to patience. To find any reference here to "speaking with tongues" one must needs possess a strangely constituted mind.

(2) The "baptism of the Spirit" was certainly not a special gift conferred upon some believers and withheld from others on account of their low spiritual condition. Were not the Corinthian believers in a grievously low condition? Evil—moral, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical—was rampant amongst them, they were carnal in their ways, and were in a state of spiritual infancy. Yet it is to these very Christians that the apostle says:

304 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

“ By one Spirit are we ALL baptized into one body . . . and have been ALL made to drink into one Spirit ” (1 Cor. XII. 13).

This being the case, we should assuredly not lend an ear to any who would persuade us that at the coming of Christ only those who adhere to what is called the “ Latter Rain movement ” will be translated to heaven. By the baptism of the Spirit a *unity* was formed that includes every believer on the face of the earth. A body has been constituted of which we are all members. Many things tending to disintegration exist, and have existed ever since the days of the apostles, but at the coming of the Lord it will be fully demonstrated that, in spite of the enemy’s devices, the church is *one*.

YOUNG CHRISTIAN.—We think that you could spend your spare time to better advantage than in the study of Hebrew and Greek. We by no means undervalue scholarship, but to acquire a thorough knowledge of these languages is the work of years, and but few have the necessary leisure. Moreover, the results of the lifelong labours of devout and learned students of the Word of God are now placed within reach of the reader who knows no language but his own.

The late Mr. W. Kelly, an able expositor of the Scriptures and one of the foremost Greek scholars of his day, has left on record his mature judgment as to the matter about which you seek counsel. “ Depend upon it,” says he, “ that to know the English Bible well is far better than to know somewhat of Greek or Hebrew ; and I have rarely found

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 305

that knowing a little of these languages has any other effect than to give a good deal of conceit. It enables persons, of course, to talk about knotty points, especially to those that do not understand them ; but I do not think that really profitable for either party. . . . Whatever may be the opportunities that you can look to have for learning, you are never likely to be great scholars. You may learn a little ; but you must remember that as those of old who translated the Bible were men of real learning, you are never likely, in this respect, to compare with them ; nor can you hope to get, by such study, beyond what you have already in the English Bible. . . . God takes care, in His grace, to raise up persons who perhaps spend a great deal of a long, laborious, and uninterrupted life in these pursuits. . . . Through such helps God corrects mistakes for His people."

M. W. G.—(1) The seventeenth verse of chapter xxii. sufficiently disposes of the contention that Israel, not the church, is the bride mentioned in Revelation. Observe that in verse 16 the Lord Jesus sends His message to *the churches*. From whom comes the response ? From the Spirit and *the bride*. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Together they address the One who has presented Himself as the bright and morning Star. Can Israel thus respond to what is testified in the churches ? Who does not know that to-day she is deaf, and blind, and dumb towards God ? When the hour comes for the hearts of her children to turn to the Lord, the church will no longer be on earth to be the recipient of any testimony. We

306 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

conclude therefore that the bride of Revelation XIX., XXI., and XXII. is the church.

We are far from denying, however, that the same figure is employed to set forth the relationship between the chosen nation and Jehovah. We find instances of its use in this way in the Old Testament. A careful study of the context will generally suffice to show whether Israel or the church is meant.

(2) With regard to the new birth, no doubt the saved remnant of Israel will experience it. Ezekiel XXXVI. 25, 26 would seem to indicate this. But in conversation with Nicodemus the Lord Jesus spoke of the necessity for the *individual* to be born again if he would see the kingdom of God. Not only did He say, "Ye must be born again," but, "Except *a man* be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Those to whom Peter addressed his first epistle had thus been born again. The living Word of God had become operative in them (chap. i. 23). By the resurrection of Jesus Christ they had been begotten again to a living hope (ver. 3). Surely it cannot be supposed that all this has reference to Israel's national regeneration in a future day. Nor can we understand any one denying its present application to Christians.

