

NEEDED

TRUTH.

EDITED BY

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C. M. LUXMOORE.

They read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.—NEH. viii. 8.

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ERRATA.

Page 56, line 6 from bottom, *for* דִּיָּהּ *read* דִּיָּהּ.

Page 62, lines 4 and 7 from top, *for* רִבִּים רִבִּים *read* רִבִּים.

NEEDED TRUTH.

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LEPROSY AND ITS LESSONS.

IN Leviticus, chapters xiii. and xiv., the law relating to leprosy is given, and deals with a leprous person, and garment, and house.

The briefest consideration of that law must convince us that in all the care and requirement to determine between clean and unclean, swelling, scab, bright spot, and leprosy, God was, 1st, asserting His character as the Holy One in the midst; 2nd, considering the welfare of the camp as a whole; and 3rd, caring for the individual or persons more immediately concerned.

It was necessary that the dwelling place of God on earth should be clean. His character demanded it, and His presence made it imperative. His claim to this came first, and man's good flowed out of it. "Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the Camp every leper and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead. Both male and female shall ye put out, without the Camp shall ye put them, that they defile not *their* camps in the midst whereof I dwell" (Num. v. 2, 3). God's camp was thereby kept clean, and their camps freed from contagion. The general good was considered in the giving heed to His glory.

Does not all this give emphasis to New Testament teach-

ing in regard to discipline in the churches of God? The very first mention of gathered ones unto the Name is associated with discipline (Matt. xviii.), a discipline most obligatory by reason of that Name and declared presence. But the evildoer must be outside for the welfare of the assembly also (1 Cor. v.). "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump"; and, further, while the divine presence and the assembly's welfare were thought of, the good of the very evil-doer was not overlooked, for when given to Satan it was for the destruction of the flesh, and in view of the spirit being saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The Name, the whole lump, the wicked person, each had to be considered, and considered in its relationship to the others. A false charity which spares the wrongdoer, denies the Name, injures the defaulter, and wrongs the assembly, as a spared rod spoils the child, troubles the family, and dishonours (if it does not break the heart of) the parents.

The discrimination between leprosy and something else must have been anxious work: to carry out fully the commands of God, and yet to do the person no injustice, meant watchfulness, waiting, patience, and decision; a hurried judgment might have concluded leprosy to be only a scab, and tolerated evil in God's dwelling; or mistaken a scab for leprosy, and unjustly excluded one whose place was still within. "They watch for your souls," "warn the unruly," "patient toward all," "reject," are words which suggest the application of all this to discipline now. How many fleshly scabs and swellings within churches of God there are which continue to give anxious thought and troubled hearts while testing, indeed, the reality and worth of God-given overseers in patience, discernment, and decision. A bright spot was not necessarily leprosy, but it must not be overlooked, its appearance cannot be ignored, its development may prove excommunicable. It may be only a surface thing,

yet must be watched lest it spread and go deeper than the skin.

The trespasser in Matthew xviii. is not outside all at once. The hardening process of his obstinacy works its way—1st, refusing to hear the one who would have gained him; 2nd, the two with greater effort to gain find in him greater effort to resist; and then, 3rd, the church speaks and is disregarded, and the man's defiance ends in his complete estrangement.

So long as it appeared a question of only a spot or swelling, a shutting up, a looking again and yet again till his condition was well ascertained and attended to accordingly, was all that was needed. It was a discipline within, but when leprosy had declared itself and the man was put out, till God had healed him no effort to bring him back could be attempted.

To "admonish," to "warn," to "have no company," to "avoid," tell of discipline within the assembly towards the faulty one, but when the divine requirement to put away has to be carried out, then, as the leper was to dwell alone without the camp, so the put-away one is to be as a heathen man and a publican. Outside till repentance had brought about recovery. Until healed of God there was no restoration to the camp.

The putting away was thorough. Outside the camp, not only away from the particular tribe; but outside the whole, away from all, dwelling alone. So with the wicked person of Corinth, away from the church of God in Corinth, away from the circle of the saints in Achaia and from all who called on the Lord in every place; outside in one place, outside in all.

Leprosy in a garment suggests another aspect of evil; of sin in one's surroundings, as leprosy in the person told of sin in oneself: evil from within, and evil from without. Sin as it shows itself as rising up within us, sin as it declares itself

in coming upon us. God would have us clean in ourselves and clean in our ways, our thoughts, our affections, our motives, and also our habits, business and general behaviour. *Holy* in all manner of living (1 Peter i.). Having your behaviour *seemly* among the Gentiles (1 Peter ii.). *Good* manner of life (1 Peter iii.). Holy toward God, and seemly and good in the eyes of men. Among the Gentiles as strangers and pilgrims our conduct is open to their gaze, they can see spots on our garments when they cannot detect it in other ways. Debt, insubjection to domestic and governmental authority, want of straightforward dealing in business, situations in which truth and good conscience have to be sacrificed, and tricks of trade which are nothing short of lies, deceit, and cheating are kept up for worldly gain. All this may be regarded as the character of evil indicated in the leprous skins and cloth.

Matthew xviii. opens up the teaching of the leprous person. 1 Peter enables us to examine the leprous clothes.

The mode of dealing with the suspected garment is somewhat different, but the principle is the same as in the case of the person—viz., 1st, make sure of the condition; 2nd, preserve it if you can; 3rd, remove it if still unclean. If not sure about it, shut it up, wait for development, but do not ignore the possibility of uncleanness. If after washing the colour of the plague remains, then burn it, or if after rending out the evil spot leprosy yet is found within the garment, the whole must be destroyed. Gain if possible, even though it be at the loss of some of the cloth; but if the disease cannot be got rid of, then the whole must be consumed. God would have us bring the Word of truth to bear upon our circumstances, by the washing of the Word to cleanse our ways. If after this, that situation, that business, that position, that manner of life be found unholy, unseemly, and bad, and after effort to eliminate the evil parts thereof the colour of the plague remains, the whole

must be treated as an unclean thing and done away with. *Anything* for an honest living is not the motto for the child of God. "Let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is *good*," is the direction given of God.

With the third part of the subject—viz., leprosy in a house—we are brought to the consideration of sin in an assembly. The leprous person and garment gave two aspects of sin in an individual; here we submit it is sin in a collective sense.

1 Corinthians iii. speaks of the assembly in Corinth as God's building, in the erection of which Paul was used in laying the foundation, and others in building thereon; but in the formation of it care was needed, lest wood, hay and stubble found their way in; while, further, the building being the temple of the Holy Spirit, the utmost regard for holiness must be had, lest the building be marred. 1 Corinthians iii. 16, 17 is the keystone to the arch of truth contained in this epistle, the centre, in relation to which all other teaching herein is to be viewed. The church of God, temple of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Schism, immorality, self-seeking, disorder and evil doctrine, each in itself carried its own condemnation; but how much more evil and condemnatory each became when viewed in relation to the House of God. "Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, for ever." Then the clamour of party strife and favouritism should be silenced there, and moral and doctrinal evil driven thence, selfishness subdued, and disorder quelled. For the temple of God is holy, which ye are.

What is said of the leprous house divides itself into two parts—viz., 1st, a house recovered from its leprosy; and, 2nd, a house continuing in its uncleanness, and therefore removed from its place (Lev. xvi.). The two epistles to Corinth give us the teaching relative to the one, and the two epistles to Timothy that to the other.

In the case of the leprous house, as in that of the person and garment, recovery is sought. If that cannot be accomplished consistently with divine character, the building must be removed. Three times over the principle is enforced, retain if possible the suspected person, cloth, house; but if leprosy is there, then each must go.

We have briefly noticed the teaching in its application to the individual; let us seek to discern it in its application to an assembly.

In the church in Corinth sin had arisen both in its more subtle form of sectarianism and in its more flagrant character of known gross immorality and evil doctrine. The assembly had suffered it in its indifference and want of conscience, even as its low moral and spiritual tone had occasioned its conception and development. What was to be done? The first epistle is the answer. Sin must be judged, the wicked person put away, disorders corrected, the words of good doctrine again asserted for the confirmation of the truth and the removal of error. The house must have its leprous stone removed and its walls scraped and plastered; all this to recover the house and retain it. The second epistle to Corinth gives the result: they had dealt with the evils and had cleared themselves. It had not only been a case of neglected discipline, but their own existence as a church of God was involved. The scraping of admonition and plaster of exhortation and teaching, and imperative command as to evil had been effectual: the assembly had cleared itself and confidence was restored.

With Ephesus it was far different. Doctrinal evil foreseen by Paul (Acts xx.) had broken in upon the assembly. The Faith was involved, vain jangling, old wives' fables and perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds had displaced the truth. To counteract this condition of things Timothy is left in Ephesus to charge some that they teach no other doctrine, while he himself was to teach and exhort accord-

ing to sound and good doctrine, and according to godliness. Timothy under solemn charge was in turn to charge others with regard to order and teaching, and to take heed to himself and teaching that he and his hearers might be saved; saved from the tide of evil doctrine which had set in, and its sad consequences. The second epistle shows the evil still there, the leprosy eating and spreading progress in evil: a turning away (chap. i.), erring concerning the truth (chap. ii.), resisting it (chap. iii.). The care to gain and recover, effectual in Corinth, had yielded no such fruit in Ephesus except in individual cases; therefore the assembly as such is set aside by each who purged himself out of it in solemn obligation to the Name, henceforth to follow righteousness, etc., with those who called on the Lord out of a pure heart (chap. ii. 21, 22).

“Let *every one* that nameth,” etc. In Ephesus the primary responsibility was to be felt, but surely the term *every one* contemplated others beyond. If the obligation of the name necessitated a separation in Ephesus, the same obligation was binding everywhere and upon all. It was as complete a separation in the case of the house as in that of the person and garment; the unclean man or thing was removed from the whole, without the camp, outside the city. The same principle applied to each, equally so with the sinning one of Corinth and the erring assembly of Ephesus, “all in every place” accepting the discipline with regard to the sinning one in Corinth, “every one” who named the name of the Lord compelled to determine with whom to follow in Ephesus. The difference between Corinth and Ephesus was that in the former the assembly there dealt with the evil and cleared itself; in Ephesus the individual removed himself from an evil company as the only way he could be personally clear.

Is it objected that this might be right for apostolic times, but not now? We ask, why not? If in the same

circumstances as existed in Corinth and Ephesus, we have the same epistle for our guidance as they had, and the Holy Spirit with us to lead us into all the truth. As Moses and the prophets remained in their writings for the guidance of Israel in remnant times, even so Apostles remain for us in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

God who left not Israel without help to discern between clean and unclean, and who determined the course they should take, has clearly demonstrated the path for His people now, and as truly emphasized His own character and relationship to assemblies which name the Name of the Lord and own their obligation to Himself.

CHARLES MORTON.

Fragment.

In studying the Bible, covet above all things to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus to yourself, for whatsoever He has said to us, in the hour of our need the blessed operation of the Holy Spirit bringing that word again to our remembrance shall be our happy experience in difficulty.

As it was of Nehemiah, for example, when he came in bearing the king's cup, and the king saw from his countenance that something ailed his cupbearer, and he said "That sorrow is sorrow of heart. What is wrong?"

Ere he opened his mouth, he lifted his heart in prayer to his God, and thereupon came to him words that God before had spoken to him, in the which, repeating to the king, he found acceptance.

So shall it be with us; as we hear, let us commit to the Lord for us, with the prayer: "When again the same we need, O Lord, be pleased to bring again to our remembrance that word Thou hast spoken to us"; and this, whether it be words for ourselves directly, or words through us to those whose help and blessing to the glory and in the will of God we may seek.

THE FOUR GREAT MONARCHIES.

I.

IN Israel he that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer,¹ hence we understand that there is no difference between the functions of the two, but that their office and service are one. Yet do the terms themselves point to a distinction between the ways in which God imparted His message and revealed His will to each, and that as the HEARING EAR was the characteristic of the prophet, so was the SEEING EYE of the seer, to whom visions came rather than words and utterances.

Yet again it is clear that in some men the two were combined, and that the prophet was indeed a seer, seeing visions and beholding sights.

Of this class DANIEL was a prominent example, owned indeed as a prophet by the authoritative voice of the Son of God,² still the beginning of the revelation of secret things unto him was in a night vision,³ following which, and in amplification of it, it was given to him to see many visions, to hear as to them the word of the LORD, and to record what he saw and heard.

His position amongst the prophets of the Old Testament was, in one sense, unique, for with him alone lay the declaration of things which were to come to pass amongst the great Gentile majority of humankind.

It is, of course, within remembrance that many of the prophets dealt with the future fate of Assyria, of Babylon, of Egypt, of the smaller peoples round about Palestine, and of other Gentile nations; but their deliverances as to these were merely incidental to, or at the most, supplemental of, their main theme—the fate and future of Israel, and were introduced only as bearing upon that main theme. Whereas

¹ 1 Sam. ix. 9.

² Matt. xxiv. 15.

³ Dan. ii. 19.

in Daniel's case the great Gentile monarchies, with their tremendous influences for good and ill upon the history of the human race, their rise and fall, their origin and fate, are the main theme, Jewish matters being brought in only as far as they form part of the great whole.

Daniel is in fact the John, and his book is the Revelation, of the Old Testament scriptures.

Of the book it has been truly said, "It is at once an end and a beginning, the last form of prophecy and the first philosophy of history. The nation is widened into the world; the restored kingdom of Judah into a universal kingdom of God."¹

In this series of sketches it is not proposed to enter, or to attempt to enter, upon any exposition of this great book, but merely to present in a general way some of the involved historical facts, acquaintance with which is so necessary that without it effort at such exposition, by whomsoever made, is worse than useless.

In the present paper it will be sufficient for us to essay some explanation of that which led up to the position of affairs when "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem and besieged it; and the LORD gave Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God, which he carried into *the land of Shinar*"—that is to say, into the land of the Chaldeans (Shinar being the Hebrew term by which such was described), the southern part of Mesopotamia, of the country between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

In former issues of this Magazine² certain notes as to the character and configuration of this notable country were published, to which those interested in the matter will

¹ Dr. Westcott (now Bishop of Durham), in Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible." Article, "Book of Daniel."

² *Needed Truth*, Vol. I., pp. 116 and 179.

perhaps refer, and make enlargement upon it unnecessary here.

It should be remembered, however, as having an important bearing upon the identification of the monarchies, that while the country itself was in a physical sense essentially one, its inhabitants were from a racial point of view dual and antagonistic, the men of the southern or Babylonian section differing in descent from those of the northern or Assyrian parts, the first being originally sons of Ham, the second of Shem.

“The thing that hath been it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done,” and the “Eastern Question,” that for ages and for centuries was present in the minds of statesmen and leaders of men amongst these ancient peoples, centred in the struggle for supremacy of these two races, until by-and-by Japheth, in the persons of *his* sons, came upon the scene, and like the lawyer in the fable, settled the question by bestowing upon each of the combatants a shell and retaining the oyster for himself—reducing the children of Ham to servitude, and making for himself a dwelling-place, of as comfortable a character as circumstances would admit, in the tents of Shem.

As a natural consequence of their position as neighbours in one land, the representatives of the two races struggled persistently for its mastery and for supremacy over each other; the periods of its history at which they divided its government and lived in peace being brief and rare; almost invariably one or other of them dominated the whole.

Dominion lay first with the Southerners, the sons of Ham. They were the older inhabitants, and from them the literature, the science, the religion that prevailed, and even the language that was ultimately spoken and written throughout the whole land, were derived.

In everything that pertained to their civilization the

Assyrians borrowed from the Chaldeans, never the Chaldeans from the Assyrians, even though the latter were, for centuries, so dominant politically that Babylonia was but a province of their empire, ruled by a viceroy appointed by their monarch.¹

The records show that after Nimrod's death the empire founded by him was broken up into a number of independent principalities or kingdoms, even Chaldea being subdivided into several centres of independent government.²

This condition of affairs came to an end somewhere about 2000 B.C., the whole country being (about the time of Abraham) united under one rule, the centre of government lying in one city of Chaldea or another, as the metropolis appears to have been changed as dynasty succeeded to dynasty.

At the first Assyria was subject to this central government, but as time wore on and the power of its people was consolidated, the old yoke was thrown off and an independent monarchy founded alongside of (and almost continuously at war with) the still flourishing Chaldean kingdom.

Not a few of the rulers of the new kingdom were men of that type of masterful genius and restless energy that forces its possessors to the front wherever and whenever they may have their location upon this earth. Such were Shalmaneser I. (B.C. 1290) and Tiglath Pileser I. (B.C. 1130) and, in a lesser degree, such were their sons and successors.

Under them Assyria rose to a height of extraordinary greatness, becoming a peril to all her neighbours, and more than a peril to her nearest neighbours (the Chaldeans), who, through internecine strife and other causes, grew weaker as the northerners grew stronger, and finally fell before

¹ A striking parallel to this will be found in the history, at a much later period, of the relationship between the Greeks and the Romans.

² "Chaldean Account of Genesis," by G. Smith, p. 25.

them altogether, becoming first a kingdom feudatory to Assyria and afterwards a province of Assyria.

Then arose the great Hebrew monarchy of David and Solomon, which extended to part of the right bank of the Euphrates, thus becoming coterminous with Assyria (there bounded by the left bank of the same river), and so completely overshadowing that power that it sank back into weakness and obscurity such that nothing is known of it for a space of 200 years.¹

There is an interesting little piece of indirect testimony to this in the hiring of "the Syrians that were beyond the river"² by Hadarezer in the last stand which was attempted to be made against David's victorious career, as these "Syrians" were Assyrian subjects, and the fact that the King of Zobah was able to influence their movements speaks volumes as to the disintegrated and impotent state of the once mighty kingdom.

As is usual in the history of these two peoples, a rise of the Babylonian power took place concurrently with the depression of that of the Assyrians.

A glance at the map will show that Assyria was interposed between the lands ruled by David and Solomon and Chaldea, and naturally felt the pressure of their might first. The records of this period show that intimate relations were established and close correspondence kept up between the Babylonians and the Egyptians: the latter were always jealous of the Assyrians and ready to enter into any league against them, and doubtless at this time the extraordinary rise and development of the "commonwealth of Israel" and of the power of its rulers were viewed with jealous alarm by the statesmen in both Egypt and Chaldea, hence the readiness of Pharaoh to receive and to shelter David's enemies and Solomon's foes.³

¹ "The Second Oriental Monarchy," by Canon Rawlinson.

² 2 Sam. x. 16.

³ See 1 Kings xi.

Israel's glory was, alas! short-lived, and about 100 years after the death of Solomon, when his kingdom was broken into fragments and his power only a remembrance, a great king arose in Assyria, whose name has been translated Asshur-nazir-pal. He began to reign B.C. 885,¹ and he raised Assyria to a height of greatness she had never reached before, conquering, amongst other places, Tyre and Sidon and all the country round Lebanon.

Asshur-nazir-pal was succeeded by his son Shalmaneser, with whose reign and whose wars the contact between the Scripture history and that of Assyria and Chaldea may be said to begin, for he over-ran and subjugated Babylonia, Media, Persia, Phœnicia, Syria (under Ben-hadad and Hazael), and Israel, which (under Jehu) paid tribute to him.

His conquests were consolidated and extended by his son and his grandson, who succeeded him, and who both ruled over the whole of Mesopotamia as one united state.

Then came another political break-up, probably due to the failure or overthrow of the dynasty, and a period of some 40 or 50 years (B.C. 788-741) of disorganization and weakness, during which Babylon was independent and Israel, Judah, and Syria free.

In all probability it was during this period that Jonah paid his famed visit to Nineveh, for disaster upon disaster had fallen upon the land and had prepared its people to "believe God," when His messenger cried, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown."

Another most striking figure, appearing towards the close of the period, is that of Merodach-Baladan, who reigned over a part of Chaldea. Upon his romantic and adventurous career space forbids us to enlarge here, sufficient be it to say that it was he who afterwards sent the embassy to Hezekiah King of Judah, making a pretext of his concern for the sickness of Hezekiah and of his scientific interest in

¹ "Chaldean Account of Genesis," by G. Smith, p. 31.

the astronomical marvel, which had doubtless been noted by his own skilled observers, when "the shadow returned backward ten degrees," to open negotiations with one whom he was sure to regard as a favourite of the gods, with a view to the formation of an anti-Assyrian league of Egypt, Judah, and Chaldea.

But he had lost his opportunity ; a change had come over the spirit of the dream ; great men had arisen through violence, and great deeds had been done in violence, in and around Assyria, through which that power had entered upon her period of last and mightiest development, in which the Assyrian indeed became "a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches," and having "his height exalted above all the trees of the field," but only that his ruin might be the greater and that the echo of the sound of his fall and of the crash made as he "went down into hell" might linger the longer among the nations, and might bear louder witness unto us of the latter times to the truth of that which is written, even that "Our God is in the heavens ; and hath done whatsoever He hath pleased."

W. H. HUNTER.

SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY.

STARTLING and varied are the voices that have spoken on the matter of "Spirit and Soul and Body." Doubtless none is without signification. While perhaps the most general meaning is that "all flesh is grass." Happy is he whose ear has been opened to hear God, whose experience and life echo forth Isaiah xlii. 18-20: "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but My servant? or deaf, as My messenger whom I sent? who is blind as he who is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not."

We have reason to believe that a number of those who have undertaken the exposition of the subject of Spirit and Soul and Body in their distinctiveness and relationship are verily the children of God. Others are self-proclaimed as not being such. Therefore are they children of wrath by nature (comp. Eph. ii. 3.), and children of the Devil by practice (comp. 1 John iii. 7-10). To state, and then answer the errors published would be interesting and profitable, could these be briefly and thoroughly collated. That being difficult, we content ourselves with the safer and more certain ground of statement and exposition of what the Scriptures declare and make plain hereon, holding ourselves ready to answer so far as we may be able any questions sent us in connection with our subject. This we do so as to cut off occasion from those who are neither slow to take nor make occasion. Notwithstanding, we shall be obliged to name and answer some of the more prominent and well-known premises and assertions found in the destructive heresies which are abroad on these verities of the Faith.

As axiomatic, or self-evident, in this matter, we affirm

that the Scriptures never make Spirit and Soul and Body synonymous or interchangeable terms.

Neither do the Scriptures ever make the spirit of man to be the same as the Spirit of God.

Nor do they make having a soul the same as having a living soul.

Nor, again, *being* a soul (or *being a living soul*) and *having* a soul.

Nor is it true, although stated by some, that the body is the whole man.

Every man—*i.e.*, every human being—is, in this present life, composed of a Spirit, and a Soul, and a Body, yet is but one person.

Sometimes, moreover, the *person* is spoken of as a “spirit,” yet never so out of the mortal body.

Sometimes the *person* is spoken of as a “soul,” or as a “living soul,” but this only as *IN* the mortal body, while the *body* itself is commonly spoken of in the Scriptures as that *in which* the person is. As again, the spirit of man is said to be *IN* him, so also the soul of man is said to be *IN* him.

Although certain assert and contend that no one has the Holy Spirit now, or in present life, the fact that the Lord Jesus predicated that they who believe in Him should receive the Spirit sufficiently disproves such ignorant assertions. Yea, “the SPIRIT Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God.” Further, although some declare that the word נְשָׁמָה, N'SHAMAH, is often translated in the Authorized Version by the word “spirit” (which it does not mean), anybody can satisfy himself that out of twenty-four occurrences it is only twice so translated, perhaps one should rather say mistranslated. At any rate the word N'SHAMAH, נְשָׁמָה, is never used to designate the Spirit of

God. Neither is it used to describe the spirit of man. Indeed it is notably used in contradistinction to the spirit (רוּחַ, ruach, Heb.; πνεῦμα, pneuma, Gr.) of man in Job xxxiv. 14, where it is translated "*his breath*," and Isaiah lvii. 16, which presents it by the word "souls," which it does not mean!

N'shamah is that which Jehovah God breathed into the nostrils of the man He had formed out of the dust of the ground, and man became a LIVING soul. It is that again which is declared of man alone in Genesis vii. 21, 22. After it was written that all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of the fowl, and of the cattle, and of the beast, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, it was further written:—"And every Adam (man), all in whose nostrils was the N'shamah (the breath) of the ruach (the spirit) of life of all that was in the dry land died."

Speaking broadly, the spirit of man, while he is in mortal body, is the seat of intelligence; being to God-ward very similar to what conscience is to man-ward. As witness, "Who among men *knoweth* the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him" (1 Cor. ii. 11, R.V.), compared with ". . . their conscience bearing witness therewith and their thoughts (reasonings) one with another accusing or else excusing them" (Rom. ii. 15, R.V.).

Likewise, the soul of man while he is in mortal body is the seat of affection; being to God-ward much the same as heart of man is to man-ward.

The spirit of man as such at death goes back to God who gave it.

The body of man at death is commonly put out of sight by burial; we do not say funeral. Thus, while man is found to have given up the ghost or expired, the question still

abides, "Where is he?" That he is (somewhere) stands proved by the Word of God, which declareth "that man moves, and lives, and *is* IN GOD." Wherefore until God is not, man is. Besides, this solemn truth is given *in example* by the Lord Jesus in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Luke. There He shows three men *after* death, and *previous* to resurrection two of whom He tells were in conscious bliss, the other, alas! was in conscious woe, having power of memory, understanding, seeing, hearing, and feeling! The foregoing we trust may prove sufficient for our further elucidation of "Spirit and Soul and Body" in our next issue.

JOHN BROWN.

THE REVELATION OF THE LORD.

“WHOM JEZEBEL HIS WIFE STIRRED UP.”

As with the church in Pergamos, so with the church in Thyatira, we may expect to obtain light by reference to the Old Testament. Who was Jezebel? She was a king's daughter, and the wife of one of the kings of Israel—a clever and designing woman, keeping in the background herself, yet making her will to be done through her husband. Ahab was probably one of those men who had no very decided character of his own, but who was in great measure the willing tool for evil in the hands of others. He does not seem to have plotted the death of Naboth, but to have fallen in readily with Jezebel's plan. She was the designer and the carrier out of the wicked scheme, but the letters were sealed by her with the king's seal, she keeping out of sight in the matter.

In fact, as the heading of this article implies, Jezebel was the real ruler in Israel. Had Ahab had a wife of different character, he might have been a totally different man.

It is often said that the woman is more guided by impulse than by reason. Eve was evidently deceived. Had she waited to reason in the matter she might have been delivered, but she looked at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and seeing it was to be desired to make her wise she gave way to her impulse, took and ate, and then used the power that God had given for good to lead the man with her into ruin, and thus brought in sin and death to God's creation. We are told, “Adam was not deceived,” though in the transgression. With him it was not impulse, but deliberate action. Thus the result of woman's taking the lead was the bringing in of the death and the ruin, the darkness and the despair, that to-day holds sway over this groaning creation. Far different the mighty re-

sults when in humble subjection Mary said to the angel, "Be it unto me according unto thy word."¹ And she became the mother of the lowly Babe of Bethlehem, yea, of the mighty One who shall yet restore to groaning earth its peace and calm, and, finally, as King of kings and Lord of lords, subdue all things under His feet, He whose right it is to reign. In Scripture the woman is frequently depicted as either a power for evil or a power for good; and if her power be great for evil, we believe that it is only equalled by her power for good. Evil, unmitigated evil, when stepping out of the woman's sphere, uncalled of God, and taking the lead; good, and good that will be only fully comprehended in a coming age, when occupying her place and using her influence in accordance with the will of God.

It is by the woman that man is trained in early infancy, the first lessons, and the lessons that often leave a life-long impression, are learnt at the mother's knee, and thus we may say that in great measure the woman has the making of the man.

Had we gone into the church in Thyatira, should we have there seen any one woman answering to the description of Jezebel? We believe not. Revelation ii. 19 depicts the outward condition of this church—works, love, service, faith, and patience; that which would have abundantly satisfied any eyes save the eyes like unto a flame of fire. But what do these eyes see? and what is the revelation or the unveiling of Jesus Christ? A Jezebel working her will and teaching, whilst the word of the Lord is, "I suffer not a woman to teach,"² calling herself a prophetess, and seducing the people of God. Her children are spoken of as those who are to be killed with death or pestilence. This speaks of an enlargement, an increase, but an increase that was not of God, an increase that was to bring down judgment as with the Jezebel of old. Thus in many an assembly which

¹ Luke i. 38.

² 1 Tim. ii. 12.

is yet church of God, as Israel was still the nation, there is an enlargement which ends in judgment and scattering, a woman's work that is not the work of God, a multiplying which at last brings judgment by the hand of a Jehu.¹

Have our readers ever carefully considered 1 Timothy iii. ? It is, we believe, the Divine photograph that the one who desires or stretches forth to the work of the oversight should be brought to and compared with.

First, he must be able to rule his own spirit, for the headstrong and hasty man easily becomes the willing tool of the flatterer; his own character must be established, or he may easily become the reflection of his wife or some other woman. "One who ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity"; and this implies much more than an arbitrary will, forcing compliance in his presence: it is the rule of one who is himself ruled of God, and such is the one, and only such that is pointed out as fitted to take care of a church of God.

