

[STEM Publishing: The writings of C. H. Mackintosh](#): Answers to Correspondents.

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C. H. Mackintosh.

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1. CHASTENING.

"J. C." The teaching of Heb. 12: 5-12 is peculiarly precious, and most gladly would we expatiate upon it, did our space permit. We can merely remark here, that the object of the Holy Ghost in the passage is to encourage our hearts under chastening, by the assurance that it is from the hand of a loving Father who only corrects us for our profit, in order to subdue our indwelling gravity, and to make us, practically and experimentally, partakers of His holiness.

2. SISTERS AT BIBLE READINGS.

"Pilgrim." We do not look upon a reading meeting such as you describe as an assembly, and hence we do not see any scriptural objection to a sister's asking or answering a question. No doubt, a sister may ask questions in such a way as to leave herself open to the charge of teaching and usurping authority over the man. She may show, by her manner of putting her question, that she considers herself competent to teach the brothers present. This should be avoided, and will be by every Christian woman of good taste and sound judgment. It is not that we doubt in the least the competency of many sisters to instruct a brother, were it a mere question of knowledge or experience. But it is not a question of competency, but of moral fitness, and in the settlement of this question there are great principles involved, in reference to which the Holy Ghost seems peculiarly peremptory. As to reading meetings in general, we may be permitted to say that it is very needful to have some one present who is capable of giving the mind of God on the passage or subject under consideration, otherwise a quantity of time is lost in vain conjecture and useless speculation. We do not, of course, attempt to lay down a rule, but merely give our judgment in a general way. We know full well that where humility of mind and earnestness of heart characterise the members of a reading meeting, they will do more towards promoting edification and comfort than mere knowledge, however profound and extensive.

3. JUDAS AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

"F. R." Your question is an interesting and important one. "Does the permitted presence of Judas Iscariot in our Lord's chosen band on earth furnish any argument in favour of our toleration of evil in communion with us as Christians?" We would say, most assuredly, it does not. If the argument, so constantly based on the case of Judas, proves anything, it proves too much. To what does it amount? What does it prove? Why that we ought, knowingly and deliberately, to have at the Lord's Table a man capable of selling Christ for thirty pieces of silver — knowingly and deliberately to have fellowship with a traitor. This is the amount of the argument; and we know that what procures too much proves nothing at all. But it may be asked, Why did our Lord, who knew what he was, permit his presence? The answer is very simple. Our Lord allowed Judas to manifest himself. Had He acted on His divine knowledge of what was in the heart of Judas, it would have been no example for us; for we cannot judge the heart, but merely the life and doctrine. To say that we may *ignorantly* have a traitor in our midst is true; to say that *we ought knowingly* to have one, is false. In the former case we confess and mourn over our infirmity; in the latter we openly defend a piece of downright wickedness. We cannot understand how any one with a single atom of spiritual sensibility can have recourse to this argument respecting Judas. We deem it not merely weak and foolish, but very wicked.

4. UNION WITH CHRIST.

"M. V. O." The believer is united to Christ in resurrection There could be no union with Christ on this side of death. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth *alone*." This is a great

cardinal truth of all importance at the present day. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." This can only apply to a dead and risen Christ. In the purpose of God, the Church was united to Christ before the foundation of the world; but this union is only actualised in the case of an individual when he is quickened and united to Christ by the power and presence of the Holy Ghost.

5. The JUDGMENT.

"Z." Your communication of December, 1863, only came to hand last month. The subject of your MS. is one which we could not possibly admit into our pages, not because we think your matter badly put together, but because we consider your doctrine unsound and dangerous.

Controversy is not our province. Indeed, we are resolved to avoid it, and to keep our pages entirely free from all questions that gender strife. Edification has been the one unvarying object of "Things New and Old." This must be apparent to you, if you have looked through our back volumes True, we have ventured to bear our feeble testimony to the grand and solemn doctrine of "Eternal punishment," which, by the way, is very intimately connected with the subject of your paper.

We firmly believe in the immortality of the soul, and we cannot but marvel that not one of those "evangelical clergy and laymen," to whom you have submitted your paper, has ever "given you a reply, or warned you that you were treading on dangerous ground." We do not wonder at your "feeling hampered in teaching Sunday School children and others," for, truly, "the views you hold are completely *your own*," and not what we have learnt after twenty-five years' study of Holy Scripture.

We deem it very unsound and dangerous to teach that people will only be judged for rejecting the gospel. "For this we know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for *because of these things* [and not merely because of their rejection of the gospel] cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." (Eph. 5: 5, 6) "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry; *for which things' sake*, [and not merely because of their rejection of the gospel] the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." (Col. 3: 5, 6) "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, *according to their works*." (Rev. 20: 12)

These passages, and many more which might be adduced, teach us distinctly, that men will be judged for their *sins*, and not merely for the rejection of the gospel. "*For every idle word* that men shall speak they shall give account at the day of judgment." The *reception* of the gospel takes the soul completely off the ground of judgment for sins. The *rejection* of the gospel leaves the soul on the ground of judgment; but the judgment will be, in every case, according to a man's works. To deny this is to remove a great moral embankment, and make way for a rushing mighty tide of lust and passion.

We think you have entirely missed the divine object in that governmental act to which you refer at the close of Genesis 3 "And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord sent him forth," etc. This act had nothing to do with the question of the immortality of the soul, but was simply designed to prevent the perpetuation of a life of misery in this world. Had man, in his fallen condition, been allowed to eat of the tree of life, he would have lived for ever in that same state. This the Lord God could not permit, and therefore drove him out. But if He drove him out in government, He followed him in grace, to bring him back to Himself by a new and living way, even through the rent veil of the Saviour's flesh.

6. THE POWER OF GODLINESS.

"T. A. A." Your question is interesting and important. We believe that the ground on which the Christian has power to keep down sin, to mortify his members, to exercise the mastery over the flesh, is that "the flesh" has been "condemned" — "the old man crucified." But when it becomes a question of *power*, you must have the Holy Ghost. The ground was laid in the work of Christ *for us*. The power to occupy the ground is through the Holy Ghost in us. Now this will furnish a reply to your second enquiry, "Why was this power lacking under law, according, to Romans 7?" Under law, there is neither the ground nor the power. This makes all the difference. A soul under law knows neither the work of Christ for it, nor the work of the Holy Ghost in it. "If ye are led of the Spirit, ye are not under law." You cannot have the two things. But if I am under law, sin has power over me; for "the strength of sin is the law." On the other hand, if I am under grace, I have power over sin, for "sin shall not have dominion over you, *for ye are not* under law, but under grace." The believer's position is entirely changed. "He is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit," — "He is not under law, but under grace." The Lord be praised for such a blessed position! May we have power in the Holy Ghost to occupy it! May the Lord's richest blessing rest upon you, beloved friend, and upon all those around you who love the Name of Jesus!

7. CARD PLAYING.

"L. M. B. C." We would just ask you one or two plain questions, Can you engage in a game of cards, or any other game, in the Name of Jesus, or to the glory of God! Can you ask God's blessing thereon? Are you, when so engaged, redeeming the time?

8. 1 COR. 15: 22.

"P. P." 1 Cor. 15: 22 refers to believers. Verse 93 seems to prove this very clearly: of course all shall be raised; but here it is not merely a question of being raised, but of being "made alive *in Christ*."

9. PERFECT LOVE AND ITS OUTFLOWINGS.

"T. A. A." Your difficulty as to the word "our," in 1 John 4: 17, will be at once removed by the correct reading in the margin — "Herein is love made perfect with us." God has perfected His love toward us by introducing us into a position of association with His risen and glorified Son. This assuredly is the perfection of love. It is not merely that we are forgiven and saved from the eternal consequences of our sin and guilt, but we are actually identified with a risen Christ, at the right hand of God, so that the inspired apostle can say, "As He is, so *are we in this world*." Marvellous grace! It is not possible for love, even the love of God, to go beyond this; and hence it is said, "Herein is love *perfected* with us." If you will take from the ninth to the eighteenth verse, you will find four distinct results of the love of God, four distinct things which that love bestows upon us; namely, life, peace, power, and boldness.

1. Life. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live* through Him." (v. 9) There is no life but in Jesus. "In Him was life." "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." All outside of Him is death. Men talk of seeing life, and enjoying life; but it is all a fallacy. There is no life to be seen or enjoyed but in Christ. As some one has truly said, "The very moment a man begins to live, he begins to die." Such is man's natural condition. The seeds of death are in his very Attire, and at his birth these seeds begin to germinate, so that in living he is dying. Hence our Lord said to a master in Israel, "You must be born again;" you must get a new, an eternal life; and this life was in the Son. But ere the life could flow forth to us, the Son had to die; for we could only get life through death.

2. But then there are many who have life that have not peace. They are quickened by the word,

the voice of Jesus; but their consciences have not been set at liberty — they feel themselves tied and bound by the cord of their sins — they do not know what the cross of Christ has accomplished for them. Such persons need to ponder the tenth verse of our chapter. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Thus the love of God meets me at each point with the very thing I want. It meets me with life when dead; and it meets me with propitiation when exercised and anxious, and gives my soul peace. I find that God so loved me, even when I was an enemy, as to send His Son to atone for and put away all my sine. This sets me free, and nothing else can. It is of the utmost important that quickened souls should be led to see and understand the true ground of rest for the conscience, should be led to rest and rejoice in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and in that alone. I am not to rest in the fact of my conversion, in the circumstances thereof, the feelings attendant thereon, or the experiences connected therewith. It must be the blood, and *the blood alone*.

3. But not only do we want life and peace, we want power also, and this we have as the fruit of the love of God. "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit." (v. 13) The new nature in the believer is dependent upon the Holy Ghost for power. Very many Christians fail to recognize the distinction between the new nature in the believer and the Holy Ghost. Ephesians 3: 16 is conclusive on the point. "Strengthened with might by *His Spirit in the inner man*." Here we have the two things. "The inner man" is the new nature which the Holy Spirit strengthens. He surely does not strengthen the old nature. No; He strengthens the new to subjugate the old. I have no power but by the Holy Ghost. I can neither think, feel, experience, speak, or act aright but by the Holy Ghost.

4. Finally, we have boldness in the day of judgment. "Herein is love perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is so are we in this world." Here we reach the very loftiest point to which the love of God could conduct us. I read, that "for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." But so completely am I taken off this ground by union and identification with a risen and ascended Saviour who met death and judgment on my behalf, so entirely am I taken off the ground on which, as a man in nature, I once stood exposed to judgment for every idle word, that I actually have boldness in the day of judgment, "because as He is so are we." Is there any judgment for Him? Surely not. He met it all. Death and judgment are behind Him. Well, as He is so are we. This is the perfection of love. May I then speak idle words? Far be the thought. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." The very nature which has been communicated to me is incapable of sinning; and although my old nature is as bad as ever, and ready to speak idle words, if not mortified, yet am I called and privileged to walk ever in the power of the new nature, which cannot sin, because it is born of God. I do not refrain from idle words because I am afraid of the day of judgment, but because I possess a nature which cannot speak idle words; and if my old nature betrays me into an idle word, I judge it, because I am not to come into judgment.

10. UNDER THE SUN.

"T." We believe the key to Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8, and indeed to the entire book, will be found in the expression, "*under the sun*." The Spirit of God has furnished us, in this interesting book, with a commentary upon all under the sun — a glowing picture of the old creation, and of man in the midst of it. "Under the sun" there is time for everything. God hath set one thing over against another. If there is a birth, there is a death; if there is a smile, there is a tear; the sorrow stands over against the joy. Thus it is "under the sun." This is the law of the old creation. But look at Paul in Phil. 3. Had he "a time for everything?" No. "*One thing* I do," he says. And why? Because he had found his life, his sphere, and his object, "above the sun" — in that "new creation" of which Christ is the Head and the Centre, and

wherein "all things are of God." We have frequently heard Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 abused in the way you allude to; but it has invariably been by those whose hearts are in this present evil world, and who are bold enough to quote Scripture in defence of their worldliness. Alas, for all such!

11. SPIRITS IN PRISON. "E. S." We believe that 1 Peter 3: 19 teaches us that the Spirit of Christ, in Noah, testified to those whose spirits are now in prison because they rejected the testimony.

12. THE UNCONVERTED HUSBAND.

"T. A. S." The Christian wife to whom you refer would need peculiar grace and wisdom to enable her to deal rightly with her unbelieving husband. A tender, gracious carriage on her part might be greatly owned of God to win the heart of her husband. As to whether she ought to leave him and go to the Lord's Table, thus running the risk of his going to the public house, we do not deem ourselves warranted in laying down any rule. A Christian wife, under such painful circumstances, must be much in the divine presence in order to know how to act. "I will guide thee with mine eye" — not by rules and regulations

13. FAITH.

"S." We do not see any objection to your understanding the word "it" after "believeth" in Romans 1: 16. The gospel is assuredly the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth it, and it is the gospel I am called upon to believe in order to salvation, as many passages of Scripture distinctly teach. Faith is the grand principle which connects the soul with God; it lays hold of His revelation, and believes it, because it is His. It is well to see this. "Abraham *believed God*, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." And then he adds, for our comfort and consolation, "It was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." So, also, in John 3: 33: "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that *God is true*." Many other passages might be quoted to show the place which faith occupies in Christianity. It is the principle on which we are justified in contrast with the principle of works. As we read in Romans 1: 17, "The righteousness of God is revealed, on the principle of faith (*ek pisteo*), to faith." Under the law, righteousness was *required from man*; but in the gospel it is *revealed by God*. Under the law, righteousness was on the ground or principle of works; in the gospel, it is on the opposite ground or principle of faith. You cannot meditate too profoundly on this great cardinal truth. But not only do we get righteousness by faith, we also *live* by faith. (Comp. Hab. 2: 4; Rom. 1: 17; Gal. 3: 11; Heb. 10: 38) "The just shall live by faith." This takes in the whole of the divine life in all its details. It is a great mistake to limit the life of faith to mere dependence upon God for temporal things. True, it is most blessed to be cast upon God for everything — to hang on Him like a child, in all our need, from day to day. We would not pen a single line to derogate from the value of such an attitude. But there is a way of speaking of a life of faith which limits it to mere trust in God for food and raiment, and to this we seriously object. It is not correct, and its moral influence is decidedly pernicious. There is no other way for any Christian to live but by faith.

Do not imagine for a moment, dear friend, that we deem your question either "stupid or strange." Quite the opposite. We are only too glad to be allowed to minister in any little way to exercised souls. May the Lord relieve you of every burden, and stay your heart upon His own eternal grace and truth!

14. A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

"H. H. H.," Leamington. You were quite right in leaving a place in which you were compelled to act contrary to your conscience. As to trials and difficulties, we believe the more faithfully we walk the

more of such we shall have to encounter. May God sustain you, and open your way for you!

15. ALMSGIVING.

"J. T." We are truly sorry to find the minds of Christian men occupied with such a question, as the mode in which we should lay up our offerings for the poor, whether by a box sent round, after communion, or set up at the door. It seems to us a very simple matter indeed, if only we take Scripture as our guide. We read in the first epistle to the Corinthians the following plain directions, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." Now, it may perhaps be said, that this passage had reference to a certain local matter, and forms no sort of warrant for assemblies of Christians everywhere taking up collections every Lord's day. Yes; but are there not poor saints now as there were then?

And if so, are we not to follow the rule here laid down by the Holy Ghost, in order to meet their need? We suppose this will hardly be called in question. But how are we to do it? Is it by a box laid on the table, sent round in the meeting, or fixed at the door? Scripture is totally silent on the point. It simply says, "Let *every* one of you lay by him in store." It does not say where or how; but that "*every one*" was to do it — and to do it according *as God had prospered* him — a rule, we fear, but little attended to. Now, if the Holy Ghost has not laid down any rule in reference to the mode of collecting for the poor, why should we? What right have we to urge this, that, or the other method of doing the thing, when the inspired apostle is totally silent in the matter, And is it not, dear friend, truly deplorable to find Christian men splitting hairs and making crotchets respecting things which Scripture, in its characteristic breadth and largeness, leaves undecided? What principle is there involved? You inquire, "Is it right to be occupied with pounds, shillings, and pence at the Lord's table?" We reply, the Holy Ghost has thought proper to occupy Himself with such, inasmuch as the poor saints require such. We believe it to be most suitable and seasonable that, when our hearts have been fed and comforted at the table of our Lord, the streams of benevolence should flow for the help and refreshment of the Lord's poor. Would that they flowed more copiously!

16. TREASURES IN HEAVEN.

"G. A." Matt. 6: 19 is surely addressed to the disciples of Christ (see Matt. 5: 1). And most needful it is that we should attend to such instruction. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust [not merely *can*, but] *doth* corrupt, and where thieves [not merely *can*, but *do*] break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust [not merely *can*, but] *doth* corrupt, and there thieves [*not* merely *cannot*, but] *do* not break through nor steal." You will observe that our blessed Lord is setting forth in this passage the *moral* characteristics of earth and heaven. There is no such thing as moth, or rust, or thief in heaven. On earth there is. May we set our affections on things above. "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief *approacheth*, neither moth *corrupteth*" (Luke 12: 33)

17. SEEKING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"J." The words which you have quoted are full of practical power: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." We are to make the things of God our grand object, and He assures us that all our wants shall be attended to. But be it noted, we are not to seek "the kingdom of God," etc. *in order that* "all these things may be added." This would be a fatal mistake indeed. If I give myself to the Lord's work, in order that my temporal wants may be supplied, I shall very speedily make shipwreck. But, on the other hand, if I make the Lord's work my

paramount object, my wants shall be perfectly met.