G. H. G.—So your Californian friend is puzzled by two apparently conflicting statements in our August number. If she had read with a little more care, and had turned to the scripture references given, we think that she would have seen that there is no real contradiction.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 307

Luke XIII. 25-8, 2 Thessalonians II. 12, and other passages show beyond all doubt that rejectors of the gospel will find no open door of salvation after the coming of the Lord. We must, however, remember that the great majority of the world's inhabitants have never heard the glad tidings. Amongst such are multitudes of Jews as well as the countless thousands of heathendom.

Ezekiel XXXVII. 1-14, Zechariah XII. 9-14, to quote but two scriptures among many, make it clear that the Spirit of God will work in the souls of many belonging to the chosen race. Gathered back to their promised land, their eyes will be opened to the sin and unbelief of which they have been guilty. Matthew XXIV. 14 shows that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in those days to all nations. But we are not to conclude that amongst those to whom that message will be sent are any that have rejected the gospel in this day of grace.

S. R. R.—(1) The difficulties with which we meet in our reading of the Scriptures will generally disappear upon closer study. With reference to the apparent discrepancy between 2 Kings XII. 13 and 2 Chronicles XXIV. 14, the simple explanation would seem to be that, according to the former passage, the making of the various utensils for the temple service was not included among the purposes to which the bulk of the collected money was devoted. But, after all the king's plans had been carried out, a sum of money was left over, and *this*, according to the account in Chronicles, was used for the making of the vessels.

308 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

(2) The Holy Spirit gives us, in 2 Chronicles XIV. and XVII., the number of "mighty men" in the armies of Asa and Jehoshaphat. But it is not affirmed that these monarchs numbered the people as David had done.

The gravity of David's sin appears to lie in the fact of his ignoring the directions given by God for the numbering of the children of Israel. These may be found in Exodus xxx. Verse 12 is clear enough: "When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man *a ransom for his soul* unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them." According to this scripture, every enumeration of the people was to be accompanied by a stated ransom, an offering to the Lord to make an atonement for their souls (ver. 15). David seems to have left this plain direction altogether out of account. As a consequence, the penalty attached to disobedience was inflicted. The threatened plague appeared, and seventy thousand fell before it.

Is not a sin of a very similar nature often committed to-day? Are there not to be found in the great religious bodies of Christendom and in the various so-called "Brotherhoods," P.S.A.'s, Christian Endeavour Societies, and the like, thousands who are *reckoned* among the people of God without being *ransomed* by the blood of Christ—numbered as Christians apart from their having any personal interest in the atonement? This, we may be sure, is an offence of no ordinary magnitude in the eyes of God.

WORK FOR ETERNITY.

IT is refreshing to read, in the 1911 Report of one of the smaller American Missionary Societies, such words as these :

“ Both at home and on the foreign field we see little fruit of our labours. We think it quite certain that if we should turn to human inventions, or lower the standards set forth for our guidance in the Word of God, and make success in the eyes of man our aim, we might be able to make some glowing reports. But as we solemnly consider what it means for any child of Adam to really become a Christian, we choose rather to wait many years for one such Isaac, than to fill our house with Ishmaels, who shall be seen in the end to have been born after the flesh and not after the Spirit.”

Heartily do we say, Amen ! We believe that unspeakable harm has been done by superficial work. With an eye to “ glowing reports,” heathen men and women, Christianized without being regenerated, have been numbered as converts.

Miss A. Wilson-Carmichael says in “ Things as They Are ” :

“ Over and over again it is told, but still it is hardly understood, that the *Christians* [in India] need to be converted ; that the vast majority are not converted ; that statistics may mislead, and do not stand for eternity work ; that many a pastor, catechist, teacher, has a name to live, but is dead.”

What is the work of which this is the result, but building "wood, hay, stubble"? These things are very much bigger to look at than "gold, silver, precious stones." But when the day comes for every man's work to be tested by fire, all such "results" will be reduced to ashes, even though the one whose work is thus proved valueless be himself saved (1 Cor. III. 12-15).

God help us to labour for eternity. With His mighty Word, "a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces"; with the Holy Ghost still here in gracious activity; with the Risen Christ, to whom all power in heaven and in earth is given, still working with His servants, why should there be barrenness in true result?