If a family is in great measure the reflection of their parents, and a well-ordered household the result of marriage *in the Lord*, (we say in the Lord because we believe this expression implies far more than the union of two who are heirs of eternal life,) so, again, is an assembly in great measure the reflection of those that take oversight; and if this be so, how solemn the thought, how great the responsibility! Were it realized, would there not be a shrinking back from the work of oversight on the part of many who now seem so eager to grasp authority amongst the saints? It is true that in 1 Peter v. a special crown is promised to the faithful shepherd when the chief Shepherd shall appear, but it is also true that an especial account will need to be rendered by those who profess to watch for souls. The ruling must be with diligence, not beginning, as, alas! we often fear it does, with the attending of an oversight meet-

¹ 2 Kings x. 6.

ing, and that too often only when some special matter is before the oversight circle; but with a deep care for the flock, and a willing heart to spend and be spent in its service. There is much that may flatter our pride and hasten our downfall in being the referee in all cases of difficulty that may arise amidst the saints; but the patient tending of the sheep, the going after the lost, the binding up that which is broken, the strengthening of the weak, is lowly, patience-needing work, that can only be accomplished in fellowship with Him who has left us an example that we might follow in His steps.

We may seem to have diverged from the subject before us, but it really is not so.

Who then was Jezebel in Thyatira, and where is Jezebel to-day? or better, perhaps, What is Jezebel-ism? Is it not the woman's rule, her will being done by the man, instead of the will of God being done on earth as it is in heaven? Satan's will was done in Eden through the woman and the man, and even though the garden still looked bright and beautiful, the curse of sin had entered, death reigned. So in this assembly there was that which was outwardly beautiful, yet beneath it all woman's will was being accomplished.

But some will ask, How can these things be so? To be more explicit, we believe that in Thyatira the woman was ruling through the man. There was no lack in this church of works, nay, there was a superabundance of works, yet this did not satisfy the Lord. If we examine present condition of assemblies, it may help to elucidate more fully what we mean.

The directions given in 1 Timothy iii. seem to have been almost entirely lost sight of. The men least fitted for rule are often to the front—men who take a place because of their position in the world, or because of their means; men with unbroken wills, who have utterly broken down when

tested by the divine standard; men who were never married in the Lord, whose wives stir them up, who never ruled aright at home, yet hesitate not to carry out their will in the churches of God, and their will often nothing but the will of the worldly-minded woman who, Jezebel-like, works behind the scene.

And this, we believe, was the sin of Thyatira; and if so, then how much more the sin of the present day? The book of Revelation shows us the woman reigning over the kings of the earth. "Spiritualism," so-called, speaks of the coming gentle reign of the woman. "Salvation Army"-ism is pressing the woman to the front; "woman's rights" and "woman's place in government" are being pressed in the world. What does all this mean? Is it not that Satan is busy, that another great triumph of his is at hand. Short though it be, yet terrible, a triumph in which he will use the woman as his stepping-stone to power, as in the past; only when that pinnacle of power is reached, to cast her aside. The very opposite to Him who came and sought His bride, and when she is presented to Him as the chaste virgin will share with her His throne and all His coming glory.

If we be right, then Thyatira was a woman-ruled assembly; just such an assembly as we may find to-day where weak-minded men, or men whose wills have never been subjected to the will of God, rule not for Him, but for their wives, or for other intriguers, by whom they are influenced or even controlled; not by the Word of God, but by the word of those under whose power they may be.

It will be noticed that the overcoming ones in this church are to be associated with the Lord in the rule over the nations, giving us the thought that a right rule now in the midst too often of what is wrong will fit such a one for a place of power in the coming age.

Let it not be thought that in what we have written we depreciate woman's work for God; far, very far from this

is our intention. On the contrary, we believe that holy women are being used of God when in the place of subjection in a way that will only be seen and known hereafter. The wise-hearted women of Israel, who in their quiet home life spun at their tent doors the goats' hair, had a prominence given to their work by God Himself that probably they little expected. The goats'-hair covering was doubled in the front of the Tabernacle (Exod. xxvi. 9); and that which spoke of sin being put away was what met the eye of the worshippers of Israel. "Behold the Lamb of God, that beareth away the sin of the world," were the words spoken by John Baptist; and as they gazed on Him they saw the One who was born of a woman, the One who was trained under woman's tender care, taught at a mother's knee, yet was the mighty God, the everlasting Father.

But of this we are convinced, that much of the evil that arises in the assemblies of God's saints to-day may be justly described as woman's work. Her worldliness of heart gradually tells upon her husband. At first he may resist, but by degrees this resistance becomes less and less: he falls under the influence, not of the woman, but of him who ever seeks to use the weaker vessel as his tool. A little more of worldly conformity, in the house, in the dress, and in the society. And whilst the once mighty man says, "I will do as at other times," yet he knows not that the power of God has departed from him. Many a husband might have been saved from making shipwreck of the Faith had his wife not used her influence to fan the flame of rebellion, taking her place with him outside the assembly of God, sharing thus his ruin, but utterly unable to keep him in the right. Woman's work might thus be written on many a one once active in the work of God and used by Him.

J. A. BOSWELL.

ONE.

MOSES was admonished of God when he was about to make the Tabernacle, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed to thee in the Mount."¹ Correspondingly the Tabernacle and other things are called the copies of the things in the heavens.² That is to say, of things in the heavens which God showed to the eye of Moses. "According," said He, "to all that I show thee, the pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shall ye make it."³ Thus he was shown *what* was to be made. In addition he was told by word of mouth *how* to make it. That is, God spake words to his *ear* as well as showed patterns to his *eye*.

Indeed, had God only showed to Moses a heavenly Tabernacle, and not told him exactly how he was to make a copy of it with such materials as he might obtain on earth, He would have been giving him an impossible task to perform. On the contrary, He specially tells him: "Thou shalt make the Tabernacle with ten curtains of fine-twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet; with cherubim, the work of the cunning workman, shalt thou make them. The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the breadth of each curtain four cubits; all the curtains shall have one measure. Five curtains shall be coupled together one to another, and five curtains shall be coupled one to another, and thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain from the selvedge in the coupling; and likewise shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that is outmost in the second coupling. Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of

¹ Heb. viii. 5.² Hob. ix. 23, R.V.³ Exod. xxv. 9.

the curtain that is in the second coupling; the loops shall be opposite one to another. And thou shalt make fifty clasps of gold and couple the curtains one to another with the clasps. And the Tabernacle shall be one.”¹

Again we desire to point out that if Moses had only had the instruction which God gave him by word of mouth, he would have certainly failed utterly in his building for God.

The pattern which his eyes saw was what he had to copy; the words which his ears heard told him how he was to go to work. Not one nor the other could he afford to neglect.

Doubtless there is help from this for us of the present day.

That which answers to the pattern showed to Moses in the Mount is to be found, for instance, in such scriptures as speak of the heavenly calling and blessedness of the Church which is the Body of Christ. We read much of this in Ephesians i. 1 to ii. 20, inclusive, where believing ones who were once dead in sin are seen (whether Jews or Gentiles) to be quickened together with Christ, and raised up together, and seated together in the heavenlies in Him. Viewed thus in the heavenly standing in Christ, we are all one man in Christ Jesus:² though many members, yet but one Body.³ This (as it may be well again to reiterate) is not in virtue of the attainment of the members, but because of the good pleasure of the Head. Neither does it depend on our behaviour, but on the unchangeable purpose of Him who is Himself the Saviour (the present Saviour, the Preserver) of the Body.⁴

Please note accurately:—There is one Body; this is the pattern which is in heaven.

In order that there may be on earth a copy of that which is in heaven, it is necessary to take heed—

Firstly, to the pattern that has to be imitated.

¹ Exod. xxvi. 1-6.

² Gal. iii. 28.

³ 1 Cor. xii. 12.

⁴ Eph. v. 23.

Secondly, to the means whereby a God-pleasing copy may be made.

How very many of God's servants have given attention to one only of these two things.

Either seeking to copy the pattern shown in heaven, without due attention to the words spoken to guide in making the copy.

Or else labouring to be obedient to words spoken without first seeing what it is that those commandments are meant to teach us to construct.

Dealing with the latter first, let us notice that a copy is not of necessity identical in every respect with the pattern to which it is made. It may be of different material, or it may be on a smaller scale, and yet be in its own line perfect as a copy.

The Tabernacle set forth doubtless some of the perfections of the *one* Christ of God. Why, then, was it made of *ten* curtains united together in the way we have been reading,¹ instead of being woven without seam, like the coat for which the soldiers cast lots?²

Does it not remind us that while they who are in Christ are all one in Christ Jesus³ (that is, the heavenly thing), yet (as to the earthly copy thereof) there must be a joining together of many into one.⁴

In other words, in the heavenly thing all ARE one in Christ; in the thing on earth they are to become one. Contrast "The Body is one"⁵; "They SHALL BECOME one flock."⁶

"Other sheep," said the Lord Jesus to the Jews, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also must I

¹ Exod. xxvi.

² John xix. 23, 24.

³ Gal. iii. 28. Thus also 1 Cor. xii. 12. As the (natural) body is one and hath many members, so also is the Christ.

⁴ 1 Cor. i. 1-10.

⁵ 1 Cor. xii. 12.

⁶ John x. 16.

lead, and they shall hear My voice ; and they shall become¹ one flock, one Shepherd.”

The word flock is always only used of sheep as together under the control of the shepherd. The oneness of the flock is due to the sheep (whether Jews or Gentiles) hearing the voice of the one Shepherd and being led by Him.

Clearly in the matter of salvation all believers hear the voice of the Son of God unto their receiving life. Each enters in (comes in) by Him as the door, and thus of each it is true, “ He shall be saved.”

But besides the coming in unto being saved there is a further word—“ and ”—“ if any man come² in he shall be saved ; and he shall come² in, and he shall come² out, and he shall find pasture ” ; that is, come in and come out with the Shepherd, hearing His voice and ordered by Him ; and there is a sense in which all the sheep are not led by the Shepherd,³ in which all do not hear His voice.

Hence we note that since being in the one Body depends only upon the work of Christ, all believers in Christ Jesus are in the one Body, are in Christ, and that for ever.

But since being in the one flock depends on being led by the one Shepherd and hearing His voice, all believers, alas ! are not to be found in the one flock. We speak primarily of the times of the later scriptures of the New Testament, and we point to the wicked person put out of the church in Corinth as one outside the one flock. Then there was the company in Ephesus who followed Hymenæus. Was that part of the flock ? On the contrary, out from it had Timothy and others to purge themselves before they could follow

¹ They shall become one flock means these and those together shall come to be one flock (John x. 16).

² The word come is the same throughout, though variously translated “ enter ” and “ go ” (John x. 9).

³ Isa. liii. 6.

righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.¹

Thus it is clear that the one flock on earth, whilst meant to be a copy of the one Body in heaven, is not identical with it. In one important respect it has always of necessity differed vitally—

For *in Christ* every man is a new creation: the unity of believers in Christ is a oneness of that which is wholly and altogether of God from first to last. Whereas the flock is composed of born-again ones who still carry about the old evil nature, and thus of necessity in the churches of God there ever is an element opposed to God; an element of evil, we mean, in each one in the churches, which each one has to fight against, lest it control him and work mischief amongst his fellows.

Even so in the pattern Tabernacle which God showed to Moses everything was just what it was simply and only because God willed so; whereas in the Tabernacle which Moses made for God everything was what it was as a result of the God-ordered and God-directed labour of His people.

So in the matter of the Church, a man is in the Church which is the Body of Christ, the heavenly pattern, solely in virtue of the will and operation of the Lord Christ Himself; whereas he who is found in a church of God is there because in God's mercy he has joined himself to the disciples.²

Perhaps, however, just now the danger that saints lose sight of the heavenly pattern itself is even greater than the danger of seeking to attain to a copy not according to that which is written.

We fear that some, perhaps many, who are by no means neglectful of the plainer precepts of the Word as to church order, utterly fail to see that these are only means to an end, that God's purpose is that our obedience thereto may

¹ 2 Tim. ii.

² Acts. ix. 26.

be a means to bring about a certain result. Yet is it not so? Is it not God's purpose for His saints on earth that they should be in vital organic unity? We do not mean that God desires us to become one *in Christ*. All believers ARE one in Christ; nothing can alter that. But even when God had such a perfect Tabernacle as He showed to Moses in the Mount, He yet desired to have one made in the desert of Sinai. So now He desires that they who are one in Christ in the heavenlies may be one *in the Lord* on earth. That corresponding to the one Church which Christ builds in heaven there may be on earth many churches of God united into one, that He may have a lodging place in the wilderness of this world. But it must be according to the pattern. The Church that Christ builds has Him for its foundation, and in the building of churches of God other foundation can no man lay than that is laid. They who compose the heavenly thing are called-out ones as to the purpose of God for them. Therefore must they who compose the churches of God be called-out ones as concerns their manner of behaviour upon earth. The Church which is the Body of Christ is one; therefore must that which is a copy become one also.

In opposition to this is what may be called the doctrine of

CONGREGATIONAL AUTONOMY.

They who hold and teach this do not always make their meaning quite plain. But there are not a few who definitely say that every company of persons who are in the habit of breaking bread in one particular building are responsible only to God for their own affairs. That they may as a matter of policy or of graciousness permit or even solicit the help of brethren in other assemblies. But that this is purely permissive; that God's Word allows it, but does not enjoin it; that they are under no obligation to consult with brethren in other assemblies, except in so far as they may

(in greater or less degree) judge it wise and seemly so to do.

Correspondingly as to persons going from one assembly to another, as a rule they will bear a letter of commendation as a convenient means of proving themselves proper persons to be received; and as a rule¹ one assembly will decline to receive a person put out from another. Yet it is maintained that all this in no way involves a bond or link between the assemblies in question. So that if a case of difficulty arise, as, for instance, a man is supposed to have been wrongfully received or rejected, or unscripturally excommunicated, assemblies may go to the length of making inquiries of each other, or even of consulting each other, yet so as each assembly is in the last resort *only* responsible to God. It is even maintained that an assembly may, if convinced a man has been wrongfully put out of fellowship, receive him in without the consent of those that put him out, and yet maintain with this latter assembly the same relation as before! Clearly this relation is not a relation that can be called a copy of the heavenly unity; neither is it according to the word of the Lord as plainly expressed in 1 Cor. i.

Moreover, this claim for local government is usually made for assemblies of saints meeting in one building, who are but a fraction of the assembly of God in the town in which they meet; although the power to put out of fellowship (and therefore to receive in) is distinctly given, not to an assembly at a building, but to the assembly of God in the town. This doctrine of home rule for congregations was invented in England some few centuries ago, and has been accepted without question by many who have taught it persistently by word, and even more by deed, ever since.

¹ We regret to say that even this wholesome rule is now being rebelled against by some, and that such even pride themselves in their freedom to receive all whom *they* have not directly dealt with, or who have not turned away from *them* directly.

It is high time it was compared with the scriptural model by all who care for the mind of the Lord. It is utterly irreconcilable with the Divine order; it is absolutely not a copy of the heavenly pattern.

God's pattern for us is of a unity manifested by all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. One Flock, one Fellowship, one House, the wide world over.

C. M. LUXMOORE.



Other Lands.

FRANCE AND BELGIUM.

OUR brethren, A. P. Macdonald and G. F. Gaudibert, who have just returned to the Continent after a brief visit to Great Britain, have communicated the following notes on work in France and Belgium:—

One finds it necessary to speak concerning the work in PARIS in carefully guarded language. This for various reasons. Many things wherein we have been helped by God are not such as it would be wise to publish. On the other hand, results have been obtained which may or may not be lasting, and time must be left to declare this.

When I went to Paris in 1888, the assembly there consisted of some half a dozen friends, meeting at a private house in a back street. For at least twenty years there had been no Gospel testimony in connection with the assembly, nor any meeting except that for the breaking of the bread. Concerning the internal condition of the gathering, it is not now the time to speak in detail, but there are brethren in this country who have been there, and who remember something of it.

Almost from the time of my arrival in the French capital, God was pleased "to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall,"—even a circle within which the Lordship of Christ could be owned, and without which could be kept that which denies His authority.

A hall was taken, and Gospel-meetings, Bible-readings, etc., begun. These are still kept up, in spite of much difficulty and discouragement. The present address of the

assembly is 9, Rue des deux Gares, between the Eastern and Northern railway stations. Rents are high in Paris, and that of our meeting-room is a heavy burden, although brethren in other places do sometimes help us to bear it.

Our brother, W. J. Hosking, spent some time with us in 1889, the year of the Great Exhibition, and was used and prospered by God in his Gospel testimony.

There has been continued blessing on the work, although not much to look at at any given time. Last year there were Christians from ten or eleven different nations in the fellowship. On two occasions there were seven believers baptized together.

Individual effort is owned by God. One brother had testified year after year in the office in which he is employed without seeing any results. Suddenly an interest was awakened, and the other *employés* begged him to supply them with copies of the Word of God. Within a week he had given away 100 Bibles to men who seemed eager to possess, and who promised to read them. A sister who has apprentices, instructs them in the Scriptures with such success, that one of these girls is already baptized and in fellowship, while others are manifestly converted.

I preach and teach in private houses wherever the Lord opens the door. During two years I had a very interesting weekly meeting for English friends. Each season an "elect lady," a Russian, invites me one day each week, to expound and testify the kingdom of God to a number of her fellow-countrymen in her drawing-room.

It was early in 1889 that I was led by God to the discovery of the assemblies gathered into the name of the Lord Jesus in Belgium. These assemblies had continued in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers, for over thirty years, without any one in Great Britain being aware of

their existence. I have visited the Belgian assemblies four times, and have had cause to thank God and take courage each visit. At Ransbeck last autumn I had the joy of baptizing ten believers into the Name one Lord's Day morning.

We accept what God has been doing for us and through us hitherto, as a pledge of what He is willing to do for us and through us henceforth.

A. P. MACDONALD.

For the last forty years or so a testimony for the Lord in BELGIUM has been in existence, and has been sustained by Him. This testimony was not raised by means of help from other countries, but has sprung up by the application of God's truth to the hearts of some believers in the sects who heard and obeyed the truth. All through these years the assemblies have been quite unknown outside of Belgium, and have been living their own life, finding and following with the help of God the truths contained in the Word. It is only during the last few years that they have been in contact with brethren from other countries, and have found that the same doctrines have produced the same results elsewhere.

There are at present four assemblies, two in the province of Brabant, and two in the province of Hainaut. There are only twenty-five believers in fellowship in the largest assembly. The increase in numbers is slow, because we have very little liberty as to ways and means of doing Gospel work. I have been privileged of God in going about some of the assemblies in England and Scotland these last three months, and I have a strong conviction that, were we allowed the same liberty on the Continent as in Britain, we should see greater results.

The four Belgian meetings are wholly composed of the working class (peasants, miners, etc.), and there is very

little evangelistic gift among the gathered saints. Any that may exist is hampered by the necessity which all have to work for their daily bread,—the Belgian labourer or artisan is at work at least twelve hours a day,—and by the restrictions under which we are placed. Thus the law allows no open-air preaching, and it is only in exceptional cases that the local authorities would permit us to attempt it. The priests have great influence, and the local authorities, although they may be willing to tolerate such work, are often afraid to offend the clerical party who are now in power. On the other hand, people are unwilling to lend or let a room, or hall, as this generally brings down upon them the wrath of the Roman Catholic Church, and, in some cases, causes them to be “boycotted” by the whole village. Yet people are willing to hear the good news of God’s love, and often say: “If our priests preached the Gospel as these people do, how much happier we should be!”

Thus we are confined to a limited sphere, and we have to seek to reach the people by means of tract-distributing and visiting. One brother, a farmer, goes about selling Bibles and Testaments, and giving away tracts when he has spare time. On the Lord’s Day morning he preaches the Gospel by the roadside to the people who are returning to their homes after hearing Mass. He has had to take a hawker’s licence, so as to be able to do this without fear of the authorities. We have had Gospel meetings in the neighbourhood of the battlefield of Waterloo within the last three years, and some persons have been saved and added by the Lord to the assembly; but in several other places, where we have had meetings, there has been, so far, little apparent result. Nevertheless, the seed has been sown, and we believe that fruit will appear later on, even though we may not see it in our day.

We are in the midst of a Roman Catholic population, which is still outwardly faithful to the tenets of that

system. But the result of the religious teaching which the people receive is that they are very indifferent in most cases to the Gospel. Their conscience never having had any exercise as to their spiritual state is careless concerning all that is not material and for the present world. How difficult it is to preach the Gospel in such surroundings is only understood by those who have practically tried it. It is not like England, where a man has almost always received instruction in the Scriptures, or has read them, or heard them read, so that an address, a tract, a word, may reach his conscience by bringing vividly before his mind some truth which he has known for a long time, but which has hitherto had no effect upon him. On the Continent this is not, as a rule, the case. The Gospel is such a new thing to most men, that one cannot take for granted that his hearers have any knowledge of it. Frequently they have none whatever, and must be spoken to as one would speak to little children. The educated classes generally sneer at the Gospel, and are so steeped in atheism and materialism, that they are difficult to convince of the reality of eternal things.

The need is very great, the responsibility of Christians in connection with it is also great, and our hearts yearn to see this country evangelized as it has not yet been. It has a population of some six million inhabitants, and is the most densely populated country in Europe; it is within easy reach of England, France, and Germany, with every facility for travelling, and it has a pleasant climate. The French and Flemish languages are spoken, the former in the South and West, the latter in the North and East. There is liberty of conscience, and so long as a man respects the law of the land, he will not be molested. I would only remind the reader, who may be interested in this matter, that continental ideas, habits, and customs are very different from those of England, and it is very necessary that visitors

shou'd keep this in mind when coming over to help in the Lord's work.

GEORGE F. GAUDIBERT.

Our brethren have thoughts of issuing a small paper at monthly or longer intervals for the help of French-speaking believers, and they desire the fellowship in prayer of God's gathered saints in this matter, as it will assuredly involve them in much labour, with perhaps little apparent result at first.

Department of Review.

"ELDERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FELLOWSHIP
OF ASSEMBLIES." ¹

WE gladly welcome this contribution to the elucidation of an important subject from our esteemed brother, Dr. J. A. Owles, and we commend it most heartily to the consideration of all our readers in the spirit of 1 Thessalonians v. 21 and Ephesians v. 10. It is the report of an address which we know to have given great help to those who heard it, and we trust the result of its wider circulation may be in keeping with that of its original delivery.

The writer helps in the matter much by clearly showing "that there is a marked harmony between the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, with reference to eldership. In Genesis l. 7 we read, 'Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the *elders* of his house, and all the *elders* of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren and his father's house.' The elders

¹ Published by John Ritchie, Kilmarnock. Price 1*d.*

manifestly *represented* the land of Egypt. Then in Leviticus iv. 13-15, we have the same truth put still more pointedly in connection with the Assembly, where it is perfectly clear that the elders *represent* the rest. In Numbers xi. 16 we are carried one step further. We find them not only representing, but we have what is expressed in New Testament language by the word 'oversight,' and as is afterwards detailed in the chapter, we see them bearing the burdens of the congregation, and ministering to them from the Lord. Then in Psalm cvii. 32 (R.V.) we have an important distinction, 'Let them exalt Him also in the assembly of the people, and praise Him in the seat of the elders.' There are two meetings, a meeting of the people, and a meeting of the elders. That I take to be the germ, in Old Testament truth, of what we have more clearly and fully developed in the New."

These are seasonable words as to what oversight work is:—"It is absolutely essential that the elders, or shepherds, should be in contact with the flock, that they should know the sheep, should practically and literally care for them, that they should have them under their very eye, and that they should visit them. The reproach that is given in many scriptures in connection with this subject bears this out. As an example, turn to Ezekiel xxxiv. 2-4. I cannot pause to enter into detail, but it is sufficient to impress this, that the shepherds had responsibilities in connection with the sheep that they could only execute by being in direct contact with them. And therefore I say that the chief work of oversight is *not in the oversight meeting*, all-important as that is, but the overseers ought to be at *other* times in direct contact with the lambs and sheep of the flock, knowing their circumstances, entering into their trials, personally dealing with them day by day and week by week, and ministering God's truth, as by His Spirit may prove to be in season, for their souls."

Coming to the matter of fellowship in oversight, he says,

referring to Acts xxi. 17, 20:—"The Greek word here translated 'thousands' is *myriads*. It would be impossible to compute the exact number of saints gathered in Jerusalem at that time, but any computation that is at all reasonable would make it almost impossible and impracticable that they could have been accustomed to meet in one building for the breaking of bread. I simply submit that for a fact to be tested by the Scripture. If you will even in the most superficial manner read what the Holy Spirit has recorded of the numbers of saints gathered in Jerusalem, you must, or you would be hardly reasonable men at all, come to the conclusion that they could not have been gathered in one building. Nevertheless, there was in Jerusalem one oversight of elders. I do not for one moment doubt that we have there the mind of our God, the will of our God, from which, alas! we have all of us—I was going to say departed—but it is rather the other way, we have never attained unto it. God's purpose unquestionably is, that in any given town—bearing in mind what we have already said, that the elders should be in contact with the sheep—they should come together as a united oversight, and seek thus to ascertain more and more the mind of God in connection with His people. It was the same in Ephesus also. I need only refer you to the well-known verses, Acts xx. 17, 18. We could probably prove, if we had time, that there was more than one place of meeting in Ephesus, a town with a population of at least some hundreds of thousands, and yet the elders of that place were called by Paul to Miletus as one," etc.

Further on he points out that this is not to set aside local responsibility, quoting Matthew xviii. 20, "Where two or three are," etc., as "a fundamental truth . . . entering into the very constitution of an assembly," "to be handled with the utmost reverence, and not to be set aside by inferences drawn from Scriptural examples elsewhere." This we fully endorse, and may add that it receives strong con-

firmation from 1 Corinthians v. 4, where the power (not authority) of the Lord Jesus is connected with the gathering to His Name.

After pointing out various ways in which, as matter of fact, there was fellowship among assemblies in early days, the writer turns to 2 Corinthians viii., and points out the use of the plural 'churches' in verse 19. "Here is a striking instance, in addition to what we have seen, of sympathy, of interchange of ministry, and of united action. A number of churches appointing one man. Where could such be possible, if independency were admitted to be according to the mind of God? That is, then, manifestly one point at least that we should aim at, and that we should recognise. We need to be honest in these things, and recognise that we have fallen very far short of the will of God. I greatly tremble for the condition of saints who are unwilling to go on learning, for I believe the experience of all from first to last should be progress, step by step. Most of us have known what it is from the very days of our conversion to resist almost every truth that God has brought before us. Speaking for myself this is true, and from my little experience in dealing with others, I believe that the natural heart in all of us resists every truth of God. So that just as in past days we can look back and say, I remember the time when I fought against, perhaps, believers' baptism, or the breaking of bread as we now know it in the Scriptural order. Or perhaps it was the liberty of ministry, or God's rule of eldership in the church, or perhaps gathering to the Name of the Lord alone. As we have known what it was to fight in the energy of the flesh against the mighty power of the Spirit of God, so I tremble lest we should be found fighting still against truths that are manifestly in the Word of God, and which God is pressing upon the hearts and consciences of His people in the present day.

“Again, I want just in a word or two to point out this. In 1 Corinthians v. 13, written as that epistle was to the church of God in Corinth, and to all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, it was manifest that when the apostle said to those in Corinth, ‘Put away from among yourselves that wicked person,’ the discipline in the one church was to be owned in the others. Yet I have known of saints positively put out of one assembly, and then going like rabbits burrowing in a hole into another. And why? Because of the false principle of Independency. And so in the second epistle to the church of God in Corinth and to all the saints in all Achaia, when the apostle says that this man should be received back, he would be received elsewhere too.

“I have briefly touched upon a variety of points as to what I take to be God’s standard, that we are to aim at; and Satan, you may depend upon it, beloved, will oppose it to the utmost of his power. And why? Because if these questions were settled, a large proportion of the divisions in Christendom would be done away. There is no truth that would go so far towards blending the saints of God in manifest unity as this one that we are dealing with. Hence the enmity from Satan. It may be Satan working in the flesh even of many beloved children of God. And I would put it to you, we have to decide between one of three things. We may have, if we choose, one of the many forms of human government that has originated in the mind of man, and that exists around us at the present day. Or we may have Divine government, as we have looked at it in the word of God. Or, we may have no government at all. That means simply chaos and disorder. If we put it thus, surely there are few indeed, if any, who would not say—Let us at any rate have that which is of God, and let us reject that which is of man.

“Let me meet one difficulty that may suggest itself to

some, viz.:—that the days in which we are living are very different from apostolic times. We have to grant that, with a deep feeling of sorrow. And because they are different, what are we to do? Are we to institute something that we devise in our own hearts, or are we still to be guided by that which has been in the Word of God from the beginning? I care not how great our differences: if the divisions were multiplied ten thousand times, and if we could get only half a dozen saints to agree, yet I would say, the path of truth is that which is pointed out in the Book, and every other path is one of error, and can only lead us away from the Great Shepherd of the flock.”

Department of Question and Answer.

"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God."—*John vii. 17, R. V.*

QUESTION 26.—*Can sisters meet together for the breaking of bread?*

We answer without hesitation, We believe not; for in Scripture we find the breaking of bread connected with the coming together of the Assembly on the first day of the week, and on that day only. When the church is "in church"¹ is the time when divine rule and judgment is to be carried out, as see 1 Corinthians v.; the time also for the exercise of gift (1 Cor. xiv. 23). There is no thought in Scripture of a breaking of bread apart from them.

The practice in some of the sects around us of taking the bread and wine into the sick chamber savours much of the extreme unction in the Church of Rome; so also the breaking of bread apart from Church responsibility, or on any day than the first day of the week, is without Scriptural authority.