"Make you His service your delight,

Your wants shall be His care."

18. ON TAKING AN OATH

You ask "If we deem it lawful for witness in a court of law to take the oath usually taken by witnesses," etc.?

This is entirely a question for individual conscience. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." We deem it perfectly right for a witness, when called upon by the magistrate, to take the oath usually administered. Under the Mosaic economy, when anyone heard "the voice of adjuration," he was bound to utter, or give evidence. (See Lev. 5) And when the High Priest said to our blessed Lord, "I adjure thee by the living God," He immediately spoke.

The magistrate is the expression of the power of God, and when he adjures us, we are bound to give evidence. But, as we have said, let each one act according to his light. The enlightened and liberal government under which we, in England, are privileged to live, has, with characteristic leniency and considerateness, made provision for sensitive consciences in an Act of Parliament to which you refer. The form which *such persons* must use commences thus: "I, A. B., do solemnly, sincerely, and truly, affirm and declare, that the taking of any oath is, according to my religious belief, unlawful." Nothing can more fully illustrate the genius of the British Government than the wording of this form. May God, in his infinite mercy, bless our Queen and preserve our constitution! May His gracious providence strengthen the pillars of that throne, under the shadow of which we enjoy a measure of freedom hardly known by the subjects of any other Government in the world.

19. THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH.

"I. W. W." We believe the term "angel," in the first and second chapters of Revelation, applies to one who could convey the mind of God to the Church. We quite agree with you in thinking that there is no foundation in Scripture for the idea that the "angel" was a pastor or elder. It has been thought by some that the term angel refers to a certain mystic representative of the Church — one who personified the assembly, and in whose person the assembly was addressed. There is much to favour this suggestion in the very teaching of the chapters before us. Take, for example, the following: "Unto the angel of the church of Smyrna write I know thy works. Fear none of those things which *thou* shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast *some of you* into prison," etc.

The Lord seems to pass from the angel to the Church as though they are one and the same, and this would greatly favour the idea that the angel was some mystic personage representing the Church. But it becomes us to speak with great modesty on a point concerning which there has been, and is, such diversity of opinion.

20. HEB. 6.

"Mary." We think you have quite mistaken the import and application of the passages of Scripture to which you refer. Heb. 6 has been again and again referred to in our pages; see particularly vol. 4., page 25. 1 Cor. 9: 27 has also been explained; see vol. 3, page 221. As to Heb. 10: 26-30, we believe it applies to the deliberate giving up of Christ — wilful departure from Christianity. Its primary application is, as we judge, to a Jew, who, having made a profession of the truth of Christianity, should deliberately return to Judaism; and the apostle tells such an one, that "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin;" that he could not look forward to a great annual day of atonement as of old; that there

remained nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment. The earliest symptom of this departure was the forsaking of the assembly. Now, dear friend, we are most thoroughly assured that these scriptures do not apply to you. It is not that we wish, in the smallest degree, to take away the edge from any portion of the word of God, nor yet to prop up any soul in a false condition. Nothing is farther from our thoughts; but we feel that the enemy is seeking to trouble you by a misuse of Scripture; he is leading you to write hard things against yourself, when the Spirit of God would lead you to rest in all confidence in the fulness and sufficiency of Christ. Thousands of souls have been exercised by those very scriptures to which you have called our attention; and while we doubt not, that in many cases this exercise has been used of God to deepen the work of grace in the heart, and to give a firmer grasp of Christ, still we deem it of importance to have correct apprehensions of the scope and object of the various parts of the word of God. May the Lord Himself give you settled peace in His own perfect work!

91. THE CHURCH'S PLACE.

"J. J.," Montreal. Your two questions are exceedingly interesting, and far too important to be discussed in the brief space allotted to our correspondents. We believe the place of the Church is quite unique. It is formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven consequent upon the death and resurrection of Christ, and His session at the right hand of God. It is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and the boundaries of its existence down here are Pentecost and the rapture. The saints of the Old Testament will have their own place assigned them in the dispensational wisdom of God. He names and fixes the place and portion of "every family in heaven and earth." They could not possibly belong to a body which had no existence till after their time. They will have part in the first resurrection and in heavenly glory; but the Church must ever occupy its own peculiar place as the body and bride of Christ. Wondrous place! May we enter more into it, and walk more worthy of it!

With regard to your second question, we are disposed to judge that the saints of the Old Testament, and even the apostles themselves, previous to the descent of the Holy Ghost, had very imperfect conceptions of the nature and effects of the work of Christ.

22. SIMON MAGUS.

"W. R. C." We have long felt persuaded that Simon, in Acts 8, was a mere professor, and not a truly converted man at all. As to the words to which you refer in verse 13, we believe it was merely a faith founded upon the miracles which he saw performed by Philip. We see the same thing in the history of our blessed Lord's ministry. "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many *believed* in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all." (John 2: 23, 24)

23. WALKING IN THE LIGHT.

"A. D.," Norfolk. We deeply sympathize with you in your present very trying position; but we believe your path is plain, namely, to walk according to the light which has shone in upon your conscience and understanding. One of the greatest practical difficulties of the present moment is to keep *a wide heart* while treading *a narrow path*. Some one has well said, "I must be as wide as Christ, and as narrow as Christ." Here is the difficulty. We live in a day in which we are in danger, on the one hand, of shutting ourselves up within the narrow enclosure of our own opinions, tastes, and predilections. Hence the value and force of the first clause in the aphorism just quoted. But, on the other hand, we meet with a great deal of what the late Mr. Hewitson so justly designated "An every-body-liking and everything-approving spirit;" and hence the need of the second clause. We are clearly called to walk in grace toward all, even toward those who, as we believe, are in error. To exhibit an

intolerant bearing, a morose or sour temper, a bitter spirit, is not Christian-like, but the very reverse. But then we must be faithful as well as gracious. There is great moral beauty in Lydia's words to Paul in Acts 16 "If," says she, "ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide." There is a great principle wrapped up in these words. To accept of hospitality, where there is manifest and positive unfaithfulness to Christ the Lord, is to prove that He has a very low place in our hearts.

If there be honest ignorance, it is, of course, another thing. Where a man is sincerely living up to his light, grace can bear with him, even though he may be involved in a mass of error and confusion. But where there is the deliberate and intelligent cushioning of truth to carry out one's own will or serve one's own interests, or to be on good terms with one's fellow, then verily, faithfulness to Christ demands bold and unflinching decision. We must bear in mind, that "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." Beauteous combination! Rare and exquisite adjustment! "Power" without love might display itself in a haughty independence, or an intolerant dogmatism. "Love" without power might issue in a total disregard of the claims of truth. "A sound mind" will enable us to adjust, with a delicate hand, the claims of that and this, and to discern the fitting occasion for the exercise of each. Oh, dear friend, what a Volume we possess in our precious Bible!

24. THE GOSPEL.

"G. N. L." Your communication was mislaid, else it should have received an earlier notice. Pray excuse the seeming neglect. We believe it is the same gospel which is referred to in the various passages to which you call our attention; but the Spirit never varies His mode in designating the gospel, without, as we believe, having some specific object in view. Whether we are able to discern and define the object in each passage is, of course, another thing. It would require an entire number to unfold the meaning of the expressions in those four passages which you quote. In general, we may remark that the term made use of in any particular passage gives the leading characteristic thought in the mind of the inspired writer. Thus, for example, in the expression, "The gospel of the *grace* of God," grace would be the leading thought. In "the gospel of the *glory* of Christ," glory would be the prominent idea. So also, in the expression, "gospel of God," or, "Gospel of Christ;" in the former, the object is to bring God prominently before the soul; in the latter, Christ.

25. DISCIPLINE AND GOVERNMENT.

Your question is a very interesting and important one. "Is any one, *now* by God's grace a believer, when suffering the bitter consequences entailed by past sin, entitled to take the comfort of those passages in the Word which speak of trial and chastening as being sent in love from a Father's hand?" Doubtless, in such a case, the Father may use the necessary consequences of past sin as a present discipline for the soul of His child; but we are disposed to view this and such like cases as illustrative of that great and solemn governmental rule, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." (Gal. 6: 7) You may see men suffering, all their lifetime, the natural consequences of past folly and excess. True it is that God, in His grace and mercy, overrules, and turns their very consequences to account, by using them for holy discipline; but all the while they are the fruit of past sin.

It is very needful to be able to distinguish aright between the actings of grace and the actings of government. They are often confounded. It is most solemn to think of the government of God. No exercise of His grace can ever interfere with the principles of His government. Grace pardons and restores; but government takes its course. If you sow tares, you cannot reap wheat. Grace can pardon your folly in sowing tares, but it will not change the crop. Moreover, as you walk through the field of tares, you may praise the grace that has pardoned your folly, while you weep over the folly that sowed the tares. The Bible abounds in illustrations of these things, and so does the history of the Church of

God in all ages. We consider the question to be a thoroughly practical one. It has been briefly handled in one of our earlier volumes. See an article entitled, "Grace and Government."

26. JOHN 15.

"A Constant Reader." The following, from the pen of a recent writer may help you as to your difficulty in John 15, "The true vine, therefore, is not Israel; quite the contrary, it is Christ in contrast with Israel, but Christ planted on earth, taking Israel's place as the true vine. The Father cultivates this plant, evidently on the earth. There is no need of a husbandman in heaven. Those who are attached to Christ, as the remnant of Israel, the disciples, need this culture. It is on the earth that fruit-bearing is looked for. The Lord, therefore, says to them, '*Ye are clean already*, through the word which I have spoken unto you;' 'Ye are the branches.' Judas, perhaps it may be said, was taken away. The others should be proved and cleansed, that they might bear more fruit.

"I do not doubt that this relationship, in principle, still subsists. Those who make a profession, who attach themselves to Christ in order to follow Him, will, if there is life, be cleansed; if not, that which they have will be taken away." (Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, vol. 3, page 491)

27. STOPPING SHORT.

"X. L." We believe the two tribes and a half stopped short of the true inheritance of the people of God; and though where there was personal energy, the effects of their so stopping short did not appear, yet we know they were the first to fall into the hands of the enemy.

No doubt this has a voice for us; "for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning." We are ever prone to stop short of our true position and portion, to remain at this side of Jordan, to take our place amid the gifts of God's hand, rather than with Himself in the proper heavenly inheritance of His people. Oh, for a higher range, a closer walk, a more profound and intimate communion!

28. GENTILES UNDER LAW.

"L. M. N." The first attempt to put the Gentiles under law is historically recorded in Acts 15, where you may see how it was met by the Holy Ghost, the twelve apostles, and the whole Church of God. The epistle to the Galatians may be most profitably studied in connection with your question.

29. WHAT IS MY MOTIVE?

"L J. P." You ask, "What is the difference between going to the British Museum and the Crystal Palace?" It is possible there may be a greater *energy* of worldliness in the latter than in the former; but as to the rightness of going to this or that, it would simply hinge upon this question, "Have I any business there? or does my duty call me there? Can I serve Christ there?"

30. THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY.

"R. W. M." The teaching of 1 Cor. 9: 14 is very plain. The apostle, in the opening of this chapter, gives a statement of his rights and privileges as an apostle. "Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? Have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" (i.e., with their hands for temporal support.) Thus he goes on stating his rights, and giving his authority for those rights, both from the law and ordinances of God. But for what end does he make this statement of his rights? Simply that he may give all up for the gospel's sake. "But I have used none of these things:

neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me; for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void."

Now, dear friend, you will observe a very marked difference indeed between the object of the apostle Paul, in thus stating his rights, and the object of many who quote his words. He states his rights only that he may abandon them; many quote his words only that they may insist on those rights which he abandoned for the gospel's sake. There would be no grace, no moral beauty in relinquishing privileges to which one had no right; but when the right is duly established, the grace that relinquishes it is fully manifested. Thus it was with Paul. He had a *right to* live by the gospel, but *grace* led him to live by the work of his hands. He would take nothing from the Corinthians; but that was to their shame. He did receive "once and again" from the Philippians; that was fruit abounding to their account. But the apostle's rule was to maintain himself by the work of his hands. Such was the lofty ground occupied by this incomparable servant, and we hold it to be the very highest privilege of a servant of Christ, and any who do not or cannot enjoy it are shorn of one of their holy dignities.

But the Lord is very gracious, and He meets us in our feebleness and poverty. Moreover, society is so constituted that it is immensely difficult for one who is called to the work of the ministry to combine with that work any secular calling sufficient to maintain himself and his family, if he has one. If a man holds a situation, he must fulfil *its* duties. If he is in business for himself, he must attend to it, and maintain it in its integrity, else he will soon be gazetted. If, therefore, any one be called forth to work in the gospel field, it must be a very distinct matter indeed. The *gift* and the call must be unmistakable. He must know where he is, who has sent him, and what he has to do, else he will, sooner or later, make shipwreck. We have known, within the immediate circle of our own acquaintance, certain who threw up their honest secular callings, under the impression that they were called to give themselves to the work, and live by faith, as they expressed *it* (though surely it is a great mistake to confine the life of faith to such a very narrow range). What was the end? They actually lost their reason! and even when reason was restored, there was the entire abandonment of the Christian course. The simple fact is, there was neither gift nor call in the oases to which we refer and hence the giving up of the occupation was a grievous mistake.

In a word then, dear friend, we have no hesitation in stating that, as a rule, every man should abide in his callings, provided it be a godly one. If he be called to the work of the ministry, if God has gifted him for it, and that he finds his secular calling a positive hindrance, then true devotedness of heart to Christ will lead him to give all up that he may obey his Master's call. But it must be very distinct. His pathway must have solid embankments. The immediate business of his heart and conscience must be with God, and not with men; not with his brethren, else he still never get on.

31. "THE GREATER WORKS."

"G. I. H." You desire to know the meaning of John 14: 12. We believe it teaches us that the works wrought by the Holy Ghost, as the witness of Christ's exaltation, were greater than those wrought by Himself in the days of His flesh. Your difficulty arises from comparing the works viewed abstractedly. You say, "We know that He gave sight to the blind, raised the dead," etc. Yes but He was down here, whereas now He is at the right hand of the Father, and the Holy Ghost is here as the witness of His glorification. This makes all the difference. The descent of the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, placed the disciples on advanced ground as to everything.

32. INFANT SALVATION.

"G. K." If memory serves us, we have, on a former occasion, referred to the question of the salvation of all who die in infancy. Here is our authority, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these

little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. For the Son of man is come to save that which is lost." The body of the infant dies because of Adam's sin; the soul of the infant is saved by the death of Jesus.

33. THE UTTERANCE OF FAITH.

"T. Y." The Scriptures to which you refer do most distinctly and blessedly set forth the wide aspect of the grace of God and the work of Christ, nor do we know of any hindrance, so far as the love of God, the work of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost are concerned, to any believing soul adopting the language which you quote, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." May God the Holy Ghost establish your heart in the truth!

34. THE SAINTS' RAPTURE.

"M. J." We fully believe that the Church will be caught up to meet her Lord and be with Him, before the great tribulation, and before the apocalyptic judgments. You merely ask our opinion, and we give it without entering upon the proofs We believe that Scripture distinctly teaches this great and most important truth; but our space does not admit of elaborate proof.

35. THE HOUSE OF RIMMON.

"M. A. W." We regret the disappointment in reference to your letter, and fear it must have gone astray. As to your difficulty with respect to Elisha's answer to Naaman, we cannot agree with either of the solutions proposed in your letter of the 12th of December. We could not, for a moment, admit the idea of any "evasion" on the part of the Lord's servant. What object could he have in evading Naaman's difficulty? Then as to his giving his "sanction" to Naaman's frequenting the house of Rimmon, we consider it wholly untenable. He did not tell him to go, for this would be to sanction idolatry. He did not tell him not to go, for this would be placing him under a yoke of legality. He simply says, "Go in peace," which was casting him back upon the grace which he had already experienced, and the exercise of an enlightened conscience. There were three things which Naaman received in connection with his cleansing, namely, an enlarged heart, an enlightened understanding, and an exercised conscience. His enlarged heart tells itself forth in the words, "Take a blessing of thy servant." His enlightened understanding exhibits itself in his request of two mules' burden of earth to build an altar to the God of Israel. And his exercised conscience is evidenced by his difficulty as to the house of Rimmon. Now it is easy to see that there would have been a lack of moral order in placing such an one under any formal rule; whereas there was most lovely order in casting him upon his responsibility to the One whose grace had so fully met his need. "Go in *peace*" was the suited utterance for a cleansed leper, and "Go, *wash*" for a leper uncleansed. So in the New Testament, the sinner is pointed to a Saviour; the saint to his Lord. The two things must never be confounded.