But even if our eyes are not gladdened by the sight of many conversions, is it not far better, and more acceptable to Him whom we seek to serve, to labour on, refusing, as our American brethren say, to turn "to human inventions, or lower the standards set forth for our guidance in the Word of God" rather than swell the roll of "converts" by "filling our house with Ishmaels"? In the day of reward not the *successful*, but the *faithful* servant will be he who receives the Lord's commendation (Matt. xxv. 21).

H. P. B.

ELECTION AND FREE GRACE.

A BIBLE TALK.

FROM the beginning of Scripture history, two great facts, forming the basis of all God's dealings with men, have been apparent. First, God is absolutely sovereign. Second, man is an intelligent creature with moral faculties and responsible to his Creator.

But these two facts, the sovereignty of God on the one hand, the responsibility of man on the other, have always presented a difficulty to certain minds, particularly when it is a question of the practical work of preaching the gospel, and of the reception of it by the sinner. Between the sovereignty of God expressing itself in the election of some for blessing, and the free offer of grace that addresses itself to all, there seems to be some contradiction which it is difficult to avoid, some discrepancy not easily explained.

Of course, if we are at liberty to discard one of these facts in favour of the other, and throw ourselves into the arms of either a hard hyper-Calvinism, or a weak Arminianism, as the case may be, the difficulty may vanish. But this would mean the sacrifice of truth. Since we are not at liberty to do this, but have to ac-

312 ELECTION AND FREE GRACE.

cept both these facts (for both plainly lie on the surface of Scripture), we must humbly seek the divine solution, assured that the only real difficulty is the littleness of our minds and of their ability to grasp the thoughts of God.

We have but to open our Bibles at the beginning to find both these truths. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i. 1). Here is declared the one truth. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion" (Gen. i. 26). Here is declared the other. Man was made in God's image, i.e. as God's representative in creation. He was after God's likeness, inasmuch as he was originally a free, intelligent, moral agent. And though no longer sinless but fallen, his responsibility remains.

It would be difficult to find a finer confession of the sovereignty of God than that made by Nebuchadnezzar, the great Gentile monarch in whom *human* sovereignty reached its highest expression. He said, "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).

Nor can we point to a more striking unfolding of the responsibility of man in his fallen estate than that given by Paul in his powerful argument (Rom. i. 18 to iii. 19) to prove the complete ruin of the race. If sin

and degradation destroyed a man's responsibility there would be every excuse for his condition, but the most degraded heathen is shown to be "without excuse," as is also the polished idolater and the religious Jew.

Thus far all seems plain. The difficulty occurs when we begin to *apply* these truths. Believers are addressed as "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. i. 4), as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Peter i. 2). To His disciples the Lord Jesus distinctly said, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John xv. 16); and again, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" (John vi. 44). Shall we reason from these scriptures that since the choice is God's and no one comes to Christ unless drawn of the Father, therefore all effort in connection with the gospel is useless; that, in fact, to preach to any except those chosen of God is waste of time?

On the other hand, Peter urged his hearers, when pricked in their heart, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts ii. 40). To careless and rebellious sinners he said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted" (Acts iii. 19). Paul tells us that he testified to both Jews and Greeks "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts xx. 21).

Shall we disregard these apostolic utterances? Ought they rather to have run something after this fashion: "Men and brethren, you can do absolutely nothing. You are spiritually dead and therefore you must simply wait the pleasure of God. If He has elected you, you will be saved. If not, you will be lost"? Or shall we adopt the opposite view, and do our best to explain away these references to God's sovereign work in connection with conversion, saying that they only mean that God, being omniscient, knows the end from the beginning, that He has no particular will as regards anybody, that man is an absolutely free agent, quite capable of choosing the right if put before him in an attractive way, and that therefore we ought to earnestly work, making painstaking efforts to win sinners to Christ?

To incline to either view at the expense of the other would be, indeed, to expose ourselves to the keen edge of those searching words, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken" (Luke XXIV. 25).

Any difficulties we may have as to these things would, we believe, largely vanish if we better understood the true character of *the ruin of man* and *the grace of God*.