Some may say, But it is not forbidden; but if we thus argue we may say with equal truth the baptism of infants is not forbidden, neither is the giving to infants the bread and wine forbidden, a practice that was introduced amongst the saints in days of decline from obedience to the Lord. But when we are told how to do the right thing, then we know that anything else or anything done in another way is wrong.

Israel were never forbidden to carry the ark on a new cart, but they *were* told how it was to be carried; so the not doing it in "due order" (1 Chron. xv. 13) brought upon them judgment, instead of blessing.

Ministry amongst the saints is on behalf of an absent Lord, the public giving thanks for the bread is a ministry for Him until He return, and this ministry we believe is not that to which the woman is called, any more than the leading of the assembly in any other matter.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 27.—*What is the difference between a "thief" and a "robber" in John x. 1, 2.*

A "thief," as the word so translated implies, is one who takes for himself that which is the property of another, secretly, by guile, in the hope that so doing he remains unseen and unknown; on the other

¹ See 1 Cor. xi. 17.

hand, a "robber" is one who seizes another's property forcibly, by terrorism or actual violence.

In the language of the parable, the "thief" is the agent of the Devil in his character as the serpent, the "robber" his agent in his character of the roaring lion—the first employs craft with subtlety and deceit, the second the force of terror and persecution, of the loss of goods, or even of life, to effect the one purpose—viz., the present taking from the Shepherd of the sheep that which is His by right of His Father's gift and His own purchase.—W. H. H.

Fragment.

It is said by travellers that the waters of the Nile are so deliciously sweet, that those who live in that eastern land actually take salt in order to create thirst that they may have the pleasure of drinking the delicious waters of the Nile.

What is the truth of God's word? Is it not salt? And God means that all the truth of His book shall but create in us greater thirst for more of these delicious waters, the living oracles of the living God, that are indeed appreciable to him who, with set face and with prepared heart, seeks to know them. He finds them not only of more value than gold, but sweeter than honey.

TO OUR READERS.

IN our last issue we addressed our readers in the spirit of Galatians vi.: "Let every man prove his own work." As we anticipated, the replies are varied and interesting. The gist of some will doubtless be looked for by our readers. Hence the following:—

J. D. earnestly suggests a continuance of the Magazine on the lines already manifested, supporting his counsel with words of encouragement and becoming prayer.

I. N. enlists himself as an agent to supply "N.T.," urges the need for continuance of such teaching, would gladly see the price increased, and declares his conviction that "opposition will gradually cease as the truth lays hold of the opponents."

F. H. very heartily and lengthily sends words of counsel and cheer. He judges that the Lord very specially regards the paper with favour. He presses in detail the need and comeliness of continuing the publication, and offers most acceptable and helpful counsel, etc., etc. Finally, he declares that a cessation of "N.T." would only compel him, with others who fear God and think upon His name, to put their shoulder to the wheel, and by His grace commence another paper to *spread the same truths*.

One sends five shillings as willing help, hoping that he does not offend in offering such gift, which indeed he only comforts by.

Another, who cannot refrain from telling how much God has blessed *Needed Truth* to him, prays that it may still be the bearer of messages from the Lord, and adds, "They are always the truths most blessed to us that need thinking out and meditating upon in God's presence, as they thus become food to the soul, strengthening and sustaining, so that it is not blown about by every wind of doctrine."

Others would gladly guarantee the need and acceptance of "N.T." in that the price should be 4*d.*, 6*d.*, and even 1*s.* per copy, rather than any weakening of the hands of its conductors or cessation of the publication should take place. One, and only one, has made bold to write his convictions in such language as it would be a shame to repeat.

From all the foregoing and much else we assuredly gather that God's will is that we give Him thanks--take courage and go on, even though it be as with bare head and feet, under the taunts of those who in due season shall reap as they sow. Albeit we intercede with God for such, and remain to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption,

Your bond-servants for His sake.

THE EDITORS & CO-WORKERS.

FROM WITHIN TO WITHOUT.

IN studying the Scriptures of Truth the spiritual mind can hardly fail to see a beautiful order in all that God does. His manner of doing things is His own, and is in keeping with His character.

God always works from within to without—from Himself to man. This is true, whether Creation or Redemption be the sphere.

In Genesis i. 1 it is recorded that "God created the heavens and the earth." Not the earth and the heavens; not first that which was designed to be farthest from His own dwelling place, but that which was to be nearest Himself. "O Thou that dwellest in the heavens" (Ps. cxxiii. 1).

First the heavens and then the earth are dealt with, and the record ends with "every green herb." Also in chapter ii. the same line is followed: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished."

It is thus evident that the heavens first received the Creator's attention, and then the earth.

We believe this to be an index to all God's work afterwards, and hope to adduce a few out of many scriptures to show that God's manner of working is from within to without,—from Himself to man,—and thus seek to profit ourselves and our readers as God may help.

THE COMMANDMENTS.

In the commandments to Israel God begins with Himself, saying, "I am THE LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me" (Exod. xx. 1-3).

The first commandment deals with God in relation to man; the next two with man in relation to God; the next

(a combination of these) with man in relation to God and man; and the last six with man in relation to his fellow man.

The foundation stone of man's relationship to God is God's relationship to man. And the definition, as well as the measure, of man's responsibility to God rests solely on the revelation God has made of Himself to man. Thus much as to principle.

THE TABERNACLE.

In giving Moses the pattern of the tabernacle Jehovah first says, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exod. xxv. 8). It was not so much a question of man being privileged to dwell in the presence of God, how blessed soever that is, but that God would take up His dwelling among men. That is, God descends to man, and then gives directions as to how man may approach Him. But this is not all. The pattern, we notice, began with the Holy of Holies—the ark, mercy-seat, and cherubim are described. Then the holy place is considered; then follows the description of the table, shewbread and candlestick; and lastly, the pattern of the outer court is communicated.

JEHOVAH gave His directions to Moses from "*within* the holiest of all to the *outer* court."

As to the relative value of the metals to be used, He began with gold and finished with copper. All this has its own peculiar significance.

THE OFFERINGS.

It is very instructive to notice the *order* of the offerings in Leviticus. The first mentioned is the burnt offering, then come the meat offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering.

Now, the burnt offering was exclusively for JEHOVAH, for "the priest shall burn all on the altar" (chap. i. 9). It was

the only offering in which there was nothing for the priests.¹ They might eat of the meat offering (chap. vi. 16), the peace offering (vii. 15), the sin offering (vi. 26), and the trespass offering (vii. 6), but the burnt offering was solely for JEHOVAH, and is first mentioned.

In approaching God man begins at the bottom of the ladder, and goes on until he reaches the top. He is first a trespasser, and knows it; then he sins ignorantly; then has no peace; then requires evenness and purity in his walk; and lastly, draws nigh to worship. All these requirements are met in the offerings. But God looks at them as from Himself to man,—from within to without,—and gives directions accordingly.

The burnt offering was that in which Jehovah found delight—it was worship (see 2 Chron. xxix. 27, 28), and offered by the offerer's "own voluntary will" (Lev. i. 3). In the case of the Hezekiah revival, only those who were "of a free heart" offered burnt offerings (2 Chron. xxix. 31). But that which was nearest man, the trespass offering, was obliged to be offered. Contrast the "if his offering" of Leviticus i. 2 with the "he shall bring his trespass offering" of chapter v. 6.

In fine, the instruction conveyed in the order of the offerings demonstrates the fact that the divine economy begins with the glory of God, and ends with blessing to man.

THE ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT AT THE SAVIOUR'S BIRTH.

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,—

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,
AND ON EARTH PEACE,
GOODWILL AMONG MEN."²

¹ Nothing of the flesh. "The priest that offereth any man's burnt offering had to himself the skin of it" (Lev. vii. 8).—ED.

² Luke ii. 13, 14 (marg.)

When God sent His Son into the world the first consideration was by no means the blessing of man, but His own glory. God began, as is His usual way, with Himself; then considered a groaning creation, and finally had blessing for man. Of course all are inseparably connected, but the order is God first and man afterwards.

The very establishment of *glory to God in the highest* secures *peace on earth and goodwill among men*. The order in which it is apprehended by man is the reverse. He looks at himself and his own blessing first; then gradually comes to see that the highest thing is "glory to God." But many never come to see this at all, and go on with might and main striving for blessing to man apart from God's glory. As though blessing to the creature were all that God had ever considered. Such have yet to learn that God will first be glorified in all things.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

John xvii. is a scripture which contains a mine of wealth to the disciple who seeks therefor. The order we have observed to prevail in the Old Testament is here enunciated and emphasized. He, whose ear JEHOVAH wakened morning by morning to hear as the learner (Isa. l. 4), was in the mind of God as no creature could be; and He begins, not with the creature's blessing, but with His Father's glory. "FATHER, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee" (ver. 1).

One of the objects of His coming from above was to "save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). But He ever saw and kept before Him that which towered high above man's salvation—the glory of His Father. This, therefore, is the first mentioned in His memorable prayer recorded in this chapter.

Next to His Father's glory, those whom the Father had given Him were most dear to His heart. "HOLY FATHER,

keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (ver. 11).

Having presented His petition for these, He turned His thoughts to the world that had despised Him and cast Him out. "O RIGHTEOUS FATHER, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me" (ver. 25).

Thus the order is from within to without. It begins with the Father's glory, next speaks of His saints, and then reaches to the world.

From the foregoing it will be plain that the saint's responsibility is first to God, next to his brethren, and then to the world.

He is first taught that God dwells within him in the person of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20); Eph. i. 13; iv. 30), and of his consequent responsibility to God.

Then he is instructed concerning his relationship to all saints (Rom. xii. 5; 1 Cor. xii. 13), and his responsibility towards them (Rom. xii. 10; John xiii. 14; 1 Peter iii. 8).

Lastly, his relation to the world (John xv. 19; xvii. 11, first clause; 1 Peter ii. 11), and his responsibility towards it (Phil. ii. 15; 1 Peter ii. 12) are dealt with. The first consideration for every child of God, individually, is to be well-pleasing to his God and Father. The second, to carry out his responsibility towards his brethren. And lastly, to fulfil the claims the world has upon him—the order from within to without.

The first of these requires no definition. The second calls for some remark.

The disciple who remembers that he is part of a whole, and bears a distinct relationship to that whole in the shape of blessed privileges and solemn responsibilities, will seek to carry these out—firstly, towards *the assembly at the house* (or room or hall, as the case may be; 1 Cor. xvi. 19, *kat'oikon*—*at the house*); secondly, in relation to *the assembly in the*

town (or *city*) where he resides (Acts xiii. 1); and thirdly, in connection with *the assemblies of the province* (or *county* or *district*—Gal. i. 2) in which his lot is cast,

As to the house (or room, or hall), his first responsibility is to those in the assembly there, and then to all God's saints who are in close proximity thereto, though not "in the assembly."

As to the town (or city), his first thoughts ought to be directed towards those in the assembly there, and then to all believers in the town, who, though children of God, are not in assembly of God.

As to the province (or county, or district), his attention should first be given to his brethren in the assemblies therein, and then to all saints in the province. Then this widens out and embraces "all saints everywhere." Thus the order is still from within to without.

As to the third consideration, the claim of the world upon the disciple, Mark v. 19 would seem to indicate the first and nearest place of responsibility: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord has done for thee." Then the town or city where he resides presents a larger sphere for testimony. This again extends to "all the world," and embraces "every creature"; according, of course, as the Lord may be pleased to lead, and give the needed strength and ability. But the order, we believe, will always be found to be the same—from within to without.

Happy is he who, in the mind of God, sets himself to seek God's glory first; the welfare of his brethren next; and lastly, endeavours, according to the grace and ability that God giveth, to discharge his responsibility to the world in bearing testimony to the Rejected One by life and lip.

THOS. WINSHIP.

SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY.

(Continued from page 16.)

IN seeking to further expound the trinity that makes the human being, as distinguished from the brute beast, we shall endeavour to consider each part in the order of the New Testament scripture.¹ That, probably, is the reverse order of how Jehovah God *created* the man whom He *formed* out of the dust of the ground. At that time the *first man*, Adam, was made (became) a living soul through the breathing into his nostrils of the נְשָׁמָה, n'shamah of life.² The brute is never said to have received nor to possess נְשָׁמָה, n'shamah. Indeed, the brute was created and made a living soul by the Word of God, who SPOKE them into existence.

The adjective "*living*," as applied to man alive in the mortal body, describes, not what he has, but what HE IS AS LIABLE to death! Hence, man out of the mortal body is described as a *dead* soul, as see, for example, Numbers vi. 6. He shall come at no *dead body*. This word "body" is the translation of the ordinary word soul, which is different from the one which signifies body. Man is never said in the Scriptures to have a *living* soul. Were that the case, the meaning would be that man is like the beast. On the contrary, it is in this that the great radical difference between man and beast is found.

The beast has living soul, but *not* soul alone, as man only HAS. Because the beast HAS IN IT living soul, as well as being itself a living soul, at death the beast that was, is not. Whereas, at death, man whom we knew as a living soul, and whom now we speak of as a dead soul, still is,—“For in God man lives, moves, and is.”

¹ 1 Thess. v. 23.² Ger. ii. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 45.

What man has, and what the beast has, we never could have known, had not God been pleased to reveal this to us in the Holy Scriptures. Man is wholly shut up to God and the word of His grace in regard to knowledge of the vital difference between, as well as the common possession of, the beast and mankind.

Every living thing can only yield or bring forth according to its own kind.

God hath given to every seed a body, as it hath pleased Him.¹ Thus, whatever similarity may be found, and there is marvellous similarity in the generation of the creature as concerneth the outward shell or body, the brute could never bring forth, nor rise, nor be brought up by any process to be as mankind. God anticipated such monstrous wickedness as might seek that such should be (comp. Lev. xviii. 22-30, and Rom. i.). Neither could the brute beast and men coalesce so as to drag man down to the level of the brute.

The beast has spirit as well as man; otherwise we apprehend it would have been wholly untameable. Yet every beast has been tamed (see Jas. iii. 7).

In fact it is this possession of spirit that makes the beast to have the sagacity, intelligence, etc., that are the wonder and delight of an owner of such. That too, alas! has led not a few into the error of Romans i. 21-23: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Which, again, has caused others to speak of the brute as possessing "the germs of human faculties in an undeveloped state," or of possessing "man-like qualities," and other such-like things, which, nevertheless, are only the outcome of the רוח (ruach, Heb.), πνεῦμα (pneuma, Gr.) SPIRIT, which the beast hath, and which at its death goeth downward (Eccles. iii. 21).

As the scriptures speak, the difference between the extremes of vegetable life and that of the brute is that, the former has neither spirit nor soul, and yet has a body, and

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 38.

may yield seed according to its own kind.¹ While the root difference between the brute and man is, the former has a spirit, *living* soul, and a body; the latter has a spirit and a soul (NOT a *living* soul) and a body.

Doubtless the very grandest and greatest illustration of the trinity of man has expression in the grace of God, "Who sent His own Son in the *likeness* of *sinful* flesh (Rom. viii. 3). We emphasize the word *sinful* to refute the allegation of certain who affirm that man by nature has not a spirit, which is quite disproved by the fact that God's Son, as found among men, "had a spirit and a soul and a body.

At His death on Calvary's hill we are told that His spirit went up to the Father, His soul went down to Hades (in its upper compartment—*i.e.*, into its sphere of *comfort*, and not into that of its *torment*), while His body was borne along and laid in the new tomb, which belonged to Joseph of Arimathæa.

The whole man is sometimes spoken of as a spirit. When that is so, the meaning usually is that he is viewed as a person in the pathway of wrong, or of possible wrongdoing; as see 1 Corinthians v. 5, also 1 John iv. 1-3. The spirit of man is never said to go down. Hence we know that they of 1 Peter iii. 19 were not what many speak of as "departed spirits." A most unwarrantable term, equalled by the similarly misleading expression, "immortal soul." Although, despite these facts, those words are used to describe great and solemn verities.

The whole man is also quite commonly, in the Scriptures, and by English-speaking people of the present day, spoken of as a soul. The eight persons of Noah's household are spoken of as eight souls that were saved through water, while any catastrophe is now-a-days described as entailing the loss of so many souls—*i.e.*, persons. The operations, to and from the soul *in* man (Job xiv. 22), seem to be from

¹ Gen. i. 29.

the spirit (the seat of understanding) to the soul, and from the soul (the seat of affection) through the body. Therefore the ordinary current of working is, first the spirit, then the soul, and after these the body.

The love and the hate, with all other feelings that possess the soul, find quick expression in the look, the gesture, the words, the way, etc., etc., of the man. Yet the source of every manifestation is the spirit, as witness how the utterances of a Peter and John were answered by the Lord Jesus in those most instructive words,—

“Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.”

In saying this, we do not lose sight of the fact that the spirit of the unconverted man is that which the spirit, that now worketh in the children of disobedience, operates upon (Eph. ii. 2), just as the spirit of the born-again man is that which the spirit of God works upon and from. See Romans viii. 16.

Though the whole person is spoken of as a soul, the Scriptures make it quite plain that the man as a man is either IN or OUT of the mortal body, as see—

“The life *I* now live *in* the flesh” (Gal. ii. 20).

“But if *I* live *in* the flesh” (Phil. i. 22).¹

“Yourselves *in* the body” (Heb. xiii. 3).

“As long as *I* am *in* this tabernacle” (2 Pet. i. 13, 14).²

Whether in the body or out of the body, the personality of the man centres in and radiates from his soul; whence—

“The soul desires, and can experience leanness;”

“Suffers hunger, and enjoys plentifulness;”

“Is vexed, and anon rejoices;”

“Faints, and may be revived;”

“Loves and hates;”

“May be converted, or may remain unconverted;”

“May be lost or saved”—*i.e.*, acquired.

¹ Comp. too 2 Cor. v. 6-3, xii. 2.

² Comp. Job xix. 26, R.V.

We entreat our readers not to confound the soul (the life) of the flesh with the soul of man (Gen. ix. 4). Further, the man sometimes is identified with his body, which, strangely enough, has led some to affirm that "the body is all." These assert, for example, that since devout men carried Stephen to his burial, therefore Stephen was only found in the body which these buried.

Christ also was buried. Yet, during the time that His body was in the tomb, it is written,—

"He went down into the lower parts of the earth.
His soul was not left in Hades."

The first mention of Hades (*i.e.*, Sheol of the Hebrew) is Genesis xxxvii. 35.

Jacob, who understood and believed that his son Joseph had been devoured by wild beasts.

Observe that his son was devoured, as men speak; but that meant that only the body had been so.

Wherefore, Jacob said, "I will go down into Sheol (Hades) unto my son, mourning."

Neither Sheol nor Hades ever mean the grave.

In conclusion, we pray that the very God of peace will be pleased to sanctify every reader wholly—even to keep the entire spirit, and the soul and the body of such, blameless in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. How encouraging that He who calleth is faithful, and will also do.

JOHN BROWN.

Questions on the subject of the foregoing article are invited from our readers.

BAPTISM.

THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

BAPTISM is presented for the first time as a public confession of a personal change of mind by "John the Dipper"—the only man who is called a "Baptist" in the Word of God.

The baptism of John was not a copy of the "divers washings" (*διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς*, *diaphorois baptismois*)¹ of the law; with which, indeed, it had little or nothing in common except the use of water, and from which, in the New Testament, it is carefully distinguished by the employment of a different noun. Contrast *βάπτισμα* (*baptisma*): the ordinance of baptism; and *βαπτισμός* (*baptismos*)²: which designates other ceremonial immersions.

Nor was John's baptism borrowed, as has often been asserted, from that of the Jewish proselytes. It is almost, if not quite, certain that there was no such thing as Jewish proselyte baptism in existence before the days of John, and that the Rabbins, if they practised such a rite several centuries after the destruction of Jerusalem, did so in imitation of him. The initiation of proselytes by baptism is neither mentioned in the Old Covenant scriptures nor in the Apocrypha. The Jewish historians, Philo and Josephus, take no notice of it, and it is not referred to by any of the "fathers" of the first three centuries. Most probably, therefore, its antiquity is altogether a myth.

On the other hand, the divine origin of this baptism is clearly proved by the questions addressed (1) by the priests and Levites to John,³ and (2) by the Lord Jesus to the chief priests and scribes and elders.⁴ The astonishment of the Pharisees expressed in the words, "Why baptizest

¹ Heb ix. 10.

² Mark vii. 4, 8; Heb. vi. 2; ix. 10.

³ John i. 19-28. ⁴ Matt. xxi. 23-27; Mark xi. 27-33; Luke xx. 1-8,

thou then?" and their inability to reply to the interrogation, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" are inconceivable if this thing had been done in accordance with the traditions of the elders.

The responsibility laid upon the people by Moses, to judge the claims of a new prophet *during his lifetime*,¹ seems to have been felt by those who sent the official deputation to make inquiries of John. The duty, however, was, to them, a disagreeable one; and the imprisonment and death of the Baptist soon gave them an excuse for shirking it altogether. No decision was come to; hence, when the Lord inquired of them concerning John's authority as a prophet they were found unprepared.

It is evident that the new idea connected with the act of baptism did not change the nature of the act itself. It was still *dipping*, as will be seen more fully from the following considerations:—

(1) We have already remarked² that the same verb is employed in the Septuagint, or Greek version, of 2 Kings v. 14 in Matthew iii. 6, and in Mark i. 5. If, therefore, Naaman the Syrian dipped *himself*, it follows that John the Baptist dipped *his disciples*.

(2) Where baptism is spoken of with reference to the element used, it is *ἐν ὕδατι* (*en hudati*),³ "IN WATER." The revisers have been constrained to put this rendering into their margin, and the American committee (whose correction we welcome for the truth's sake, although it does not go far enough) adds, "After 'baptize' let the margin 'IN' and the text 'with' exchange places."

(3) John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there.⁴ The Revised margin has "many waters," which is a literal translation of the words *ὕδατα πολλά* (*hudata polla*). These words are Greek,

¹ Deut. xiii. 1-5; xviii. 15-22. ² *Needed Truth*, Vol. III., p. 103.

³ For example, John i. 26, 31, 33.

⁴ John iii. 23.

but the sense in which they are used is Hebrew, and this sense must be looked for in the Old Covenant Scriptures. There we shall find ὕδατα πολλὰ as the equivalent of מַיִם רַבִּים (mäyim räbbim), "many waters," and applied to large collections of water, such as the sea. For example, 2 Samuel xxii. 17; Psalm xviii. 16: "He drew me out of many (R. M. "great") waters" (Heb. מִמַּיִם רַבִּים, mim-mäyim räbbim; LXX., ἐξ ὑδάτων πολλῶν, ex hudatōn pollōn). Indeed a glance at an English concordance will satisfy any one that, in the Bible, this expression means a mass of water, and not, as some have pretended, numerous shallow streams. John required deep water in order to baptize. The baptism consisted in his dipping the repentant ones in this water.

The place which John's baptism occupies in the history of God's dealings with His ancient people is but little understood by the majority of Christians. The ministry of John was preparatory. He comes into view preaching in the wilderness of Judæa and saying, "Repent, for the reign of the heavens hath drawn nigh."¹ Jehovah has sent His messenger to proclaim to Israel that the Kingdom, foretold by the prophets and foreshadowed in the victories of David and the glories of Solomon, is, at length, about to be set up!

But the way of Jehovah had to be prepared,² and this in the sense of Luke i. 17—namely, "to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." This making ready of a *prepared people* must needs be by way of bringing them to repentance. Those who were baptized were so "confessing their sins."³ The baptism to which they submitted was "the baptism of repentance"⁴—the expression of individual conviction, and not, like circumcision, a hereditary rite.

Each Israelite who went down into Jordan water said, by an act more eloquent than any words, "The Kingdom

¹ Matt. iii. 2.² Is. xl. 3.³ Matt. iii. 6.⁴ Acts xix. 4.

has drawn nigh, and I am not fit to enter it. The Messiah is coming, and I am not worthy to stand before Him. I with all my people, have been under probation. I acknowledge that we have been proved a failure." Thereupon he was plunged into the river of Judgment, whose waters closed and flowed over him.

Self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, who sought baptism as a concession to the religious fashion of the day, were rebuked in stern words, and charged to bring forth fruits answerable to the repentance of which the baptism itself was a profession.

A national repentance on the part of Israel would have been followed by a national salvation wrought out for them by God. If the people, as such, had acknowledged their sin, they would, as such, have acknowledged their Saviour. A heavenly reign would have been inaugurated on earth; divine rule would have been exercised among men; and the Lord's Christ would have governed Israel, and, through Israel, all the nations.

It was not so to be. The Kingdom suffered violence in the person of its herald and representative. Israel, with violent hands, thrust God's mercy away from them.

The baptism of John did not, strictly speaking, save, but it brought men into a position where, having cast themselves flat down upon the grace of God, He could come in in grace and save them. Hence the special feature of John's preaching was, as Paul reminds us,¹ his "saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him who should come after him; that is, on Jesus." "I, indeed," he says, "baptize you in water unto repentance; but HE THAT COMETH AFTER ME . . . shall baptize you in Holy Spirit and fire."²

The explanation of these two baptisms is found in the words which immediately follow.³ The threshing floor is to be thoroughly purged. Some, baptized in Holy Spirit, are

¹ Acts xix. 4.

² Matt. iii. 11.

³ Matt. iii. 12.

to be gathered as wheat into the garner ; others, rejected as chaff, are to be consumed in unquenchable fire.

To those who took the place of death under the ministry of John the Lord, as life-giver, did surely appear. The seventh chapter of the Gospel according to Luke gives us precious information concerning this matter.

“And all the people . . . and the publicans justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John.”¹ They “justified God,” as a criminal may justify his judge; namely, by pleading guilty, and thus admitting the justice of the sentence which the law pronounces.

“But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, not having been baptized of Him.”² They justified themselves, and, hence, denied God’s judgment, and set aside God’s counsel concerning them.

There was no efficacy in the baptismal water ; the required preparation consisted, not in the act of immersion, but in the inward condition of those who justified God by condemning themselves.

The Lord Jesus presents us³ with a striking picture of the general condition of the men of that generation. It is easy to imagine the scene He describes. Who that has watched, with a kindly interest, children at play does not know that one of their favourite amusements is to imitate what they have seen older people do? The Lord brings before us two groups of children, sitting opposite one another, in the market-place ; the one group imitating the music of a wedding or the mourning of a burial ; the other holding themselves aloof and refusing to join in their companions’ games. The bulk of the nation neither responded to the severity of John nor to the grace of the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless some had justified God, and God was now justifying them by sending to them Christ as Saviour.

¹ Luke vii. 29, R.M.

² Luke vii. 30, R.M.

³ Luke vii. 31-35.

Luke narrates the story of Jesus in the Pharisee's house¹ as an illustration of the working of this principle. The Pharisee is referred to as an example of the class who had frustrated the counsel of God towards themselves. The woman is considered as one of those to whom repentance had been given. I have no doubt, from the context, that she also had been baptized, confessing her sins. The Lord Jesus was manifested to her, while the Pharisee saw no beauty in Him that he should desire Him. To the latter He remained a simple street-preacher, in whose case it was not necessary to observe the commonest duties of Eastern politeness. If, at first, he was willing to consider Him as a prophet, he soon comes to doubt His claim to even this title. Yet the Lord was received in that house, not however by the one who invited Him there, but by another, who was not herself invited. It is in such ways as these that wisdom has been justified by all her children.

The last mention of John's baptism is in Acts xviii. 24 to xix. 7, where the unhappy division of the chapters and the imperfect rendering of chapter xix. 2 have greatly obscured the sense. Apollos comes to Ephesus from Alexandria, and teaches accurately the things concerning Jesus, *knowing only the baptism of John*. Aquila and Priscilla expound to him *more* accurately the way of God, bringing his knowledge of God's dispensational dealings up to date. Apollos then goes to Corinth, in Achaia, and Paul comes to Ephesus, where he finds certain disciples, no doubt made and baptized by Apollos. Of these men he inquires, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit, having believed?" They answer him, "Nay; we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was [given]" (Revised Version). The absurd reply put into their mouths by the Authorized Version could not have proceeded from followers of John's teaching, which contained sufficient information concerning the existence of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Luke vii. 36-50.

Words similar to those they use are to be found in John vii. 39, where it is written that "the Holy Spirit was not yet [given]." In both cases "given," or some such word, is understood. Nevertheless the baptism of these men was behind the times, and out of keeping with God's present ways. Therefore, although really baptized—that is, dipped—and that so recently, they are again baptized, this time "into the name of the Lord Jesus."

Here is scriptural authority for baptizing into His name those who have received a "baptism" which the Word of God does not authorize, not to speak of those who have only been sprinkled upon, and therefore not baptized at all. Here is also an appeal to the conscience of believers who persist in abiding by any such unscriptural ceremony, as if it could be accepted by God as a substitute for a divine ordinance, or as if their adherence to it would do, instead of obedience to the Lord.

A. P. MACDONALD.

Fragment.

Nothing calls forth more opposition than pure truth. What is liked generally is a mixture—such as a great deal of sentimentalism, with a very little truth as seasoning. This will take and become popular, as a rule. Had the majority of Christians lived under Moses they would have said, "The woollen is too warm and the linen is too cold, but half of each is just comfortable."—*From a Correspondent.*

“UNTO MYSELF.”

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY E. STACK.

(Read Exod. xix. 4-7; Lev. xxiii. 2.)