36. LIFE MORE ABUNDANTLY.

"J. A. S.," Swindon. The scene in John 20: 22 must be distinguished from the day of Pentecost. In the former, we have the risen Christ breathing upon His disciples the power of resurrection-life — life more abundantly. In the latter, we have the *glorified* Christ shedding upon His people the Pentecostal gifts of the Holy Ghost.

37. RESTORATION.

"A young Convert." There is nothing in John 13: 10 about asking for forgiveness. The entire scene in the opening of this chapter sets forth the present action of Christ toward His people. The washing of regeneration makes us clean — clean every whit; and Christ's present action is to maintain

us in the power of that cleansing, or to restore us when, through want of holy vigilance, we have lost it. You may read, in connection, Ephesians 5: 25-27.

38. THE UNJUST STEWARD.

"A. B. T." The moral conveyed in the parable of the unjust steward, in Luke 16, we believe to be simply this: use the *present* with your eye on the *future*. If you possess this world's riches, spend them in the Lord's service, with your eye on the everlasting habitations. Read, in connection, 1 Timothy 6: 17-19. If we deny ourselves, and under the constraining power of the love of Christ live for others, and do good unto all men, it will be remembered and rewarded in the kingdom.

39. WOMAN'S COVERING.

"A. H. L." We believe that woman's covering, in 1 Corinthians 11, is manifestly distinct from her hair. Verses 5 and 6 place this beyond all question. As to the question when or where, we must remember that the apostle does not speak of "coming together" until the seventeenth verse. The whole passage teaches us that the covering on the woman's head is the expression of her subjection to authority. The woman is to be subject to the man, as the Church is subject to Christ.

40. FIRST RESURRECTION.

"Mary." There are various classes or families who will have part in the first resurrection. Not seeing this simple fact has led to much confusion. As to Matthew 16: 28, we believe it refers to the scene in the opening of the following chapter.

41. THE LAMB'S WIFE.

"T. A. H." In Isaiah 54: 5, and Hosea 2: 19, and many other passages of Old Testament Scripture, we have Israel presented, in the mystic relationship of wife, as in Revelation 21 we have the Church. But the difference between the two is immense, and very material as bearing upon our character and conduct. The former is earthly; the latter heavenly. The former will stand connected with the Messiah, known on the earth; the latter with a heavenly Christ — the Son of God — not known after the flesh — not known in earthly relationship. The Church only knows a glorified Christ above. Her relationship with Him is in heavenly glory. She is connected with Him as one cast out from earth — rejected — crucified — risen and glorified. This stamps the Church's character. The restored nation of Israel will know Christ as the one exalted in the earth — the great King — the Lord of hosts. The Church, on the other hand, is called "the Bride, the *Lamb's* wife." She is linked with Him in that wondrous character. Hence, all those who, through grace, form part of the heavenly body, should walk as heavenly people — a people who have broken with the world — the intimate companions of a rejected Christ — partakers of His sufferings. As to the terms "Bride" and "Wife," they set forth a positive relationship between the Lord and His heavenly and earthly people. It may be said that they set it forth mystically or figuratively; but yet they do set forth a real relationship with its holy affections, privileges, and responsibilities; and while it is quite true that an individual is not the Bride, yet should each individual cultivate the affections and exhibit the characteristics of this high and holy relationship. We may further add that, in human life, the term bride suggests a different idea from that of wife. The former is a title connected with the joys of the day of espousal; the latter awakens the thought of matured companionship in all the joys and sorrows of life. But we must beware of being too human in our mode of handling these holy mysteries. "The Spirit of truth" can alone enable us to enter into them.

42. THE PARTICULAR RESURRECTION.

"M. J." In Philippians 3: 11, the apostle sets forth the grand object of his hope to be, resurrection

from among the dead." (*exanastasin ton nekron*) It is not merely resurrection of the dead, but something quite peculiar, quite distinct, even a resurrection from among the dead - a resurrection after the pattern and example of Christ's resurrection. As regards the expression, "If by any means," it does not imply any doubt, but simply declares that the apostle was quite ready to reach that glorious goal by any route his Lord and Master might see fit to appoint.

43. DISPENSATIONAL POSITION.

"B." Matthew 11: 11 teaches us that, looked at dispensationally, John the Baptist was less than the least in the kingdom of heaven, though, officially, the greatest of prophets. You will find this subject gone into in our paper on "The True Workman." It is very needful to distinguish between the position which a man may occupy in the dispensational dealings of God, and his own personal walk and moral condition therein. The very feeblest member of the Church of God occupies a position which the very highest of the Old Testament saints could not have thought of. Very many find difficulty as to this, because they are looking at men and their ways, rather than at God and the dispensational dealings of His grace. No doubt, the higher our dispensational position, the higher should be the tone of our character and conversation; but we can never arrive at the truth on this subject by comparing men with men.

44. FREE SALVATION.

"G. H." Ezekiel 3: 20, and many kindred passages, present man in responsibility under the government of God; they cannot, therefore, be applied to one who is the subject of free, sovereign and unqualified grace. The gospel meets me as an utterly lost sinner, as one condemned under the law. It brings me a full and an unconditional salvation. It gives me *eternal* life, not temporary or conditional life. It is truly wonderful how men, with the Bible in their hands, can talk about "the possibility of a believer in Jesus being lost." It shows very plainly that they neither understand the totality of man's ruin, nor the reality of God's salvation. As to James 2: 14, the little word "say" is the key to it, and to the entire context. The apostle does not say, "What doth it profit though a man *have* faith?" Mere lip profession is valueless to God and man. Of what use is it to say, "I go, sir," if we do not go? Oh! for reality! May the Lord stir up our hearts, and lead us forth in genuine devotion to Christ! We live in a day of widespread profession. The doctrines of the gospel are too much taken up in the intellect, without any true exercise of soul before God, and the result is a merely worldly profession, which is really paving the way for infidelity. What we want is whole-hearted consecration; and we ask you, dear friend, and all our Christian readers, to join us in waiting on the Lord for more spiritual energy — more depth of work in the soul — more separation from everything that tends to hinder our testimony to our absent Lord. May God grant us these things more and more abundantly, to the praise of His holy name!

45. WOMEN PREACHING.

"A Lover of Truth." We have, in one of our earlier numbers, gone into the subject of women speaking or teaching in public. We believe the teaching of the New Testament is distinctly against it. Whatever is meant in Acts 21: 9, and 1 Cor. 11: 5, it is impossible they can contradict 1 Cor. 14: 34, and 1 Tim. 2: 11, 12. These latter are plain and positive, and admit of no question whatever. The former may present difficulties when you come to apply them; but Scripture cannot gainsay Scripture.

46. THE CLEANSING WORD.

"F. A. H." The word is constantly spoken of as cleansing. (See Psalm 119: 9; Eph. 5: 26) Blood and water both flowed from the pierced side of our blessed Lord — the blood to expiate our sins, the

water to cleanse and sanctify us practically. Our sins were cancelled by blood; but our ways, our habits, our whole man must be cleansed day by day. If you will look at John 13: 1-14, you will be able to understand the meaning of our Lord's words in chapter 15: 3. They were clean every whit through the washing of regeneration, but needed to have their feet washed day by day, in order to their being maintained in the power of communion.

47. ADDRESSING THE LORD JESUS.

"M. A." We do not think that John 16: 23 prohibits our addressing the Lord Jesus in prayer. Our Lord is opening up to the disciples the new and blessed ground to which they were to be introduced through His resurrection and the gift of the Holy Ghost. They were to have access to God as their Father in His. Hitherto they had asked nothing in His name. Now they were to ask and receive, that their joy might be full. We merely add, that in Acts 7: 59 we find Stephen addressing the Lord Jesus.

48. THE FRIENDS OF JESUS.

"T. A. H." A careful study of John 13 - 16. would help you much as to your question. It is our privilege, as the "Friends" of Jesus, to have fellowship with Him in everything in which He is interested. We are identified with Him in life, position, and hope. God has, in His infinite and marvellous grace, called us unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ. Hence, whatever interests Him should interest us; for we are one with Him. Would that we more appreciated this immense privilege; but oh! beloved friend, we have to mourn over our barrenness and poverty. Lord, enlarge our hearts!

49. THE BEAST OF REVELATION.

"A Babe in Christ." We stated very recently that we have no light as to the number of the beast. Doubtless light will be given as the time approaches. May we be found waiting for the Son from heaven, and not for the beast on earth!

50. THE CHURCH UNDER RESPONSIBILITY.

"M. H." In Revelation 2 and 3, the Church is viewed in the place of responsibility, and as under judgment. We must not confound this with the Church as the body of Christ. In this latter aspect, there can, of course, be no question of responsibility or judgment, inasmuch as Christ will infallibly maintain His Church in all the perfectness which belongs to it as His body. If we do not distinguish these two aspects of the Church, we shall be confused as to many passages of the New Testament. The Church as a responsible vessel — a steward - a witness on the earth, is one thing and the Church as the body of Christ — the bride of the Lamb — is another. In the former aspect it has failed; in the latter it never can. As to your own personal condition, dear friend, there is much we should like to say to you, did space permit; but for the present we can merely commend you to the blood and advocacy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May God bless you!

51. MODEST APPAREL.

"J. M." We most cordially agree with you, dear friend, in deploring the sad conformity to the world as exhibited in the dress of many professing Christians. It is most sad, and evidences but too plainly the bent of the heart, the tone of the mind, and the moral condition of the soul. We are often deeply pained, in looking round at assemblies of Christians gathered for the purpose of showing forth the Lord's death, to mark the style of dress, the light, airy, fashionable appearance, the profusion of artificial flowers, and various other appendages, so unlike what one would expect to find on the persons of those who profess to be dead to the world. It is not, we may truly say, that we desire to see Christians adopting a certain costume or livery, or that we should like to see them slovenly in their appearance.

Far from it; we love neatness and simplicity — "modest apparel" — moderate, suitable attire. It may perhaps be said that many take their place in the Christian assembly who have been accustomed all their lives to dress elegantly, and they never think of such thing. This we can quite understand, and make allowance for; but, at the same time, we feel called upon to offer a word of warning to Christians on the subject of conformity to the world in dress and other things. It is a subject which demands serious attention. We believe that, where the heart is true to the Lord, the word of exhortation will be received and acted upon; the Lord knows we offer it in love, and under a deep sense of personal failure. May He act on the hearts and consciences of His people by His word and Spirit, and give them to carry themselves aright in these things, that His name may be glorified in the deportment, walk, and appearance of His people!

52. THE CUP WHICH WE BLESS.

"S. L." You ask, Is it incumbent at the Lord's Supper to give thanks separately for the wine? We cannot do better than quote for you the whole testimony of Scripture on the point. We are more thoroughly convinced, each day we live, of the urgent need of keeping close to the written word. Truth must be the girdle wherewith to strengthen our loins for every line of action. It is not what we ourselves or others think, or feel, or say. There is far too much of this within us and around us. We want to bow down to the authority of Holy Scripture. We want a "Thus saith the Lord" for all that may be pressed upon us. If Scripture is silent, we may well be silent too, inasmuch as it speaks fully and clearly in reference to all we need to know. But when Scripture speaks, its authority is paramount, and we have no right to pursue a line of conduct, as to the smallest matter, for which there is no foundation in the word of God. We may deem certain things very right, very good, and very suitable; but still the question remains to be asked and answered, "Where is the authority?" An all-important question now-a-days. Who are we? What is man, even the best of men? or what are his thoughts worth? Just nothing, if not founded on the eternal foundation of the Holy Scriptures. Do we not see, every day, how easily men slip away from Scripture, and get into their own notions? And do we not also see the disastrous consequences of so slipping away? It is like the points on a railway; at first, the measure of divergence seems to be hardly perceptible; but look at the end!

What, then, saith the Scripture in reply to your question? We turn, in the first place, to Matthew 26, and there we read, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take eat, this is my body. And He took the cup, *and gave thanks*, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it." (Ver. 26, 27)

Again, in Mark 14 we read, "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them, and said, Take eat, this is my body. And He took the cup; *and when He had given thanks*, He gave to them, and they all drank of it." (Ver. 22, 23) So also in Luke 22 we read, "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. *Likewise* also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." (Ver. 19, 20) The word "likewise" in this last quoted passage implies that our Lord did with "the cup" as He had done with "the bread." Finally, in the first epistle to the Corinthians we read, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. 10: 16) "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake, and said, Take eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. *After the same manner also the cup*, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do

show the Lord's death till He come." (1 Cor. 11: 23-26)

Oh! dear friend, how important it is to keep close to the veritable words of Christ, and to be so close to Him as to value what He says! There is a deplorable amount of ignorance of Scripture amongst us. The very plainest and simplest precepts of Christ we seem not to know, or to have wholly let them slip from the memory of our hearts. Even on the momentous subject which you have brought under our notice, what ignorance, what carelessness, what inaccuracy, what divergence of thought, what difference of judgment, what conflict of feeling, as to the order, the nature, the character, the meaning and object of the precious Supper of our Lord! Why is this? Is not Scripture sufficiently full, plain, explicit, and authoritative? Has it left any ground for difference of judgment? Does it afford any margin in the which to insert our own opinions and feelings? Not the breadth of a hair: It tells us the order, and it tells us the mode; it gives us the elements, and explains to us their deep and wondrous significance. It gives us the authority of Christ, and the powerful influence of His example. What, then, do we want? What is the deficiency? Ah! we want subjection to the authority of Christ. We want to do His will. We want that accurate acquaintance with Scripture that flows from the practical carrying out of what Scripture says. Here, we may rest assured, lies the root of the whole matter. "If any man *will do* His will, he shall know of the doctrine." But how is it oftentimes with us? Have we not often found ourselves persisting in a course of action, and persisting in a line of thought for which there is not a shadow of foundation in Scripture? How is it, for example, that we so often find all manner of things introduced at the Lord's Table, rather than the one thing which it is divinely intended to set forth? The teaching of Scripture is clear and emphatic, namely, "Ye do show the Lord's death;" and yet, how often do we find anything and everything but this introduced at the Table? It may be said, "Do not a great many things flow from the Lord's death? Do not life, righteousness, and everlasting glory flow to us from the death of Christ?" Unquestionable; but where is it said in Scripture that we do show life, righteousness, glory, or any other precious fruit of the death of Christ, in the Lord's Supper? Nowhere. "Ye do show *the lord's death*." True, it is, "Till He come:" but we do not show His coming, but His death, till He come.

Now, there is far more involved in a right apprehension of the import and object of the Lord's Supper than many are aware. We feel convinced, that where the Lord's death is kept prominently before the soul, at the Table, there will be a depth of tone, a subduedness of soul, a chastening of the heart, an exercise of conscience, which will shed a distinct influence over the whole life, walk, and character. And, on the other hand, where, instead of the Lord's death, all manner of things are introduced, you will find levity, unsubduedness, lack of self-judgment, and of profound exercise or conscience.

We earnestly entreat you, dear friend, and all our Christian readers, to give this matter much calm and prayerful consideration in the light of Holy Scripture; and may the Lord give unity of judgment, thought, and feeling, the sure result of being so near to Him as to feel and own the authority of His word! As to your immediate question, we think it perfectly plain that thanks should be given in connection with the cup, as well as with the bread.

53. NOT UNDER LAW.

"A Sister in the Lord." No one, surely, possessing a spark of reverence for Scripture, would think of placing Matthew 5: 19 in opposition to Romans 6: 14. The apostle declares, in the most distinct and positive manner, that we are not under law, either for justification or as a rule of life. But is this to lead us to the conclusion that we may break the commandments, even the very least? Far be the revolting thought. "What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." Assuredly, teaching that we are not under law, and teaching men to break the commandments, are not the same thing. And, on the other hand, I can teach the commandments as part of the revealed mind of

God, and, at the same time, maintain that I am not under the law.

54. CHRISTIANS IN DEBT.

"A. B." You ask, "Is it right for Christians who are in debt to give money for benevolent purposes?" Most assuredly not. We must be just before we are generous. If I am in debt, I have no right to give money in charity. Were I to do so, there would at least be, as another has said, a measure of honesty in my writing on the back of whatever I bestow, these words, "Borrowed from my creditors without their consent." But, dear friend, we should go very much further than this. We believe that, as a rule, Christians should not go in debt at all. "Owe no man anything" is a precept so plain, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. We do not here enter upon the question of how far persons engaged in trade can carry out this holy and happy rule. There are certain terms upon which the manufacturer sells to the warehouseman, and the warehouseman sells to the shopkeeper, such, for instance, as, "Cash in a month," or the like, and so long as these terms are observed, it may be questioned how far one is actually in debt. We believe that it would be far safer and better, in every way, for persons in trade, to pay cash, and take the discount. And, unquestionably, a man is in debt, if his stock in trade and the debts due to him are not amply sufficient to meet all liabilities. It is a poor, hollow, worthless, unprincipled thing for a man to traffic with fictitious capital, to live by a system of "kite-flying," to be making a show at his creditor's expense. We fear there is a deplorable amount of this sort of thing even amongst those who occupy the very highest platform of profession. As to persons living in private life, there is no excuse whatever for their going into debt. What right have I, before God or man, to wear a coat or a hat not paid for? What right have I to order a ton of coals, a pound of tea, or a joint of meat, if I have not the money to pay for it, It may be said, what are we to do? The answer is plain to an upright mind and a tender conscience, we are to do without rather than go in debt. It is infinitely better, happier, and holier to sit down to a crust of bread and a cup of water paid for, than to roast meat for which you are in debt. But, alas! dear friend, there is a sad lack of conscience and sound principle as to this important question. People go on, from week to week, taking their places at the Lord's Table, making the highest profession, talking of high and holy principles, and all the while they are over head and ears in debt, living far beyond their income, taking food and raiment on credit from any one who will trust them, and knowing in their hearts that they have no reasonable prospect of being able to pay. Surely this is most grievous and dishonouring. Indeed, we do not hesitate to pronounce it practical unrighteousness, and we most solemnly warn the Christian reader against all such loose and unprincipled conduct. We have seen a great deal of it latterly, and we can only regard it as one of the many bitter fruits of the spirit of Antinomianism so rife at the present moment. Oh for a tender conscience and an upright mind!