In what does the ruin of man consist? By sinning he has placed himself under a burden of guilt and has rendered himself

ELECTION AND FREE GRACE. 315

liable to judgment. There is more than this, however. He has also become possessed of a fallen nature utterly and incorrigibly bad, with a heart "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked" (Jer. xvii. 9). But even this is not all. Sin has acted like a subtle poison in his veins and has so stupefied and perverted his reason, will, and judgment that "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. iii. 11). Even in the presence of grace and the sweet pleadings of the gospel men reject the Saviour provided, and with perverse unanimity prefer the empty follies of the world. Like the "great herd of swine" they rush madly to destruction, and hence the only hope is a sovereign interposition of God.

The parable of the "Great Supper" (Luke xiv.) illustrates this. The well-laden supper-table represents the spiritual blessings resulting from the death of Christ. At great cost all is ready, and yet all seems to have been provided in vain. Something else is needed: *the mission of the Holy Spirit*, pictured by the errand of "the servant." Things were brought to a successful issue, and the house was filled, only because of His "compelling" operations.

If we once realize the full extent of that ruin into which sin has plunged us, we shall be delivered from the "Arminian" extreme, and shall recognize that the sovereign action

of God in choosing us and drawing us by the compelling power of His Spirit was our only hope. Instead of quarrelling with this side of the truth, it will bow our hearts in grateful worship before Him.

Poor fallen, self-destroyed man is still, however, a responsible creature. Reason, will, and judgment may be perverted, but they are not destroyed. Hence the largeness of the grace of God.

What is grace? Is it the particular goodness which visits and saves the souls of the elect? No. That is *mercy*. In Romans IX. and XI., where election is the great subject, mercy is mentioned again and again. *Grace* is the mighty outflow of the heart of God towards the utterly sinful and undeserving. It shows no partiality. It knows no restrictions. It is a wide and deep sea. "All men" (1 Tim. II. 3-6) are its only boundaries, and "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. v. 20) is the only measure of its depth.

We hear the accents of grace in the last great commission of the risen Christ to His disciples, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke XXIV. 47). How akin were these instructions to those given by the King in that other parable of a feast, recorded in Matthew XXII.: "Go

ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." In this parable we have not "the servant," as in Luke, but "the servants." It is not the Spirit of God in His sovereign and secret activities, but saved men who, without knowing aught of these secret things, simply do the King's business. Do they find any one in the broad highways of the world? Then without raising questions as to their character, or as to whether chosen or not, they give the invitation. All who listen are gathered in, both bad and good: and the wedding is "furnished with guests."

Is there any great difficulty in this? Surely not. Knowing that it pleases God "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," the evangelist proclaims the glad tidings far and wide. When men believe his message, he attributes that work to the Spirit of God and rejoices over them, knowing their election of God (1 Thess. i. 4).

Nor is there anything to stumble the seeking sinner. The very fact that he is seeking indicates that he is being drawn of the Father. The idea that a sinner may be even in an agony of seeking for the Saviour in this day of grace and yet be unheard because not elected, is a hideous distortion of truth. The words of the Lord Jesus are as true as ever: "Seek, and ye shall find" (Matt. vii. 7).

318 ELECTION AND FREE GRACE.

The fact is, election has nothing to do with the sinner as such. No hint of it is breathed in any recorded preaching of the apostles, though it is frequently referred to, to establish the faith of believers. As a rule, it is only when unbalanced preachers of extreme views take it from its setting in Scripture and thrust it upon their unconverted hearers that it creates difficulty in their minds.

Can it be shown that "election" does really mean anything more than that God knows everything, and therefore knows from the beginning who will believe and who will not?

Most assuredly. In 1 Peter 1. 2 we read, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Election, then, is distinct from foreknowledge, though based upon it. God's election or choice is not a blind, fatalistic casting of the lot. That is a purely heathen conception. There is some such legend in connection with Buddha. When men were created it is said that he cast a lot, saying, "These to heaven and I care not; these to hell and I care not." But our God and Father does not act like this. He chooses in the full light of His foreknowledge. Hence no sinner, who ever really wants to be saved, finds the door shut against him because he is not one of the elect. His very desire is the fruit of the Spirit's work. And God's choice, as in the case of Esau and Jacob, is always justified by

ELECTION AND FREE GRACE. 319

results. (Compare Rom. IX. 12, 13 with Mal. I. 2, 3.)