FROM these Scriptures we hope to gather something of the mind of the Lord concerning our gathering unto Himself. Before we can learn the will of God, it is necessary that we should lose our own will. No believer should have a will of his own, but every one should have a mind. We often find children of God with no mind and any amount of will. The will of man is entirely opposed to the will of God. The only example in Scripture of one who did the will of God, and did it perfectly, is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The will of God, as we have it in the Thessalonian Epistle, is our sanctification—*i.e.*, our separation. The moment we believed we were set apart by God, that in His own way and time He might take us up and use us for His glory, just as, previous to our conversion, the Devil used us in our carrying out of our own will. Paul could thus tell the Thessalonian saints, “This is the will of God, even your sanctification.” Sanctification has a double aspect; that is, on the one hand it is absolute, and on the other it is progressive. The very moment we were converted we were sanctified and set apart; but in John xvii. (R.V.) we read words that fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, “Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.” Before we can do the will of God His word must really become food to our souls, for it is possible to read the Book of God in a carnal way, and obtain knowledge that will only puff us up, and make us think that we are superior to our fellows; and then we will seek to do our own will, and to bring ourselves into prominence before our fellow saints. Sanctification of the

truth leads us into the mind of God, and it will lead us to be holy, for, as one has said, "Separation is holiness, and holiness is separation."

In Exodus xix. we see God bringing a redeemed people into relationship with, and separating them unto, Himself. God never stops short of that, and anything short of that is not of God. Notice, again, in Leviticus xxiii. God gathers the people around Himself, for the word convocation simply means gathering. There the Lord speaks of the feasts which He commanded them to keep as "My feasts." Now, in the Gospel by John we find the Lord speaking of them as the "feasts of the Jews." In Leviticus xxiii. the tabernacle is set up, and the presence of God is maintained with His redeemed people on the ground of sacrifice, and we see the redeemed tabernacling or dwelling around God, not according to their own will, but according to His will, and celebrating the feasts according to His mind. In like manner every redeemed soul throughout the world should be gathered into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and if they are not, it shows that their own will is at work.

In Ezekiel viii., ix. we see the longsuffering of God—how unwilling He was to withdraw His presence from the Temple where He had put His name. The cloud rises gradually, and when it is gone the inscription over it is "Ichabod." In John ii. 13 we read of the Temple, and the true Glory of the Temple was there, and yet Temple worshippers knew Him not. Although Ichabod had been written on the Temple, Israel was going through the routine of worship, and sacrifices were being offered; but where was the Lord Jesus Christ? Outside! While they were celebrating the feast of the passover He was outside. The Deliverer had come, but the people whom He came to deliver would not accept His deliverance. In John vi. they could talk of the manna. Here was the Bread of Life,

and they had no desire for Him. In John vii. they could celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, which speaks of glory, but there was no room for the God of Glory in that feast. There is a possibility of occupying a position, and yet have no room for God in that position. There may be any amount of room for the will of man, but no room for God. In Hosea vii. 13, 14 there was an assembling of the people, but it was for a purpose—for corn and wine, and yet they were rebelling against Jehovah. The will of man was being carried out under the appearance of being the right thing, but God was outside.

The most unspeakable privilege we have in the Book of God is gathering unto the Lord Jesus Christ, however loosely that may be held by some. The exhortation in Hebrews x. is not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. Every time we gather to remember the Lord it is one time less, and we may have remembered the Lord in the breaking of bread for the last time upon earth, but, if He permits us to remain a little longer, it is our privilege to gather around Himself. To some it may appear trifling, but it is better to do the will of the Lord than to do our own will, to please ourselves, or a multitude of people. We may appear narrow and bigoted to others, but it is ours to do the will of God, who has redeemed us and gathered us unto Himself. Let us see that we will have little to regret as we look back upon our past history and review the way we have trod. As we look on to the future, let us see that we have got His word, and that we are setting down our feet in the path which He would have us to take. Let us seek unto the will of our God; and as we do so we shall be kept simple, happy, and humble, and He will be glorified in us; and that should be the object of every Christian's life.

THE FOUR GREAT MONARCHIES.

II.

IN the later Assyrian kingdom, to which reference was made at the close of a preceding paper,¹ the succession of rulers can be determined with something of certainty, the order being :

Pul.
 Tiglath-Pileser II.
 Shalmaneser IV.
 Sargon.
 Sennacherib.
 Esarhaddon.
 Asshur-bani-pal.
 Saracus (?).

The enormous influence which Assyria exercised upon the fortunes of Israel and of Judah during the period covered by the reigns of these monarchs is shown by the frequency of reference to the great Gentile power in the Scriptural history and in the prophecies which bear upon the period, every one of the names in the above list, except the two last, being found in the sacred pages.

During the period in question the Ten Tribes were led into the captivity from which they have never returned, and Judah was reduced (with rare intervals) to the position of a feudatory and dependent power. King after king in Assyria was made the instrument of the execution of the divine judgment upon an offending and unrepentant race. One was "the hired razor"² by which the Lord shaved, another, "the rod of His anger, sent against an hypocritical people,"³ and concurrently with this—perhaps because of

¹ *Needed Truth*, Vol. IV., p. 15. ² Isa. vii. 20. ³ Isa. x. 5.

it—the boundaries of the Assyrian empire were expanded, and its power and might increased, until indeed, as a cedar in Lebanon, the height of its ruler was exalted above all the trees of the field, and he over-topped and over-shadowed the nations around him, until, besides Assyria proper, Susiana, Chaldæa, Media, Matiene, Armenia, Palestine, Idumæa, Cyprus, and part of Lower Egypt were beneath his sway.

But his days were numbered, and the end was at hand. The axe had boasted itself against Him that lifted it, and though the empire had been raised to this great height,

“’Twas but to sink beneath misfortune’s blow
With louder ruin to the gulf below.”

It would seem as if Assyria never really recovered from the shock caused by the sudden destruction of Sennacherib’s host during the Palestinian invasion, which he led in person, and which was described with such *verve* and dramatic force by the greatest of all the great prophets of the time;¹ or from the demoralization which followed it, and which culminated in the murder of the baffled despot by two of his own sons, before the very shrine of the deity to whom he had pledged his allegiance, and upon whose special and personal protection he still confidently relied.

No doubt, under Esarhaddon, there was a time of partial recovery. That was a wise and a warlike prince, well able to make himself feared and respected by his neighbours, and his martial expeditions had generally a successful issue. Nevertheless, even in his time, the power of certain of the fringe of surrounding and feudatory kingdoms was increasing; and amongst them an “anti-Semitic movement” was set on foot, which gathered to itself strength as time rolled on. Wars and rumours of wars were constant; rebellions

¹ Isa. x. 24-34.

and outbreaks had no end; Esarhaddon had even to reconquer Babylon for himself.

His son and successor, Asshur-bani-pal (the Sardanapalus of the Greeks), though far from resemblance to the effeminate fool portrayed by Greek historians, yet fell short of the warlike prowess of his ancestors; though his patronage of learning and of the fine arts is even now acknowledged with something akin to gratitude by great men who are versed in Eastern lore, and whose researches (to which all Biblical students are indebted) have been much aided by the remains of the collection of engraved tablets, cylinders and seals which he formed in his magnificent library at Nineveh.¹

Asshur-bani-pal succeeded in keeping at bay, and even in partially hurling back, the mutinous nations that rose against him, but "the flowing tide was with them," and its waves were only checked to return again with greater force. He died, and was succeeded by his son, whose name has been tentatively read Saracus or Sabacus.

This young man lacked much of the energy of either his father or his grandfather, gave himself up to pleasure and to voluptuous ease, a manner of life which had but small accord with the times which were upon him.

For, following upon an inroad of Scythic barbarians, which had still further weakened Assyria, the Medes rose once more, and this time the issue was joined in grim earnest, for Astyages (or Cyaxares, as he is otherwise called), their leader, sent emissaries into Babylonia and Susiana to stir up these nations against Assyria, and with success. He further induced the King of Egypt (Pharaoh-Necho, who, indeed, needed but little persuasion) to join the new league. And then the Medes upon the north, and the Babylonians and Susianians upon the south, attacked Assyria simultaneously.

¹ "The Chaldean Account of Genesis," by George Smith, p. 33.

At this supreme crisis Saracus showed himself not unworthy of his place as the last of Sargon's fierce dynasty and race. He gathered all the forces at his disposal, and divided them (no doubt a great mistake in policy) into two formidable hosts, and himself taking the command of the northern army, which was intended to operate against the Medes, he committed the southern division to the hand of one of the princes of the empire, Nabopolassar by name, as commander-in-chief.

Saracus charged Nabopolassar to occupy Babylon with all speed, and at all costs to hold it as the centre of Assyrian power in the South. The former part of the charge was carried out to the letter, for Nabopolassar marched upon Babylon, entered the city, and established himself and his host there; but being so established, the indefatigable Astyages opened negotiations with him, offering to recognise him as King of Babylon, and to make an alliance with him, which should be cemented by the marriage of his son NEBUCHADNEZZAR with Astyages' daughter, Amuhia or Amytis.

The bait proved too attractive for Nabopolassar's loyalty and sense of honour, as we should say, though, truth to tell, loyalty had but little vogue in Assyria, and sense of honour but small place in an Assyrian's mind; he turned against his king, joined Saracus' own forces under his command to those of the advancing Medes, and conjointly with them, laid siege to Nineveh.

Saracus first offered a stout resistance, but, appalled by some unlooked-for disaster, said by some to have occurred through the destruction of part of the city's wall by the uprising of the Tigris (then swollen by floods from the Armenian hills) in a great and terrible storm, he concluded that his gods had failed him, his deities forsaken him, and so, gathering his treasures, his wives, his concubines and his children with him into his magnificent palace, he had the great structure fired, and perished in its ruins.

With him ended the mighty Assyrian empire, overthrown by the interposition of Divine Providence, by the outstretching of the arm of the true "King of Nations," who has His way in the whirlwind and the storm; and thus the earth was freed from the incubus of one power of darkness, of devilry and of blood, and one, too, that had been amongst the worst—if, indeed, it was not *the* worst—that had ever cumbered her surface.

And the deliverance was lasting. "There was no healing of the Assyrian's bruise";¹ the power had melted, the empire had passed from the earth for ever.

Not yet, however, did Nineveh sink into the melancholy ruin which, in accord with the prophetic word,² she ultimately became, not yet was the land of Assyria made desolate; the populousness of the one and the fertility of the other remained, but the centre of gravity and of government was moved to BABYLON, and the later Babylonish or Chaldean dynasty established in the person of Nabopolassar, who strengthened himself in the portion of the Assyrian spoils that had fallen to him in the division effected by Astyages and himself after the fall of Nineveh, and which comprise the whole of Mesopotamia, Syria, Phœnicia, Palestine and Idumæa, with perhaps some possessions in Egypt.

This was the beginning of the first of the Four Great Monarchies of the book of the Prophet Daniel, the kingdom of which Nabopolassar's son and successor, Nebuchadnezzar, was the "Head of Gold," the power that became "like a lion," and had "eagle's wings."

Thus two things become clear: (1) that Daniel took no cognisance of Assyria as a world power, and (2) that this was due to the very sufficient reason that as such Assyria had passed away before the time at which the book which bears his name opens.

The only incident in the reign of Nabopolassar which

¹ Nahum iii. 19.

² Zeph. ii. 13-15.

interests us here, as dealing with matters in which ancient history elucidates Scripture, was the Carchemish campaign against Pharaoh-Necho and his Egyptians, in which Nebuchadnezzar commanded on behalf of his father.

Necho had marched out to take part in the attack upon Assyria and the siege of Nineveh, but met with an unlooked-for check in the Vale of Esdraelon, in North Palestine, where Josiah, the King of Judah, had posted himself, for the purpose of disputing the passage.

Pharaoh knew that a great crisis was impending, and that time was precious, and therefore, though fully understanding the insufficiency of Josiah's force to do him serious hurt, he opened negotiations, appealing to Josiah to stand aside and allow him to pass without delay, giving assurances of his pacific intentions towards Judah, and even claiming to have a divine mandate for his course and for his haste; so fearful was he of the consequence of delay.

His appeal was in vain. Josiah joined battle with him at "Armageddon," was defeated and slain, and Pharaoh passed on to the siege of Carchemish, a stronghold of Assyria on the Upper Euphrates, once a great city of the Hittites.

Whether it was the delay caused by Josiah's ill-advised intervention, or whether it was that Carchemish offered a more stubborn resistance than the Egyptian anticipated, is not clear, but from one or other cause, or perhaps from both causes combined, Necho was too late to take part in the operations that ended in the overthrow of Nineveh, and in the partition of the Assyrian spoils, and out of this arose shortly an Egypto-Babylonish war.

Pharaoh's interference in the Jewish succession, and his claim for tribute from Judah show plainly that he considered that the suzerainty of Palestine should pass to him on the break-up of the Assyrian power. But the road to and from Egypt lay through Palestine; it was the "granary of Syria," and Nebuchadnezzar, who was already cherishing

in secret aspirations after the great world-power which he afterwards established, saw too clearly the advantages of its possession to allow the Egyptian to hold it in peace.

He first wrested Carchemish from the hands of Necho's representatives,¹ and passed on, conquering and to conquer, until Pharaoh was shut up in his own land, all the outlying territory (including Palestine and Jerusalem), in which he had aspired to supreme influence, having passed under Chaldæan sway.

Nebuchadnezzar's career of conquest was checked by serious news from home. His father, Nabopolassar, had died, the throne was vacant, and the son's position as the representative of a new dynasty that had little hold upon the nation was too precarious to admit of delay or needless risk. So, leaving his army and the bulk of his captives and spoils in the hands of his generals, he himself pushed on at the head of his light horse, crossed the desert, and entered Babylon without opposition, bringing with him (perhaps as tangible proof of his many victories) some few of the flower of the captives he had taken.

Among them was a beardless youth, of royal lineage, though of fallen fortune, who was soon to win his esteem and affection, whose fame was to become even more deathless than his own, and the reflection of whose greatness was to be, in unlooked-for ages, the brightest glory of the great king; for thus and then was DANIEL the Prophet introduced to the city of Babylon, and at this point in history the book of Daniel opens.

Nebuchadnezzar found no resistance to his claims; it had already become clearly manifest that he was a person with whom it was unsafe to trifle; he ascended the throne as sole monarch of the great Babylonish empire, and began his lengthened and generally prosperous reign.

He lived to be eighty-three or eighty-four years of age,

¹ Jer. xlvi. 2.

fought many battles, built many towns, did much harm and some good, and then died, having raised the kingdom of the Chaldæans to a height of power so great that it had worthy type in the lion with the eagle's wings, and of glory so supreme that its fitting representation was in the bright golden head of the symbolic image.

All this is so well known, the course of the "king of kings" is so fully set out in the books of the prophets of his time,¹ that it is unnecessary to occupy space here with the story of his Syrian, Palestinian, or Egyptian campaigns; of his destruction of Jerusalem and its temple; or of his complete rebuilding of Babylon and its temple; except to say that his vaunting, vainglorious boast of the greatness of the Babylon that he had built (that brought upon him the strange judgment of the Most High) was not without basis in actual fact, as witness Sir Henry Rawlinson, who says: "I have examined the bricks *in situ*, belonging to perhaps one hundred different towns and cities in the neighbourhood of Baghdad, and I never found any other legend than that of Nebuchadnezzar, son of Napobolassar, King of Babylon."² And again, Mr. George Smith: "He entirely rebuilt Babylon, and made it the most magnificent city in the world. The tower and temple of Belus, the magnificent palace and the walls of the city, are all his; . . . scarcely a ruin exists in the neighbourhood without bricks bearing his name."

Nebuchadnezzar was succeeded by his son Evil-Merodach, who dealt pitifully with Jehoiachin, King of Judah, and beyond that did nothing worthy of record; indeed, he "rendered himself so odious by his debauchery" that a

¹ And of before his time, see Isa. xiii. and xiv. chapters; that become all the more remarkable when it is understood that when they were written Babylon was a mere dependency, and far from being a first-rate power.

² "Comm. on the Inscr. of Assyria and Babylonia," pp. 76, 77.

conspiracy against him was entered into by his own relatives, who slew him, and raised to the throne Neriglissar, his brother-in-law, who was the leader in the successful plot, and whose name has been identified with that of the third of the great officers in Nebuchadnezzar's army and court, whom Jeremiah¹ described as having formed a sort of commission for the execution of the king's authority in the conquered city of Jerusalem.

In Neriglissar's short reign of about four years it became evident that the conflict for supremacy between the Medes and the Babylonians, before whose allied powers Assyria had gone down, could no longer be delayed; indeed, some ancient historians assert that Neriglissar died in battle against the Medes; but it appears more likely that his death was a natural one, he having been of mature years when he ascended the throne.

He was succeeded by his son, a youth named Laborosoarchod, who was only allowed to reign for nine months, he being then cruelly assassinated by conspirators, who were, as in the former case, his own friends and blood relations.

Nabonidus (or Labynetus, as he is otherwise styled) succeeded. He is said to have been a son of Evil-Merodach, and therefore a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, which would be a sufficient reason for his being chosen to fill the throne left vacant by the murdered Laborosoarchod, who was at best the heir of a usurper, and which would apparently agree with the remarkable prediction of Jeremiah² as to the period of continuance of Nebuchadnezzar's empire, and of its final destruction; but as to this there is at present no historic certainty.

Throughout the time of Nabonidus peace prevailed more or less, but the pressure of the Medo-Persian power con-

¹ Jer. xxxix. 13. Rab-mag, the title of this officer, is interpreted as meaning chief priest.

² Jer. xxvii. 6.

tinued, and was increased; for the greatest of all the great Oriental rulers had come to the front, his fear was on all his neighbours, and the name of CYRUS was in every man's mouth.

Nabonidus spent a considerable part of the seventeen years of his reign in putting his dominions in as perfect a state of defence as he could: fortifying his towns, laying up great stores of provisions in his cities, and looking well to his hosts. Apparently for the furtherance of this purpose, he associated with himself his son, Bel-shar-ezer (Belshazzar) in the supreme dignity.

War now broke out between Cyrus and Cræsus, King of Lydia. Nabonidus thought he saw his opportunity, and at once entered into a league with Cræsus, in the hope of thus breaking, or at any rate stemming, the power of his dreaded rival. But Cyrus had introduced a new principle into warfare, precisely similar to that by which Hannibal conquered in his time, and Napoleon Buonaparte overcame in his: and without giving the Babylonians and Lydians time to concentrate their power or join their forces, he attacked them in detail, utterly worsted Cræsus, and then turned upon the Babylonian king.

Nabonidus committed Babylon to the hand of Belshazzar, and himself marched against Cyrus, only to be defeated, and shut up in one of his fortified cities (Borsippa), leaving the main body of the Medo-Persian host free to invest Babylon.

Belshazzar's folly at this crisis can (like that of Rehoboam) only be accounted for by the fact that "the handwriting was upon the wall," and that the decree of divine judgment upon Babylon had found the time of its execution. He gave himself up to festivity and impious debauchery, and building himself up in a fool's paradise as to the impregnable strength of his city, he neglected even ordinary precautions; while the Persian general, biding

his time until the far-off works which Cyrus had undertaken for the diversion of the river Euphrates (which flowed through the town) were completed, kept watch and ward without.

At length, during a high religious festival, the falling of waters, for which they had eagerly looked, indicated to the Medes and Persians that the operation had been successfully completed, and that the time had come, and entering the city under the cover of the darkness, and by the well-nigh dry channel of the river, "that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain," and "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," was, according to the words of the prophets of the LORD, prostrated at the feet of the Aryan conqueror.¹

Not only so, but the Babylonish empire had passed, the power of the Chaldæans had gone for ever. Another power of darkness and of gloom had vanished from the earth, the head of gold was broken, and the lion with eagle's wings devoured by the second wild beast, which was like to a bear; for Nabonidus, on being informed of the overthrow of his capital, submitted himself to Cyrus, who treated him with humanity, and even settled certain possessions upon him in another part of the Persian empire.

W. H. HUNTER.

¹ Isa. xxi. 2-9; Jer. l. and li.

CONGREGATIONAL AUTONOMY.

IS IT TAUGHT IN MATTHEW XVIII. 20?

A STATEMENT was made in the last number of this Magazine¹ that "the power to put out of fellowship (and therefore to receive in) is distinctly given, not to an assembly at a building, but to the assembly of God in the town." The specific basis of this statement was, of course, the mandate in 1 Corinth v. 13, as given to the company addressed in 1 Corinth i. 2. That is to say, we desired to point out that when the Lord through Paul said, "Put away the wicked man from among yourselves," He was addressing the whole company of called-out ones in the city of Corinth; that the letter was not addressed to any particular group of believers as meeting at a particular building, but "to the assembly of God in² Corinth"; that the Lord Christ regarded the assembly in that city as one whole, and to it as a whole He spake.

Exception has, however, been taken to what was written, by some few of our readers, who quote Matthew xviii. 15-20 to show that any company of believers gathered unto the Name of the Lord Jesus has power to put out of, and to receive into the fellowship. We are far from denying that a company of gathered saints may be in such circumstances that they are unable to secure the fellowship of others in the same city in the doing of what they are fully persuaded is the commandment of the Lord, and that they may thus be not only justified, but compelled, to take action without such fellowship. Nor would we deny that there are prin-

¹ Vol. IV., No. 13, p. 32.

² The Greek word here and in similar places is "in," not "at." See further on the distinction between "in" and "at"—*Needed Truth* Vol. II., No. 7, pp. 97-103; and No. 8, pp. 187, 188.

ciples in Matthew xviii., and especially in verse 20, which would have a distinct bearing on such action on their part.

But we understand some to say that "the church" of verse 17 is identical with the "two or three" of verse 20. That therefore the action to be taken by the church as specified in verse 17 is, when it is called for, to be taken by any two or three who are together, having been gathered together unto the Name, and this apart from any distinct responsibility to co-operate with other such twos or threes in the same city or town.

The consideration of this matter will need some examination of the way in which the Holy Spirit makes use of the word "church" in the New Testament Scriptures. We may readily mark four or five different applications of the word "church" to called-out things in the present age.

First. The word *church* is applied to that heavenly thing of which the Lord spake in Matthew xvi. 18, that which He began to build on the Day of Pentecost, the Church which is His Body, which includes every born again one of the present dispensation until He comes to take it to Himself in heavenly glory.¹

Second. All the saints in any given city, town, or hamlet who are gathered-together disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, all who have been added to the Lord, who are in the fellowship which is of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, are called *the church* of God, or *the church* in that city, town, or hamlet.^{1 2}

Third. Such believers as habitually meet for obedience to the word of the Lord at one particular house or building are called by the Holy Spirit *the church* at that house.²

Fourth. The word *church* is used in the singular of the whole number of gathered saints forming the churches of

¹ See *Needed Truth*, Vol. III., No. 10, pp. 57-62.

² *Needed Truth*, Vol. II., No. 7, pp. 97-103.

God in the cities, towns, and hamlets which make up a province or district.¹

Fifth. There seems little doubt that in Ephesus iii. 10 at least, we have the word *church* still in the singular applied to the whole community of believers who are in the Fellowship on earth at one time.

It will be readily seen that the church of Matthew xviii. 17 cannot be the first of the above, and we think none could say that it had a primary reference to the fourth or the fifth. The question then before us is,—

Does the church in Matthew xviii. 17 mean the whole company of gathered saints in any given city or town? Or does it mean the particular group of believers who are in the habit of breaking the bread at one house?

We exclude from our consideration the cases where all the gathered saints in the hamlet, or town, or city habitually meet in one building.

We may approach this subject in two different ways: (1) We may look at the context in the passage itself; (2) we may compare other scriptures therewith. We will seek help by both methods.

On looking at the passage (Matt. xviii. 15–20) we observe that the Lord first presents the case of a sinning brother. One who is grieved by the sin first seeks to gain him alone. Verse 16 provides for the help of one or two more, if the first attempt fail. Should the two or three fail, the matter is to be told to the church,² the assembly, that it also as a whole may seek to convert the sinner from the error of his way.³ Should he, however, refuse to hear the church also,—that is, having refused to hear the one and refused to hear the two or three, if he ALSO refuse to hear the church,

¹ *Needed Truth*, Vol. II., No. 5, pp. 28–40.

² We use the English words "church" and "assembly" as synonymous, either standing for the Greek word "Ecclesia."

³ James v. 19, 20.

the assembly,—“then,” saith the Lord Christ to each, “let him be to thee¹ as the Gentilish one is, and as the publican is.” That is, let him be like one of those whom God has not called—let him be in the without. Then follows verse 18: “Amen, I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be so, having been bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be so, having been loosed in heaven.” The “ye, you”¹ of this verse clearly agrees with “the church” of the previous verse.

This concludes the first half of the passage. The break in the thought is easily marked by the word “again” with which verse 19 begins. Providing for somewhat different circumstances, the Lord goes on to say:—

“Again I say unto you, That if two of you”—notice, please, that it is not now “you,” but “two of you”—the circle contemplated is a smaller one than that of the previous verses. Even two of you agreeing on earth may ask any matter, and “it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven; for,” He adds, “where there are two or three brought together unto” (*literally* into) “My Name there am I in midst of them.” Surely the expression “two or three” of verse 20 is meant to be read in connexion with the “two” of verse 19. We do not say it is identical with it, but it is connected with it; they are both fractions of the “ye” of verse 18, of the “church” of verse 17.

Some indeed say that we must connect verse 20 with verses 18, 17, 16, treating verse 19 as a parenthesis. But if we treat verse 19 so, we must regard verse 20 as part of the same parenthesis, for it is only in verse 21 that we return to the sinning brother. But will those who say that verse 20 describes the church of verse 17 please to carefully note that this cannot be so in the primary sense, for clearly verses 15, 16, 17 imperatively demand for their exact fulfil-

¹ *Thee*, singular, implies individual responsibility; *you*, plural, denotes joint action.

ment that there shall be more than two or three persons in the church there portrayed. Whereas verse 19 distinctly says two of you, two of the church; and the 20th verse treats the church similarly, distributing it into the twos and threes meeting at different places of which it is composed. In the midst of each two or three gathered to His name He is. If in the midst of each, then in the midst of all. Even as 1 Corinth iii. 16 has it: "Ye are a dwelling of God."

We gather from the context in the passage itself that the two or three of verse 20 is not identical¹ with the church of verse 17, but forms an integral part thereof.

Turning to other scriptures, we will first enumerate several where the word *church* clearly refers to all the gathered saints in the city, town or hamlet in question.

In Jerusalem—Acts v. 11, viii. 1, 3, xi. 22, xii. 1, 5, xv. 4, 22, xviii. 22; 1 Cor. xv. 9; Gal. i. 13; Phil. iii. 6.

In Antioch—Acts xi. 26, xiii. 1, xiv. 27, xv. 3.

In Thessalonica—1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1.

In Corinth—1 Cor. i. 2, vi. 4, xi. 22, xiv. 23; 2 Cor. i. 2; Rom. xvi. 23.

In Ephesus—Acts xx. 17.

In various towns of Judea—1 Thess. ii. 14; Gal. i. 22.

In various other towns—Acts xiv. 23, xv. 41, xvi. 5; 1 Cor. iv. 17, vii. 17, xi. 16, xvi. 1, 19; 2 Cor. viii. 1, 18, 19, 23, 24, xi. 8, 28, xii. 13; Gal. i. 2; Phil. iv. 15; Col. iv. 16; 3 John 6, 9, 10; Rev. i., ii., iii. frequently xxii. 16.

We ask the reader to carefully ponder as many of the above scriptures as seem to him upon due consideration to refer to the whole company of gathered saints in that town; then, having familiarized himself with this which is by far the *most frequent use* of the word *church*, let him contrast therewith the following passages—1 Cor. xvi. 19; Rom.

¹ Except, of course, where all the saints in one hamlet, town, city, meet in one building.

xvi. 5; Col. iv. 15; Philem. 2—which speak of a church at a house. We believe this will most clearly show that it is the former on which lies the responsibility as to discipline and administration, and that to read the latter, the church at the house, into Matthew xviii. 17 is simply to allow congregational notions received by tradition from our fathers to blind our eyes to the truth of God.

We do not, of course, desire to lose sight of, or to be indifferent to, the teaching of 1 Corinth v. 4 in these matters. Whilst the whole church in Corinth was bidden to act, yet it was not bidden to come to one place for that purpose. It was when they were gathered together unto and in the Name of the Lord Jesus, when they came together to break the bread for a remembrance of Him—it was then that the wicked man was to be put out. He was to be put away by the whole assembly in Corinth, and from the whole assembly in Corinth, but the act was to be done when they were gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, in however so many different buildings they might then be. For in the midst of each two or three He was.

We well believe that in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God every individual child of God—how much more each assembly at a house—has a responsibility to be obedient to the will of the Lord Christ. But what is His will? Is it not that all may be one. Therefore we understand that the Lord Jesus being in the midst of the two or three is not to make them independent of the other twos or threes who meet a mile or so away. Yea, from Matthew xviii. 15–20, as well as from 1 Corinth i. 1–10, we learn that God's will for His gathered saints in any town is that they may be one, and act as one in the Lord.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

GOD RATHER THAN MEN.

“DAYS should speak, and the multitude of years should teach wisdom” (Job xxxii.). It is fitting we should expect from those of riper years and larger experiences the help in direction and counsel needed from time to time; but “great men are not always wise, neither do the aged understand wisdom” (Job xxxii.).

Elihu had listened as a younger man till those elder than he had spoken. His expectation that they would have found an answer for Job had kept him silent, but it is noticeable that his respect for age did not hinder his faithfulness. First telling the three that they had neither convinced nor answered Job, he next proceeded to deal with Job himself. To rise up before the hoary head, and to honour the face of the old man (Lev. xix. 32) is indeed both right and comely, and is to be inculcated as a principle and as a part of that good behaviour which becometh us in the house of God.