55. LAYING UP FOR THE FUTURE.

"S." You ask, "Is it right to lay up money for the future?" This is entirely a question between the heart and the Lord. If one cannot fully trust the Lord for the future, both for himself and for his family — if one has not such a sense of what God is, and what the life of faith is, as to lift the heart entirely above the range of creature confidence, human hopes, and earthly expectations, he can, of course, only lay up money, or insure his life. In the case of a mere man of the world, it is very laudable to deny himself in order to lay up for his wife and children; but the man of God stands on different ground altogether. We believe it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in a store of money, or in an insurance policy. "Leave thy fatherless children to me, and let thy widows trust in me." We have often seen the truth of the old proverb: "If you lay up for a rainy day, God will send you a rainy day." And as to children, the best provision you can make for them is, to teach them to provide for themselves by honest industry.

56. GOD OR MAN.

"E. L." We think *it very much better* to go to God about our wants than to go to the very best of men.

57. THE SAMPLE KINGDOM.

"Emily." Matthew 16: 28 refers to the Transfiguration, which was, as it were, a sample of the coming kingdom of the Son of man.

58. CHRISTIANS AND POLITICS.

"J. B." You enquire, "What is taught in the Word regarding the position of a Christian when called upon to vote for a Member of Parliament?" You will, perhaps, be startled when we tell you that your question involves the very foundations of Christianity. We would ask you, dear friend, to which world does the Christian belong? Does he belong to this world or to the world above? Is his citizenship on earth or in heaven? Is he dead to this world, or alive in it — which I If he be a citizen of this world — if his place, his portion, and his home be here, then, assuredly, he cannot take too active a part in its affairs. He should vote for town councilors and members of Parliament, he should strain every nerve to get the right man into the right place, whether it be at the municipal board, or on the floor of the House of Commons. He should put forth every effort to mend and regulate the world. If, in a word, he be a citizen of this world, he ought, to the best of his ability, to discharge the functions pertaining to such a position.

But, on the other hand, if it be true that the Christian is, as regards this world, "dead" — if his citizenship is in heaven, if his place, his portion, and his home be on high, if he is only a pilgrim and a stranger here below, then it follows that he is not called to meddle in any way with this world's politics, but to pass on his pilgrim way, patiently submitting himself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, yielding obedience to the powers that be, and praying for their preservation and well-being in all things.

But, we must remember, you ask, "What is taught in the Word" on this point? An all-important question. What, then, saith the Scripture? A passage or two will suffice. Hear what our Lord saith, when addressing the Father in reference to "His own in the world." "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because *they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world*." Again, hear the inspired apostle on this subject: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, *who mind earthly things*.) For our citizenship (*politeuma*) is *in heaven*; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Phil. 3: 17-20) So also, in the epistle to the Colossians, we read, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with: Christ in God. When Christ our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory."

Some, however, may say that the fore-going Scriptures no longer apply — that "the world" of John 17 is not the world of the nineteenth century — that the former was a pagan world, whereas the latter is a Christian world. To all who take this ground, we have nothing to say. If the teaching of the New Testament was only designed for a bygone age, if it bears only upon the things that were, and has

no application to the things that are, then, indeed, we know not where we are, or whither to turn for guidance or authority. But, thank God, we have a divine: and, therefore, all-sufficient directory for all ages, all times, and all conditions. If, therefore, we are to be guided by Scripture, we have no warrant whatever for meddling in this world's politics. The cross of Jesus has snapped the link which connected us with this world. We are identified with Him. He is our Model. If He were here, He would find His place outside the range of this world. You would not see Him at the council-board, on the bench, in the House of Parliament, or with the sword in His hand. By and by, He will wield the sceptre, draw the sword, and hold the reins of government in His hand. (May God hasten the day!) But now He is rejected, and we are called to share His rejection. Our path in this world, as Christians, is obedience or suffering. We are called to pray for all in authority, but not to be in authority ourselves. There is not so much as a single line of Scripture to guide me as a voter, or a member, or a magistrate. If, therefore, I act in these characters, I do so without one word of direction from my Master — nay, more, I act in a way utterly opposed to Him, and in direct opposition to the spirit and teaching of the New Testament.

May God make us more faithful to Christ! May we be delivered more completely, in heart and spirit, from this present evil world, and be enabled to pursue, with holy decision, our pilgrim path across the sand of the desert! We are quite aware that what we have written on this subject will prove unsavory and unpopular; but this must not deter us from speaking the truth, and we trust it may not deter us from acting the truth also.

59. OBSERVING OF DAYS.

"F. D." You enquire, "Is it right for Christians to avail themselves of 'Good Friday' and 'Christmas-day' for the purpose of meeting together for worship and edification?" There is a great deal to be said on both sides of this question. We should, of course, say, all things being equal, it is well to meet together for worship and edification as often as we can, and well too to avail ourselves of every opportunity of bringing people under the sound of the gospel. Furthermore, there are many who are engaged in business or in manual labour all the week, to whom a meeting on a week-day would be a great boon. All this would make the matter plain enough, were there nothing more to be considered. But then there are many who object to aught that might look like a sanction of Christendom's observance of the above named days, an observance resting wholly, as we know, upon a traditional basis, and having no authority whatever in holy Scripture. Who knows whether December 25 and Good Friday are really the anniversaries of the events which they are said to commemorate? There is not a shadow of authority in Scripture for either the one or the other. It is not that the mere fact of the world's observing these days should lead us to object thereto, for on that ground we should also refuse to observe the Lord's Day; but then we must remember the words of the apostle, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." If we can avail ourselves of these days, just as we should of any national or local holiday, then by all means let us do so. But, on the other hand, care must be taken not to lend our countenance to superstitious observances resting on a traditional foundation. The careful study of Romans 14 would put the heart into the right attitude touching this question. Whether it be a matter of eating or not eating, observance or non-observance, we are to bear with one another in subjection to the authority of the one Lord. This fine moral principle regulates everything. We have no right to lord it over each other's conscience. For ourselves we must say that we feel only too thankful to attend a meeting for worship, edification, prayer, or gospel testimony, whenever we have an opportunity. But, at the same time, we would desire to respect the conscience of our brethren who feel a difficulty as to Christmas Day and Good Friday.

60. PREACHING CHRIST.

"A. B. O." We could not too strongly condemn the practice to which you refer, namely, that of "brethren," whether old or young, "standing up to preach the gospel, and occupying three-fourths of the time in attacking the various religious systems of the day." Alas! that any should so forget their proper work, so lose sight of the glories of the gospel of Christ, and the need and danger of precious immortal souls, as to spend their time in such a profitless, or rather, we should say, such a reprehensible manner. Whatever has the evangelist to do with systems? He has to do with Christ and precious souls; enough, surely, to occupy him during any hours he may have for public work. We can hardly imagine how any one, having a spark of love for souls, or any real sense of the solemnity of eternity — the reality of God, of heaven, of hell, of sin, of death, and judgment, can spend his time in attacking systems, when his Master has given him an opportunity of preaching the precious gospel. For our part, we should not sit for five minutes to listen to any preacher who could so shamefully forget his high and holy commission. All such preachers should be left to preach to empty benches. We may just add, that we feel more deeply impressed than ever with the feeling, that all who know the gospel of the grace of God, and possess any measure of gift, should give themselves earnestly and devotedly to the glorious work of evangelisation. *We want evangelists*, we long for evangelists — large-hearted, earnest, devoted evangelists — men who know their work, and are determined, by the grace of God, to stick to it, no matter who may affect to undervalue it. God has pronounced the feet of the evangelist to be "beautiful;" all heaven is interested in the work of evangelisation; and we never met a spiritual saint on earth who was not interested in it also. No doubt the evangelist should have a distinct object before him; not merely *conversion*, but *planting*; not merely the salvation of souls, but the glory of Christ in their position and walk. We most fully own all this; but still we say, from the very depths of our heart, May God raise up from amongst us many gifted, ardent, whole-hearted evangelists.

61. CHRIST OR DOCTRINES.

"Anxious Enquirer." Many seem to feel a difficulty in reconciling these passages to which you refer, namely, John 3: 16, and Rom. 8: 29, 30. But we must remember that no one passage of God's word can possibly clash with another. If they seem to do so, according to our thoughts, it simply proves our ignorance. There is then most perfect harmony between the truth of God's eternal counsels, and the truth of free salvation — between His sovereignty in predestination and election, and the message of His love to a lost world — between His deep and unsearchable purpose, and the glorious display of His character and the activities of His nature. True it is that theologians find difficulty in working both these things into their theological systems; but it is enough for us that both are found in the Holy Scriptures. We are not called to frame systems, but to receive, in artless simplicity, every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord. If this were borne in mind, it would hush the reasonings of many a restless spirit, and remove many a stumbling-block off the pathway of the anxious enquirer. We find one class of theologians who always take up one side of this great question, and present one line of scripture quotations in support of their view. They are right, so far as they go — right in what they hold. But then they reject the other side of the question, and either pass over or explain, in a one-sided manner, a large body of scripture texts which plainly support that side. They are wrong in what they reject. They hold predestination and election, and there they are right. They reject free salvation, and there they are wrong. Then, again, we find another class of theologians, who seem to see only the other side of the question, namely, God's love to the world and free salvation to every creature under heaven, and so far they are right — right in what they hold. But then they reject predestination, election, and final perseverance, and here they are wrong — wrong in what they reject. The former hold divine sovereignty, but deny, virtually, human responsibility. The latter hold human responsibility, but practically ignore divine sovereignty. Those hold the permanency of salvation, but deny its freedom. These hold its freedom, but deny its permanency. We find both in the Word, and believe them. To

reconcile them is none of our business. They are reconciled already, inasmuch as they are taught in the Word. It would be a great mercy to souls, as well as a safeguard to truth, if men would preach Christ, and not doctrines or systems of doctrine. Let the teacher unfold doctrine; but let the evangelist preach Christ.

62. THE HEART'S TREASURE.

"A. M." "Ought Christians to attend secular concerts?" Your question amazes us, and the statement contained in the body of your letter not only amazes, but pains us exceedingly. We do not know exactly why you think it needful to adopt the word "secular," unless it be to convey the idea that vain, worldly music is introduced. But however this may be, whether the music be sacred or profane, we can only express our unfeigned sorrow to think that any bearing the name of Jesus should be found attending such scenes: it proves but too plainly that their hearts are not finding their centre and object in Him whose name they bear. It is, in our judgment, always a poor, low thing for a Christian to ask, "What harm is there in going to a concert or a flower show?" A person might as well ask, "What harm is there in swallowing a handful of ashes?" If we have gotten good wholesome food, we shall not think of eating ashes; and if our hearts are filled with Christ, we shall never think of asking what harm is there in going to a concert. The great question, after all, is, "What is my object?" Is it Christ or self-pleasing, Christ or the world, which? It is truly melancholy to contemplate the low tone of many who profess to be looking to Christ for salvation. It would seem as though they cared not how far they live from Him, provided they can escape hell at last, through His atoning work. The cross is merely viewed as the means of deliverance from the coming wrath, and not as the power of separation from this present world. This, you may be sure, dear friend, is the secret of much of the low walk, the self-indulgence, and the worldly tone of professors of the present day. The power of the cross is not felt, risen life is not understood, true strangership is not apprehended, fellowship with a world-rejected Jesus is not cultivated. True, the name of Christ is used, but it is tacked on to the world, to nature in its unrenewed state, to man in the flesh. This is a deep and subtle snare of Satan, against which we feel called upon to warn our Christian readers. We should like to enlarge, but our narrow space forbids, so we must content ourselves with merely suggesting to our Christian friends a very safe test in reference to all questions of the right and wrong of going hither and thither. It is this: just ask, "*Shall I find my Lord there?*" If this question be honestly put and answered, it will solve a thousand difficulties.

63. MAN'S WEAKNESS

"A Learner." Luke 13: 23, 24 gives us our Lord's reply to a *curious* enquirer, a reply designed to make curiosity as to others give place to anxiety about himself. In John 6: 37, our Lord declares Himself to be the servant of the Father's gracious purpose in receiving all who came to Him, inasmuch as none came save such as were drawn by the Father. Both these passages are sadly misused through lack of attention to the context.

64. HEART, NOT ATTITUDE, IN WORSHIP.

"J. C." We are extremely sorry to find the minds of Christians occupied with such a question as that of bodily attitude in singing. We are not aware of any passage in the New Testament affording authority on the point. Our worship is to be "in spirit and in truth," and, assuredly, bodily attitude has nothing to do with that. The question for us to consider is not the attitude of the body, but the state of the soul. If we might venture to offer an opinion, we should say that in hymns of direct address to the Lord, it is fitting we should stand up. But we would say, in all brotherly love, do not let us fall out about such questions. The devil would delight in raising strife about any or every bide. Let us, by the grace of God, frustrate his schemes, and where the absolute claims of truth are in nowise involved, let

us bear and forbear to the uttermost. We must take care that *self is* not at work, and while we fancy we are contending for something of importance, it is in reality our own will we are seeking to carry out. Where Scripture is silent, we have no right to legislate; when it speaks, let all be subject. We feel most fully persuaded, that if our hearts were more taken up with Christ, and more thoroughly devoted to His cause, we should neither have time nor disposition to contend about such trifles. We should be ready to stand or to sit as the occasion may demand, but never dream of forcing a certain attitude upon any one.

65. CONFESSION.

"J. T. G." We read in the first epistle of John, that "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession involves the moral judgment of sin in the conscience, which is a very important element. It is one thing to ask for pardon, and another thing to confess my sins. The believer is forgiven all trespasses; he stands on the ground, and breathes the very atmosphere of forgiveness. But if he commit sin, there must be the confession of that sin, in the presence of God, ere he can enjoy the sense of pardon, or be restored to communion. To ask for the forgiveness of my sins, as though I were yet in the condition of an unforgiven sinner, would be a denial of the truth of the gospel. But if, as a child of God, I sin against my heavenly Father, in thought, word, or deed, my communion must be suspended until, by confession founded on the death and advocacy of Jesus, my sin is forgiven, and my conscience cleansed from the soil which I had contracted. It is a most perilous thing to go on with unconfessed sin upon the conscience; it hardens the heart, deadens the moral sense, and puts one into the hands of Satan, who may lead us we know not whither. May the Lord keep us in the security of His own presence.

66. 1 JOHN 5: 7, 8.

"E. V." 1 John 5: 6 refers to the fact recorded in John 19: 34. The blood of atonement and the water of purification both flowed from a crucified Christ. Verses 7 and 8 are read as follows by the four editors: "For they that bear witness are three, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and the three agree in one." All the rest is omitted. This makes the passage very simple. You may, perhaps, be aware, that when the four editors, Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, and Tischendorf, agree in a reading, it takes precedence of the Received Text from which our unrivalled Authorized Version was made; but we can never touch the question of various readings without bearing the strongest testimony to the incomparable excellence of our precious English Bible, for which we heartily bless God every day.

67. EXHIBITIONS.

"F. C.," Weston-super-Mare. To find professing Christians going after shows and exhibitions of any kind is, in our judgment, a melancholy proof that their hearts have never yet found a satisfying object in Christ. If Christ be dwelling in my heart by faith, I shall not be found at shows. It will not be so much a mere question of the right or the wrong of the thing; but the fact is, it will never occur to me. The Lord Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall *never thirst*." There is no more longing for the streams of false delight which this poor world offers, when once the heart has found its place beside the fountain of living waters. Do you think Paul ever thought about the right or the wrong of going to any public amusement? "*One thing I do*," he says. And this is his language, not merely as an inspired apostle, but as a devoted Christian man. It is most deplorable to think of having to reply to such a question; it proves too plainly the low tone of things amongst many who profess and call themselves Christians.