If God must elect at all, why did He not elect everybody ?

How can I tell you that ? Is it likely that God will tell us, who are but His creatures, the motives that underlie His decrees ? If He did explain, would our finite minds be able to grasp the explanation ? We may rest assured that all His decrees are in perfect harmony with the fact that " God is light " and " God is love." For the rest, if any man be contentious we content ourselves with quoting the inspired words : " Behold . . . I will answer thee, God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against Him ? for *He giveth not account of any of His matters* " (Job xxxiii. 12, 13). After all, being God, why should He ?

If man be morally incapable of going or choosing right, how can he be really responsible ?

Let me answer by an analogy. If, in the case of that poor creature making her 201st appearance before the magistrates on the old charge, " drunk and disorderly," the plea were raised that since she was so degraded as to be morally incapable of resisting alcohol or choosing a better life, she was no longer responsible, or amenable to punishment, would it avail ? Of course not. No sane person

imagines that one has only to sink low enough into crime to be absolved from responsibility.

Alas! who can measure the depths of perversity and incapacity into which man has plunged himself by sin? Nevertheless his responsibility remains.

Does "free grace" mean that salvation is ours simply by a choice which lies in the exercise of our own free will?

It does not. It means that as far as the *intentions* of God's gospel are concerned, all are embraced. Christ died for all (1 Tim. II. 4, 6). To all the gospel is sent, just as freely as if it were certain that all would as naturally receive it, as, alas! they naturally reject it. Multitudes, however, *do* receive it, and then the righteousness of God which is "unto all" in its intention is "upon all them that believe" in its actual effect (Rom. III. 22-4). Such are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God (Eph. II. 8). Their blessing is of God from first to last, and they are entitled to regard themselves as chosen of Him.

Has the sinner to choose Christ?

If we wish to speak with scriptural accuracy, the answer must be, No. He has to *receive* Christ; but that is a somewhat different matter. *Choose* is a word with active force. It implies certain powers of discrimination and selection. To speak of a sinner choosing

ELECTION AND FREE GRACE. 321

Christ supposes that he has powers which he does not possess.

Receive is passive rather than active in force. It implies that instead of exercising his powers, the sinner simply falls into line with God's offer. It is the word Scripture uses.

The children of God are said to be "as many as *received*" Christ (John I. 12), and this receiving was the result not of their freewill, but of God's gracious operation; they were "born . . . of God" (v. 13).

Are we right in urging sinners to repent and believe?

Certainly. Our blessed Lord Himself did so (Mark I. 15). So did Peter (Acts III. 19), and Paul (Acts XVI. 31, XX. 21, XXVI. 20). We have not only to proclaim that faith is the principle on which God justifies the sinner, but we have to *urge* men to believe. The fact that faith is the result of God's work in the soul and that all spiritual enlargement for the believer is through the operation of God's Spirit, in no way militates against the servant of God being much in earnest and persuading men.

Paul preached at Thessalonica "with much contention" (1 Thess. II. 2)—"with much earnest striving" the New Translation renders it. He speaks of "*persuading* men" (2 Cor. V. 11), and with Barnabas he *persuaded* certain converts "to continue in the grace of God" (Acts XIII. 43).

322 ELECTION AND FREE GRACE.

These examples are enough to outweigh any amount of reasoning to the contrary.

How would you answer a person who says, "I can't believe until God gives me the power"?

I would remark that both repentance and faith are things which do not require power so much as weakness. To repent, is to own the truth as to yourself; to believe, is to lean your poor shattered soul on Christ.

Again I would point out that God's command is man's enabling. The man with a withered hand is a case in point (Luke vi. 6-10). The power was there instantly the word was spoken.