“Rebuke not an elder (one in years), but entreat him as a father, . . . the elder women as mothers” (1 Tim. v.). The Old and New Testament thus marks our duty toward the aged, but we must be careful we do not allow the influence of aged men to divert us from the path of truth. The ways and words of older ones are not always right, any more than the conduct and teaching of younger ones are always wrong. Hoary heads are not inevitably found in the way of righteousness. Age does not bring infallibility, nor does a glorious sunset at all times follow a beautiful sunrise. Age is no more to be trusted than youth. It is God alone and the Word of His grace which meets the need of His people, and to which at all times we may look with confidence.

We need not only the reminder that “the fear of man

bringeth a snare"; but the exhortation to "cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils." If in former years we have been helped through any, there is a danger lest we follow the man in his after years of failure, when the scripturalness of his course is declining. The influence gained in days of godly labour may be a force moving us in a wrong path, when the godly labour has diminished or has been departed from. Our safety lies in God. We can only hope to be right as we count upon Him and walk according to His Word.

All through the pages of Scripture instances are given of godly men failing: Aaron, the saint of the Lord, leading the people in the idolatrous dance; Samuel making his sons judges; David numbering the people; Solomon in idolatry sowing the seeds of disruption which the after rashness of Rehoboam reaped. These and others tell us that age is no guarantee against errors, and that although respect for the aged becomes us, yet there are times when we have to decide against imitating those from whose lips in time past we have been fed, and by whose guidance we have been led.

Again, it is a part of our obedience to God to obey them who are the guides (Heb. xiii.), to honour and esteem them highly (1 Thess. v.). It is only in such subjection that godly order can be maintained. As the shepherd leads the sheep follow. There is no greater mistake than to suppose the ceasing from the one man ministry means an equality on the part of those gathered. We speak now as to ministry, though we are sure a word is needed as to social distinctions, for the servant is to remember his master has claims upon him as such, and not to despise him (1 Tim. vi.) The fact that the spiritual relationship exists, rather than lessening the regard for his master, is to induce him to do that master more loyal service, that the doctrine be not blasphemed. Social distinctions are maintained in Scripture, and we do well to recognise them. But to revert to the assembly oversight. There are those who are to be honoured and esteemed,

imitated and obeyed. There are those who are to honour and obey. But it is for their works' sake that overseeing ones are to be honoured, and it is in the speaking of the word they are to be obeyed. It is not the dictum of strong-willed men, but the Word of the living God, which is to influence and command our obedience. It is in the speaking of that Word the overseer guides. He has no theory of his own to promulgate and insist upon, or he would be a lord. He is servant to the great Shepherd whose sheep he serves; his business to declare the word of his Master and tend the flock for his Master's sake.

That overseeing ones met separately from the assembly is clear; that all the overseeing ones in a city, whether in one or more assemblies, formed one oversight is also evident (Acts xx. 17; xxi. 18). The fellowship, the unity, the prosperity, were promoted thereby, but this did not constitute them corporately a court of appeal or a central authority. They met as guides, not as lords; legislation was not their work; that was already provided in the scriptures. It was theirs to speak the Word of God, and that furnished the guidance, and in speaking that and that only, together with their exemplary lives, they were guides to the flock.

We may in our admiration and affection for some men put them in the place of divine principles, as again we may allow principles to absorb our minds to the exclusion of the Lord from His rightful place. If Christ as Lord is first with us in everything, divine principles will have their due weight and place with us, and will be held fast in the obedience that loyalty to Christ demands; while men will have all the respect it is our duty to give them, though we may have to refuse to follow even those whose lives have been in the past a bright example, and whose labours have been of immense service to the saints of God, but who have since, it may be only in some things, turned aside.

CHARLES MORTON.

THE REVELATION OF THE LORD.

LAODICEA.

IN our present paper we wish, for the most part, to confine our remarks to that which is written of the last church of the seven, simply noticing with regard to the church in SARDIS that its outward condition is very clearly depicted by the opening words addressed to it: "A name that thou livest and art dead" is the solemn message from Him who seeth as man seeth not.

There is oftentimes much of beauty in death; it paints the leaves with all the colours of the failing year; yet how soon are they to be the playthings of the autumn blast! Its approach sometimes decks the cheek and brightens the eye of the one soon to be laid beneath the sods. So with this church; there must have been much of that fading beauty which takes the eye and satisfies those who look on the outward appearance.

In the church in PHILADELPHIA we have again an assembly suffering persecution, and one in which inward condition and outward profession correspond. As with the individual so with this church, it is often when in the furnace of trial that the will of God is most done in us and by us, and our walk and ways are most in accordance with the mind of our God. A little strength is a good thing, for it leaves room for the power of God to rest upon us. It was when thus weakened that Paul could become the mighty power through whom the will of God could be accomplished on earth.

With regard to the church in LAODICEA, probably what we are told it said of its own condition others were saying of it (Ps. xlix. 18). The man who makes much of himself in the world is often the man who, for a time at least, others

will make much of. So with this church there is the boasting in the outward condition of things that tells too plainly of inward decline of heart, a contentment which arises, not from fellowship with the Lord, but from occupation with the blessings He has bestowed. How different, yea, how solemnly different again, was the judgment of "the faithful and true witness"—"Wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked." Soon, if there was no awakening produced by the warning voice and call to repentance, was this church to be spued out of the Lord's mouth.

The call here was addressed to them collectively as a church, so that there might be a collective restoration; but if the warning remained unheeded, there would have followed the disowning on the part of the Lord of the church as such, we believe,—there would have been a scattering, that there might be again a gathering of repentant ones as church of God, according to the doctrines already revealed. Before concluding this paper we would refer briefly to some of the various teachings with reference to this church.

Some think that they discover in the words, "If any man hear My voice," a call to those desiring to obey their Lord to come out from a position of mere profession and a call also into a new position. If our readers have followed our line of thought, and what we have written be in accordance with the mind of the Lord, this *cannot be so*, and that to have come out from any one of the seven churches at that particular time would have been sin and schism.

Moreover, in no one of the seven are we told that the lampstand is removed out of its place; and if this be so, surely we have not in any one of the seven a church concerning the which the Word of the Lord is "Come out."

We would wish to be very plain here, for some hold and teach that an assembly is to be disowned when the lampstand is removed; but if in no one of the seven are we told

that this has taken place, then we have not in any one of the seven, on this account, any warrant to come out from it. Nor would we expect to find any such teaching in this book, for the simple reason that the relationship of man to man and church to church has been fully revealed previously to this last revelation of the internal condition of these seven churches.

Yet further, could it be proved that the lampstand had been removed out of its place in any one case it would surely still need to be shown that such an act, on the part of the Lord, would warrant the disowning of an assembly, for as a child of God may cease to shine as a light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and yet be one in whose conduct there is nothing to warrant his being disowned as a Christian, so surely may it not be the same with a church of God?

We repeat, guidance in this book as to the responsibility of one church towards another, or for one individual towards another individual, we do not expect to find, as it has previously been made abundantly plain for those who desire to be doers of the Word, and not hearers only.

But while there are those who may differ from us here, yet we should be perfectly of one mind in that if called to come out from a church, we would be responsible to begin again with the two or three, or the many, on just the same principles that first gathered the saints together as church of God, and which have already been fully revealed, and to which, moreover, nothing has been added in the letter to the seven churches in Asia. But there are those again who seek to teach from the words addressed to Laodicea, and specially the words of the twentieth verse, a very different and dangerous line of things, against which teaching we would seek to raise a warning voice with all earnestness, believing it to be a deadly and soul-destroying heresy.

The teaching is to the effect that "If any man hear My

voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me," means that it has become an individual matter, personal communion with the Lord. The Church having failed, collective testimony is at an end, a hyper-spirituality is assumed, which professes to be superior to the order of the House of God as revealed in the epistles by Paul.

What a terrible casting aside of the Word of God is this! Yea, what a putting of those who are so taught into the hands of designing men, that they may with fair words deceive the hearts of the simple.

Should what we have written fall into the hands of any who are being so led astray, we would beseech them to pause and consider their ways, for if we are released from all collective responsibility by Revelation iii. 20, and if that which has been previously revealed is to be cast aside, where we ask are we landed but in the midst of mysticism and self-will. Yea, moreover, if the doctrines given us for our practical salvation, 1 Timothy iv. 16, are to be set aside in one point, where is it to end? Will not the very foundations of the faith be shaken and the House of God marred? Might it not be as well argued that Revelation iii. also releases us from *moral* responsibility one to another, and thus again lead as in the past those who are willing to follow into the filthiness of the flesh as well as that of spirit?

In the second epistle to Timothy in which we get the Lord's mind revealed to us with regard to our coming out from evil when there is no longer power to put the evil out, we find a most important word of the Lord and principle for our guidance, one which we believe will, if comprehended, once and for ever deliver the child of God from these wiles of the Devil; we refer to chapter iii. 15. Here we find that the one who has heard the call of the Lord out to Himself, is not left to follow the desires of his own heart, or to become the prey of those who would draw away dis-

ciples after them; on the contrary, such a one is thrown back on the already revealed will of God, on the Scriptures which are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction (or the setting up again), for instruction in righteousness. How different this from being cast on the whims and fancies of man, or worse, on the subtleties of the Devil and into his snare again!

Let this be thoroughly understood and we shall see that there is no fresh position to-day for those who come out from the place where the will of God cannot be carried out; on the contrary, we are called to come back to the old foundation which standeth sure, there to build according to the pattern before revealed (just as the remnant of Israel that came out of Babylon built upon the old foundations), and to contend still for the faith *once for all* delivered to the saints. There is that to-day abroad in men's teaching which is paving the way for the doctrines of which we have been speaking, a mysticism which speaks of being led by the Spirit into the mind of God and having revelations of His will, and this apart from the written word which alone is able to make us wise unto salvation. The denial, moreover, of a practical and divine oneness of saints on earth as prayed for by the Lord as a thing incompatible with the unity of the Spirit. On the contrary, we believe that wherever there is the real carrying out of the will of God on earth, there will be a true manifestation of that which is heavenly. The oneness of all saints in the Body of Christ is a fact, but the manifestation of that oneness midst the churches of God is a responsibility to which we are called. It has not been our object in these pages to enter into the many blessed lessons of this book which have been already dwelt on by others, but to seek to bring out a line of truth which we believe has in great measure been lost sight of. That all seven churches were called to listen to the solemn words spoken to each, we doubt not, but that the responsibility

of one church to the other is directly taught, we do not believe, for the reasons before stated, namely, that such responsibility had already been fully revealed through the Spirit to the Apostle Paul, and communicated by him to the churches of God. We believe that with the fresh gathering out to the Lord, directions for which are given in the second epistle, a new responsibility arises towards those who are left, as in 1 Corinthians v. a new responsibility arose in the church in Corinth when one was put away from their midst --and of this we may treat at another time.

J. A. BOSWELL.

TO OUR READERS.

ENDEAVOUR was made in the last issue of this magazine to give its readers a concise account of some of the replies received by us concerning the desirability of continuing it on the same lines as have hitherto been followed in its publication.

Since the last number (13) passed into type we have had letters from other persons in various parts of Great Britain, and we think it well to insert the pith of these letters here, assured of the sympathy and co-operation of an increasing number of friends.

R. P. expresses his desire that strength and encouragement may be granted to continue the paper, quoting Haggai i. 13: "I am with you, saith the LORD."

A. B. declares himself in full sympathy with the views advocated in *Needed Truth* and though seeing many difficulties in the way of the practical carrying out of the principles set forth therein, exhorts us to "blow the trumpet," that some, hearing, may derive blessings, and that our God may reap the harvest of praise and glory.

W. A. D. writes in no stinted terms of the measure in which God has blessed *Needed Truth* to him, and of the strengthening and sustaining of his soul that has been the result of meditation on the truths that writers have sought to deal with in its pages.

He prays God *Needed Truth* will still bear messages from the Lord, more especially to young men, and asks for remembrance of such in prayer.

H. B., J. S., and A. C. also write words of cheer and thankfulness for the continuation of the magazine, thanking God that ever hearts were constrained to so labour in His vineyard.

THE KINGDOM,

PAST AND TO COME.

It is our object in this paper to lay before our readers some considerations which bear on this most important of subjects. The selfishness of human nature may make us dwell almost exclusively on what has been done for us through the Cross of Christ, while there may be little apprehension of that for which we have been apprehended (or laid hold of) by Christ Jesus.

Many Christians become dwarfed in the divine life by not seeking thus with the apostle¹ to grasp the purposes of God in their salvation. Yea, not only the purposes in our individual salvation, but the mighty results that will yet flow out to a groaning creation in the age to come, when the reins of earthly government shall be taken into hands which were once pierced, but which will then be mighty to uphold His authority amidst the nations of earth.

“This picture awaits a story.” These words often meet our eye, but it may never have had a story of its own, and one will need to be made for it. Not so the earth on which we tread.

As we look into the mighty picture-book of Nature—the contorted rock that tells of days long since gone by, when it was forced from its bed by the molten mass beneath, the upturned strata bringing to light the fossil of ten thousand ages past—we long to hear the story of those bygone days; but Nature’s voice is silent, and we must wait the day when He who was and is to come, by whom the worlds were made—the God of Nature—tells us Nature’s past.

Still, we have some record of these hoary ages, faint

¹ Phil. iii. 12.

gleams of light amidst the darkness, until the voice of the mighty Trinity breaks through the silence, "Let there be light"; and there is light. And now, rescued from the well-nigh unknown ruin of the past, this little corner of the mighty universe smiles in the sunshine of creation's God, and on earth His will is done.

It will not be in our power minutely to enter into a subject so vast as that of the kingdom past, present, and to come; we can only touch upon the outline, so seeking to help our readers to study the subject more deeply for themselves. The picture presented before us in Genesis i. 2 is, we believe, a restored earth, with man placed over God's creation, as responsible to Him to carry out His will upon it, to dress the garden planted in Eden, that Eden being again separated from earth. We notice this because there seems thus early the foreshadowing of what is yet to come, which foreshadowing we get in the Tabernacle, with the outer court, the holy place, and the most holy; this again repeated in the Temple.

Paul speaks of being caught up to the third heaven (2 Cor. xii. 2). Thus early there seems to have been on earth the image of heavenly things (Heb. ix. 9), and man, unfallen, occupied the inner place, where he could walk with God and God with him. After the Fall man could only enter into that place by virtue of the blood which spoke of Christ's death, and in the future ages it will be by the blood of Christ, in virtue of that blood, that man will stand again before his God.

Thus for a time—how brief that time we cannot say—the will of God was done on earth; but soon a dark cloud cast its shadow over that fair scene. Another's will has entered, and the will of God is set aside. Sin is the result of that other will than the will of God being done on earth, and death again enters. So death has passed on all, for all have sinned (Rom. v. 12). We say again entered, for death seems

to have been busy in the far ages past. We would here remark that some may look at the punishment of disobedience to the express will of God as disproportionate to the offence. To simply take of the fruit of one tree that God had forbidden may seem to some a trivial matter ; but be it remembered, in the first place, that those were simple days, and the Creator had given a simple law in keeping with such. But in that act of disobedience another's will was done ; and ever since, more or less, down through earth's history, Satan's will has been carried out amongst the children of men ; and, thus ensnared by him, man becomes his tool, to work his purposes on earth.

But whence came sin ? Had it its origin in the mighty (though not almighty) being who, in some distant age, occupied a place of regal power, and, being lifted up with pride on account of his beauty, fell into the depths of damnation ?¹

Has this world been in past ages, is it yet, and is it yet to be the one spot amidst the mighty universe as boundless as the eternal ages, where sin is seen in all its hideous results—God's great picture-book, read by countless created beings, in countless worlds ? We ask the question ; we must await the answer for awhile, until that day when we shall know as we are known. But passing on. The results of another will being done on earth than God's is dire confusion, till, waxing worse and worse, earth cries to Heaven for vengeance, and in the Flood the answer comes, and God asserts His authority.

As Noah with his family passed from the ark, what a scene of wreck and ruin must have met their eye. A wrecked creation, and all this resulting from the will of God being set aside, and the will of another done. Nor let the solemn warning pass us by unheeded.

And now in Genesis ix. 2 we see this wreck and ruin

¹ Ezek. xxviii. 13, 15.

again put under fallen man to rule for God. Let any one contrast the picture here and that of Genesis i. 28. How sad—the change! Blood-shedding, fear, and dread have entered on the scene, and man soon makes creation groan with his misrule, subject to the rebellious will of him who first hid in serpent's form, and who still hides him from the eye of man, yet ever working behind the scene to thwart the purposes of God. Yet an age is coming when God will show, after that Satan has been bound in the abyss, what even this poor ruined earth might be if but His will were done on it as it is done in heaven. Let no one, then, say that because of present ruin there is no use seeking to carry out the will of God among His saints; for if His will is done to-day in truth there will be on earth that which resembles heaven.

When the Lord descends for His people with a shout, this heavenly thing will be caught up from earth. Then for a brief moment Satan will seem to triumph. Yet but a moment; for the Lord shall come, and all His saints with Him, and the kingdom in all its glory will be re-established on earth. Heaven is the place where no other than the will of God can enter. Yea, more, when Christ has reigned till the last enemy has been subdued under His feet, the will of God shall be supreme in heaven, and earth, and even hell (Phil. ii. 10).

The will of him who seeks to make this world a hell now shall no longer be done on it, even in measure. Even in the place that is being prepared for him and his angels—where the guilty light rejecter will be; both of the age that is past, when the light in Nature was rejected; of the present, when the light shines out in Christ;¹ and of the future, when the light of the glory of God shall shine amidst the nations—God's will shall be supreme, but not in redemption, for redemption's day will then be past. For

¹ John i. 9.

it is better for the lawless to be under law, both on their own account and that of others, although they hate that law, and in their hearts rebel against it.

In Babel's tower we see afresh man's rebellion; then follow ages when there is no direct rule of God upon earth. We do not mean by this that there was no individual among the nations who owned the rule of God and worshipped Him, but the state of earth is pictured in the first and second chapters of the epistle by Paul to Roman saints. We would notice for our mutual comfort that God in His wonder-working power continually passes by the many, and accomplishes His will in and by the few. This principle we see time after time repeated down through the ages. The time has not yet come of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets.¹ He will call out a fresh testimony to His name on earth, but that which departs from Him is as a whole allowed to depart.

But now the time has come when God calls out from the dark scene one man, called alone—Abram.² It is most important for us to notice that with this man God makes two covenants—one unconditional, the other conditional. The first can never be set aside; the other, as conditional on man's obedience, may.³

We would specially commend this thought to our readers, as we believe it is important, affecting the whole of our present subject; but into it we have not space to enter in detail. Abram is called out and separated (not only from the land of his forefathers, but eventually even from the one that took a place to which he had not been called), and now receives from God promises of blessing and the future greatness of his seed. Let us here notice that it was not till after Lot was separated from him that the fulness of

¹ Acts iii. 21.

² Isa. li. 2.

³ Gen. xv. 18, xvii. 1.

God's purposes were revealed. Not only was Lot a hindrance to Abram's becoming fully acquainted with the mind of God, but also his descendants were those whom Satan used for drawing back the called-out ones into his snare and a fellowship of evil.¹

We must now pass on to Israel's call out from Egypt, where they had been guarded by the hand of Him who to them was well-nigh an unknown God—called out from their bondage and their idols² that God might manifest in them and by them again His rule and government.

From Adam to Moses no form of government had been delivered to man to carry out on earth; he had been left to his conscience, and to learn of God as He is seen in creation—this, at least, in great measure, for all through these ages God revealed Himself, and made His will known to individuals, by special means, and by these revelations of Himself to chosen men light must continually have found its way into the surrounding darkness of the heathen world. The book of Job bears testimony to this; see also Numbers xxiv. 19.

When God brought out His people from Egypt it was not only deliverance from bondage that He purposed for them. Infinitely more than this. It was that in them first, then in their midst as a nation, the coming kingdom of His Son should be shadowed out. But man then, as to-day—selfish in his fallen nature—thinks more of what grace has saved him from than the purpose for which that grace has laid hold of him.

Altars have been raised on earth ever since sin entered, but altars do not tell of God's abiding on earth; but now the time is drawing near when a habitation is to be builded for Jehovah, and He is to dwell with man.

Let us closely notice at this point what takes place. During the time of Israel's sojourn in Egypt they had for

¹ Num. xxv. 2.

² Josh. xxiv. 14.

generations been subject to another will than God's; their own wills would have regulated their behaviour; the flesh-pots of Egypt, its cucumbers and onions, were their delight, and little heart had they for the land promised to their forefathers. Yea, more, their very tribal arrangement would have been in conformity to Egypt's will, for Egypt's will was deeply stamped upon God's people, so deeply that it was long, yea, very long, ere it could be effaced, even though they were a redeemed people; and when they came up out of bondage, they and the mixed multitude that went up with them must have been mingled together much, according to the tradition and usage of the past.

But now the Tabernacle is set up, and Moses has looked upon it, and finds that it has been carried out in all its minute details according to the pattern showed him in the Mount; and in this Tabernacle—this place on earth a shadow of the heavenly things—the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is to take up His abode and manifest His glory. His will has been done in its construction; His will can now be done from it on earth as it is in heaven. And mark the change in Israel's camp; around that Tabernacle the tribes are gathered, no longer according to Egypt usage or the will of man—Judah to the east (Num. ii. 3)—to the sun-rising, for out of Judah was the Sun of Righteousness to arise—and all the tribes are ranged according to the will of God.

As called-out ones, and as gathered-together ones, it is not for us to be fashioned by our own wills, or even by earthly friendships, in the things of God, for these may be at variance with His purpose in calling us out, and gathering us together as His people.

This would have been no easy lesson for Israel, and it is no easy lesson for us to-day; we may take our place professedly outside the camp, yet our lives may practically

deny our profession ; tradition and human friendships may shape our ways, and not the will of God.

We would fain linger on this part of our subject, but it would fill a volume, and we pass on.

The land is entered, and, according to the will of God, is divided amongst the twelve tribes, which number seems to speak of God's rule on earth, for it was by twelve, the number of the sons of Jacob, that God divided to the nations the earth.¹

This may throw some light on the four-and-twenty elders in the book of Revelation ; they may represent the rule of the past and present age, therefore the number twelve doubled, their place in heaven at this point and not on earth, would seem to denote the rule of God on earth for the time being set aside, as is the fact, for the kingdom of the Anti-Christ is being developed, and his authority becomes wellnigh supreme. But more of this hereafter.

We have not space to dwell upon the rebellion of Israel against the rule of God by choosing them a king, that they might be like the nations around them ; the very thing that should have been their glory became a weariness and distasteful.²

In the reign of Solomon the kingdom is seen in full development and in attainment of its climax of earthly grandeur, till the day come when a greater than Solomon shall reign.

But, again, the rule of God is rebelled at. Some failure on the part of Solomon in carrying it out has given the excuse for Israel to murmur, and soon the ten tribes are separated under Jeroboam rule, the man again of their own

¹ Deut.-xxxii. 8.

² We would refer the reader to our little book on "Apostasy," in which this subject is more fully followed out than we have space for here.

choice, and God has let them know the bitterness of that choice to its full earthly end. "Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin," is the terrible title given to him whom their rebel hearts have chosen; by him they are led back into idolatry, till, after warning upon warning, they are scattered from their own land and lost amidst the nations of the earth.

Let those to-day who are murmurers and complainers amidst the gathered-out and gathered-together saints take warning by this solemn lesson. There may be some failure in carrying out the will of God by those that rule, some harshness; we do not question it, we would on no account seek to justify it. Solomon gave occasion thus for complaint; yet better have a rule that seems in some measure rigid where the will of God is owned, than, murmuring and complaining, to turn from it to where Satan is ensnaring, and leading on to the worship of himself.¹

The ten tribes were not at once cast off; prophet after prophet was raised up to testify to them of their ungodliness by their long-suffering God. It was during this time in their history that we find presented to them the pattern of a temple and a kingdom grander even than anything of the past.² But this seems to us to be one of the conditional promises we have before noticed—conditional on their repentance and turning to God; but all the glory set before them could not move their idolatrous hearts or win them back to the God of their forefathers. Their choice was made, the die was cast; no repentance was wrought, and the glorious picture faded from their sight, and, it may be, this phase of the kingdom has been to them for ever lost.

Soon Judah, with those of the ten tribes who had joined with her in the days of Rehoboam's reign, follows her treacherous sister Israel, and is for her sins led captive into Babylon.

¹ 2 Chron. xi. 15.

² Ezek. xliii. 10.

At this point the reins of government are taken out of the hands of God's people, never to be restored until He come whose right it is to reign. Let this be borne in mind, and it will throw light upon John Baptist's preaching the kingdom; for while out of Babylon God restored a remnant from that remnant of Israel, working in such, first, a right condition (Ezra i. 5), then leading them into a right position, which is ever the divine order, not gathering them on the *ground* of the nation, or because they were all Israelites, but gathering them as those in a condition to be moulded to His mind, they are restored to their own land, to set up the altar on his base, to build the Temple, and to restore the wall. Meanwhile, God's promise was that He would be a wall of fire round about them until the pattern again of things in the heavens should be set up by this feeble remnant according to the will of God.¹

Yet the position of this remnant differs essentially from the position of the nation; they occupy their place by permission of the Gentile powers, the direct rule of the earth having been given into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold, not to be restored to Israel until the reins of government are taken by the Lord Himself. Subjection was that to which they were called. Let our reader remember the occasion when some asked the Lord, Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Cæsar? and the wisdom with which He replied. Had there been a *national* repentance at the preaching of John Baptist, or even at the call of the Lord and His disciples, He could have taken His place amongst His people, and given them their place again over the nations. But, no; their ear is dull, their heart has waxed gross. Again they must be set aside, and a remnant out of this remnant is called, whose history must form the subject of another paper, those among whom the rule of God to-day can be carried out. We noticed that the reins of govern-

¹ Zech. ii. 5.

ment were transferred into the hands of the Gentiles ; but let there be no confusion of thought in this matter. No form of government was given to the Gentile powers to carry out as had been delivered unto Israel,¹ yet, as God held fallen man responsible to rule aright a fallen creation, so this responsibility was given back into the hands of the Gentile power, Israel having failed ; and this same Gentile authority is running through the present age. The powers that be are ordained of God,² and in the coming age will be the ground on which God will deal with the nations as nations. We do not here speak of the individual judgment that will take place at the Great White Throne, but the nations will be dealt with according as they have carried out rightly or wrongly government upon earth.

The question may be asked, In what then did the position of the remnant differ from the nation ? So far as concerns themselves and their internal economy, there was no difference, we believe ; but this state of things was by permission, and they were never suffered to take their former place of authority over the surrounding nations.

Before we leave these remnant days, on which a volume might be written, and which in many respects closely resemble the days in which our lot has been cast, we would yet notice one or two important points. First, that there could be no altar, House of God, or carrying out of the Kingdom in Babylon. There might be individual worship, individual faithfulness to God, as with Daniel and his fellows, but out of Babylon they *must* be before the rule of God can be carried out collectively or His worship re-established. We believe there is a parallel to this to-day. We must be delivered from human systems ; yea, delivered in heart first, before we can serve God collectively, and carry out the present government of God's house. We would further notice that it was in the midst of this gathered-out

¹ Psa. cxlvii. 19, 20.

² Rom. xiii. 1.

people from Babylon that God preserved both the godly seed, the royal line by which the Governor of the nations, God manifested in the flesh, was to come; and that, moreover, it was by the careful guardianship of this feeble few that we to-day rejoice in the light of Old Testament revelation.

Whatever their failings, whether it were the narrow-minded bigotry, the Pharisaical spirit that strained out a gnat and swallowed a camel, yet be it remembered that in the grace of God these were the people in whom fear and reverence was engendered for every jot and tittle of the sacred writings, the people who, in the providence of God, we have to thank to-day for the maintenance of the purity of our Old Testament Scriptures.

Yes, and we may go further, and notice that it is to the Massoretic text that we are indebted for our present version; not to the Septuagint of the cultured Greek or the proud Samaritan's manuscripts. Let those who speak to-day of Phariseeism and narrow-mindedness in seeking to carry out the letter of the Word take this into their consideration.

There is one important link that we would briefly refer to here, and will have occasion to speak of more fully afterwards. It is the manner in which the will of God was practically carried out. Let us turn to Exodus xii. 3. In this verse and the following one directions are given for the ordering of the Passover; but verse 21 shows the way that this was to be accomplished, even by the elders of Israel. Leviticus iv. 15 shows us the elders again acting for the congregation, as also Joshua xx. 4, with Deuteronomy xix. 12; where, in the one case, we find the elders receiving the manslayer, and, in the other, delivering up the murderer to the avenger of blood. Ezekiel ix. 6 seems to indicate with other Scripture that the tribes of Israel appeared before God in the person of their elders. With the returned remnant

(Ezra v. 9 and vi. 14) the elders are still seen as the responsible ones. And yet again in Acts iv. 8 they are seen as the rulers of the people and elders of Israel.

J. A. BOSWELL.

Fragment for Sunday School Workers.

AN eighteenth century worker among the children of Annapolis, Maryland, U.S.A., wrote to a friend what proves sweetly helpful even at this far-off time. She says, "When my head turns to this subject, it seems to me I want forty heads, well stored with strong sense; forty frames, supported by vigorous strength and health; and a hundred hands, as organs of execution for the plans and projects of my head.