68. ALL WELCOME.

"D. H." May the Lord meet the desire of your soul! It can never be "too late" for any one to come

to Jesus, until "the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door." Till then, there is a hearty welcome for all who will come. "*All things are ready, come!*"

69. CHILDREN.

"An Elder Sister." We believe it to be deeply important that our dear children should be early taught to look to God for themselves, and pray to Him in their own little way. God delights to hear the breathings of a child's heart. "Suffer the little children to come unto me." But, inasmuch as we do not like another to put words in our children's lips when coming to ask us for anything, so neither should we put words in their lips when they kneel at the throne of grace. If the *heart* of the child is rightly taught, the *lips* will utter the right thing; otherwise it is only formalism and heartless routine.

70. THE MODE OF MARRYING.

"H. J." We fully accept the rendering of 1 John 5: 16, as given in our most excellent authorised version. As to the scriptural mode of celebrating marriage, we believe that Christians are bound to submit to the law of the land, and comply with the requirements of the government of the country, which surely are framed in such wise as to meet the most tender conscience. We are called to "submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake."

71. JOHN 6: 50.

"A constant Reader of Things New and Old." We do not think that John 6: 50 refers to the Lord's Supper. Many, alas, may eat the Lord's Supper, and yet not have life at all. We believe that John 6: 50-58 refers to the soul's feeding by faith on the death of Christ. His death is life to us. It is quite true that the Lord's Supper shows forth that most precious mystery, and that to faith the bread and wine set forth the broken body and shed blood of Christ.

72. INTOXICATING WINE AT THE LORD SUPPER.

"G. H. S." We have looked through the lecture which you have so kindly sent us; and we have only to say that we believe the principle of it is utterly false, and some of its statements most reprehensible. We dare not transfer to this page the epithet which the lecturer ventures to bestow upon the cup in the Lord's Supper, in cases where fermented liquor is used. We can only marvel at the temerity of the man who could use such language. He would rather urge upon us to partake in one kind, or not to partake at all, than that we should use fermented liquor. Now, dear friend, we feel called upon to express our most decided condemnation of such teaching. We firmly believe that the wine spoken of throughout the Holy Scriptures was intoxicating. To adduce proofs would fill a volume. Various cases are recorded in the Old Testament, in which persons experienced and exhibited the intoxicating effect of wine. And the precepts of the New Testament distinctly imply the same thing. "Be not *drunk* with wine" would be pointless, if wine were not intoxicating. But we would ask you, dear friend, where is there any authority in Scripture for singling out any one creature of God, and calling upon people to make a vow against touching it? We read in Scripture, that "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim. 4: 4, 5) Timothy was exhorted by the inspired apostle to "use no longer water, but take a little wine, for his stomach's sake, and his frequent infirmities." Ought he to have refused the apostle's advice, because many were in the habit of over-indulging in drink? We might as well say that it is wrong to eat a morsel of meat, because there are gluttons in the world; or to have a shilling in one's purse, because there are misers in the world. You are aware, dear friend, that we have recently ventured to give full expression to our judgment on the subject of the use of stimulants; but in doing so, we took care to guard against the idea that we were writing in defence of the principle of total abstinence. We

are anxious that Christians should exercise godly care and self-control, in reference to the use of stimulants; but we utterly repudiate the principle set forth in this lecture; and, as you have sent it to us, we feel called upon to give you our judgment plainly, lest our silence should be regarded as a proof of our sympathy with its sentiments.

73. ON GIVING OUT OF HYMNS.

"C." You ask if there is any authority in the New Testament for introducing a hymn between the bread and the cup, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, None whatever, so far as we can see. We read, in Matthew 26, of their singing a hymn *after* supper; but we nowhere read of a hymn *during* the supper. We have occasionally known such a thing to be done; but we have always felt it to be out of place. We look upon it as a positive intrusion, an interruption to the current of spiritual feeling proper to the occasion. This, of course, is only what we might expect, from the fact of its being without any scriptural authority. We cannot believe that the Holy Ghost would ever be the author of an act which is not in strict accordance with the Word. We believe we ought to adhere closely to Scripture, in the celebration of the holy supper of the Lord. A man may fancy that he is led by the Spirit in doing a certain thing, and it may be, after all, only the impulse of his own mind. It is well to remember this, in order that we may be really exercised before the Lord as to our actings in the assembly of God's people. Some seem to think that it is a very simple thing to give out a hymn; and hence you will find persons who have no spiritual power to lead in prayer, or to give a word of exhortation, ever ready with the hymn-book, as if anybody could give out a hymn. Now, dear friend, we consider it a very solemn thing to give out a hymn. We believe it requires very great subjection to the leading of the Spirit to enable us to discern the proper moment for a hymn, and the proper hymn for the moment. We have known the entire current of the meeting to be rudely interrupted by the giving out of a hymn; and not infrequently we have felt the hymn-book to be a grievous infliction.

We write in all confidence and freedom; for we have the most entire sympathy with the feelings to which you have given expression. And while on the subject of hymns, we may add that we have far too many hymns at our meetings for prayer; at least, so we judge. They very often sadly interfere with the depth, earnestness, and solemnity of the occasion. In many cases it appears to be a regular routine of hymn and prayer, hymn and prayer, until one is thoroughly worn out by the actual bodily exercise, which certainly "profits little." All this, we confess, is most deplorable. You go to a prayer meeting with your heart full of the sense of deep and urgent need, and of the reality of waiting upon God. The state of the Church, the claims of the world, the need of your own soul, are all pressing upon your mind, and you long to bow down before the Lord, in the midst of your brethren, in humiliation, confession, and prayer, when, lo! the hymnbook is taken up, its leaves turned over and over, and some hymn given out completely foreign to the occasion. Then when you do get to your knees in prayer, no sooner is there a pause in the strain of supplication, than the hymn-book is again resorted to, and thus the integrity of the meeting is marred.

We do greatly desire to call the attention of our friends to this matter. We write in a spirit of true brotherly love, and with a real desire for the blessing and edification of the people of God. We have often longed for more power of continuance in the spirit and attitude of prayer, and less of the bustle and confusion of getting up and down. We dare not attempt to lay down an iron rule. Far be the thought. Many are unable, through weakness of body, to continue long in any one position; and nothing is further from our thoughts than to lay a burden on such, or on any; to do so would not be Christianity, but monasticism. Still, we feel free to throw out these suggestions to our Christian friends, who, we are sure, will receive them, as they are offered, in true affection.

74. HEB. 12: 2.

"A." We see no reason for altering the rendering of Heb. 12: 2, as given in our excellent authorised version; and most assuredly we should reject the rendering which has been suggested to you. A very competent Greek scholar renders the passage thus: "Who in view of the joy lying before Him has endured the cross, having despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." This, as you will see, differs even more than the authorised version from the rendering to which you refer. Indeed, we cannot imagine how any one could think of rendering it "Instead of the joy," etc. The idea that "the joy" refers to "the allurements set before our Lord by Satan," is, in our judgment, absurdly fanciful.

75. THE UNEQUAL YOKE.

"M. A. C." 2 Corinthians 6: 14 is perfectly conclusive as to your case. We believe it to be a grievous sin for a Christian to marry an unconverted person; and we have known cases where persons having acted in wilful disobedience in this solemn matter were called to reap the most bitter fruit during the whole of their after life. We recently heard of an instance of a Christian girl, who, in the face of earnest advice and remonstrance persisted in marrying an unconverted man. What followed? They had not been long married when her husband reproached her for her inconsistency. Nor was this all. They had two children, who proved to be idiots, and kept up in the poor mother's ear the constant heartbreaking wail of idiocy. In short, her married life was one of untold anguish and misery. We believe her soul was restored, but she was made to feel the solemn force of those words, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Oh! dear friend, let nothing induce you to enter the marriage yoke with an unconverted person. Let not the devil cast dust in your eyes, and let not your own heart deceive you by the vain hope of doing your partner good. It is a deadly delusion. You will do him no good; but you will do yourself incalculable mischief; and, what is much worse, you will disobey and dishonour your Lord. How can you possibly expect to be the means of leading a soul into the way of truth, that very way which you yourself have deliberately abandoned in order to gain your own end, and gratify your natural affections? We feel bound, in faithfulness to the Lord and to you, to warn you, in the most solemn manner, not to proceed further in this matter, but, in the fear of God, break off this connection altogether. May God give you grace so to do.

76. STIMULANTS.

A correspondent has applied to us for an opinion on the subject of the use of fermented liquor in the ordinance of *the* Lord's Supper. We desire to treat with respect the conscience that feels a difficulty in this matter, though we cannot say that the question has ever troubled us. We simply use the wine appointed for the purpose, asking no question for conscience' sake. But we are thankful for the communication just now, and we deem it right to avail ourselves of it, for the purpose of addressing our readers on the very important subject of the use of wine and other stimulants in a general way. We feel bound to speak plainly on this or any other question which may come before us; and in acquitting our conscience in the matter, we must candidly confess that we have recently witnessed much and heard much to alarm us in reference to the use of stimulants. We do not want to startle our readers, or create any sensation. Far from it. We merely want to raise a warning voice against what we are convinced is a very great evil — namely, the abuse of stimulants. We do not presume to lay down rules, or to dictate to others; each one must judge, as in the fear of God, whether he really requires to "use a little wine:" but we have no hesitation in saying that the Lord has been dishonoured, His Spirit grieved, His cause injured, the testimony marred, and souls stumbled, by professing Christians indulging in the use of strong drink. We are aware that 1 Timothy 5: 23 will be referred to as divine authority for the use of

wine on medical grounds; and most assuredly, had we only to do with self-denying Timothys, there would be little fear of their abusing a divine prescription, and therefore little need for us to write these lines. But, alas! alas! self-denial is, now-a-days, the exception, self-indulgence the rule. We fear that many who are not in Timothy's state, either as to soul or body, draw a plea from this passage for a practice which they really love, and for which there is no real need. Drunkenness prevails to such an extent that it really becomes Christians to bear a decided testimony in their personal habits. We know, on divine authority, that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused; but we know, on the same authority, that "it is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." (Rom. 14: 21) We are not now writing in defence of what is called total abstinence; nor do we mean to advocate the principle of vows and resolutions. We merely wish to call the attention of Christians to this one question; namely, is it right, is it spiritual is it Christ-like, all things considered, to indulge in the use of intoxicating drinks Would it not be better, in every way, to abstain from that which is productive of such misery and moral degradation? Self-denial is good. It is a great thing to keep the body in subjection. The Christian should never suffer himself to become the slave of a habit. How much better it would be, in every respect, if all that is spent on alcohol and tobacco were devoted to the work of the Lord, or to the poor. May the Lord lead us to lay these things to heart!

77. DRESS, ETC.

"A Lover of Justice;" "I. P. S.," London. You both deem us one-sided in our remarks on dress in our November issue; and you consider that we ought to have dealt faithfully with our brethren, as well as our sisters. We accept your reproof, and thank you for your candour. But he must say we have not met with many cases such as you name of "brethren," and "even teachers," wearing "gold rings and chains," "goldheaded walking canes," "white waistcoats," and "peculiarly fashionable hats" We can hardly conceive such things in connection with any measure of spirituality of mind. Indeed, we have rarely met with them where there was even sound sense and a vigorous intellect, to say nothing of Christianity and the work of grace in the soul. The most distant approach to foppishness should be sedulously avoided by a Christian man, but more especially by any one who takes part in the service of God. However, as we have said, we have not met with much of this sort of thing; and, besides, we must remember that the exhortations of the Holy Ghost on the subject of dress are all addressed to women.

78. "SO LET HIM EAT."

"L E.," Ryde. We deeply sympathise with your feelings; but we do not think you should absent yourself from the Lord's Table on the ground you name. The word says, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." It does not say, "Let him absent himself." It is unjudged evil that affects the assembly. A person who habitually judges himself will never prove a hindrance to the assembly. If at any time you find your heart dull, heavy, barren, or wandering, betake yourself at once to the Lord, call on Him, and cast yourself entirely upon His grace; pour out your soul to Him, and He will assuredly give lifting up, healing, and restoration. Then you can go to His table, and remember His death in a worthy manner. May God bless you, and keep you!

79. WOMEN'S PREACHING.

"B. B." Judging from the number of questions which have of late been put to us on the subject of female preaching and teaching, we conclude that there must be considerable misgiving on the point in the minds even of some who engage in the work. We have again and again ventured to give expression to our judgment on the question. We believe the spirit and teaching of the New Testament, and the voice of nature itself, are entirely against the idea of a woman's taking the place of a public preacher or

teacher. *Home* is pre-eminently the woman's sphere, whether we view her as a daughter, a wife, or a mother. And oh! what a holy, happy, elevated sphere it is to one who carries herself aright therein! The most devoted heart may find in that sphere ample scope for the exercise of every gift. We know of nothing more lovely — nothing more attractive — nothing which more adorns the gospel of Christ and the doctrine of God than a Christian woman who occupies aright the place in which the providence of God has set her. Look through Scripture, and through the entire history of the Church of God, and see who were they that rendered most effectual service to the cause of Christ. If we mistake not, you will find, without exception, that those who showed piety at home, who walked holily and graciously in the midst of the domestic circle — those who commended the truth to their parents — those who lived in godly subjection to their own husbands — those who trained their children in the fear of God — those who guided the house according to the authority of Holy Scripture — these were the women who most effectively served their generation, left the most hallowed impress on their times, and walked in fullest harmony with the mind of heaven. We would ask you, dear friend, of what use is it to point us to this one and to that one who can preach eloquently and impressively to assembled thousands? The real question is, "What saith the Scripture?" Is this a woman's work?

And does it not sometimes happen that, while a woman seems to be reaching the most splendid and exciting results in a forbidden sphere, her simple, obvious, divinely appointed home duties are grossly neglected. Her parents are not requited — her husband is neglected — or her children are left to the care of godless or unprincipled servants, who pollute their imaginations, initiate them into vile practices, train them in deceit and falsehood, and lead them into habits which ruin them for life. It is vain to say that God blesses the preaching of women. This is no defence. What does not God overrule and bless? It was only this very week we heard of two young men who were converted through one of them praying, in downright mockery, at a public prayer meeting. God made use of the shocking conduct of one to bring conviction to both. Such is His sovereign goodness. But to use this goodness as an argument in defence of what is plainly opposed to Scripture is a fatal mistake.

It may, however, be asked, What are we to learn from Acts 21: 9, and 1 Cor. 11: 5? The former passage simply teaches us that Philip's four daughters possessed the gift of prophecy, while the latter teaches that this gift was to be exercised only with covered head. It remains to be proved that the prophetic gift was exercised in the assembly. We do not believe it; on the contrary, it is plain that the apostle, in 1 Cor. 11, does not speak of the assembly until the seventeenth verse. It is important to note this. In chapter 14 the teaching is positive and unmistakable, "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." (Verses 34, 35) So also in 1 Tim., "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. But *I suffer not a woman to teach*, nor to usurp authority over the man, *but to be in silence.*" (1 Tim. 2: 11, 12)

But it is further urged, that preaching the gospel to the unconverted is not teaching in the Church. We reply, the Holy Ghost commands the woman to be in silence, and to be a keeper at home. How far obedience to these holy injunctions is compatible with going about from place to place, and preaching to large assemblies, is for others to judge. It may, however, be asked, Is there no way in which a woman can take part in the Lord's work? Assuredly there is. In Luke 8: 2, 3, we read of certain women who enjoyed the high privilege of ministering directly to the Lord Himself; and in Phil. 4: 3, we read of other women who laboured with the apostle in the gospel. There are numberless ways in which a woman may help on the Lord's work without going out of her divinely appointed sphere, and acting in opposition to the voice of nature and the authority of Holy Scripture.

80. SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

"M." We are truly thankful to hear that you have commenced the Sunday School, and we count it a real privilege to be allowed to comply with your request for a word of counsel as to the mode of working it. The longer we live, the more highly we prize the blessed work of Sunday School teaching. We look upon it as most interesting and delightful; and we believe that every assembly of Christians, gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, should support such work by their sympathy and prayers. Some, we are sorry to say, exhibit much lukewarmness in reference thereto, and others seem to disapprove of such work altogether. They look upon it as an interference with the duty devolving upon Christian parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This, we own, would be a grave objection, were it well founded; but it is not so, for the Sunday School is not designed to interfere with, but to assist, or supply the total lack of, parental teaching and training. There are thousands of dear children thronging the lanes, alleys, and court-yards of all our large cities and towns, who either have no parents, or else parents utterly unable or unwilling to instruct them. It is on these the Sunday School teacher fixes his benevolent eye. No doubt he is glad to see all sorts occupying his benches; but the poor, the ragged, the neglected, the outcast, are his special objects. There are thousands of children, too, who crowd the mill and factory, and spend their days in toil, in order to keep soul and body together, and who have no other means of being instructed in divine things, save what is afforded in the Sunday School class. Should not these be looked after? Is it not a good work to gather such, once a week, for a couple of hours, in order to store their young minds with precious texts of Scripture and sweet hymns, which may leave an impress which no lapse of time shall ever efface? We most thoroughly believe it so; and, with all our hearts, we wish God speed to every one engaged in it. We have the fullest assurance that such work will meet its rich reward in the day of the Lord, even though present appearances may be discouraging.

