

which is invisible, and consists of the whole number of the saved, that have been, are or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head. This spiritual and invisible Church is said to be "the body" and "fulness of Christ" (Eph. i. 22, 23); the Bride the Lamb's wife. (Rev. xxi. 2, 9.); and our Lord declares that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it (Matt. xvi. 18); * for it is built upon the rock of Christ's divinity and every one of its members is united to Christ by a living faith (2 Cor. iii. 11; x. 30-31; xii. 6, 13; Eph. i. 22, 3-32) but this cannot be said of all the members of any visible Church. God has never left himself without a true witnessing Church on earth. He had that even in the time of Elijah when the external and visible Church had become entirely corrupt and idolatrous, yet even then God had reserved Him seven thousand in Israel that had not bowed the knee to Baal or worshipped his image. In like manner during the ascendancy of the Great Apostasy thousands of faithful witnesses were scattered here and there throughout Christendom who maintained the pure and spiritual worship of God according to the appointments of His Holy Word. Then at length the Reformation burst upon the world as a Great Revival of Primitive Christianity, after a long dark winter of spiritual deadness. Now the inquiry how long will this great Apostasy continue in power is indeed natural, and is similar to that made by the souls of the martyrs whose blood was shed by the early persecuting powers. (Rev. vi. 9, 10.) The very nature of the prediction partly conceals the dates until the period of their fulfilment; and it is not yet possible to determine the time when the 1260 years began. Robert Fleming, a Scotch minister in London, made calculation, in 1701 founded on data given in Scripture, and he named the year 1794 as the date of the French Revolution, and the year 1848 as the period when another great revolution should occur, and both these calculations were correct. He also named the year 1866 or 150 years later, as the period of the fall of Antichrist, the year 1866 dates the rise of the Apostasy from the 606 A. D., when the title universal bishop was received by the Church of Rome. And we know that at these periods the power of the Papacy was greatly weakened, or received a deadly wound by the revolution under Garibaldi and others. But if we date from the year 755 A. D., when the temporal power of the Papacy was established and Antichrist fully developed as a politico-religious system, the prophetic period of 1,260 years will be completed about the year 2015 A. D. Probably as D'Aubigne says, as the rise of the great Apostasy was gradual so will be its decline and fall. John Bunyan says "Antichrist had a time to come into the world and so must he have a time to go out again. For although he saith that he is a God, yet he must be subject to the will of God, and must go as well as come according to that will. The Lord is still going on to make that conquest over him that is determined in the way that is determined." How shall this system be overthrown? In 2 Thess. ii. 8, we are told "then shall the lawless one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming." As Israel's reign in Canaan was ushered in by judgments on the nations for apostasy (for the Canaanites originally worshipped the true God: thus Melchizedek, king of Salem, was "priest of the Most High God" (Gen. xiv. 18); Ammon and Moab came from the righteous Lot) so the universal reign of Christ over the earth shall be preceded by judgments on apostate Christendom. By "the spirit of His mouth" seems to be meant the word of His truth, the two-edged sword that goeth forth out of His mouth. (Rev. i. 16; xix. 15-21.) There seems to be allusion to (Isaiah xi. 4): "With the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." He will gradually consume this Apostasy by the free preaching of His Gospel and shall utterly destroy at His second coming in the glory of His Father (Bishop Newton). Then it is our duty to circulate the Scriptures among the votaries of Rome and to send to them the living preacher to unfold to them the pure Gospel of Christ and to show them that salvation is only and wholly by faith in the Crucified Saviour. Then the system will be greatly weakened and its influence diminished though it may not wholly be destroyed until the second coming of Christ.

But some may ask why did God permit this Great

*See A. A. Hodge on the Confession of Faith; article "Church."

Apostasy? We can know little of the ways of the infinite Jehovah; but we may be sure that He has good reasons for all that He appoints or permits. He is holy in all His ways, and righteous in all His dealings with the creatures whom He has made. One reason may be that it was necessary as a moral discipline for his people. There is a tendency in the human mind to trust in outward forms, and in the creature rather than in the Great Creator or Redeemer; and we have the full development of this tendency in Popery which obscures the way of salvation by Christ only, by placing in the foreground the mediation of saints and angels, the power of the priests to forgive sins, and the efficacy of various sacred things; and in these many trust rather than in Christ to their eternal ruin. Then those who take the Word of God as their guide are taught more emphatically the great evil and danger of reliance on human merit, and the necessity of simple trust in Jesus only for salvation;—that salvation to the race, as to the individual, is of the Lord, and that in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit only can any real progress be made. Let us then cherish and put in practice the Scriptural and fundamental principles of Protestantism. These are that the Word of God is the supreme standard of faith and manners, and that all human teachings should be subordinate to it; that it is the right and duty of every man to study the Word of God (as the expression of the will of his Heavenly Father) for himself, that it is the privilege of every man to judge for himself, what is the mind of God concerning him as revealed in the Scriptures; and that it is the duty of every man to worship God in the ways he has appointed in His holy Word; and in order to this to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners, to receive the great salvation as the free gift of God to all who come to Him through Christ, and earnestly to seek the pardon of all his sins, for the sake of Christ's atonement in our room, and that the Holy Spirit may enable him to live a life of holy obedience and devoted service to Him who bought us with His precious blood. In the Protest of Spire, 1529 A. D., the Word of God reigns alone. That Protest sets the power of conscience above the civil magistrate, and the authority of the Word of God above the visible Church. It teaches with the apostles, that we "ought to obey God rather than man"; when the laws of God and man conflict; and, therefore, it maintains the right and duty of Christians to preach the Gospel to all who will hear it. By maintaining that "the truth as it is in Jesus," as set forth in the Divine Word, is alone capable of saving the world, the Reformers defended with intrepid courage the right of Christian proselytism as maintained by the apostles, in obedience to our Lord's commission and command. (Matt. xxviii. 18-20; Mark xvi. 15.) We cannot abandon this right and the missionary spirit which it involves without deserting the fundamental principles of Protestantism. This duty we are endeavouring to perform by sending missionaries to the heathen and the Jew, and by our Protestant missions to the French Canadians; these missions I commend to the cordial support of all. The great object of the framers of the Protest of Spire was to secure civil and religious liberty, freedom of thought and action, the heaven-given right to worship God according to His Word and the dictates of conscience without let or hindrance from man. They succeeded in the noble effort, and thus transmitted unto us the goodly heritage of privileges which all enjoy. Let us then, following the motto of the noble house of Nassau ("I maintain"), maintain these privileges for ourselves and hand them down intact to our children's children. Let us then as Protestants prize and study our Bibles, and daily dig in this spiritual mine for the heavenly treasure which it contains. Let us not rest satisfied with having the Word of God in our hands, but earnestly seek to have a personal interest in Christ whom it reveals, as the only Saviour, to have Christ formed in our hearts as the hope of glory.