"For I, like every little mole toiling in his own dark passage, have been given to murmuring; and my great complaint for some time past has been that I was cut off from every means of usefulness, and could not find anything on earth to do that might not as well remain undone. While I am fretting at having nothing to do, you find equal discomfort in having too much.

"Somebody, no matter who, has said the secret of happiness is that the BUSY FIND leisure and the *idle find* business, and it would seem so between us."

BAPTISM.

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD JESUS.

FROM Nazareth, where He had passed His youth in the home of Joseph the carpenter, the Lord Jesus, being at that time about thirty years of age,¹ came to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized by him.

According to the reading of John i. 28, found in the oldest MSS. and adopted by the most reliable critics, it would appear that John was then at "Bethany beyond Jordan," which must not be confounded with Bethany near Jerusalem, where Lazarus lived. There is a further reference to the same locality in John x. 40. The Lord Jesus, having returned at a later date beyond the Jordan, unto the place where John at first baptized, found there, among His hearers, some who believed because of the fulfilment of words which John had spoken concerning Him.

The persons who had hitherto presented themselves to John the Baptist were such as had need of repentance, and whose repentance found its fitting expression in their being dipped by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. Now there comes to him One who had nothing to repent of and nothing to confess—the "Holy One and the Just," concerning whom witness is borne to us that He was "without sin,"² that He "did no sin,"³ and that He "knew no sin."⁴ We can understand something of the Baptist's astonishment, and why he sought to hinder Him, saying, "I have need to be baptized by THEE, and comest THOU to me?"

The Lord's reply is, "Suffer it now; for THUS IT BECOMETH US TO FULFIL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS."⁵

¹ Luke iii. 23.

² Heb. iv. 15.

³ 1 Peter ii. 22.

⁴ 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁵ Matt. iii. 14, 15.

He had been circumcised the eighth day, as a man-child of Abraham's seed. He had lived, as a son of Israel, in subjection to the law that was given through Moses. Now that, in the ways of God, it is John that succeeds Moses and the prophets, He follows obediently the progress of the dispensations, fulfilling the righteousness preached by the Baptizer as well as that demanded by the Lawgiver. He left us an example in order that we should follow after in His steps. This thought, that He whom we call Teacher and Lord submitted to baptism, in order to "fulfil all righteousness," in the sense of doing what was right in the sight of God, has decided many a believer, in these latter days, to render willing obedience to the commandment to be baptized into His Name.

Nor is this all, for it was according to the order of the heavens that the Saviour should "fulfil all righteousness" by coming down to the sinner's level.

Just as a very rich man might identify himself with his poverty-stricken fellow-citizens, so as to become accountable for their debts and meet their needs with his wealth, so the Lord Jesus identified Himself with repentant sinners, in order to answer, in His righteousness, for them in their unrighteousness. He engaged Himself to be, in His own Person, the manifestation of God for their salvation. John having already brought home to them the conviction that they have no righteousness for God, He appears with the revelation that God has a righteousness for them.

How He accomplished what He undertook to do for God's glory and the sinner's salvation, one of His apostles bears witness, saying, "Christ died once for sins, the Righteous One for the unrighteous ones, that He might bring us to God;"¹ while another demonstrates that God is thereby declared to be "just (or righteous), and justifying (that is, declaring righteous) him that is of the faith of Jesus."²

¹ 1 Peter iii. 18.

² Rom. iii. 26.

That which the Lord Jesus did, in being baptized, is in contrast to what the believer now does in submitting to the same ordinance. We were exposed to death because of our sins, and He identified Himself with us, in order to suffer death for us; we have now been identified with Him in His death, so that we may not have to suffer death for ourselves.

In the Gospel according to Mark we read¹ that Jesus "was dipped (*ἐβαπτίσθη*—*ebaptisthē*) INTO the Jordan (*εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην*—*eis ton Jordanēn*)." The following verse, as read by Lachmann, Tischendorff and Tregelles, mentions His going up "out of the water (*ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος*—*ek tou hudatos*)." We who hold and practise Christian baptism (which must not by any means be confounded with that administered by John) accept our Lord's example as defining and illustrating the precise manner of the ordinance which He afterwards instituted for His people of the present dispensation.

It is painful to be obliged to refer to the accusations of those who affect to see something unseemly in a rite which our Lord Himself has undergone, but it is not difficult to answer such fools according to their folly, lest they be wise in their own conceits. Romish and Protestant artists have been oftentimes called upon to produce paintings and stained-glass windows setting forth Christendom's popular acceptance of the "baptism of Jesus." They have drawn a figure, supposed to represent Him of whose human features God has seen fit not to leave us any similitude. This figure stands, unclothed as no one would think of unclothing himself with a view to scriptural baptism, in water abundantly deep enough to allow of its immersion therein; and all this merely that another man, standing near by upon a rock, may allow a few drops of water to fall upon it from a scallop shell which he holds in his hand! So little

¹ Mark i. 9, 10.

can talent, or even genius, do to render the generally accepted tradition plausible! Their most strenuous efforts only leave us with a picture that is as wildly improbable as it is utterly inconsistent with reverent thought.

No sooner had the Lord Jesus put Himself, figuratively, into the sinner's place than God makes haste to proclaim the difference between Him and those He came to save. God had had no righteous reason to bring those who were confessedly guilty out from the place of judgment and death. But no suspicion of personal unworthiness must rest even for a moment on the Lamb of God. He delighted to do God's will, and God delighted in Him. Therefore, without delay, as He was going up FROM the water;¹ yea, as He arose OUT OF the water,² He saw the heavens parting asunder,³ and the Spirit as a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: "THOU ART MY SON, THE BELOVED, IN WHOM I HAVE FOUND DELIGHT."

Luke informs us⁴ that Jesus, having been baptized, was *praying* when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him. It is interesting to note that in the Gospel of the Son of man the descending of the Holy Spirit upon Him is linked, not with the ceremony of His baptism, but with the exercise on His part of faith in God.

The divine right of John to baptize is intimately bound up with the proof of the Lord's authority furnished to Israel. When this authority was called in question in the Temple court,⁵ He would make no reply till His opponents answered Him concerning the origin of John's baptism. If John received from heaven the commission to baptize, then

¹ Matt. iii. 16, ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος—apo tou hudatos.

² Mark i. 10, ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος—ek tou hudatos.

³ σχιζομένους—schizomenous. Same verb as Matt. xxvii. 51: "The rocks were rent."

⁴ Luke iii. 21.

⁵ Matt. xxi. 23-27; Mark xi. 27-33; Luke xx. 1-8.

His ministry is also from God. He began that ministry by being baptized by the hands, and receiving testimony from the mouth, of John. And of the excelling glory of His title to the consideration of Israel John had spoken in no uncertain language.

Thus in the temporal order of things the Lord Jesus comes after John; while in the eternal order He has the precedence of him, for He was before him.¹

The impartiality of the witness was guaranteed by his ignorance concerning the Lord's person.² Even if he might have known Jesus, the Son of Mary, as his kinsman according to the flesh, he did not yet know Him according to the spirit as the Christ, the Coming One, whose way he was sent to prepare. In order that he might know Jesus as the Son of God, he must receive a sign from heaven. Thus the baptism served as the manifestation of Christ to Israel, to the end that Jehovah's people might salute in Him their promised King.

Only after the baptism was an accomplished fact—after beholding the signs that accompanied it—after hearing the very voice of God speaking out of heaven—did John utter these memorable words, "I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."³

The Shepherd of the sheep had come to the fold,⁴ which was Israel; and the door, which was baptism, had been opened to Him by the porter, who was John the Baptist.

A. P. MACDONALD.

¹ John i. 27, 30.

² John i. 31, 33.

³ John i. 34.

⁴ John x. 2, 3.

GOD'S PURPOSE IN DAYS OF DIFFICULTY.

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." With these sadly significant words the book of Judges ends. Repeated failures, notwithstanding frequent chastisements, had ended in grossest idolatry and abominable wickedness. Conscience had gone, both toward God and towards man, and forgetful alike of the mercy which had given deliverances when in their distress they had cried to God, and of the punishment sin had brought, Israel had sunk into the sad individualism of each man doing what was right in his own eyes, as if, in addition to "No king," there was no God, and no law for their guidance. A condition not without its deepest lessons and warnings for present times, when men speak of the church in ruins; of testimony to church order gone; and of an individual walk and testimony superseding a collective responsibility, as though God had relieved His people of their responsibility to obey all His words. And yet, notwithstanding all the disorder and sin that pertained to Israel in those days of wrongdoing to which we have referred, a divine purpose was at work, a purpose to extricate the people of Jehovah from their chaotic state, to lift them out of their enfeebled and impoverished condition, and again to make them a power in the earth before which nations would tremble and fall, vastly exceeding all they had ever experienced in the days of Joshua.

The first glimpse of that work and of that purpose is given to us in the book of Ruth. The book of Ruth is the history of a family—living when the judges judged. Family life is seen in its varied aspects—its disappointments, its sorrows, and its joys. Births, marriages, and deaths, each finds a place here. The keenness of want, the breaking up

of home to get bread in a distant land, the bitterness of bereavements once, twice, thrice repeated, the unutterable sorrows of widowhood, to which (as often still) deep want is linked, and then the sympathy and clinging of saddened hearts in their sorrows, and needs and hopes, complete a picture of family life indeed. And yet in all this there was a heart planning and a hand guiding. The web of time for Naomi and Ruth had been woven in mercy and with judgment. The heart and hand of God were at work for them. The famine, the broken up home, the marriages, the deaths, all were working together in the arrangements of that guiding hand, and working for their good. There was to Him, if not to them, a harmony in their sorrows and their joys. All was to end in Ruth claimed by Boaz, a babe in the bosom of Naomi, a nourisher of her old age, and DAVID, GOD'S KING for Israel.

And would there not be in our experience more of the "peace of God which passeth all understanding," more of the hush and quiet and contentment which faith in God brings, did we the more believe that the hand of God had taken up our affairs, and was doing its best for us, and that all in His perfect way was making room for David's Lord?

"His purposes shall ripen fast,
 Unfolding every hour;
 The bud may have a bitter taste,
 But sweet will be the flower."

Thus in our family life may we see a divine purpose at work, though not so publicly made known as that of Naomi and Ruth, yet as truly for the glory of God, and for our good.

The purpose of God in the book of Ruth linked together family good and national blessing; the first was His immediate act, but the second was the great object of His mind throughout. David for Israel. But David must come in

God's way, as also in God's time, and the family in Bethlehem, the honoured channel of that event throughout all its chequered history, be guided and controlled to that end.

The babe of Ruth is called kinsman redeemer, and by the genealogy of Ruth iv. 21, 22 is seen to be David's grandfather. This is the first mention of David. The next time he is spoken of is in 1 Samuel xvi., when Samuel is sent to Bethlehem with the horn of oil, and David is anointed and marked out as the one God had provided as His king. The babe of Ruth, the kinsman redeemer, and David anointed king, both of Bethlehem, were foreshadowings of another babe, another anointed One, and another Ruler in Bethlehem, of a later day, when the angel of the Lord announced, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii.). Obed, the child of Ruth, and David, the anointed king, were intended to pourtray the triple character of Mary's babe, the Son of the Highest, as Saviour--Christ--Lord.

A *Saviour* who has delivered us from wrath by being Himself delivered up to it, who now in the heavens lives to save evermore those who come unto God by Him (Heb. vii.), and who as the Saviour shall come from the heavens (Phil. iii.) to complete all that is contemplated for His Church in that precious word "salvation."

Christ.—The anointed One. Anointed on earth as servant of Jehovah, in the power of which anointing He went about doing good (Luke iv.; Acts x.) In the heavens, receiving the Spirit, which He has bestowed upon His members in blessed fulfilment of promise, and in gracious care for His people here. Again, to be the anointed in a coming day of earthly greatness, when the rod out of the stem of Jesse shall take the place of the bough with terror, which shall be lopped in judgment, and the Son of man shall have

entered on His day. Like as David, the thrice-anointed one (1 Sam. xvi ; 2 Sam. ii., v.).

Lord.—The owner of every one, bought by His blood ; the Sovereign, to whom all authority is given in heaven and upon earth to administer rule. Rule now in His present kingdom as the Son of God (Col. i.), rule hereafter on the earth as God's King (Ps. ii.).

In that Babe of Bethlehem (Luke ii.) centred the purpose of God, yet how few knew it. Simeon, Anna, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, represented a small remnant in a day of apostasy and distress, when the Roman ruled, and the people had sunken nearly as low as they could get, and were ready to confess the rule of the creature—"no king but Cæsar"—even as in reality they had rejected the rule of God, notwithstanding all the outward semblance of regard for Him, and the law He had given at Sinai. A day of sorrow and bitterness, indeed, like unto that of Naomi's, for those who spake together, and who thought upon His name, and yet a day big with hope to them, as they beheld in the Babe of Bethlehem the salvation of God, and the Governor to rule His people Israel. The praise of the women of Ruth iv.—"Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman"—found its counterpart in the worship of Mary and Zacharias, as the one spoke of "God, my Saviour," and the other of the "Dayspring from on high."

And is not all this our own comfort, as with deepening consciousness of the disorder and confusion among children of God that self-will has brought in, to know God's purpose from eternity will bring us deliverance. Deliverance completely in that moment of "the coming," which shall right everything for His Church ; but, meanwhile, deliverance to as many who call upon the Name with trueness of heart (2 Tim. ii.): unto whom the exalted One of Acts ii. is everything, and who in heart here respond to the act of

God there, in making that same *Jesus* both *Lord* and *Christ*, and, realizing the obligations that Name brings, as well as its attractions, "depart from all unrighteousness."

Our hope is in Christ; and as our hearts are bowed to Him, out from the disorder and confusion we are brought like those who on day of Pentecost were saved from that untoward generation, by faith in and subjection to HIM, Jesus, Christ, Lord.

C. MORTON.

UNTO HIM WITHOUT THE CAMP.

“Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, into a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing” (Gen. xii. 1, 2).

When the Lord calls to any position, He will assuredly maintain the called one in that position, to the glory of God. Alas! how often we rob God of His glory by our self-will in not leaving all in His hands. Abram had received a definite call to “come out,” and “when his father was dead he removed him into the land” (Acts vii, 4). All fleshly relationships had to be severed if the call of God was to be obeyed, and so it was not until his father’s death that he was prepared to follow where the Lord was leading him. But it required faith on Abram’s part—faith in God; and the Holy Spirit commenting on Abram’s faith, says: “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, *not knowing whither he went*” (Heb. xi. 8). This verse speaks volumes to the child of Heaven. How often we want to know the way beforehand, but He leads only one step at a time. To the man of the world Abram would seem to have no object in life, wandering at random. But to the man of faith God’s call had come; it was his happy privilege to obey, and so out he went. He left the whole thing in the hands of God, knowing that He would lead aright. Would that we had this simple, childlike faith, to take hold of the mighty promises of God, and to go out, neither knowing nor caring where; being assured that what He has promised He will also perform. And if we enjoyed the same measure of *fellowship with God*

as Abram did, it would be no task to have the same amount of *faith in God*; and we too should be prepared to go out, simply following where He would lead. Abram was called into a position of definite relationship to God. So are we. And not only so, but, as Abram was, we are privileged to *enjoy* that blessed position.

In God's dealings with men upon the earth, it has always been a law that before they can do His will He must call them aside to hold fellowship with Himself, and there, on the Mount of Communion, impart to them His will and power to do it. Thus it was with Abram, and thus has it been with God's servants all down the ages, and thus it is with His servants still. Blessed be God for the high and holy privilege of holding fellowship with the Father.

"So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him" (ver. 4). It may seem strange for Lot to have gone with Abram, as his career proves that he was not prepared to take the place of separation into which God had called Abram.

The whole course of Lot's after-life would lead us to believe that his journey with Abram was one of self-interest. Abram was blessed, and why should not he share the blessing too? A picture of many believers to-day, whose sole object is *self*.

If the blessing and presence of God be with the few who have "gone forth unto Him without the camp" (Heb. xiii. 13), why should not we have the blessing too? they say. But, as in the case of Lot, so it is in the present day. A testing and sifting time comes. The called-out ones remain firm to their Lord, because they have heard His voice (John x.) calling them out *unto Himself*. But the worldly religionist is soon found going back to his "church." He was not prepared for the consequences of such a step. As to the blessing, yes, he would like the blessing, but not in *such company*! And off he goes, whence he came.

With Lot it was a simple question of Profit and Loss. Which would profit him most?—to stay where he was or to go with Abram? Unquestionably, to go with the man whom the Lord had blessed. This was the profit side; but he did not count the loss, and so when the time came, his selfish desires became apparent (chap. xiii. 10, 11), while the man of God stood out in all the dignity and beauty of faith. Just so now. If the Lord be working openly, and in such manner that all can see it, by the twos or threes who disown any name but the Name which is above every name (Phil. ii. 9), you will find a sudden acquisition to their numbers at, say, the Gospel Meeting. One would think that, as if by heavenly impulse, every Christian in the town had discovered his true place from the Word of God, and was determined to occupy that place at all cost. The “churches” are discarded as being no longer needed by such heaven-born spirits. The cage of “denominationalism” has suddenly lost its prey, and they breathe freely. “No doubt, after all, God’s way is the right way,” they will tell you. They are ready to give out the hymn-books, show strangers to their seats, and “start the hymns.” And at the after-meeting, no voice of prayer so long and loud as the “freed slave of sectarianism”! While what they term “success” lasts, they are still found “outside the churches”; but let the tide turn, and apparent success be borne away by the high waves of a strong ebb, and these same Christians seem to have received a “new revelation,” and are soon found “inside their churches” again.

They may have been for the time being “separated,” but not *unto God*. They have been “without the camp,” but it was not *unto Him*. Lot-like, they were not prepared for the step they had taken! We have seen this enacted over and over again, and have always felt relieved at the departure of the “hangers-on.”

Thus far Lot is still journeying with Abram, and “the

Canaanite was then in the land" (ver. 6). This is most significant. The Canaanites of Abram's time represent the wicked spirits in heavenly places (Eph. vi. 12) of ours. And in their presence Abram is careful how he acts towards Lot. Our conflict is with the wicked spirits in the heavenlies, and so it becomes us to look well to our going. Our conduct towards fellow Christians, whether under the yoke of sectarianism or not, should be such as cannot be reproved by the world, nor be an object of accusation for the spiritual Canaanites!

Lot is often taken as a type of the unbeliever, but the Book shows him to us as a type of the believer. A carnally-minded believer (Rom. viii. 6), no doubt, but a believer nevertheless. God "delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds" (2 Peter ii. 7, 8). The great difference between Abram and Lot was, that while Abram found his *all in God*, Lot was bound up *in self*!

T. WINSHIP.

Fragment.

God's love and man's hatred met at the point of the spear that pierced the Saviour's side.

THE FOUR GREAT MONARCHIES.

III.

THE Medes and the Persians, who were the appointed instruments for the execution of God's judgment upon great Babylon, and who were designated as such by Isaiah the son of Amoz, nearly two hundred years before the event, were of different race and lineage from, and were still more different in religion and in custom to, the Assyrians and Babylonians, whose place upon the world's stage and in the world's government they came in the due time to take, when, in the mystic speech of the seer, the second beast, that was "like a bear,"¹ superseded that which was as a lion, and had eagle's wings.

Though these two peoples were closely related in an ethnic sense, though their customs were similar, and their religion at first was the same, and though their power was blended into a remarkable measure of unity, they were distinct, and had distinct histories; hence the later phase of their rule was represented, in the second great vision, by a ram with two horns, of unequal growth, for one rose before the other, and unequal magnitude, for that of later growth was higher and greater than its older neighbour.

In this the horn of earlier growth represented the Medes, who were first in order of time; and the horn of greater height the Persians, whose power at its greatest far surpassed that of the Median empire.

Hence it is necessary to follow separately the outlines of the history of the two nations up to the point of the confluence of the two great streams, from whence they became one mighty monarchy, and held, under CYRUS THE PERSIAN,² supreme power amongst men.

¹ Dan. vii. 5.

² Dan. vi. 28.

The Medes retained in their national cognomen the tradition of their Japhetic descent through MADAI¹ (as the name is written in A.V.), their forefather; and were, with the Persians² proper, perhaps the most typical representatives of the great Arian family of nations which, in their persons and through their empire, first gained the place of domination amongst the nations of the earth, which (in the Western races) it still enjoys. They were nearly akin to the Germanic races, who have furnished a large element in the structure of the composite people represented by the modern "Britisher." To many of the customs of the Medes and Persians Britons have become co-heirs (including that of reading from left to right, and not from right to left, like the sons of Shem and Ham); and it would have been well for them if they had succeeded to others, for one of the noblest traits of the character of these ancient Arians was an abhorrence of deceit and a hatred of lying.

There is some reason to believe that Berosus, the Chaldæan, had substantial basis for his statement as to a Median dynasty having held sway in Southern Mesopotamia before the Cushite migration into or invasion of that district, which, in all probability, Nimrod led. According to Berosus, the dominion of the Medes endured for some 220 years, during which time there was a succession of eight monarchs. This would imply that the builders of the Tower of Babel were in great part descendants of Japheth; and in the enterprise and the audacity of these ancient adventurers one seems to catch a glimpse of that Japhetic spirit which is seen in its full development to-day, and which, when rightly directed,

¹ Gen. x. 2. They called themselves the *Mada*. The Semitic form of this was the *Madai*, and the Greek the *Medi*.

² The Persians are frequently but erroneously confounded with the Elamites of Scripture. The Elam of the Old Testament was the land of Susiana, which lay between Media and Persia, and of which "the city Shushan" (or Susa) was the capital. Elam was one of the Semitic races.

holds great possibilities for the good of men, but which ever leads to disaster when turned into channels of vain celestial quest, of self-taught building of ways up into heaven.

However, Japheth's time had not yet come. Nimrod drove the disorganized hordes in headlong route from Shinar into the mountains of Media, and originated the great empire that, first in the Chaldæan race, and afterwards in that of the Assyrians, held such long and such gruesome sway. For centuries Median history is a blank, and the Medes had no national existence. Media Magna, as their home-land was called, was peopled by a valiant, hardy race of mountaineers, who were simple in their habits, upright in their ways, and blessed with a religion which was as light to darkness compared with that of the Assyrians and Babylonians; but who were broken up into several tribal governments, of which the rule had something of the patriarchal and something of the republican order.

About the year 835 B.C. Shalmanezar II.¹ of Assyria overran the land, the divided condition of the people rendering resistance impossible, and Media became nominally tributary to Assyria. Sargon, the father of Sennacherib, drew the bonds tighter, making Media virtually into a province of the Assyrian empire, and endeavouring to give permanence to this by, first, a partial depopulation of the land, and, then, a re-peopling of the partially deserted valleys by forced immigrants from the city of Samaria and the land of Israel.²

This immigration was indeed only partial, yet its future bearings were of the highest importance for Israel and Israel's fortunes; for God, who delights to temper justice with mercy, thus prepared for a deliverance, which was yet far away, of the captives of His people, for whom He had ever thoughts of good and not of evil.

¹ The Shalman of Hosca x. 14.

² See 2 Kings xvii. 6.

It may easily be imagined how galling such a yoke as that of the Assyrian was to a hardy, vigorous and freedom-loving race of mountaineers like the Medes. They were a constant source of trouble to their rulers, again and again forcing these rulers to conquer one part or another of their land; and their spirit was inherited by their descendants, and remains to this day.

Notwithstanding this indomitable spirit, the power of the Medes was too feeble to offer any prolonged resistance to that of Assyria, and record after record of the Ninevite kings remains, in which one monarch after another vaunts his successes and boasts of his triumphs over the mountaineers.

Concurrently with the accession of Saracus, the last and feeblest of the Sargonidæ, Media received a marked accession of strength, not only in an increase of the number of men who were fit to go forth to war, but in the person of a great leader and captain in war, the Cyaxares (or Astyages), to whom reference has already been made in these pages. It would seem as if he, in conjunction with his father, Phraortes, led an immigration of Arians into Media from the lands lying to the eastward. The reason for the movement is lost in obscurity, but it is possible, perhaps probable, that it was due to the increasing strength and restlessness of the Scythic hordes, that were even then in course of consolidation into a nation.

Whatever was the occasion, it is clear that a great body of Arians, men of the Medes' own race and lineage, marched westward, smiting certain of the Turanian tribes—that is, of the Parthian and of other Scythian people—in their way; and established themselves in the mountains of Media Magna, where they were received as brethren and welcomed as deliverers by the scattered population that they found in the valleys and mountain gorges of their new home.

Whether of their own free will and sense of fitness, or

whether under the force of circumstances, against which they felt it to be in vain to struggle, the joint peoples accepted Cyaxares as their leader, and rallied themselves around him, still maintaining, however, much of their tribal independence, and presenting but little of national unity.

Cyaxares determined not only to defy Assyria openly, but actually to attack the lion in his lair, to offer battle to that great people in their own land ; and at the head of his wild warriors he descended from the mountains and invaded Assyria. Saracus, who was always able to rouse himself at an emergency, marched against him with his trained hosts, and, as has so often been the case in the world's history, rudely armed and undisciplined valour proved utterly incapable of coping with drilled legions equipped with all the pomp and panoply of war, and reinforced by the "chariots of iron," such as had terrorised the men of Judah in still earlier times : the Median host was utterly defeated, Cyaxares' father was slain, and his broken bands driven back to their mountain steeps like chaff before the autumn gales.

Whether this adverse result of the Median adventure had been foreseen by the astute chieftain who led their forces or not, it is certain that he, with consummate ability, turned it to the furtherance of his schemes. The mountaineers in their extremity turned to him alone, and chose him for their king, content now that all power should be lodged in his hands. The wisdom of this soon became apparent ; Cyaxares welded the scattered tribes into unity, into a nation, reconstituted the government, remodelled the army, and in a surprisingly short time felt himself to be in a position to take the field once more against Assyria.

This time the result was very different : he defeated the Assyrians, though again led by their king in person, in a great pitched battle, and forced Saracus to take refuge behind the defence of Nineveh.

Cyaxares made preparation for besieging Saracus in his capital, if indeed the siege had not actually been begun, but "the due time" had not come, and his operations were brought to a sudden close, and his victorious course to an abrupt termination, by desperate tidings from home—tidings that caused him and his hosts to turn them about in their way and make with all speed for their own land.

In the northern parts of the Eastern hemisphere, then little known, now, for the greater part, included in the Russian and Chinese empires, great hordes of fierce warriors of the Turanian races¹ roamed continually over the broad "steppes," or upland plains, that were there spread over the face of the earth for thousands of square miles. These nomads presented the combination of shepherd and soldier that was so common at one time in the East, and that indeed marked a stage in the progress towards civilization and refinement of the families of mankind.² Their only possessions were, first, the arms which they bore and the wiry, much enduring little horses which bore them; and, secondly, their flocks and herds, their sheep and oxen, camels and brood mares. They were in no sense an agricultural people; they despised the tillage of the ground, and when they fed upon its fruits, usually did so at the expense of more industrious neighbours.

These most undesirable visitors broke in upon Media and Assyria like a flood; suddenly and swiftly like a devastating torrent, as was their wont, they overflowed Cyaxares' land, while he himself, with the flower of his hosts, was absent therefrom.

It would be bootless to stop here to inquire why this

¹ Scythians, and other North Asiatics, now represented by the Tartars and the Turks, the Mongols, Magyars, etc.

² Recent discoveries and decipherments of inscriptions do, however, appear to point to a very early Turanian civilization, which afterwards lapsed into the semi-barbarism here described.

invasion took place at this juncture, and for the present purpose as needless as bootless. It recalls a word long ago spoken to the old-time patriarch, when to him at one and the same time God's purposes were declared, and the period of their accomplishment postponed, because, strange and difficult to understand as the word is,¹ the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.

Perhaps, in like manner, the cup of Assyrian wickedness, dark and bitter as was ever that of the Amorites, was not yet full; and so the Scythian invasion was permitted, which alike delivered Nineveh from present peril in the person of the Median king and his victorious hosts, and so weakened Assyria that it fell a certain prey to its appointed conquerors at a fitting time that was yet to come.

Cyaxares made such speed as he could to his mountains, met the Scythians in a great pitched battle, and was by them defeated, if not utterly overthrown.

It is difficult for moderns, with modern notions of men and manners, to understand the arrangement that was entered into between the Medes and the Scythians after this battle. It was very similar to that which obtained between the Egyptians and the Hyksos, or Shepherd kings, at an earlier stage of earth's history, and its ultimate consequences were not dissimilar.

The Medes remained in possession of their land. Cyaxares remained as its king, the laws, customs, and habits of life of its own people seem to have been unchanged; notwithstanding all which, migratory bands of Scythians roamed through the land as dominant in it, and quartered themselves upon the country and upon its unwilling inhabitants.

There is much doubt and difference of testimony as to the length of time during which this oppressive occupation continued. It can hardly have been for any protracted period, as the place of inferiority to which they were relegated

¹ Gen. xv. 16.

must have been intolerable to a race of proud freemen such as the Medes; while the wanton wastefulness of the Scythians—whose herds devoured the best of the pasture and trod down the residue with their feet, until the land was brought to the brink of famine—could not possibly have been supported by the country for any protracted period.

Cyaxares and his courtiers found a characteristically Eastern mode of ridding themselves and their people of their oppressors, and one of which the best we can say is, that it was effective.