Does a sinner wish to insinuate that he is very anxious to believe, but that God will not give him ability to do so because of certain fatalistic decrees? Tell him plainly it is not true. He is leaving sober fact for the nightmare of fallen reason. Never does the smallest bit of desire toward Christ spring up in a sinner's heart but there is grace to bring it to fruition in definite faith. Probably the questioner would prove to be a trifler bent on quibbling, in which case I should have to leave him. A really perplexed and anxious soul I would urge (instead of occupying himself about questions as to God's sovereignty, which are, and must be, above the ken of finite man) to rest with simple confidence in the

ELECTION AND FREE GRACE. 323

Saviour and to give heed to those great verities which are so plainly declared that "the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

"Never let what you do not know disturb what you do know," said a wise and good man.

Never forget that He who said "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me," immediately added: "and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

F. B. H.

SININGFU, in Kansu, was, at the end of June, again the scene of a rebellion which, but for the prompt action of the local officials, might have resulted in the loss of much life and property. Mr. Arthur Moore, writing in July, told how the city and district had been in a state of chaos since June 26th, when yellow proclamations were found posted at the south and west gates, and in a great many of the surrounding towns and villages. These placards, which were cruelly worded, called upon the people to kill the foreigners, whose "ten evils" were enumerated. Mr. Moore writes: "I must make mention of the comfort we received from *Simple Testimony* Calendar. The texts from Monday, June 26th, to Saturday, July 1st, the days when feeling was most intense, were an unspeakable blessing to us; they were most appropriate. For instance, on Friday, the 30th, the day the city was in a tumult, the text was: 'Who delivered us . . . and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver,' and on Saturday: 'Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard'" (1 Sam. XXII. 23). The trying experiences through which God's servants have passed emphasize the importance of continual prayer to God for their protection.

From the "Christian Herald."

TO THE UTMOST.

“ He is able also to save them to the utmost that come unto God by Him.”—HEB. vii. 25.

LET us not think of this familiar passage as though it were merely a magnanimous statement concerning the deeply fallen sinner. Let us at once rescue it from that emasculated interpretation.

It is, of course, gloriously true that Christ is able to save the sinner who trusts Him, however deeply fallen. The pages of Christian history are full of such blessed facts. No matter how hardened the heart, no matter how clouded the mind, no matter how degraded the soul, the penitent sinner may find cleansing and pardon. It is the glory of the gospel that Christ came to save sinners.

This, however, is not the primary meaning of the passage. Neither can it mean what some have asserted, namely, that a life of sinlessness is possible here and now. There is no suggestion of human perfection in the context. The thought is simply that Christ *is able to be Saviour to the very end*. We are not told in the text what the “very end” may be—whether it applies to degree or time, but this matter is settled for us by the context. The context is often the best commentary

we can have on a difficult passage of Scripture.

The writer of the epistle has been pointing out contrasts between the Levitical priesthood and that of Christ. He reminds us that the old-time priests were unable to continue because of death. While they lived they exercised their ministry, but when the call of death was heard they were compelled to give it up.

Then he turns in triumph to the priesthood of Christ and shows its infinite superiority over that of Aaron and his sons. *He* "because He continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood, *wherefore* He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him."

The passage speaks then of continuous salvation based upon continued intercession. All around we see change and decay, but Christ abides for ever. All power in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. He is pleased to serve us not only by the grace of His passion, but by the glory of His priesthood. He knows our need. He knows the hereditary weakness of our nature. He knows the handicap with which we start upon the life of faith. He knows the forces that are arrayed against us. And with untiring patience He is saving us through the ministry of His mighty intercession.

Adapted.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. J., Stafford. — Who could the Servant in the parable of the Great Supper (Luke XIV.) be but the Holy Ghost? Who else has power to *compel* men to come? In the somewhat similar parable of the Marriage Feast (Matt. XXII.) *servants* are sent forth, and in gathering the guests from the highways they introduce a man whom the King casts out. With the best intentions, their work does not bear the stamp of perfection. Not so with the work of the Servant in the other parable. Nothing that He does has to be reversed.