ALPHA.

(To be continued.)

THE Rev. Dr. Jenkins, of Montreal, is at present supplying with much acceptance the pulpit of St. Andrew's Church, in the absence of the pastor, Rev. Mr. Herridge, who is in Scotland. Dr. Jenkins is preaching a series of five discourses on "Natural and Revealed Theology."

THE American Church, near the Champs Elysees, Paris, has been lately purchased for the use of the Scottish Presbyterians for \$30,000. The Paris congregation has already done wonders.

BIBLE STUDY IN THE FAMILY.

The following paper was read by the Rev. James Ballantine, Paris, at the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Brant County Sabbath School Association, held in the city of Brantford:

In some respects our era may be characterized as "The Bible Age." Never before, certainly, were so many copies of the Word of God in circulation. Thanks to the printing press, it were now impossible for Rome to burn the Bible out of the world. "So bright with Bible knowledge," said the late Dr. James Hamilton, "is our modern atmosphere, that it would be almost as easy to close the portals of the east and shut out the day-spring, as to exclude the morning of Truth now dawning on the mountains of Time." The Bible is acknowledged to be the corner-stone of our civil and religious liberty—the perennial fountain of the knowledge, holiness, and happiness of society. Why then, it may be asked, has such a book, though widely known and read, so largely failed to effect the regeneration of Christendom? The depravity of human nature is, no doubt, a good general answer to the question; but there is nevertheless the specific cause of guilty failure on the part of professing Christians, properly and directly to apply, in the school and the family, the great principles of Holy Scripture to the lives and hearts of men. Of society's three forms, the family, the Church, and the State, the first is the most important, as constituting the foundation of the other two. The preserving salt of Christendom is its well-ordered Christian families. Yet in how few homes, comparatively, is the Bible daily studied as the oracles of God! But mark it well: in whatsoever family the Bible does not reign supreme, something else will reign, and that less worthy. To ignore or neglect the Bible in the family, is to sap and undermine both Church and State. On the important subject of its study in the home, I have nothing new to present to you. Our knowledge is here far ahead of our practice. I would simply seek to stir up the pure minds of Christian parents and teachers by putting them in remembrance of the following truths: 1. Bible study is the most important; 2. The family is its best school; 3. It makes the best family; 4. I shall conclude with a few remarks on the best method of studying the Scriptures in the family.

1. BIBLE STUDY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT.

The sacred volume is well named "The Bible," or "The Book." Other books we may read, but this book we must read. For, to quote John Locke's familiar testimony, "It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." Mr. Matthew Arnold, in a recent lecture in Toronto, is reported to have said: "But whilst acknowledging and recognizing the fact, that for exceptional minds an exclusively scientific training may be the one essential to full development, it must be denied that for the great majority of mankind such a training is the best. And for this reason: such a training ignores one essential element in the nature of average humanity, inasmuch as it works wholly in the region of the intellectual, leaving un nourished the emotional nature, 'the sense of conduct,' 'the sense of beauty.' There is a certain degree of interest attaching to the fact, and a certain importance as well, that when a candle burns, carbonic acid gas and water are formed; but there is nothing in such knowledge which reaches the emotions, nothing to link itself to man's 'sense of conduct,' or 'sense of beauty.' On the other hand, the conceptions obtained from the study of art, eloquence, poetry, and the like, do inevitably appeal to the emotional nature, and find many points of contact with our 'sense of conduct,' and 'sense of beauty.' They link themselves to them in a way that is mysterious and irresistible."—*Globe* newspaper of February 13th, 1884. Now what the lecturer here describes in education, and pleads for in connection with the conceptions of art and literature, is furnished in its fullness, and as no other book can furnish it, by the Bible. "The Scriptures contain," remarks that eminent scholar, Sir William Jones, "independently of a divine origin, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, purer morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass, from all other books that were ever composed in any age, or in any idiom." Moreover, this book will explain, what Mr. Arnold confesses his inability to do, the how and the why of the commanding moral element in education;