The king bid the whole of the Scythian chiefs to a great banquet,—they were, and are, unmitigated gluttons,—feasted them royally, made them very drunk, and then had all their throats cut by his guards.

This wiping out of the chiefs was the signal for an uprising of the Medes against the Scythians, as sudden and fierce as that of the people of Sicily against the French at the time of the famous "Sicilian Vespers"; the outcome being that the broken remnants of the Scythic bands were driven beyond the frontiers of Media, and finally found their way back to their native steppes.

According to Herodotus, when driven from Media, the Scyths attempted to effect an entrance into Egypt, and to this end forced their way through Palestine in the days of Josiah; but they were met and defeated by Psammetichus, the predecessor of Necho; and for centuries sank into obscurity, leaving, however, marks of their visit to the Holy Land in the name of the city *Scythopolis* ("the City of the Scythians"), and finding, if it be but once, special token of divine remembrance of their humanity and of their need, in the covenant of grace and in the New Testament writings.¹

As soon as Cyaxares was freed from his unwelcome visitors, he set himself once again to the organization of his kingdom

¹ Col. iii. 11.

and the development of its resources; and again with such success that he felt himself able to revert to the great project of which he had never lost sight, and the desire for the accomplishment of which dominated all his thoughts and counsels, the overthrow and subjugation of Assyria.

And now the time had come. Assyria had suffered almost, if not quite, as much as Media at the hands of the Scythians, while Cyaxares strengthened himself by an alliance with the people of Susiana (Elam); and the coalition was further strengthened, while Assyria was correspondingly weakened, by the defection of Napobolassar and the Babylonians, as already described in these pages.

Nineveh fell; the last of the Sargonidæ perished in the ruins of his palace, and a Median dynasty was established in the north of Mesopotamia, contemporary and allied with the new Babylonish monarchy, which held sway in the south.

The great purpose of Cyaxares thus accomplished, it might have been thought that the pressure of his advancing years—he was now an elderly man—would have led him to rest content with the power he had won, and the dominion he had achieved. But rest seems to have had no charms for that fiery spirit. The indomitable will, the inexhaustible energy of Cyaxares lost nothing in the advance of years. He gathered together the greatly increased force now at his command, and pressed on into fresh fields and to new conquests.

The ancient kingdom of Armenia fell before him, probably offering but little real resistance; and then he over-ran and subdued all the easterly provinces of the present Asia Minor, including the districts of Pontus, Cappadocia, Pisidia, and Cilicia, which have become familiar to readers of the New Testament as the scenes of apostolic journeyings and ministries.

In Cyaxares' course of conquest, and of the consequent

westward movement of the Median frontier, he reached at length the boundary, the old and remarkable kingdom of Lydia, then ruled by a prince named Alyattes, the great grandson of the celebrated Gyges, whose capital city was Sardis.

Cyaxares picked a quarrel with Alyattes about some runaway Scythians, and at once invaded the Lydian king's dominions.

He found that his advent was by no means unexpected, that his course had been keenly and closely watched, that a mutual defence league had been formed against him by Lydia and her neighbours, and that with this league at his back Alyattes had been quietly biding his time, and preparing on every hand for the struggle which he saw to be inevitable.

As a result, Cyaxares met with a stubbornness of resistance and an energy of counter-attack to which he had, for some time, been little accustomed. He invoked the assistance of the Babylonians, and Nebuchadnezzar, the Crown Prince of Babylon (and his own son-in-law), marched with an army to his aid. Still the conflict continued, and still the issue remained uncertain, until the whole was brought to an end in a manner as romantic as it was singular.

One day, probably in the year 610 B.C., while the two hosts were actually drawn up in order of battle, and were approaching each other with the grim deliberation of ancient Eastern warfare, an eclipse of the sun took place, and the foes found themselves shrouded in a common and mysterious darkness. They had little or none of the Chaldæan knowledge of astronomy; and concluding that "the end of all things was at hand," they cast down their arms, and called in terror upon their gods.

The Babylonish prince who was present with the Median forces (Nebuchadnezzar himself, doubtless), who had a

shrewder idea of the real nature of the phenomenon than either of the contending monarchs, saw his opportunity, and stepping forward, offered his mediation for the purpose of bringing about a truce and a treaty of peace.

The offer was accepted, terms and conditions were quickly agreed upon, and the compact was sealed by a somewhat unpleasant process, which was then regarded as an appropriate function at the settlement of kingly differences. Each monarch punctured his own arm with the point of his sword, and then each sucked the blood which trickled from the other's wound.

Nor was this all. Cyaxares had a son and Alyattes a daughter, and the two young people were joined on, or almost on, the spot in matrimonial bands by their parents, thus evidencing the abiding character of the treaty entered into.

The peace thus made and cemented was loyally kept by all the parties to the compact, and lasted for nearly fifty years, for the whole of which time Media, Babylonia, and Lydia not only avoided aggression at each other's expense, but stood mutually ready to render prompt and substantial assistance in each other's need—a remarkable and almost unique example of good faith in the history of the nations.

Cyaxares died shortly after the conclusion of the treaty with Alyattes, and was succeeded by his son, also known by the name (or title) of Astyages, whose long reign was marked by no special progress of the Median kingdom, and no great development of its power. He hated war and turmoil, and loved ease and pleasure; and under him the one time hardy and simple Medes became, perhaps, more civilized, certainly more effeminate in their habits and luxurious in their tastes, adopting, indeed, many of the customs and the tastes of the Assyrians whom they had overcome; and what had perhaps more to do with the

downfall of their monarchy than anything else—more corrupt in their religion.

Of that downfall, and of the religious questions involved in it, which had so marked an influence upon the history of the returned remnant of Judah, we may, perhaps, hope to treat on another day.

W. H. HUNTER.

Fragment.

GODLY oversight has its own blessed place, and nothing is more needed at the present time than godly example, living ensamples and epistles.

* * * *

What need for godly simplicity, and by abiding in Christ manifesting the life and power—"not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power." Princes who have power with God and with men, and prevail.

* * * *

Power thus to lead souls after Christ as their Leader, and thus to build up His Church and grace and truth in due proportions. "I, wisdom, lead in the midst of the paths of judgment."

In all matters of difficulty how important to have the anointed eye to see His, nay, and the yielded will, which is promised guidance. "If any man will do His will, he shall know," etc.

Duly waiting for God, as well as waiting on Him, and not forgetting the promise to the two agreed in Church needs, for it is to Him in the midst we are gathered. For we were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to THE Shepherd and Bishop (overseer) of our souls.

Extracted from a letter from MR. JOHN RAE.

SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY.

ONE of our readers asks for proof for statement, p. 57, and gives as a quotation therefrom, "The latter (*i.e., the brute*) has a spirit, *and a soul* (*not a living soul*) and a body." Reference to our columns will show that our reader has made a mistake.

We teach and have published the very opposite of such error. Our words are (p. 57): "While the root difference between the brute and man is, the former has a spirit, *living* soul, and a body; the latter has a spirit and a soul (*NOT a living* soul) and a body." The word latter in the foregoing sentence points out "*man*," and not the "*brute*," as our reader alleges in his unintentional mistake.

Genesis vii. 22 had our careful attention, as see p. 18 of our current volume.

His request for exposition of other scriptures we may be able to overtake by-and-by. No sufficient answer could be given in our Department of Question and Answer.

J. B.

Department of Question and Answer.

"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God."—*John* viii. 17, *R.V.*

QUESTION 28.—*In the article headed Department of Review, at page 42, 1 Corinthians v. 4 is quoted, and the statement made, "Where the power (not authority) of the Lord Jesus is connected with the gathering to His Name." I was always led to believe that the power here was "authority," the same as in Matthew xxviii. 18—"All power (authority) is given unto Me." Is this not so?*

The word translated power in 1 Corinthians v. 4 is in the Greek *Δύναμις*, *dunamis*, which is derived from the verb *Δύναμαι*, *dunamai*, signifying "I am able." Its meaning, therefore, is power in the sense of ability or might.¹ A typical use of the verb *Δύναμαι*, *dunamai*, is to be found in Matthew viii. 2—"If Thou wilt Thou *canst* make me clean." And of the noun *Δύναμις*, *dunamis*, in Romans i. 16—"The gospel . . . is the *power* of God"; and in Revelation iii. 8—"Thou hast a little *power*."

The word used in Matthew xxviii. 18, on the other hand, is *ἔξουσία*, *ēxousia*, which is derived from the verb *ἔξεστι*, *ēxēsti*, it is allowed. The meaning of this word is power in the sense of authority or right, as can be clearly seen by its use in Matthew viii. 9—"I also am a man under authority."

C. M. L.

QUESTION 29.—*Is it right for an assembly to appoint persons to arrange the Gospel work? Also, is it right for one to be preaching the Gospel in connection with an assembly in whom all have not confidence?*

Let us ever bear in mind that an assembly, if it be gathered according to the will of God, is as much a divine creation, a habitation for the indwelling Spirit, as is the individual believer (1 Cor. iii. 16, and vi. 19). In such an assembly there will be those who guide or shepherd the flock (Acts xx), known and submitted to because of their godly walk and behaviour, as well as their work and labour in the Lord (1 Thess. v. 12, 13). It will be part of the duty of such, in caring for God's glory in the assembly, to see that all things are done decently and in order; yet it will not be for them to appoint who is to preach the Gospel, but rather for those who are gifted of God to do so to arrange among themselves this matter. Undoubtedly, those who

¹ From it we derive our English word dynamics, the science of force in motion.

exercise oversight as responsible to the Lord and to the assembly would see that no one took such a public position in the hall or place of meeting occupied by the church who was not of good report, no one whose life did not recommend the Gospel. Generally many of those who take part in Gospel work also exercise oversight, and this forms a strong connecting link between those who guide and those who are gifted in teaching and preaching the Gospel. Such would not allow any to be associated with themselves in service of any sort that were not of good report.

Whilst the church has nothing to do with appointing those who teach or preach the Gospel, any more than to appoint those who guide, yet it is indispensable to the prosperity of the Gospel work that those who take part in it should arrange for such meetings to be so conducted in order that it should be known who is going to speak. The work of the Gospel is often sadly hindered by this want of arrangement, the unconverted sometimes being kept waiting because no one is ready to commence and duly conduct the meeting.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 30.—*Should letters of commendation be given by assemblies or individuals?*

We believe that the answer to this question involves the whole subject of oversight or eldership. If we trace it through the Old Testament, we find continually the elders are held responsible to act for the assembly (read Exod. xii. 3, and see how this was to be carried out—ver. 21). Also in the cities of refuge notice who are responsible to receive in the manslayer (Josh. xx. 4), also in the delivering up of the murderer (Deut. xix. 12). The same principle is apparent in the New Testament: Barnabas brought Saul to the apostles (Acts ix. 27). A letter of commendation would be from those responsible in an assembly, acting on its behalf; and the signature of two seems to accord with the scripture that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established.

It has been argued that 2 Corinthians iii. 1 is not assembly commendation, because the epistle is addressed to the church of God which is in Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia, that the lesser cannot include the greater, that it is therefore the saints that commend individually, not the assembly; but surely this argument is faulty, for the First Epistle to the Corinthians is addressed, not only to the church of God which is in Corinth, but also to all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Would any one argue that in chapter v. 4 “when ye are gathered together” means the gathering together of all the saints in every place with the church of Corinth? Would it not be that Corinth, as a church of God, would act by the word of the Lord through the apostle, and

this word would be binding also on all the saints everywhere? Yet Corinth would have the first responsibility. So surely in the Second Epistle the letter of commendation would be from the church of God in Corinth; and one going with such a letter would be welcomed by saints in Achaia, as the one in the First Epistle without such a letter would find himself kept without.

In Acts xviii. 27 we read, "The brethren wrote." This cannot mean all the brethren, and implies that more than one commended Apollos to the disciples in Achaia; the name disciples being used as saints is used in 2 Corinthians i. 1 may imply that the commendation was to saints in other parts of Achaia, as well as to the church in Corinth, the name being inclusive of all.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 31. — *Would it be according to the Word for sisters to come together regularly for prayer—to have a woman's prayer-meeting?*

We believe that the will of God is that there should be that "together" which we read of in Acts i. 14. Nor do we believe that Acts xvi. 13 sets forward any different principle.

There is nothing in this place to prove that there was more than individual prayer.

In the Church of Rome we find the separation of men and women, the one into Monasteries, the other into Nunneries; in other sects the principle more or less obtains. How different to this are the directions given by the Lord through His apostle to Timothy (1 Tim. v. 12). Here is depicted a blessed and holy "together" of the Heavenly family. In what is generally called a sister's prayer-meeting (and we do not mean by this two or more sisters praying together over the work they are mutually engaged in), where often one sister specially takes the lead, inviting others, etc., the unexpected coming in of a brother would bring the meeting to a termination, and would be looked upon as out of place; that is, if the sisters had so far learned their place before the Lord as to be silent in the presence of the man. Likewise, also, if the presence of a woman in a brother's prayer-meeting would hinder its proceeding, we should be inclined to object to both the one and the other on the same grounds.

But it may be asked, Are you not thus hindering prayer? By no means; we are only now speaking of what is commonly known as a regular sister's prayer-meeting, in which the brother would be out of place. Not as we have before said, two or three praying together. But again, some might say, Where would you draw the line? Just where we would draw it between long hair and short—the one is forbidden to the man, the other is not; but what an endless controversy could be raised on the question, When does hair become long?

So with prayer: there is that which is undoubtedly wrong, while

there is that which approaches near to the wrong and becomes questionable.

The woman has her sphere of rule where she is to act for God, yet this is to be carried out in subjection to the man whose will, if he has learned aright his place in the House of God, is subjected to the Lord Christ.

Let not our sisters think that we are desiring to shut them out from anything to which God has called them; far be the thought. Let them only grasp the blessed privilege of their present position as showing forth in this age the truth of a coming one, when the Bride shall reign with her Lord, and delight to do His will: then it will be their delight to be where and what our Lord would have them in the churches of God.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 32.—*Will you please explain who took part along with the eleven apostles in the apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell—was it Matthias or Paul? And if there were thirteen apostles, how can we make that correspond with the Twelve Apostles of the Lamb? Rev. xxi. 14.*

From Acts i. 26, and ii. 14, we would understand that Matthias was numbered as one of the twelve as a witness, with the other eleven, to the Resurrection, and as one who had companied with the apostles all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out amongst them.

Acts vi. 2 seems to confirm this; for here we have the twelve acting together, and in verse 6 they are spoken of as apostles, and they lay their hands upon the seven unitedly.

The passages also quoted by Peter from the Psalms seem to have their fulfilment more fittingly with Matthias than with Paul, the expression "His overseership let another take" (R.V.) seems scarcely applicable to the Apostle Paul.

Be it also remembered that "the lot" was a Jewish practice: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 33). The testimony was still confined to Israel, they being called upon to repent (Acts iii. 19). We must bear in mind, too, that the name apostle was not confined to the twelve, Barnabas being also so named (Acts xiv. 14). Paul's apostleship differed from that of Matthias in that he was directly and personally chosen by the Lord Jesus, and sent forth by Him. The apostle himself seems to have had this before his mind, possibly contrasting his personal call with that of Matthias (Gal. i. 17).

We are inclined to believe that when the testimony to Israel of the kingdom had been finally rejected, Paul was called out by the Lord Himself as a witness with the other eleven to the present aspect of the kingdom, and that Paul, not Matthias, is seen in the foundation of the city as one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. This thought would

seem to harmonize with Ephesians ii. 20. In Revelation iv. we see "four-and-twenty elders seated on thrones" (R.V.) round about the throne. Twelve appears to be the governmental number, that by which the earth was divided (Deut. xxxii. 8). The fact that twelve is doubled in the above passage may indicate the double position of testimony that the apostles occupied, first the eleven with Matthias towards Israel, afterwards Paul with the eleven in the testimony of the Church. In the coming kingdom the apostles are to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.¹ Surely this would be Matthias; but in Revelation iv. for the time being the Kingdom of God on earth is entirely set aside, therefore the thrones are seen in Heaven. When the Lord returns to earth the saints that overcome will rule with Him; this will not be confined to the apostles (1 Cor. vi. 2; Rev. ii. 26).

J. A. B.

LIFE INSURANCE.

IN reply to a believer, who asked whether insuring his life would be a carrying out of 2 Corinthians xii. 14, our esteemed brother R. C. Chapman sent the following letter, which we publish, hoping it may be a help to others:—

"DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—

"It is a weighty matter of which you write me. If to provide for wife and family you spent money upon some so-called 'Insurance Office,' you would not be chargeable with doing an unlawful thing. Nay, among the church of God you would find commendation. But to obtain the commendation of the Lord, both now and hereafter, your path, I judge, is that of Psalm cxii. and 2 Corinthians ix. In the heavenly 'discretion' of Psalm cxii. what would be paid to the 'Insurance Office' is cheerfully given to the Lord to do good to the widow or the fatherless, or for the furtherance of the Gospel, or to show the kindness of God to some unregenerate one. This, according to 1 Timothy vi. 19, would be 'laying up a good foundation for the time to come.' This would be Isaac's sowing for Isaac's reaping—to wit, 'an hundred fold' (Gen. xxvi. 12), 'and the Lord blessed him.' The 'providing' of 1 Timothy v. 8 is a caring for a man's own according to natural obligations, instead of casting those obligations on the church. The Insurance Company will not nourish faith, but God, being trusted by liberal distribution, be it of gold, silver, or copper, will nourish the faith that honours Him, and bestow manifold blessing on the trusting one. Him and His, farewell.

"Affectionately yours in the Lord,

"ROBT. C. CHAPMAN."

¹ Luke xxii. 30.

Department of Review.

“PAROLES SALUTAIRES.”

WE have received the first two numbers of this publication, to which, in our October number (page 39), we made allusion, asking the prayers of gathered saints on behalf of our brethren who are seeking to serve the Lord by ministering His Word to French-speaking believers, as well as by labouring in the Gospel amongst the unsaved.

The first number (which was issued last December) contains articles on The Body of Christ and the Assembly of God; Separation; “This is My Body”; The Purpose of God; The Coming of the Lord, etc. And No. 2, just issued, contains papers on The Communion of Saints; “My Flesh is Meat indeed,” etc.

Paroles Salutaires (Healthful Words) is published quarterly by our brother, G. F. Gaudibert, whose address is Ohain, par la Hulpe, Brabant, Belgium; and the yearly subscription to places outside Belgium is 1 franc 25 centimes (1s. 1d.) for one copy, or 5 francs (4s.) for five copies. This sum can be sent by post office order, payable at Ohain (*not* by postal order or stamps). Or the corresponding editor of *Needed Truth* would be pleased to receive and forward subscriptions. We mention these particulars because we fancy that many of our readers, and especially many of our Canadian readers, may be able to help the circulation of our contemporary by bringing it under the notice of French-speaking Christians. At any rate, we can all help by prayer that God will richly bless this effort for His glory.

THE PLACE OF POWER.

IN objecting to the separation from the ungodly that God distinctly enjoins on His people in His Word, many fall back on the plea that *once you get out of touch with the world, your "influence for good" ceases*. They say, "Your good example to the unconverted *while among them* must produce its results." In Genesis xix. we have a case in point. Abraham, in chapter xiii., allowed the Lord to choose for him, while Lot *chose for himself* all the plain of Jordan, pitched his tent towards Sodom, and at last had risen to the position of Magistrate in the city (comp chap. xix. with Acts xvi. 19, 20). And all this against the plain declaration that "the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (chap. xiii. 13).

Now, according to the theory, Lot ought to have wielded such a mighty influence for good in the place that, had they not become better men, the inhabitants of that vile city would at least be disposed to "take his advice" on important matters!

Well, a critical time is reached in the history of Sodom. God will tolerate their sin no longer. And the man whose example ought to have told its tale upon the people has a chance of manifesting his "influence for good!" And what does that influence amount to? We shall see. "But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: and they called unto Lot, and said, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, and said, I pray you, *brethren*, do not so wickedly. And they said, *Stand back*. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee than with them.

And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door" (vers. 4-9). Such was the effect of Lot's example, such the "influence" he exercised!

He had got so blinded by contact with them—so blind to their true condition before God—that he called them "brethren." This has its parallel to-day. Undoubted children of God call the children of the Devil "brethren." The worldly element is too strong for them, and they get blinded to the true condition of the lost around them, and so help them on in the delusion that they are "all going to one place." Some time ago we read the opening part of a great preacher's address to a "large and appreciative audience." He began with "My brethren," and we knew that the most of his hearers were on the broad track that leadeth to destruction, and many of them scoundrels of the deepest dye. But *he* called them his brethren all the same.

If God's people want to "influence the world for good," they must be apart from it. And the unconverted are not slow to see and know whose influence affects them.

There was only one man who had any influence in the matter of Sodom. That man was Abraham. He was walking in fellowship with God, and *that* separated him from the world; and in fulfilment of Psalm xxv. 14 the Lord informs His servant all about Sodom's coming doom. "And Abraham *drew near*" (chap. xviii. 23). The man who is unequally yoked with the world cannot "draw near to God." No! The "connecting links" must be severed, and then the drawing near can take place.

Let us learn then this lesson, that there is only one place of power and "influence for good," and that is *walking with God*. So shall we be separated from the world that lies in the wicked one, and our testimony shall surely exercise a mighty influence on the world, which the day shall declare.

T. WINSHIP.

THE KINGDOM PRESENT.

OUR object in this paper is, as we obtain help of God, to bring before our readers the Kingdom in its present aspect ; but before doing so, it is necessary briefly to refer to the Kingdom past.

We noticed in the case of the returned remnant that they occupied their place by the sufferance of the Gentile powers. Whilst their internal economy remained unaltered, they had lost their proud position among the nations ; nay, more, at the time of the coming of John the Baptist they had been still further subjected to the Roman yoke, and the measure of independence enjoyed at first by them had been taken away. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," and the Roman fashion of the death which our blessed Lord suffered is a further indication of this. This understood throws light on the preaching of John (Matt. iii. 1, 2). It was the Kingdom he preached, and the Kingdom that would place Israel as the first of the nations. This they would gladly have accepted, utterly regardless of their condition before God ; therefore the prominence given to repentance in the Gospel of the Kingdom, both by John the Baptist and by our Lord and His Apostles. Israel failed to repent, and as it was not the Lord's purpose to set up a mere outward thing amidst those that were in a wrong condition, the testimony to the kingdom by our Lord is brought to an abrupt conclusion by His betrayal and crucifixion. Being rejected as their deliverer His people are left under the power of the Gentile yoke, which is making them groan to the present day.

We believe the testimony to the Kingdom was continued for a brief period to Israel (Acts iii. 25) after the resur-

rection, and even after the Church, which is His Body, had been founded at Pentecost; so that we have here an overlapping of the two dispensations—the Kingdom still being preached to Israel, whilst the Church which is His Body was being formed, and the saints gathered together that were afterwards to be formed into churches of God, and in whose midst the government of God was to be carried out, the Kingdom of God on earth. It is of this Kingdom of God that the Lord appears to be speaking in Acts i. 3. For had it been concerning the Kingdom of Israel, so important a point as that of which the Apostles inquired (verse 6), could hardly have been omitted. The Lord does not answer their question in this matter, showing that the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel was not the subject of which He had been speaking. That of which He had spoken with them we are not here told, but doubtless it would be brought to their remembrance by the Spirit when He was sent (John xiv. 26).

This, together with further revelation given to the Apostle Paul, would form the principles of government for the present age, and the rule of the House of God (1 Tim. iii. 15), the doctrines by giving heed to which we shall both save ourselves and those that hear us (1 Tim. iv. 16).

We do not believe that the Kingdom present differs so widely from the Kingdom past, or the Kingdom to come, but that there are *points* of difference there can be no question. The power of life and death has not been given to the people of God in this age, Christians being in the position of subjection to the powers that be. Had this been clearly seen, how many mistakes it would have saved the Lord's people from making. It might have saved the Covenanters from drawing the sword for the furtherance of the truth; it might have stopped the Crusades to Palestine for the recovery of the holy city, and in our day would stop much of the religious activity that is seeking to win the

world for Christ; for the world will never be won for Him till He comes Himself to claim it as His own.

The present Kingdom of God, or rule of God on earth, is (or we should rather say *was*) confined to the churches of God. We do not mean by this that God is not overruling in the kingdoms of men, for He makes even the wrath of man to praise Him, and is continually working things according to His own will; but it is only amongst the gathered out and the gathered together ones that He is ruling *directly*; among such alone, we believe, can the Kingdom of God be carried out. It is most important for us to see this, and if we do so we shall also see at once that the coming together of saints for the breaking of bread will no more accomplish the will of God in this age, than would the coming out of Israel to keep the Passover have accomplished the purposes of God with Israel in the past.

It seems to us that it has in great measure been lost sight of, that God has a purpose not only through the individual testimony of His children—by their lives or the gospel from their lips, but also by the collective testimony of His gathered together saints in accordance with His will (1 Cor. xiv. 23). As we have already said, it is in the House of God, and in it we believe alone, that the government of God can be carried out in this age—or in other words, the Kingdom of God can be manifested.

Let us not be misunderstood here. We do not say that Christians who are in the sects will not be eternally saved, as well as those gathered out, for the salvation of God reached to those who were outside the Kingdom of Israel (Acts x. 35). The same to-day, but we do not believe that those ensnared by Satan in the many false systems of men are in the Kingdom of God, or in the place where they can carry out the rule of God collectively on earth, that which Paul preached at Ephesus (Acts xx. 25).

Regarding the discipline of the House of God, far more

might be said than we have space for at this time. The most minute directions have been laid down for the ordering of the House, the goings out and the comings in thereof, so difficult, yea, so impossible to be carried out acceptably to the Lord of the House, except as we are abiding in living fellowship and communion with Himself; but they have been in great measure and sometimes wholly superseded by some human device, well suited to the carnal mind, and which can be carried out with as much ease as the ark could be carried on the new cart, and with, alas! the same disastrous results following.

Much of the discipline of the House is internal, and the putting away or the putting outside the circle where the Kingdom of God can be carried out is the last step; but as it is this internal discipline that so tests an assembly's real power and brings out its weakness, this discipline is set aside, and the last step that should be taken (namely, the putting out) is made the first.

Where there is the real power of God amongst gathered-out ones, the erring one that does not repent of his sin will be in much the same position in the assembly as the suspected leper was in the camp of Israel (Lev. xiii. 26), he would be isolated within, marked, avoided, and no company had with such a one, so that his power for evil among the saints would be reduced to a minimum; in fact, he would find sympathy only with those who sympathised with his evil ways or doctrines, he would not be able, as, alas! it too frequently is to-day, to walk out of the assembly into the next one, to be received with open arms, but would find himself in the same position wherever he went. But while some profess to see that this responsibility towards an individual who is under discipline in or put out of an assembly is binding on all other assemblies (at least until the action has been proved to be unscriptural), because it is not the assembly's action that binds us, but the Word of

God, equally binding them to act, as it does us to accept their action; they reason that this mode of dealing cannot be extended to an assembly, and that if an assembly meeting in a certain hall has been put under discipline and finally excluded from the fellowship of the surrounding assemblies, who, under the guidance of the united oversight, have acted unitedly in the matter, such action is not binding upon other assemblies beyond what they may see fit to accept. And this on the plea that there is no Scripture warrant for dealing with a company of saints meeting together in one place. The lamentable result of such teaching is that each assembly acts in independency on its own responsibility, and although the matter may have been gone into unitedly with the utmost care, in one place Christians will be received and welcomed without a word, in another case they will be received as individually sound in the faith, without being mentioned to the assembly for fellowship, thus giving a preference to the disobedient and disorderly that would not be given to one coming from a "Baptist Chapel." For ourselves we have not yet discovered anything in Scripture that would warrant such a line of action. The above teaching amounts to this, that if there were in any town three companies of saints meeting in three different halls, one we will say of a hundred, another of twenty, and another of six, that whilst there would be Scripture to put away six sinning ones from the Assembly of a hundred or that of twenty, there would be no Scripture to put away the six who happen to meet together in a separate hall of their own; that were such put away by the church of God in that place (and be it remembered that church of God would include all those gathered out and gathered together, and only such), the action would be in no wise binding upon other assemblies any longer than they might choose to accept it of their own free will! We may well ask, Is God the author of confusion? And yet, in the midst of this, that has and is being

practised, some expect to see the power of God manifested. No wonder that they are disappointed, that Satan triumphs, and that confusion confused is the result.

Surely this most disastrous teaching arises from the fact that many have never seen what the position of a Church of God in a city is, that it embraces all the gathered out ones, that although the six may meet in a separate hall to break bread, yet that they would be put away by the church of God in that place, and would therefore be in exactly the same position as six put out from the assembly of a hundred or that of twenty, and that in each case the act would be equally binding upon other assemblies.

So, in like manner, with the internal discipline of six meeting in a separate hall, or six in an assembly of a hundred. We are not now raising the question as to whether there was Scriptural ground for dealing with the sinning ones, for this would apply as much in the one case as the other. We believe that exactly the same Scriptural action can be carried out towards an assembly as towards Christians in an assembly, both for internal discipline and the final act of rejection. But some may ask, What if only four of the six meeting together in one hall could be Scripturally put away, two being only sympathizers with them? Our reply is that we should deal with the two in exactly the same way that we should deal with two sympathizers in the Assembly of a hundred, where four had been put out for evil conduct or doctrine.

To suppose that God has in His infinite wisdom legislated for us so that sin can be dealt with in individuals, and yet not in assemblies, is indeed amazing. It has led to the present independency, and every man's doing that which is right in his own eyes, and not only so doing, but loving to have his own way, so that the way of truth is and will be evil spoken of.