It is impossible to tell where and when the fruit of a Sunday School teacher's work may turn up. It may be on the burning sands of Africa, or amid the frozen regions of the North, in the depths of the forest, or on the ocean's wave; it may be at the present time, or it may be years after the workman has gone to his eternal rest. But, let it be when or where it may, the fruit will assuredly be found, when the seed has been sown in faith and watered by prayer. It may be that the Sunday School pupil will grow up a wicked youth — a wicked man; he may seem to have forgotten everything good, holy, and true — to have worn out, by his sinful practices, every sacred impression; and yet, notwithstanding all, some precious clause of Holy Scripture, or some sweet hymn, remains buried in the depths of memory, beneath a mass of folly and profanity; and this Scripture, or this hymn, may come to mind in some quiet moment, or it may be on a dying bed, and be used by the Holy Ghost for the quickening and saving of the soul. Who can attempt to define the importance of getting hold of the mind when it is young, fresh, and plastic, and seeking to impress it with heavenly things?

But we may, perhaps, be asked, "Where, in the New Testament, have we any warrant for the special work undertaken by the teacher or the superintendent of a Sunday School?" We reply, it is only one way of preaching the gospel to the unconverted, or of expounding the Holy Scriptures to the children of God. Properly speaking, the Sunday School is a profoundly interesting branch of evangelistic labour, and we need hardly say we have ample authority in the pages of the New Testament for this. But alas! there are too many amongst us who have no heart for any branch of gospel service, whether amongst the young or the old; and not only do they neglect it themselves, but throw cold water on those who are seeking to do the blessed work. And as it sometimes happens that those who raise objections to Sunday Schools and stated gospel preachings seem to be persons of intelligence, their words are all the more likely to weigh with young Christians.

But to you, dear friend, we say, let nothing discourage you in the work which you have undertaken. It is a good work, and go on with it, regardless of all objectors. We are told to be ready to every good work, and not to be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.

And, now, a word as to the mode of working a Sunday School. You must remember it is an individual service, to be carried on in personal responsibility to the Lord. No doubt it is most important to have full fellowship in your work, with your fellow labourers, and with all your brethren; but the work of a superintendent or teacher must be carried on in direct personal responsibility to the Lord, and according to the measure of grace imparted by Him. The assembly is no more responsible, and no more involved, in this work, than in any other individual service, such as the Sunday evening preaching, cottage meetings, lectures or Bible classes; though, most assuredly, the assembly, if in spiritual, healthy condition, will have the fullest fellowship with the Sunday School, as well as with the entire range of personal work.

You will find, if we mistake not, that in order to work a Sunday School effectively, you must have a good superintendent — a person of energy, order and rule. The old proverb, "What's everybody's business is nobody's business," is specially applicable here. We have seen several Sunday Schools come to the ground from not being properly worked. Persons take the work up, for a time, and then let it drop. This will never do. The superintendent, the teachers, and the visitors must enter upon their blessed work not by fits and starts, but with calm determination and spiritual energy; and having entered upon it, they must carry it on with real purpose of heart. It will not do for the superintendent to leave his school, or the teacher to leave his class, to chance, under the plea of leaving it to the Lord. We believe the Lord expects him to be at his post, or to find a proper substitute, in case of illness or any other unavoidable cause of absence.

It is of the utmost importance that every branch of Sunday School work should be undertaken and carried on with freshness, heart, zeal, energy, and thorough personal devotedness. And, inasmuch as these can only be had at the Divine Treasury, all who are engaged in the service should meet together for prayer and conference. Nothing can be more deplorable than to see a Sunday School falling into decay, through lack of diligence and perseverance on the part of those who have taken it up. No doubt, there are many hindrances, and the work itself is very uphill and very discouraging; but oh! if our words have any weight, we would say, with heartfelt emphasis, to all who are engaged in this most precious service, Let nothing damp your ardour, or hinder your work. Go on! Go on! and may the Lord of the harvest crown your labours with the richest and best blessing!

We need hardly remark that we do not contemplate such a thing as unconverted persons taking any part in the work: of Sunday Schools. Indeed, we know of few things more sad than to see a person engaged in teaching others that in which the teacher has neither part nor lot himself. No doubt, God is sovereign, and He can and does use His own word, even in the lips of an unconverted person; but this in nowise alters the melancholy fact in reference to the person so used. We could not think, for a single moment, of admitting or inviting any one to take part in the work of a Sunday School, if we had not satisfactory evidence of his conversion to God. To do so would be to help him on in fatal delusion.

We have gone thus fully into the subject of the Sunday School, because it is one occupying a very large place in our thoughts and sympathies, and we long to see it getting its due place in the hearts of all God's people. It is thirty-six years since we first entered the precincts of a Sunday School, and we feel bound to declare that the lapse of years has only tended to deepen our interest in what we must ever consider a charming branch of work. May God bless all Sunday Schools, for Jesus Christ's sake!

81. HELPING OTHERS IN EVIL.

"S. P." We most surely judge it to be wrong for a Christian man to employ himself in driving people to the races. We do not think that any circumstances could justify him in so doing. If it be a wrong place for him to be found in, how could he consistently earn money by driving others to it? Surely if a Christian is looking to God to supply him with suited employment for his wagon and horses, he will not betake himself to such a resource as driving the poor votaries of pleasure to the godless scenes that are usually enacted on the race course. Oh, for a tender conscience

82. SATAN'S POWER.

"A. R.," Ryde. We do not believe that Satan is a discerner of the thoughts of the heart. This is a divine prerogative. (See Heb. 4) We doubt not that well nigh six thousand years of experience and observation have given Satan an amazing knowledge of man, and profound skill in dealing with him; but Satan is only a creature, having no power against one who is walking in the energy of the divine nature. (1 John 5: 18)

83. CHRIST'S INTERCESSION.

"M. H.," Brighton. We could not insert the paper you have sent us. We do not agree with it. It seems to confine the present intercession of Christ to Israel, and also to deny our need of having our feet washed from day to day. All this we believe to be most serious error indeed. We believe that the present action of Christ in intercession is to usward, and we bless God for it. We could not get on for one hour without it. "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." "If *any* man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part *with* me."

84. BARREN MINISTRY.

As to your second question, we are not the least surprised to find that people do not attend preachings and lectures, if the persons conducting such services have not spiritual power for the work which they undertake to do. We might as well expect sheep to flock to a barren heath, or a desolate moor, as expect Christians to attend barren and wearisome services. Where the object of the meeting is to remember the Lord in the breaking of bread, it is, of course, quite different. The presence of any special gift is in nowise essential to the integrity of such an occasion, though always a most valuable adjunct. But, most assuredly, in all cases in the which the object of the meeting is preaching or teaching, there must be a measure of spiritual gift power, and intelligence, else the meeting will fall to the ground. How could it be otherwise? The grand object of all ministry is edification, and this object can only be attained by genuine spiritual gift, imparted by the Head of the Church, and diligently and prayerfully cultivated by the possessor. Let us remember this. It is worse than worthless for a man to occupy his own time and that of others in mere talk which he calls ministry, but which is positively an infliction upon his hearers. The proof that a man is a divinely sent evangelist is, that souls are converted by his ministry; and the proof that a man is a divinely sent teacher or pastor is, that the people of God are built up and led on by his ministry. If these results be not reached, the heart of Christ is not gratified — the object of the Holy Ghost is not attained. May all Christ's servants, whatever be their gift or sphere of action, seek to serve with more earnestness, energy, and fervour, and with a deeper sense of the seriousness and reality of their work.

85. LAWFUL BUSINESS.

"S. O." Accept our thanks for your faithful letter. Its tone and spirit are very grateful. Still, we fear you have not read our answer in No. 90 with sufficient care. If you will kindly refer to it again, you will find that we do not, by any means teach, that a Christian cannot engage in the lawful business of this life. Nothing is further from our thoughts. The question of our Laurencekirk correspondent had

reference merely to the Christian's taking part in the politics of this world. We believe it to be inconsistent with the teaching of John 17 and Colossians 3. We maintain that it is contrary to the example of our blessed Lord, whose steps we are to follow: and finally, we declare that the Christian, in meddling in this world's politics, is acting without a single line of Scripture authority. The word of God furnishes the Christian thoroughly unto all good works, but it does not furnish him with any authority to be a politician. It teaches him to pray for the government, to obey magistrates, to submit himself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; but it nowhere teaches him to wield the sword of worldly power. It is unintelligent to refer, on this subject, to Old Testament Scriptures, inasmuch as it was perfectly right for a Jew to exercise worldly authority, seeing that his citizenship was earthly; but "our citizenship is in heaven." (Phil. 3)

86. THE WINE USED AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

"A. Z.," Windsor. We consider the rendering of 1 Cor. 11: 21, as given in our Authorized Version, quite correct. The word translated "drunken" is from the same root as that rendered "Be not drunk," in Ephesians 5: 18: which proves, very distinctly, that the wine used was intoxicating.

87. THE LORD'S TABLE

"An Anxious Inquirer." You desire to get our thoughts as to what constitutes "the Table of the Lord." A prayerful study of 1 Corinthians 10 and 11 would give you God's thoughts on this most weighty subject. We consider the Table of the Lord to be that where His authority is dully acknowledged, His claims respected, and where His redeemed can take their place apart from everything contrary to sound doctrine and holiness of life.

88. PERSONAL ADORNING.

"A. B." We should have thought that the language of 1 Peter 3: 3 is sufficiently plain for any upright mind or tender conscience. The apostle says, "Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of *putting on of apparel*. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." If the *heart* of a Christian woman be governed by the *spirit* of this passage, her *habit* will be ordered aright. We should not then have to mourn over the painful exhibition of dress amongst professing Christians of the present day. It is enough to make one weep to see the figures that appear at times in our assemblies. We have spoken plainly on this subject again and again, and as you have brought it before us, we feel called once more to give expression to our mind. We are often thoroughly amazed to witness the things which some Christian women put upon their persons; for example, the gaudy bunches of artificial flowers on their heads and round their faces, pieces of painted glass and sham jewellery. How can any woman of good taste or common sense, to say nothing of spirituality, spend money, time, and thought on such things! Surely, if they only considered the matter in the presence of God, they would act differently. We are sorry to have to write in this strain; but we earnestly beseech all Christian women who may read these lines to give this subject their solemn consideration. Let each one look to herself. And let us be faithful to one another. Christian mistresses should set an example to their servants, by dressing plainly, and then they could with a better grace admonish them. May the Lord, by His Spirit, exercise many hearts and consciences in reference to this really important question of dress.

89. PARISH RELIEF.

"S. D." As to the question of a Christian's going to the parish for relief we believe it is the privilege of every needy child of God to look, in artless faith, to his Father for all he wants. We

certainly could not think of going to the parish, or to any human resource while we have the living God to look to and lean upon. The life of faith is either a divine reality or a mere sham. We believe it to be a reality. But then going to the parish, or going to man at all, is not faith. However, there is another side of the question. We consider it a reproach upon Christians to allow a brother or sister to go to the parish for relief, if they know of it. It is their high privilege to minister to their brother's need. "Thou shalt open thy hand *wide* unto thy poor brother." This was a precept under the Levitical economy, and surely it should speak to our hearts. If a Jew was told to open his hand wide to the poor, how much more ought we to do so? We believe there is ample provision in the Church of God to meet the need of all the members. What we want is more grace — more faith. Oh for real enlargement of heart! May we breathe more the atmosphere of the divine presence, and thus learn to find our true delight in ministering to every form of human need, and in making poor hearts glad.

90. GOING TO LAW.

"A Sister." We should require to be better advised before giving a judgment in the case to which you call our attention. As to the general principle, it is plainly wrong for a Christian man to be found, as you say, "week after week, going to law for a few shillings," or for any amount. We believe that the Christian is called to walk in grace toward all, and if he walks in grace, he cannot go to law. The two things are diametrically opposed. It is very sad to see a man, who professes to have been forgiven ten thousand talents, taking his fellow by the throat for a hundred pence. We must say, we should not give much for his Christianity. But, dear friend, would it not be better, in all such cases, to go to the individual himself, and speak faithfully and lovingly? Do you think it is the divine way, when you see anything wrong in a Christian's walk, to write to the editor of a magazine! We can quite understand, where it is a matter involving any great principle, the rightness of bringing, it under review, that it may be examined in the light of scripture. But it sometimes occurs to us that many of our correspondents write to us respecting matters which ought rather to be confined to the individuals concerned, or simply laid before God in prayer. It is not the thing to be speaking or writing of people's faults behind their backs. To say the very least of it, it is mean and cowardly. It is the way of Satan.

91. EATING UNWORTHILY.

"A. O." You desire to know what is meant by the expression, "Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." This is a deeply solemn question, and one which demands the serious attention of Christians just now. We fear there is a vast amount of lightness and indifference in reference to the Lord's Supper. There is not that deep exercise of soul, or that earnest self-judgment, which the Holy Ghost enjoins in connection with our approach to the Lord's Table. It is very questionable whether many of us, in seeking to keep clear of legality and superstition on the one hand, have not fallen into levity and indifference on the other. Legality, as we know, has sought to fence the Table with certain conditions of man's device; and superstition has sought to surround the Table with the pomp and circumstance of man's invention. All this is true; but what is the remedy? Will levity and carelessness cure us of the ills of legality and superstition? Alas! as is too often the case, the remedy is far worse than the disease. Dear friend, we must confess to you, that we contemplate with alarm very much of what goes on in the assemblies of Christians. We cannot shake off the fear that many are incurring the guilt of not discerning the Lord's body in the Supper.

True, the evil does not appear in the same form in our midst, as in the Church of Corinth. This could hardly be expected; but it in nowise alters the real principle of the thing. The question is, Are we really discerning, by faith, the Lord's body in the breaking of bread? if not, we are eating and drinking unworthily; we are eating and drinking judgment to ourselves; we are guilty (*enocos*) of the body and

blood of the Lord. Solemn thought! We need to remember that while the Table is spread on the ground of accomplished redemption, it is to be surrounded in the power of personal holiness, that while we are not saved by personal holiness, we are saved to it — that while as Christians we are entitled, through grace, to partake, we are called upon to examine and judge not merely our ways, but ourselves. Christ was judged for our sins on the cross, and we are exhorted to judge ourselves, and then show forth His death. Now we believe that this holy exercise of self-judgment is a deep, earnest, habitual thing. It is not the formal, wordy, lip confession, on the Lord's day morning, of the sins and follies of the past week, to be followed by the sins and follies of the next.

There is far too much of this. What we want is thorough, abiding self-judgment. If this were exercised, we should not so readily fall into sin. But how is it, in many cases? Alas! alas! we shrink from the reference; but we must deal faithfully. Well, then, is it not too true that many who take their place at the Lord's Table, on the first day of the week, have been living in folly, vanity, and worldliness during the past six days? They have been seen, it may be, at concerts, at exhibitions, at processions, at musical parties, picnics, and pleasure trips. And can there be, in such cases, the discernment of the Lord's body in the breaking of bread? Is it possible to conceive, in connection with such gross worldliness and unsubduedness, anything like spiritual communion with the body and blood of the Lord? Such persons may perform the outward act of "breaking bread;" but we fear they know but little of the inward power and reality of eating, by faith, the body and blood of Christ. (Comp. carefully Matt. 26: 26-28 ; Mark 14: 22-24; Luke 22: 19, 20; 1 Cor. 10: 16, 17; 1 Cor. 11: 23-29) It is with extreme reluctance, and, we trust, with a real sense of personal failure and infirmity, that we write in this strain. Nothing but felt responsibility to the Lord and to His people could ever elicit such remarks. But we feel solemnly called upon to sound an alarm; and we fondly hope the word of warning will be received as it is intended. We see the tide of worldliness rapidly rising — worldliness in various shapes. Witness the style of dress in many of our assemblies — the rustling silks, the gay ribbons, the artificial flowers. How do such things tally with the showing forth of the Lord's death, the discerning of His broken body? It may be said, "If people have Christ in their hearts, it does not matter what they have on their heads." We reply, "If people really have Christ in their hearts, it will regulate what they put on their heads, yea, it will exert a hallowed, separating, and subduing influence over their whole person, deportment, and character." Let us not be deceived with vain words. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." May the Spirit of God produce in our midst deep searchings of heart! May all who present themselves at the Table of the Lord cultivate the spirit of self-judgment! "Let a man examine himself, and *so* let him eat." It is a deeply solemn thing to be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; and all are thus guilty who do not discern, by faith, the broken body and the shed blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper. We need hardly say to you, dear friend, that there is no change in the bread and wine. You are in no danger, we trust, of falling into the error of transubstantiation or consubstantiation. The elements of bread and wine undergo no change whatever; but they have been appointed by Christ, in His supper, to set forth to the believing heart His body broken, and His blood shed for us. "Take, eat; this is my body." This is true to faiths; and if it be not thus received, we do not worthily partake.