In Luke xv. the work of the Holy Spirit seems to be set forth in the sweeping of the house by the woman with the lighted candle. In the case of the Prodigal Son it is not dwelt upon, but rather the things which were used to turn his thoughts to his father's house: the famine, the degrading occupation of feeding swine, the absence of friendly sympathy and help. When a sinner repents, no doubt his repentance is the result of the Spirit's work, whatever the circumstances may be which impel him in that direction. But we are not to expect *all* the truths of the gospel to be set forth in a single parable, even one so full of instruction as that of the Prodigal Son.

ANON., Hereford.—(1) The review of the believer's course before the judgment-seat of Christ is not the subject of Revelation xx. at all. The book of life is opened, according to verse 15, to show whose names are *not* written therein. Those whose names *are* recorded there are not mentioned

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 327

in the passage. Nor do they appear among the multitude summoned to stand before the great white throne. How could they, when the Judge Himself had declared: "He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and *cometh not into judgement*"? (JOHN V. 24, R.V.).

(2) John xv. 6. Notice the change from the "ye" of verse 5 to "a man" in verse 6. In the former verse the true branches are spoken of—branches that abide in the vine and bear fruit. The latter verse refers to one who takes the place of a branch, and *as such* is cast forth and burned, having proved himself to be no *true* branch by failing to abide in Christ. Judas may be taken as an instance of this.

A. R. K., India.—Luke xvi. 26. We agree with you that the words "they which would pass from hence to you" are not intended to convey the idea that there are actually such persons.

R. P., Brighthouse.—(1) 2 Corinthians v. 3. This verse is tantamount to the apostle saying, "Always provided I am speaking of true Christians." In the first two verses he has been expressing the normal confidence of faith in view of the dissolution of the body.

The glorified condition that awaits us is looked at as a *building* in contrast to a *tent*, a building of *God* in contrast to a material house. The moral effect of a body of glory in prospect is that we groan in this body, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.

328 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The terms used are significant ; verse 4 explains "clothed upon" to be in contrast with being "unclothed." The fact is that the hope of the Lord's coming having been revealed and put in its full place in Paul's earliest epistle, 1 Thessalonians, he ever after looks at it as ingrained into the whole Christian life. Hence he turns from the thought of the body being laid down in death, to that which will be the effect of the Lord's coming for us who are alive and remain unto it, i.e. that we shall be changed, without death at all, into the image of our Lord ; all that is mortal being swallowed up in the power of that life we already possess in Him.

But there was much in the profession at Corinth that suggested that all was not real there. Hence the solemn warning clause of the parenthetical third verse. There would be those who would be clothed in bodies of resurrection who would be found awfully naked before God, as never having received the "best robe" (Luke xv. 22), never having become God's righteousness in Christ, as the last verse of the chapter expresses it. The clothed state of the spirit when, in the hour that is coming, "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice" (John v. 28) is here referred to in contrast to the spirit being unclothed in death. The "naked" will be those who come forth (clothed, indeed, as far as their bodily condition is concerned) to nothing but "the resurrection of judgment."

(2) Philippians III. 11. There is no such thing as a special, or select resurrection of a certain company of believers. Scripture speaks of but two

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 329

resurrections ; first, that of the just when the Lord comes ; then, when time itself is over, the resurrection of the unjust to judgment. Christ is the firstfruits of them that sleep ; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming (1 Cor. xv. 20, 23). It is for them, as for Him, a resurrection *from among* the dead, which is simply what Paul refers to in Philippians III. 11. It belongs to all who are His, and depends altogether upon Christ (2 Cor. iv. 14 ; 1 Thess. iv. 14), and in no way upon the condition of the believer. What, then, does the passage mean ? It is the expression, in the experience of the Lord's beloved servant (which he is inspired to give us all through the epistle as the only true, proper experience of the Christian) of the power of having before his own soul the object before God for him. What had He laid hold of us for, when the first ray of light from God pierced the darkness of our souls, but to be conformed to the image of Christ in glory ? (Rom. VIII. 29 ; 2 Cor. v. 4, 5). Then, says Paul, that is what I follow after, or press toward (the word is the same). And his eye is so completely on the end of the way, that he does not care what the character of it may be. It may be rough or smooth, long or short ; nay, a martyr's death may be imminent in it. He does not care : his whole mind is concentrated on the glorious end. " If by *any* means I may arrive at " (it is not the word for attainment) " resurrection from among the dead." Offer him the finest situation possible for a man in this world : how *can* it be compared with what his heart is set on ? It is an object outside the whole sphere of the enemy's

330 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

power through which he has to pass, an object that infinitely eclipses all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, that is ever before his mind.

! But it is of the deepest interest that the chapter does not close without bringing in the effect of the Lord's coming by which the glorious goal may be reached at any moment without death at all. The one is the soul's pursuit, pressing on through everything here to reach Christ and full conformity to Him in glory ; the other, the hope in which the affections of the heart rest. May both be more real to us every moment till we see His face. (J. A. T.)

J. A., Bracknell.—(1) As Scripture does not inform us of any particular occasion when Aaron was to pronounce the blessing commanded in Numbers vi. 24-6, no profit can result from a discussion as to whether or not it was on the day of atonement. The subject of the chapter is the Nazarite and his vow. From verse 13 onwards, directions are given as to the time when "the days of his separation" were over, when Nazariteship was no longer necessary, and when he might again drink wine. Following this, we have the gracious words of blessing which you quote. Evidently there is a foreshadowing of the bright days yet in store for Israel, when the joy to which they have so long been strangers will be theirs, and when Christ will come forth in priestly grace and power to bless them, to make His face shine upon them and to give them peace.

(2) Yes, we believe that Zechariah xiii. 5, 6

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. 331

points to the Lord Jesus Christ. The change of subject is abrupt, but there is more than one instance of this in Zechariah. The writer of the *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible* remarks as to this passage: "In verse 5 read 'I am no prophet, but a husbandman; for man has acquired me as a slave from my youth.' That is to say, Christ takes the humble position of One devoted to the service of man. . . . Verse 6 directs our attention to that which befell Him among the Jews, where He was wounded and treated as a malefactor. The true character of His Person and of His sufferings is then revealed in verse 7."

(3) Being of the tribe of Judah, the Lord Jesus could have had no official status as a priest on earth (Heb. vii. 14). It is as risen and glorified that He has been installed "Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

F. S. L.—We thank you for your words of cheer. It is always encouraging to hear of help received through the pages of *Simple Testimony*. Interest, such as you speak of, has a happy way of becoming *infectious*, and in the hope that it may infect others of our readers we quote part of your letter. "Why are we so deadly cold? This is the question I have been asking for many a day. It is humiliating. It is sad. It must grieve the Lord's heart to see us so unresponsive, unable to appreciate the good things He has provided, useless as vessels for His service. The advice given to Mr. Dodge (*see* October number) may well be taken home to ourselves. *I* mean to begin, God

332 ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

helping me. What useful lessons we learn from our dear fellow-Christians in Korea. . . . If our own hearts were *captivated by Him* we should speak of Him with overflowing hearts, so that others would soon catch fire."

Yes, indeed. And just as every drop of hot water added to water that is lukewarm increases the temperature thereof, so every warm-hearted Christian mingling with others tends to raise their spiritual temperature. A very real and effective service is thus rendered, almost unconsciously, by those whose hearts are warm with the sunshine of the love of Christ.

H. R.—We thank you for your kind invitation to hear you preach and to pass an opinion on your sermon. Circumstances compel us to forego the honour. Nor do we consider ourselves able to judge of another's service.

Further : we know of no company of Christians competent to decide whether a man is fit to preach the gospel or not. We question if even an apostle would have ventured to assume such a function. Gifts are bestowed by the great Head of the church (Eph. iv. 11), and are to be exercised in dependence upon Him. If *He* has called you to be a preacher of the Word, why should you ask the opinion of your fellow-servants? "Study to show thyself approved *unto God*" (2 Tim. ii. 15).

Of course, in the case of a preacher of unsound doctrine, Christians are bound to refuse to have anything to do with him (2 John 10, 11). But that is another matter.