99. THE CHURCH'S COMMENCEMENT.

"E. E. M." It has been frequently stated in our pages, that the Church, properly so-called, began at Pentecost. The Church and the Jewish system could not possibly subsist together, for the simplest of all reasons, that the Jewish system demanded the rigid separation of Jew and Gentile, while the Church makes them both one. The precious mystery of the Church leads us right across the ruins of the middle wall of partition. It was therefore impossible that the truth respecting the Church could be revealed

while the Jewish economy existed. That souls were quickened, saved, and blessed, from Adam down to the day of Pentecost, is blessedly true: whoever questioned it? But you find our Lord in Matthew 16 speaking of His Church as a future thing: "On this rock I *will build* my Church." If the Church had existed all along, He would have said, "I have built, or am building," not "I *will build*." As to the occurrence of the word "Church" in Acts 7, every student of Scripture is aware that it refers to the assembly or congregation of Israel, and has no more to do with the Church as spoken of in Ephesians, than the assembly which the town clerk of Ephesus dismissed, in Acts 19. The original word is the same in both passages. We must remember that God has many families in heaven and earth, and we must not seek to confound them, or make them out to be all one. The expression in Ephesians 3: 15 should be, "every family;" compare also Hebrews 11: 40.

93. THE WEDDING GARMENT.

"C. T." The parable of the marriage feast, in Matthew 22, is designed to set forth not the Church of God, but "the kingdom of heaven." This is a most necessary distinction, if you would understand this parable, or indeed any of the parables in the gospel of Matthew. As to your difficulty with respect to the man not having on a wedding garment, it arises, in our judgment, from the fact of your thinking of the Church in connection with the passage, whereas it simply refers to the kingdom of heaven, or the gospel dispensation. God is about to make a marriage for His Son. The Jews were first invited during the life and ministry of Christ. Again, a testimony went forth by the ministry of the Holy Ghost in the apostles. Both these invitations being refused by the nation destruction came upon Jerusalem, and the invitation to the supper has gone forth into the wide Gentile world. But here another question arises. Many make a profession, but few have really put on Christ. Many are called, but few give genuine evidence of their election of God. There must be the wedding garment, the spotless robe of divine righteousness, Christ Himself. Nothing else will do when the King comes in to see the guests. The garment is freely provided — just as freely as the feast; and hence the guilt of any who presume to take their place professedly among the guests without that precious and freely offered robe. There is a testing time coming, when the vast mass of hollow profession will be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and all lifeless professors cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Oh ! dear friend, let us be real, earnest, whole-hearted, and, withal, solemn in our dealing with our fellows. We deeply deplore what you say as to the backsliding of so many young converts. Alas! alas! we fear it is too true in many other places also. We long to see a deeper work in the souls of the young - more real exercise of heart and conscience before God — more thorough self-knowledge and self-conquest. We bless God for what you are able to say as to the blessing resulting to yourself and others from this little work.

94. CHRIST THE CENTRE.

"G." You ask, "What Scripture warrants or confirms the following statement, Christ is *our heavenly* centre, and the Holy Spirit sent from the Father by the Son, to testify of Him, is our centre on the earth?" We know only one centre, even Christ. To Him the Holy Ghost gathers. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me." (John 12: 32) We consider the statement, to which you have called our attention, quite a mistake. It would lead to mysticism and confusion. When will men keep to Scripture?

95. ONE FINE STAR.

"B. B." If you will prayerfully study Rev. 13 and Rev. 17, you will see that Antichrist is a distinct person yet to arise, and not a system. You are quite right, dear friend, in not receiving anything without a "Thus saith the Lord." Would that all the Lord's people would act on this valuable principle!

96. NATURE'S STRENGTH.

"A. B.," Ventnor. In the touching of the hollow of Jacob's thigh, we see the withering up of nature's strength, so that he might ever after lean on God alone. do not look upon the scene of the wrestling as illustrating Jacob's power in prayer. It was not Jacob wrestling with the man, but the man wrestling with Jacob. The general view of this passage is a mistake, arising out of inattention to its simple terms.

97. THE WARNINGS VOICE.

"M. H." Heb. 10: 29, like all the strong warnings of that epistle, is primarily addressed to a body of professing Christians who, having been trained in Judaism, were in danger of being drawn back under its influence. Some were already beginning to forsake the Christian assembly, through fear of the reproach connected therewith, and the apostle warns them, in strong and searching language, and shows them that this forsaking of the assembly was the first step in the downward career which ends in open apostacy from Christ. But while a body of professors is thus warned, the utmost confidence is expressed as to individuals. (Comp. Heb. 10: 39; Heb. 6: 9; Galatians 5: 10) Surely, dear friend, a warning voice sounded in the ears of professing Christians ought not to shake the confidence of those who know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is ever well to distrust ourselves; but we can never go too far in our confidence in God. The worst of it is, that those who really need the warning do not heed, but go on in levity and carelessness, while those who are seeking to walk in tenderness of conscience and uprightness of heart are scared by warnings which do not apply to them at all. It only proves the craft of Satan, and the folly and unbelief of our hearts. But the scripture cannot be broken, and God cannot deny Himself. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

98. THINGS WHICH DIFFER.

"E. T." Ezekiel 11: 19 refers to Israel, in the future. 2 Cor. 5: 17 refers to the Christian now. It is important to distinguish between things heavenly and earthly. We have "the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God." These things must not be confounded. Each has its own distinctive place, and we are bound to enquire and understand what that place is. There is a deplorable tendency to confound things that God has made to differ. The effect is seen in the walk and ways of professors.

99. FELLOWSHIP IN ALMSGIVING.

"J. and S." We have no guidance in the New Testament, that we are aware of, as to whether the box should be sent round in the meeting, left on the table, or hung up at the door. All that is said on the subject we have in 1 Corinthians 16. "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." He does not tell us how or where we are to lay it by; and therefore we conceive it is wholly indifferent. How can any one say that it is "more scriptural to let the box remain on the table," when scripture is totally silent on the point? The fact is, it is just as scriptural to send it round as to leave it on the table, and to leave it on the table as to send it round; for there is no scripture for either. But there is scripture, and abundance of scripture, for attending to the poor, and that too, not according to a prescribed plan, but "as God hath prospered us." Instead therefore of splitting hairs about the box or what is to be done with it, let us cultivate largeness of heart, bowels of mercies, deep and tender compassion, a thoughtful love, a generous spirit, that delights in ministering to others and making hearts glad. If we might venture to offer a suggestion on the point, we should say, it is one of the many things which must, to a great extent, fall under the power of local circumstances. For example, in a very small meeting, it would be an easy matter for all to have access to a box laid on the table; but suppose a totally different case. Take an example of three hundred people crammed into a room hardly large enough to accommodate them. How are the people at one end to make their way

through the crowd in order to get to the box at the other end? We fear very few could attempt it, even though their benevolence were ever so glowing. We should say, therefore, that the orthodox plan, in every case, is that whereby the Lord's people can most conveniently deposit their offerings, and whereby the wants of the poor can be most liberally supplied. May the good Lord deliver us from hair-splitting, and give us a larger heart for the poor, and for every good work! This is our earnest prayer.

100. GOD OUR STRENGTH.

"E. C. L." Philippians 2: 12 is sadly misunderstood and misapplied. The apostle is exhorting the Philippians, in his absence, to work out their own salvation from the power of evil with which they were in conflict. In the apostle's presence, they would naturally lean on him; but in his absence, they were called into direct personal conflict with the enemy. The apostle further reminds them, that though he was not with them, God was in them. This is enough; and, hence, though there be "fear and trembling," there may also be the most joyful confidence.

101. EVIL THOUGHTS.

"C. E. C." We deeply feel for you. We do not at all believe you have committed the unpardonable sin. It is quite right that your conscience should be exercised before God as to your very thoughts. You have only to give yourself to earnest prayer and waiting upon God for entire deliverance from those horrible thoughts which so afflict you. Ask Him so to fill your heart with Christ, that there may be no room for aught else. May He give you full victory, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. There is a very wide moral difference between a person who treats evil thoughts as *intruders*, and one who entertains them *as guests* — between one who only seeks to expel them, and one who provides them with furnished lodgings. But the most effectual safeguard against evil thoughts is to have the mind fully occupied with good. Some one has truly said, that "the secret of peace within, and power without, is to be only and always occupied with good."

102. CHRIST OR FEELINGS

"D. H." You are entirely too much occupied with your own feelings. You say you want *to feel* that your sins, are forgiven. Scripture declares that "he that *believeth* on the Son of God *hath* everlasting life." And, again, "Through this man [Jesus] *is preached* unto you the remission of sins; and by Him all that *believe are* justified from all things." (See John 5: 24; Acts 13: 38, 39)

We must not put feeling before faith. Feeling is based on faith; and faith is based upon the word of God. The gospel calls you to believe on the Son of God, not *to feel* that you are this or that. Thousands go astray as to this. They are looking at their own feelings, in place of taking God at His word. They are occupied with self in place of with Christ; hence all their darkness and confusion. We quite believe you are a regenerated person; we could not doubt it with such a letter before us. But then you must look off from yourself altogether, and rest not in any change in you, but in the finished work of Christ, and on the word of God. True, there is a real work of God's Spirit in us; but that is not the foundation of our peace. We are called to rest simply in Christ's work for us, which is a finished and unchangeable one. May your heart find its sweet repose and its satisfying object in Jesus Christ!

103. WORKING AND PREACHING.

"C." Unquestionably, it would be quite wrong for a tradesman to neglect his work in order to go and preach; but it would be very lovely for a tradesman to do his work in the best possible manner, and then go and preach. We believe it is quite a mistake for a man to leave his business in sixes and sevens, or to neglect the just claims of his employers, or to forego any duties of his situation, under the plea of going to preach. But we know of nothing more beautiful than for one engaged in business of any kind,

or filling any situation, to devote his evenings, or his leisure hours, to the blessed work of preaching Christ to perishing souls. Such an one, however, will need to beware of neglecting private prayer and the study of the Word of God, else his soul will soon become barren, and his preaching little worth. Too many meetings are not good. A man who is actively engaged in business all day will need to cultivate secret communion with God.

104. THE LORD'S DAY.

"E. K." We could have no sympathy with any one in pursuing his secular calling on the Lord's Day, no matter what that calling may be, whether teaching, selling, or any thing else. Would it not outrage your spiritual feelings to see a Christian open his shop and sell his wares on the Lord's day? And if so, where is the difference between teaching and selling, so far as the principle is concerned? We do not, of course, refer to teaching the things of God in the Sunday School or in the fancily. We would there were very much more of this. But so strongly do we feel on the subject of the Lord's Day, that even though it were not the law of the land (which, thank God, it is) to abstain from worldly business on that day, we should feel it to be our privilege (were we in business) to shut the shop or the warehouse, and suffer whatever loss there might be involved in so doing. Alas! alas! for England when, as a nation she ceases to honour the Lord's Day. Be it that there is much formality and heartless routine in the observance — much that is hollow, and superficial — much hypocrisy and assumed sanctity — much of mere legal restraint. We fully grant all this; but still, as a national institution, the Lord's Day is a great landmark which the piety of other days has set up and sedulously guarded, and which, we believe, will only be swept away by the appalling tide of modern infidelity and licentiousness. We most fully agree with you, dear friend, in thinking that, whatever may be the measure of one's liberty, he should most carefully avoid laying a stumbling-block in the way of others. We have only to repeat what we have said elsewhere, that we have never known a truly spiritual, well-taught Christian who did not honour and love the Lord's Day. And, on the other hand, we have seen those who affected extraordinary liberty, and showed that liberty by outraging other people's feelings and consciences — we have seen such persons become the positive enemies of the truth of God and the cause of Christ. Let us beware of using our liberty as a cloak of maliciousness. May we rather seek to edify one another in love.

105. CHRISTIANS IN DEBT.

"P." We most fully sympathize with you in your feelings as to professing Christians going in debt. We consider it perfectly shocking. We have long felt that a Christian who owes money has no right, in the sight of God or man, to show hospitality, to give a penny in charity, or to purchase a penny tract. We look upon it as positive unrighteousness. We have refused to dine with a person in debt, and told him plainly our reason, and that he had no right to ask any one to dine, so long as he was in debt. The utter want of conscience on this subject is really dreadful. It must sadly grieve the Spirit of God, and bring in leanness, barrenness, and deadness of soul. We do not believe that the word of Christ can be dwelling in a person who has no conscience as to debt, and we should feel called upon to mark such a person, and have no company with him. We are disposed to think that faithful personal discipline, in all such cases, would have a good effect. As to persons who have failed in business, and compounded with their creditors, we consider them morally bound to the full amount of their liabilities; and they are in debt until that amount is paid. No legal exemption could ever release a really upright person from the righteous obligation of paying what he owes. We feel called upon to write strongly on this subject, because of the sad laxity which obtains amongst professors with respect to it. All we want is, to see some exercise of conscience — some measure of effort, however feeble, to get out of an utterly false position. A man may find himself unavoidably plunged in debt in fifty ways; but if he has an upright mind and a healthfully exercised conscience, he will use every effort, he will curtail his expenses

within the narrowest circle possible, he will deny himself in every way, in order to pay off the debt, even by a shilling a week. May the Lord give us to look at this great practical question with that amount of seriousness which it demands! We fear the cause of Christ is sadly damaged, and the testimony of professing Christians marred, through lack of sensibility and right-mindedness as to going into, and living in, debt. Oh for a tender conscience!

106. LAWFUL BUSINESS.

"M. E. F." As to the question of a Christian butcher selling blood, it must rest With his own conscience before God. If his doing so offends the conscience of any brother, he ought, in the exercise of Christian charity, at once to give it up. With regard to your other question, namely, that of a Christian's receiving rent of a gin-shop, we can merely give our own very decided judgment, which is simply this, if we had a house to let, we should rather let it stand untenanted for ever than let it for such a godless and abominable purpose. We consider gin palaces hells upon earth, bringing curse and ruin on thousands of families.

107. THE DIVISIONS IN THE REVELATION.

"A Constant and Grateful Reader." Rev. 13: 7 refers to saints that shall be on the earth after the Church has been taken up to be with the Lord. The threefold division of the book of Revelation will help you much. "The things which thou *leat* seen." (Rev. 1) "The things that *are*." (Rev. 2, 3) "The things that shall be." (Rev. 4-22) Rev. 4 and Rev. 5 show you the Church on high before the seals are open. We are in "The things that are," that is the period of the Church's history as a responsible vessel on the earth. Hence, for men to ransack history, in order to trace the seals, trumpets, and vials, is most unintelligent labour. If the Church is on earth, then we are in "The things that are," and not a single seal has yet been opened. But we merely give you the judgment which we have been led to form from many years study of the word of God. May He keep us so near to Himself continually, that we may have His thoughts about everything — past, present, and future.

108. THE FIRST AND SECOND MAN.

"M. J." 1 Corinthians 15: 24-28 refers to the millennial reign of Christ, during which He will subjugate everything under the rule of righteousness. At the close of the millennium the Lord Jesus Christ will give up the kingdom to God, after having brought all into complete subjection. The first man received all in order, and plunged it into ruin; the second Man received all in confusion, and will reduce it to perfect order. Every steward that has been entrusted with any office in this world has been turned out of his stewardship — witness Adam, Israel, and the professing Church. Not so the second Man: He will give back His stewardship into the hands of Him from whom He received it. Blessed be His name, He stands in contrast with all beside.

109. AS OFT AS YE EAT.

"T. X." It does not appear that the Lord has given us any direction as to the hour of the day at which we shall break bread. The inspired history informs us that the Supper was first instituted in the evening. (See Matt. 26: 20) We may also, perhaps, infer, from the circumstances detailed in Acts 20: 7-11, that the meeting took place in the evening. But to us it seems quite indifferent — quite an open question; and if any undertake to lay down rules, they are overstepping the bounds of Scripture. The word is, "As oft as ye eat."

110. CLUBS.

"T. A." You are perfectly right in abandoning the club. We believe that a Christian, in being a

member of a club, is unequally yoked together with unbelievers. We lately heard of a case in which an open infidel twitted a professing Christian (who was associated with him in a shop or store), in the following well-merited words, "You Christians would go to hell *with us*, in order to make money." We trust the professor has, by this time, profited by the cutting but just rebuke. Oh! when shall we learn to lean on God alone, and walk with Him through all the scenes and circumstances of life? One is sometimes perfectly overwhelmed by the terrible facts that turn up in the daily history of some who make a very high profession. We certainly do need to think of these pointed words in Haggai, "Thus saith the Lord, *Consider your ways.*"

111. PHOTOGRAPHY.

"E. A." Another correspondent has applied to us this month for an opinion on the question contained in your note, as to the rightness of a Christian practising or patronising photography. It is just one of the thousand questions as to which each individual must act before the Lord for himself. It is certain, there is nothing about photography in the New Testament. "Pleasant pictures" are named by Isaiah amongst the things on which judgment will fall in the day of the Lord. We must not expect to find a literal text bearing directly upon each of the artificial occupations of this preeminently artificial age; and, most assuredly, if the Lord has not laid down rules for His people in these matters, it ill becomes them to lay down rules for one another. A single eye will enable us to form a sound judgment in all such things. We are acquainted with several Christian men who practise photography; and we know many who think it wrong to have anything to do with it. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind."

112. SELF-JUDGMENT.

"A. D." You ask, "what is the difference between self-judgment and the judgment of our ways?" There is a very material difference. If self were habitually judged in the presence of God, we should not require to judge our ways.

Self-judgment is the expression of victory through the power of the Holy Ghost. The demand for judgment upon our ways proves that we have been defeated through the power of the flesh. We judge ourselves in the power of communion; we judge our ways, oftentimes, in anguish of soul. Take an example. A person has a very irritable, peevish temper; but he is enabled, by the grace of God, so to judge and subdue it, in secret, that it does not manifest itself to the view of others. Hence, those who come in contact with him in daily life, may consider him to be a man of a very placid temper. They know not his struggles in secret. "There his fervent spirit labours, there he gains fresh conquests o'er himself, compared with which the laurels which a Caesar wore were weeds" On the other hand, if he does not judge himself and subdue his temper in secret, it will surely exhibit itself to others, and then he will have to judge his ways in sorrow and humiliation. Instead of conquering his temper, he is conquered by it. This makes a material difference, dear friend, does it not? We look upon self-judgment as the judgment of the *root*, whereas the judgment of our ways is the judgment of the fruit. We consider self-judgment an invaluable and indispensable exercise; were it more faithfully and habitually practised, our walk would be a different thing altogether. There is a fearful amount of laxity and unsubduedness amongst us, which, if not checked by the energy of the Holy Ghost, must produce the most disastrous results.

113. BACKBITING.

"Mary." You do not tell us where you live, but we fear the evil to which you call our attention is not confined to your locality, or to the special class to which you refer, namely, "unmarried females." The sin of "backbiting" prevails everywhere, and amongst all classes, to an appalling extent. It is an

abominable, yea, a diabolical evil. It has been truly said, "The backbiter injures three persons, namely, himself, his hearer, and the subject of his tale." If I have any fault to find with a person, he himself ought to be the very first to hear of it. How little is this attended to! We meet a person with a smile and a shake of the hand, and no sooner have we parted company with him, than we commence to disparage him in some way or another. "I am determined," said an old saint, "never to speak of a mans virtues to his face, or of his faults behind his back." Noble determination! But alas! alas! how little is it acted upon! We generally reverse the order; we flatter people to their face, and blacken them behind their back. The Lord deliver us from this sinful and shameful practice! It is most assuredly of the devil We want to be more faithful in speaking to people — more gracious in speaking *of* them. If we see anything wrong in a person, let us go directly to him and speak plainly; and if we have nothing good to say of him, let us graciously draw the curtain of silence around him. This would save a world of mischief; it would prevent untold sorrow and heart-burning. "Speak not evil one of another, brethren." This is a seasonable word, and yet, alas! *how few act* upon it. There seems such a want of common honesty, such an absence of even manly frankness, such meanness and cowardliness in saying behind a man's back what we would not dare to say to his face. Christians should flee from all this. It is most contemptible No doubt "unmarried females" are more exposed to this evil, than those whose hands are well filled with domestic work. We gather this from the pungent words of the apostle, in 1 Timothy 5: 13: "Withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house: and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." It may be said that this passage applies to "the younger widows;" but then the spirit of it applies wherever the evil exists. It is a good thing to be fully employed; it saves one from a great deal of evil, and from backbiting amongst the rest; against which: we solemnly warn the reader. The devil is a backbiter — the chief of backbiters, and all who indulge in the practice are doing his work. We would recommend you, dear friend, and all our readers, to adopt Solomon's remedy in all cases of backbiting. He says, "The north wind driveth away rain; so doth an angry countenance a backbiting tongue." Never listen to a backbiter, for if you do you are a partaker of his evil. Let us remember that the way of the Lord is to speak faithfully to us, but graciously of us. Let us seek to imitate this, and not be found doing Satan's work.

114. MINISTERIAL TRAINING.

"A. B. C." We consider it a very good sign indeed to see young men diffident and retiring. It is ever well for all, but especially for the young, to be "swift to hear, slow to speak." We can quite understand how a young man might feel free to speak to a few at a cottage meeting, and yet feel a great difficulty in opening his mouth in an assembly of experienced and well taught Christians. We think we may say with truth, we rejoice in every manifestation of spiritual gift, whether it be that of an evangelist, a teacher, or a pastor. But we have always observed that the really spiritual person is ever slow to push himself forward; while, on the other hand, men possessing no power whatever are the most forward to exhibit themselves. It took eighty years' training to fit Moses for the ministry, and even after that, how slow he was to enter upon the work. Look at Jeremiah — look at all the real and effective servants of Christ — yea, look at the Master himself: He, though surely needing no training, yet as an example for us, spent thirty years in retirement, ere He came forth to work in public. Depend upon it, dear friend, there must be the secret training by God's own hand, in order to fit a man for public service. If we go forth without this, we shall very speedily break down and make shipwreck You will always find that, when God is about to use any one in His service, He fits him for the work, He calls him to the work, and He gives him the work to do.

115. 1 JOHN. 4: 17.

"L. Y. X." If you can lay your hand on the fifth volume of "Things New and Old," you will find,

page 46, an article which may help you in your present difficulty. We merely add here, that when we are manifested before the Judgment-seat of Christ, we shall be conformed to the image of Him whose judgment-seat it is. He Himself shall come to fetch us — the very one whose precious blood has cleared us of every spot and stain. "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world." (1 John 4: 17)

116. REVELATION 5: 10.

"J. W. A." The three editors, Griesbach, Scholz, and Tischendorf agree in a text of Revelation 5: 10, thus, "And made them kings and priests unto our God, and they shall reign upon the earth." When these agree as to a reading, it takes precedence of the "Received Text" from which our unrivalled translation was made. John 13: 1, while applying specially to the disciples, doth, most surely apply also to all who come under the head of "*His own*, in the world." He loves them, not for a day, a month, or a year, merely, but right through to the end. Precious truth!

117. 1 COR. 11: 23.

"G. G." The rendering of 1 Corinthians 11: 23 in our authorised English Bible is perfectly correct, and the passage distinctly teaches us that the apostle did not receive his instructions as to the Lord's Supper from the twelve, but immediately from the risen and glorified Lord Himself. A most important fact.

118. UPRIGHT DEALING.

"G. H. E." We deeply sympathize with you. It is very sad to think of the amount of deceit and corruption to be met with every day, and that, too, amongst professors of religion. Your path is plain, dear friend. Do not tell a lie for all the employers and situations in the world. A good conscience is more valuable than ten thousand situations. You are bound to promote your employer's interest in every way, so far as the claims of your heavenly Master will admit; but we cannot see how any one's true interest can be promoted by telling lies; it may produce a little temporary gain, but it is contemptible gain, such as no honest man, to say nothing of Christianity, could ever desire to make. We feel persuaded that thoroughly upright dealing is the best in the long run. Honesty is the only solid foundation in trade or in any thing else. We should much rather go to a man whose goods advertise him, than to a man who advertises his goods. The system of "puffing" is quite beneath a respectable tradesman; and no sensible person would like to go a second time to a shop where the young men are almost compelled to sell black for white in order to keep their situation. Such a system must prove as ruinous to the true commercial interests of the house as it assuredly is to the morals of the young men. As to the solemn matter of your giving up your calling in order to preach the gospel, it must be entirely between you and your Lord. It is a most serious step. If you are in the habit of preaching — if God has given you a distinct gift, and an earnest love for souls — if you are blessed in your work — if you find your calling a positive hindrance, and that you have faith to cast yourself wholly on the Lord, He will never fail you. There is real need of gifted earnest workmen; but let no one venture forth upon the waters unless God has given him faith to walk there. We have known some who thus ventured out, but they very soon broke down.

119. ADDED TO THE CHURCH OF GOD.

"A. C. R." We are taught in Acts 2 that all those who received the word of life were added to the assembly or church of God. They were baptized, and thus took their place apart from Judaism; and they had fellowship together in breaking of bread and prayers. There was, at that time, either Judaism on the one hand, or the Christian church on the other. There were no denominational distinctions among

Christians. All were of one heart and of one soul, and great grace was upon all. Alas! alas! how different it is now. Surely, we should feel this, and take our place in the dust before God on account of it.

120. "ETERNAL PUNISHMENT."

"M. S." You will find a paper in one of our earlier volumes on "Eternal Punishment," which might help you. There is also a tract on the same subject, to be had of our publisher, Mr. Morrish, which you will find most profitable. We cannot go into the subject here; but we must, at least, declare our full and hearty belief in the solemn truth of eternal punishment. It seems to us inseparably linked with the truth of the immortality of the soul, on the one hand, and the infinite nature of Christ's sacrifice, on the other. Add to this the fact that the word rendered "everlasting" occurs about seventy times in the New Testament, and is applied to the life which believers enjoy, as well as to the punishment which unbelievers are to suffer, and we cannot see how there can remain any doubt on your mind; for on what principle can the word be said to mean "eternal" when applied to the life and blessedness of believers, and to mean "temporary" when applied to the punishment of unbelievers? We are fully persuaded that the denial of the doctrine of eternal punishment is a fruit of the wide-spreading tree of infidelity which is at this moment casting its shadow over the civilised world. May God graciously shield our young people from its withering influence.

121. DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.

"A Young Believer." We can see nothing wrong in your employing your leisure hours in endeavouring to improve yourself in writing, arithmetic, and bookkeeping, with a view to your greater efficiency in your calling, provided always that it does not interfere with your study of the Bible and private prayer. Were you to study these things from mere ambition, it would be clearly wrong; but we are of opinion that the apostle Paul would not have objected to read a treatise on tent-making, if he could improve himself in his calling by so doing. However, one must be very much guided in such things by the moral effect on one's own spirit. We are deeply interested in your case; and we pray the Lord to guide and bless you, and make you a blessing. Nothing could afford us greater pleasure than to be used in any way to help a young believer.

122. Rev. 11: 2.

"R. F." Revelation 11: 2 is supposed to set forth the utter rejection of Judaism. It is to be given over to the Gentiles during the forty-two months, or the prophetic half-week.

123. Romans 1: 18.

"J. M. H." Romans 1: 18 states the broad truth, that wrath from heaven is revealed against *"all* ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." It does not matter who they are that commit ungodliness and unrighteousness, God's wrath is revealed against all such things. Romans 2: 8 must be interpreted in the same way. God deals in realities. He looks for right conduct; and all evil must be judged. We need hardly say that these passages leave wholly untouched the grand truth of the believer's standing in Christ. The Christian is passed from death to life, and can never come into judgment. His work will be tested; but he himself is accepted in the beloved, and can no more come into judgment than Christ Himself. God does not accept us today, and judge us tomorrow. Such is not His way, blessed be His name. Romans 2: 16 refers to the day of judgment. We do not think Philemon 18, 19, affords any warrant whatever for what is commonly called going security.

124. "TRYING TO BELIEVE.

"E. H." Your case is by no means an uncommon one; but this, you will any, is poor comfort for you. We know no remedy but in looking off unto Jesus You will never be really happy so long as you continue to look at your own ever-changing feelings. You can only find rest in Jesus and His finished work. Do not be *"trying"* to believe. If you were to say to a friend, "I am trying to believe what you say," he would consider it a very poor compliment. Let your heart *muse* on the love of God, on the finished work of Christ, and on the testimony of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, and as you muse, the fire of devotion will kindle, and you will be able to sing and give thanks. May God chase away the clouds and mists, and pour in upon your precious soul the bright and blessed beams of His salvation!

125. THE WRATH TO COME.

"F. J. R." We believe "the wrath to come," in 1 Thessalonians 1: 10, refers to the eternal punishment of the wicked in hell. As to your question on Acts 2, we consider the three thousand were Jews.

126. 1 Cor. 15: 32.

1 Corinthians 14: 32 simply teaches that the spirit of the prophet was under the prophet's control — that he was not compelled, as by some resistless force, to speak, but that he could wait, in calm self-possession, for a fitting occasion to speak. This is a most valuable principle, and one which ought to be deeply pondered. If it were fully understood and acted upon, it would preserve us from a quantity of mere fanaticism and absurdity.

127. THE FOOLISH VIRGINS.

"O. V. Q." We cannot at all agree with the view of the foolish virgins presented in the extract you have sent us. To suppose, as the author does, that "they are real members of the real Church of Christ, that is, real subjects of converting grace," is to contradict scores of the plainest statements of holy Scripture. We believe the foolish virgins represent that large class of persons who, though they carry in their hands the lamp of profession, have never had in their hearts the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

128. SIN AND TRANSGRESSION.

"G. H." Romans 5: 13, 14, teaches us, that although from Adam to Moses there was no law — no definite rule laid down, and therefore no formal imputation of sin in God's governmental dealings, yet, inasmuch as there was sin actually existing, death reigned as a necessary consequence. We must distinguish between sin and transgression. In order to transgression, there must be a rule laid down; now, there was no such rule from Adam to Moses; but there was sin, and hence men died. Hosea 6: 7 should be read, "But they like Adam have transgressed." Israel was placed under a definite rule, and, like Adam, transgressed. This could not be said of any one from Adam to Moses. 1 John 3: 4, last clause, should be read, "Sin is lawlessness" (*anomia*).

129. JOHN 6.

"S. S." By the expression, "eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of man," we understand simply living by faith in the death of Christ. The Jews looked for a Messiah who was to deliver them from all their enemies. Jesus teaches them, in John 6, that He must die, and that men could only live by His death. This saying proved a tumbling-block to many.

130. 1 Cor. 3: 17.

"One who desires to be," etc. In 1 Corinthians 3: 17, the apostle is speaking of ministerial labour and its results. If any man introduces that which destroys foundation truth, God will judge him. Solemn

fact!

131. 1 COR. 5: 11.

"A Reader of Things New and Old." We would not, knowingly, meet at the Lord's Table with a person keeping a public house. We are told in 1 Corinthians 5: 11 not to keep company with a drunkard. What shall be said as to those who live by keeping the drunkard's haunt?

132. SELF-JUDGMENT.

"M.T.D." We quite agree with you in thinking that self-judgment finds its place in the antitype of the "bitter herbs" which were ever to accompany the passover. We do not consider it the *only* thing, but we do consider it *one* thing foreshadowed in these herbs, and, as you say, "a most needful thing in the present day," as it doubtless has ever been. We long to understand somewhat of those "bitter herbs" We are under the impression that they set forth those deep spiritual exercises which flow from an experimental entrance into the sufferings of Christ. Were these things better known, there would be less heartless levity, less cold formality, less sinful indifference in our celebration of the Lord's Supper. If we more fully entered into the profound mystery of the cross and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; if we knew more of the fellowship of His sufferings; we should be a very different people indeed from what we are, and our meeting at the Lord's table would present a widely different aspect and tone.

133. ATTITUDE IN PRAYER AND PRAISE

"Z. Y. X." We do not know of any Christians who regard kneeling in prayer as "an imperative duty." We should feel called upon to protest against such a notion. The New Testament does not lay down any rule as to bodily attitude, and we must say that when Scripture is silent, no one has any right to legislate. We certainly do like to kneel whenever we can. We consider it a suited attitude to express the reverential and devotional feelings of the heart. We are often pained to see people habitually remaining seated while prayer is being offered, and that, too, in cases where bodily health or want of space could not be pleaded as an excuse.

It seems to us to show great want of reverence and solemnity. It looks lazy and self-indulgent. We find our Lord kneeling in prayer. (Luke 22: 41) We find the apostle Paul kneeling with the elders of Ephesus. (Acts 20: 36) It is in every way a becoming posture; but when people undertake to speak of it as "an *imperative* duty," we regard it as a piece of unwarrantable assumption. We have often found a quantity of *self* wrapped up in these little crotchets about bodily attitude in praying or singing, We never find persons of any spirituality or real breadth of mind occupied about such things. Our own feeling as to all such matters is this, let people have their crotchets if they will, let them kneel, or sit, or stand, as they feel led; but let them not attempt to force their crotchets or their attitudes as "an imperative rule" upon other people. If a man gives us a "thus saith the Lord" we shall, by the grace of God, bow to it; but if it be merely a "thus saith Mr. So-and-so," we must take it for what it is worth.

134. THE MAN CHRIST JESUS.

"M. M. R." As to the expression to which you refer, in Hymn 317, "He wears our nature on the throne," we have always understood it to mean simply that our blessed Lord Jesus Christ is a real man, in every respect, sin excepted. We do not believe that the writer of the hymn meant anything else but that. Human nature, as seen in us, is vile and sinful Human nature, as seen in "the man Christ Jesus," is pure and spotless; but, blessed be God, He wears human nature on the throne, else what should we do? We take it that the statement to which you object, and which, as you say, "the infidel threw back in your face," rests on the solid basis of Hebrews 2: 14. This we hold to be a grand foundation truth of Christianity, the which if a man does not believe he is not a Christian at all. We must beware of the

tendency to make a man an offender for a word There is far too much of this in the present day. It is quite right to be zealous and valiant for the truth; but it is poor work to be always hunting for heresy.

135. ZIPPORAH A TYPE OF THE CHURCH.

"B. E. F." We consider Zipporah a type of the Church in union with Christ, during the period of His rejection by the nation of Israel.