With Israel there was no such independency in God's

economy. The murderer who escaped to a city of refuge was given up by the *elders*, who took him in to those who were responsible to carry out the will of God towards him (Deut. xix. 12).

This brings us to another point in our subject. Who are those upon whom the first responsibility to act for God devolves? Turning to Exod. xii. 3, we find God giving directions to Moses with regard to the keeping of the pass-over, but in verse 21 of the same chapter we see how this was to be practically carried out. We here get a most important principle, and one running through the whole of the Old and New Testament, namely, the responsibility of the eldership to act for God.

As in the one who has been born from above the divine life in him is the power of God to subdue all that is contrary to His will in the individual (Rom. vi. 18); so in an assembly (which is as much a divine creation, if truly gathered of God, as is an individual) we have in a God-given oversight a centre through which God can work to the subduing of everything that is contrary to His will in that assembly.

If this be so, we can at once see what disaster, yea, what utter ruin will be wrought by those who are taking a place in the assemblies of the saints for which they never have been fitted by the Lord of the House, in whom the will of God has never been wrought, but whose own unbroken wills are carried out by them. Or it may be even worse—the will of the woman through the man. This is, we believe, the reason for the minute direction given in 1 Tim. iii. regarding those who are fitted for rule in the House of God—those who have learned first to rule themselves, those who can rule their own house after a godly sort, not a mere rule of terror, but a godly and careful acting before Him; then, and then only, can such take care of the House of God.

The question may arise—who are responsible to act upon 1 Tim. iii., and the instructions therein contained? We

think there can be little question that when once an assembly has been formed in a town or city, and that in such an assembly there is a God-given oversight, any extension of the church of God in that place will be in perfect fellowship with those already gathered together, and that the oversight will remain as one: not a new meeting started without any in its midst who have been recognised as overseers, where some would have to appoint themselves, or what is equally unscriptural, the church appoint them; but those who have already had their place in the oversight, after having been duly tested by that divine photograph of what an overseer should be—these leading saints they have already been in the habit of guiding in fellowship with others, to meet in a new locality, and yet remain part of the church of God in that city.

How utterly unlike what we see in practice continually. Some one or two cannot get the place they desire, they cannot carry out their will in the assembly, so out they go, taking their followers with them, and commence a meeting for the breaking of bread; for a time it is all so happy, and things seem to go smoothly, but soon the old troubles come up again, and there must be more division, or some other expediency must be resorted to. A popular evangelist is got, and for a little while the internal trouble is lost sight of in the excitement of the meetings; but when he is gone, things slip back into the old way; for what did not begin with God, and in accordance with His mind, cannot be carried on with His approval or power manifested in the midst. When God sends forth His sheep, we believe that He sends shepherds with them.

With regard to the relation of assemblies one to another, we have only space at this time to write briefly, remarking that we believe as all the tribes of Israel were as one nation before God, and His rule and authority were manifested in their midst, so should it be to-day, and so would it be were

the mind of our Lord comprehended. The relationship of the gathered out ones towards those who have been put away from an assembly is clearly taught in 1 Corinthians v. and many other Scriptures. Be it ever remembered that the object of discipline is the restoration of the erring child of God. The putting away is in order that they may eventually be received back, having repented them of their evil. This, peradventure, the goodness of God may accomplish, that they may so be restored to the fellowship of the House of God. The little we hear of godly restoration is owing, we believe, to the ungodly way in which in many cases those that are put away are treated; often they are companied with as though nothing had happened, and addressed as "dear brethren," thus being builded up in their sins, instead of being restored as the one was in 2 Corinthians ii. 7.

Our relationship towards those ensnared around us by Satan, or such as are in the snare of the Devil, is another most important matter for us to consider. If we treat them in the same manner as one that has been put away from an assembly for evil doctrine or practice, we shall most grievously err. Many such are living far more righteous lives as individuals, than some who profess to be gathered out; yet if we are really seeking their good, and we have found it a joy ourselves to be where the Lord's will can once more be carried out collectively, it will be no matter of indifference to us that those dear saints, dear to Him and members of the Church which is His Body, are where His will cannot be carried out. We shall seek in all love and gentleness to instruct such in the more excellent way, looking to God; if He peradventure will give unto them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, that they may awake themselves out of the Devil's snare unto the doing of the will of God. We shall seek that such may return unto us (Jer. xv. 19), not that we should return unto them, or lead them in any way to think lightly of the position which they occupy,

but faithfully warn them lest they should be losers in that day when those only that strive lawfully shall receive a crown (2 Tim. ii. 5); not seeking simply to gather them as Christians into a meeting, but as fellow-helpers with God, seeking that His Spirit's work may be perfected in them first, so that as repentant ones they may be moulded and fashioned in their walk and ways according to the will of God, thus taking the place of rejection with the now rejected One, so that when He comes to establish His Kingdom over the nations, they should share in the responsibilities of that Kingdom, as those who came out to David had a special place with him when he was made king over all Israel—sharers in his rejection, they were sharers in his triumph, and were honoured as others were not, although they were with him in the kingdom, and helped to make him king at last, though never having taken the place of rejection with him.

Thus we have sought to trace some of the principles of the present Kingdom, which will, we believe, again widen out into the coming kingdom of our Lord and Christ when He shall reign over His ancient people gloriously, they being the first of the nations, and those who have overcome ruling with and for Him in His Kingdom (Rev. ii. 26, 27).

J. A. BOSWELL.

CHRISTIANS AND THE ELECTION.

By the time these lines are before our readers the excitement about the General Election may be near its climax. It is therefore an appropriate time to consider the Christian's relations thereto.

And, first, let it be understood that we do not address ourselves to the *christianized worldling*, but to the Christian

—the born again one—for only such can appreciate our position. We can understand the world getting excited about that which concerns itself—each party striving with might and main to get its man in; but we fail to understand the Christian having any part or lot in the matter. The world will have its politics, but in spite of all it may or can do, we hold it to be true to the end of all time that “THE HEAVENS DO RULE” (Dan. ii. 21; iv. 24, 26). We also believe in the sufficiency of the Word of God to guide our steps in everything, even in such a matter as the Election. The question for us born again people, then, is: What is our position in the world? In the Book we find it most clearly laid down. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John xvii. 16). And in 1 Peter ii. we are said to be “strangers and pilgrims”—we are passing through an enemy’s country on our way to the Father’s home. Our birth (1 Pet. i. 2, 3), education (1 Pet. ii.), citizenship (Phil. iii. 20), and destiny (1 Thess. iv. 17), are all heavenly. We have nothing in common with the people of this present evil age. “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you; if ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (John xv. 18, 19). In the face of such a plain Scripture, how can any one who loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity be found seeking to aid the world in getting its man in? Our time has not come to reign; no, we are called upon to suffer with Him (Rom. viii. 17). But the reigning time is coming by-and-by. “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him” (2 Tim. ii. 12). When He reigns we shall also reign, for then “all dominions shall serve and obey Him” (Dan. vii. 27). Then, again, to go down to the world and lend a hand to get any man in, would be to put the unequal yoke on our necks. “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers . . . for

what part hath he that believeth with an unbeliever?" (2 Cor. vi. 14). The clean and unclean beasts were not to be yoked together in the Levitical economy (Deut. xxii. 10); neither are the clean and unclean—the believer and unbeliever—to be yoked together for any given purpose now. A yoke is for two necks, and the moment the Christian lowers the standard and puts his neck into the yoke with the ungodly, he virtually denies his heavenly calling, and practically brings himself down to the level of the world! The yoke suggests fellowship; the purpose matters not. How, then, can we Christians, we heavenly people, have any fellowship with the world that rejected OUR MAN—the Lord Jesus—and did its best to do away with Him? When He was on the earth, they would not have Him to reign over them. And when He ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high, they stoned Stephen, and sent him after his Master to confirm their decision (Luke xix. 14–27; Acts vii. 54). Such is the character of this world that "lieth in the wicked one" (1 John v. 19). Our position, then, is *not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world.*

Christians are commanded to be in subjection to the powers that be, for the simple reason that these powers are "ordained of God" (Rom. xiii.). But, being *subject* to the ruling power as that which *is* ordained of God is a very different thing to having a part in *making* that power. Besides, it matters not to us what "man" is in, or what "party" has the reins of government, we are bound to regard it all as that "ordained of God." If we take sides with any party, and that party does not "get in," it becomes manifest that we have been *fighting against God.* And how can we pray for those in authority (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2, except we regard such authority as that ordained of God, whichever party gets in?

We are persuaded that if Christians would walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called (Eph. iv. 1), and

seek to manifest to the world that they are one with Christ in His rejection, they would not be found coming down to the world's platform. Yea, the world would not recognise them as having anything to do with its politics.

If the Christian is to vote, he must come down to the voting level; for all voters stand on a common platform; that is, as being men of the world, who have a share in the things thereof. We cannot stand on Mount Zion and throw down our vote from the heights of fellowship with God, to the world beneath. No, we must *come down* and practically let the world understand that we are of it, ere we can be recognised as having any part in its affairs. This could be best compared to a *foreigner settling down in an enemy's country!*

In conclusion, we may add that in "the Book" Christians are contemplated as "waiting for the coming of the Lord" (Phil. iii. 20, 21; 1 Cor. i. 7; 1 Thess. i. 9, 10; Tit. ii. 12-14; Rev. xxii. 20). Can we, then, maintain this blessed position and have a hand in the affairs of "this present evil world" at the same time? Nay, verily! "Ye *cannot* serve God *and* Mammon." May the Lord enable His people to walk through this scene of sin and sorrow with our faces set as a flint, looking to yonder Throne where sits OUR MAN—our Blessed Lord Jesus, who is soon coming to assert His rights, and to put down all authority. Then, but not till then, shall we reign with Him.

NOTE.—It is remarkable that there is not a word of guidance to Christians in any authoritative capacity in the world, as King, Magistrate, etc., but only as being a people subject to the powers that be. Therefore the Christian who "governs" in the world does so without any instructions from the Lord. This is indeed solemn.

T. WINSHIP.

THE PEOPLE'S MAN.

"Now make us a king," said Israel in 1 Samuel viii. "I have provided Me a king," said God in 1 Samuel xvi. But the request of Israel was not for *the one* of God's providing, nor was the king of God's choice His response to their demand. There was the greatest possible difference between "the king which ye have chosen" and him of whom God said, "I have provided Me a king."

To give Israel a king was no after-thought with God; indeed, after-thought there cannot be with Him who declareth the end from the beginning.

It was His purpose, as Deuteronomy xvii. shows; indeed, it was absolutely necessary, in order to complete the typical foreshadowings of Christ as prophet, priest, and king.

"A prophet like unto me," "A priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec." "My king," are words which link together a triple glory of the Lord Jesus.

The king was a provision of God, as certain as had been that of the priest and prophet. But Israel could not wait for God to give in His own time. They demand a king. They seek him, not from God, but Samuel; not as God's provision and fulfilment of His word, but as a leader, who would enable them to be like the nations. God was left out of their thoughts; their demand was practically a rejection of Him.

Whence sprang this feverish wish for a king? Was it because Nahash, the Ammonite, had invaded the land (see chap. xii. 12)? Doubtless that event united the forces of discontent, and emboldened the people to cry out; but it is evident that the secret cause lay deeper than that, and that it can be traced to a long and deepening condition of failure on Israel's part. A climax is reached by the invasion; but

there had been for long a working up to it: dissatisfaction had been simmering, it now boils over.

How important to arrest the beginning of failure! how many and heavy crops of sorrow and shame had been prevented had there been a watchfulness, and a decision for God, to prevent the seeds of sin from germinating!

Matured rebellion is the growth of unchecked infant disobedience.

Israel's condition was largely due to the conduct of two families. Eli's sons and Samuel's sons were to be blamed for a great deal of it, and the old priest and the old prophet who had stood at the head of the nation for its help had each contributed to its failure. The leaders had erred, and the people had gone wrong in consequence. And has it not always been so, and is it not so still? The tangled skein of creature thought, the endless confusion of varying judgments, is the outcome of failure of those who lead oftener, perhaps, than through the dulness and perversity of those who are the led. Anyway, how careful should each of those be who take the oversight, or teach in any measure, to teach the truth, to make sure their influence and action is on the side of godly counsel and conduct, and that saints shall not from their lips and ways learn to stray. How heavy, when thus viewed, the responsibility is seen to be when the flock reflects the shepherd's conduct, and the taught reveals the teacher's negligence or care.

Eli restrained not his sons (1 Sam. iii. 13). Samuel made his sons judges (1 Sam. viii. 1).

Eli failed by what he did not do; Samuel by what he did: want of action in one, improper action in the other. What lessons lie here connected with family life, and indicate how rule at home and taking care of the church of God are closely linked.

Family life tells one way or the other on assembly conduct.

Eli's sons were priests, and had to do with the sacrifices of the people; Samuel's sons were judges, and had to do with the civil matters of the people. The one were associated with the people's relationship to God; the other with the people's relationship to each other.

The priests and the sacrifices were the links of fellowship between God and Israel (see Exod. xxix.). The judges decided in matters regulating the conduct of men with their fellows. The behaviour of Eli's sons caused men to despise the priesthood and abhor the sacrifice of the Lord. The conduct of Samuel's sons did injustice to man. In the one case communion with God was broken, and in the other discipline was made little of, and the people's wrongs were left unheeded and unredressed.

Groaning under this injustice, and out of fellowship with God, the advent of Nahash easily provoked the clamour for a king, and the people seek their own remedy. It is at such times Satan is ready, like a skilful angler, with his hook, and on it his attractive bait. Can we not see something of this in the religious agencies at work to-day? Our fellows have been neglected, Gospel work perhaps abandoned, so that some, in their zeal to remedy the wrong, have accepted Satan's religious methods, instead of seeking a right way from God. Judgment is perverted. We must have rule: make us a king. Or, to put it in its application to children of God now, We must be led, and we must be fed. Let us have a minister. And the people's *voice* is raised, and the people's desire is gratified. But it is the people's voice, not God's, their will that asserts itself, and which He permits.

Five times the voice of the people is referred to: 1st, in chapter viii. 7, 9, 22, xii. 1, in connection with Saul's choice; and, 2nd, in chapter xv., as the cause of his overthrow. The voice of the people created him their leader; the voice of the people sets him aside. "I feared the people, and obeyed their voice," said Saul; and their voice is seen as

opposed to God's. Saul listened to man and transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and lost his place. And is there not something akin to this to-day in the humanly ordained and appointed ministry of Christendom?

The voice of the people fills the pulpit with the man of their choice. After their own lusts they heap to themselves teachers for their itching ears (see 2 Tim. iv.)—creatures for the people, as well as of the people, and retained alone by the will of the people. And as truly as the call for a king was a rejection of God (1 Sam. viii. 7), and wickedness (1 Sam. xii. 20), so is it even now, when children of God depart from divinely given and appointed rule, and arrange for themselves according to their own desires.

If Israel will have a king, they must be prepared to pay the cost of it. They are told the manner of the king: "He will take," "He will take," "He will take" (1 Sam. viii. 11-18); and with all this exaction it is not surprising to find the people told "Ye shall cry out." How different with the rule of God, as seen in Paul: "I have coveted no man's silver or gold." "Ye know what manner of men we were among you" (Acts xx.; 1 Thess. ii.).

Saul was not without his personal attractions. To the natural eye there was a great deal to please. There was not a goodlier person than he: he had a good connection, wealth was in the family, while he himself was "a choice young man." A taking disposition in chapter viii., a taking appearance in chapter ix. Appearances go a long way with many: a good voice, an eloquent tongue, a pleasing manner. And if this too is blended with zeal, and some spiritual attainments (1 Sam. xi. 6, xiv. 47), popularity is secured, and the man is fought for. "Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? Bring the men, that we may put them to death (chap. xi. 12). The flesh is pleased, and the very spiritual attainments themselves are made to minister to its gratification. The earnest Gospel address, the truth as to

the second coming of Christ, in the lips of such blind thé eyes to the gravest sins. False statements may be made over babies in the name of God, and he who makes them listened to with rapturous feeling while he enlarges upon the deepening of spiritual life. The carnality of sectarianism, clerisy, with all its denial of Jesus as Lord and of the Spirit's work and place now on earth, the entirety of the Word of God practically set aside—all this is as nothing to some: *the man* dominates the people; he is "higher than any."

Then, the king must be put to the test. He who is to rule others must rule himself. To secure Israel's obedience rightly he must himself obey the Lord. Fitness to rule is gained through obedience and subjection to divine authority.

How this is seen in 1 Timothy iii. "Not given to wine." No striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, patient.

Here is control of oneself. "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." Here is control over his family. Taking care of the church of God is inseparable from such personal family control, of course assuming one has a family to care for.

Jonathan had smitten a garrison of Philistines (1 Sam. xiii.), "And the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear. And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten," etc. Jonathan had done the work; Saul blew the trumpet, and got the credit of that which Jonathan had accomplished. "All Israel heard say that Saul had smitten," etc. There are those still who, like Saul, can issue reports and get the credit of others' deeds. Jonathan's act, however, stirred up the enemy to action, and they retaliate. "And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel." In view of this the people are called together after Saul to Gilgal. But the strength of the Philistine's "thirt ythousand chariots,

and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the sea shore in multitude," intimidated and cowed the people of Israel, many of whom hid themselves in caves and thickets, others deserted and crossed the Jordan, while those who remained with Saul followed him tremblingly. What a testing time for Saul! Before him lay the enemy in power and confidence, while Israel are scattered and faint-hearted. What will he do? He is told to wait for Samuel seven days. But Samuel came not, and Saul, too much concerned about the people to wait longer, forced himself and sacrificed. The eye was off God, and on the people. "What hast thou done?" is the question of Samuel. And Saul said, "Because I saw that the people were scattered from me." Saul is tested, and he fails. The word of the Lord is disregarded. The people engross his mind: he sees their feebleness, compares it with the enemy's strength, and can wait no longer. He has no faith in God, and breaks down. The man of the people becomes a failure, and forfeits the kingdom.

Again Saul is bidden to go against Amalek (1 Sam. xv.). With what emphasis Samuel says to him, "Now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the *Lord*"; as if preparing Saul for a final test. The voice of the people had filled Saul's ears, the people again and again had taken his eye off God. "Now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the *Lord*." Will Saul this time heed the word of the *Lord*, or will the people again turn him aside? The chapter shows.

"I remember what Amalek did. . . . Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy *all* that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Such was God's command, and such was Saul's commission.

Amalek (type of the fleshly nature) must be utterly destroyed. In all its forms, in all its character, in all its ways, Amalek must be condemned and crushed. "Utterly destroy

all that they have; spare them not." The command is clear. Will Saul obey? "And Saul smote the Amalekites. . . . *But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.*" What terrible failure was here! But, sadder, Saul is ready with a lie for Samuel: "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." But the bleating sheep and lowing oxen were a witness against him, and echoed back in Samuel's ear what God had already told him of Saul: "He is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments." What has Saul to say to it? "The people spared" (ver. 15), "the people took" (ver. 21), "*I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.*"

Lamentable confession. "The voice of the words of the Lord" left for "their voice." True, the oxen and sheep were spared for sacrifice; but what of that when disobedience has spared them?

"Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." And then follows a terrible indictment and sentence against Saul: "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king." The man of the people is tried, found wanting, and set aside. Saul had given up God for man, His word for their voice, and keeping up till the very last his wish for their favour, said to Samuel, "Honour me now before the elders of my people."

What are we to learn from all this history of Israel's first king? what is there in this picture of disobedience for our eyes to see and our hearts to heed? Surely—

1st. That ecclesiastical rule according to man does not go the whole length of the commands of God.

2nd. That not going the whole length of the command is accounted a turning back, rebellion and stubbornness, and is looked upon as idolatry and sin.

3rd. That the most fervent and earnest religiousness does not make up for the lack of obedience, and that obedience alone has delight for God.

CHARLES MORTON.

THE FOUR GREAT MONARCHIES.

IV.

THE earlier history of the Persians is so meagre, their records are so scanty, that but little will suffice to bring their story to the point at which that of the Medes was left in the last issue of this magazine.

Almost beyond doubt they and the Medes had a common ancestry; that is to say, the Persians were a branch of the original "Madai" stock. From that stock they diverged at a remote period, and from the point of divergence the intercourse between the two branches was so slight that in course of time the characteristic differences of the two peoples became strongly defined, the distinction between them, at the time of their emergence from the haze of antiquity, being mainly due to the more rapid progress towards nationality and civilization of the Medes, and the more deliberate advance of the Persians.

The original home land of the Persians is represented by the modern Farsistan, a comparatively small district on the north-easterly side of the Persian Gulf, a land which was to a great extent robbed of the advantage of its seaboard by the arid and inhospitable character of the tract of

country bordering upon that great arm of the Indian Ocean, a feature that accounted in great degree for the slow development of the Persian nation; for nations, like persons, are much in dependence upon and are greatly influenced by their physical surroundings.

Like most Eastern peoples, the Persian government was tribal, and like the Children of Israel, their tribes were twelve in number; each being under the more or less independent rule of a petty chieftain, while all endeavoured, when occasion arose, to combine against a common enemy.

As was usual, as the pressure of the power of this common enemy (which to the Persians always meant Assyria) increased, the tendency to concentration increased also, and thus the Persian kingdom and nation began to take shape and form; and having thus begun, the movement received a decided impetus from the formation of a powerful kingdom amongst their Median kinsmen and neighbours under Cyaxares.

The national tradition gave the place of the founder of the Persian dynasty to one Hakhamanish, better known under the Greek form of his name, Achæmenes, from whom nearly all the successors to the throne, Cyrus included, claimed to have their descent and to derive their right of accession.

It is unnecessary to linger even so long as would be required to record the somewhat mythical names of the immediate successors of Achæmenes. The point of real interest in Persian history, and that at which it coincides with the history of the Medes, is in the reign and in the person of one Cambyses, who was the son-in-law of the Astyages to whom reference was made in the preceding paper of this series,¹ having married his daughter, but whose title to a place in the world's history and in the memories of men lies not in that, nor in anything that he

¹ *Needed Truth*, Vol. IV., p. 134.

himself was or did, but in the fact which overshadows all else about him—that he was the father of Cyrus the Great.

At this time Persia was distinctly subordinate to Media; Cambyses was little more than a feudatory of Astyages; and Cyrus the heir-apparent to the Persian throne, lived in a kind of honourable captivity at the court of Astyages, as a hostage for the allegiance and general good behaviour of his father, it being even then apparent to those about him that he was of no common parts, and that his was no ordinary character.

He “studied to be quiet” (a most wholesome exercise for any of the sons of men); and thus having bided his time, seized his opportunity when it came and suddenly and secretly escaped from Astyages to his father, with whom he had been in private communication and who was full of fears and forebodings as to his son’s enterprise. Having reached his own country, Cyrus at once gathered his warriors together around him, and advanced in order of battle against Astyages.

Twice the Persians were defeated with great loss, and an ordinary man would have despaired, but Cyrus again rallied his forces, and (his consummate generalship and ability becoming more and more clearly recognised by those about him); for the third time he led them against their foes, inciting them in his own inimitable way by the brave words which he spoke to them, and the still more brave deeds which he wrought among them, to one last supreme effort.

This time the tables were turned: the Medes were utterly and hopelessly defeated, Astyages taken prisoner, and the two kingdoms united into one under Cyrus, who treated Astyages with all deference and with every consideration, but kept all power in his own hands.

This was about the year B.C. 558, being some twenty-nine years after the final destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and being also the second year of the short reign

of Neriglissar, King of Babylon, the third in succession from Nebuchadnezzar.

The sudden downfall of the great Median monarchy, the overturning of its power after the loss of but one important battle, is one of the most striking of the many striking incidents in the stirring history of the East; great in itself, it led at a later time to even greater consequences.

Two causes besides the genius of Cyrus contributed to bring it about. It will be sufficient for us to name the first, which was an advance of luxury and love of ease which was concurrent with the growth of civilization among the Medes, particularly amongst their upper classes; while upon the second, the religious schism which rent the nation into two, it is necessary to enlarge somewhat, as without it much of the force of the narrative in the book of Ezra must be lost.

The faith and the manner of worship of both the Medes and the Persians appear to have been identical originally, and in that which they received by tradition from their common forefathers there was preserved much that was of truth, and of no small measure of purity.

None but the entirely ignorant could describe them either as heathen or idolaters; they worshipped the God of heaven, and could not away with idols in any shape or form.

Their creed, as moulded by Zoroaster, who was to them as a teacher and lawgiver, much of what Moses was to the Jews, or in later years Confucius to the Chinese, recognised two great personalities—the awful expression of the two opposite principles of good and of evil, of light and of darkness. The one, whom they called Ahura-Mazda, or Ormazd, they loved, revered and worshipped as the giver and upholder of all life, and of every good and perfect gift; the other, Angromainxus, or Ahriman, they hated and dreaded as the opponent of the beneficent Ormazd, whose delight was to thwart

the gracious workings of Ormazd, and to work all manner of ill for and amongst the sons of men.

The conflict between these great powers they conceived to be carried on on either side by an innumerable company of angels—good on the one side, evil on the other—with which they supposed that Ormazd and Ahriman had respectively surrounded themselves, and by lesser deities, also good and evil, of whom they spoke generally as “the other gods.”

It is impossible not to see what a large element of truth there was in all this, and it is a matter of certain fact that when Cyrus came into personal contact with the Jews on the capture of Babylon that he recognised in the attributes and character of “JEHOVAH, the God of Israel,” those of Ormazd more certainly and clearly declared, and that as he bowed and worshipped “the Lord God of heaven” he recognised that JEHOVAH and Ormazd were one; for the God of the Persians was the true God, seen as in a glass darkly and through the haze of centuries of tradition.

The importance of all this, so far as the fate of the remnant of Judah was concerned, will be seen anon.

In the course of the rapid rise of the Median power under Cyaxares, and the consequent extension of the dominion of the Medes over many lands and divers people, they came into continual contact with another ancient faith, which was not without some elements of truth and soberness, but which had become much more corrupt than the pure dualism, or Zoroastrianism, of the Persians, and which had in its development devised a system of priesthood and elaborated a picturesque and attractive ritual which had then, as it has now, strong charms for many minds.

This ancient faith was known as Magism, from the “Magi,” or “wise men,” or “priests,” who were its central and characteristic feature. It consisted mainly in the worship of what were supposed to be (and are still styled) “the elements”—*i.e.*, fire, water, earth and air, these being

looked upon as the garments, so to speak, with which the one great God of gods, in whom they too believed, had clothed Himself about.

This placed them in a difficulty as to the disposal of their dead. They would neither bury in the earth nor consume in fire, for fear of their pollution. Hence they adopted the mode of exposing the bodies in open and lofty towers, and of permitting the birds of prey which abound in all Eastern lands to devour the flesh, and leave the bones to bleach in the sun ; which is still followed by the Parsees, or fire worshippers, who are the modern representatives of Magism and the inheritors of its traditions.

The worship of the elements was, as we have said, accompanied by impressive ceremonies and accomplished by the aid of a gorgeous ritual, the invariable and indispensable centre of the whole being the white-robed Magi, who were as necessary for the religious functions of their cult as is the clergyman or the minister of our own time for the worship of the congregation over which he presides ; and both clergymen and ministers owe more to the Magi than some of them would admit, or than others of them could understand.

The Magi were not all bad. There was much of fraud and of imposture among them, much of sorcery and of magic (of which the very name is derived from them), but there was also much of true knowledge and enlightenment, and they did something towards softening the harsher features of the Babylonian religion and of toning down its deeper dark-nesses.

That they occupied a great position in Nebuchadnezzar's empire is clear. Their chief, "the Rab-mag,"¹ was one of his great princes, and they were "the wise men" with whom Daniel was associated at the beginning of his captivity, and of which he was ultimately made chief himself, and

¹ Jer. xxxix. 3.

their influence and power remained long after both Nebuchadnezzar and his empire had passed from the earth. They were Magi who came from the east, saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship Him¹; and Simon of Samaria² and Bar-Jesus of Cyprus³ were both Magi.

The Magian religion was prevalent in many of the countries that were subdued by the Medes, and it soon conquered the conquerors. With the growth of wealth and of luxury amongst the once hardy and simple mountaineers came the usual distinction between the rich and the poor, the "classes" and the "masses," as the jargon of the day has it, and with it came also the religious schism to which reference was made above; for Magism became the fashionable faith,—that of the Court and the aristocracy,—while the humbler people held tenaciously to the simpler and purer creed of their forefathers, marking with sullen hatred the place and position which the Magi had secured in the land and held in its affairs.

To these people, then, Cyrus and his Persians, whose faith was as pure and simple as their own, and among whom Magism had no more place than among themselves, appeared much in the light of deliverers and of restorers of the old paths; the result being that while the Median "classes" offered to Cyrus a stout resistance, the "masses" first opposed him in a perfunctory way and afterwards swung round to his side.

As a general rule when any question of dispute amongst men is to be made a gauge of battle, when its arbitrament is to be that of hard knocks, the masses have the best of it. Their numbers are greater, their arms are stronger, and their heads thicker, than those of their opponents; and when they have the advantage of a leadership like that of Cyrus the conflict is never lengthened, and the result is never doubtful.

¹ Matt. ii. 2.

² Acts xix. 9.

³ Acts xiii. 6.

In this way, then, the Median suzerainty disappeared, and the Medo-Persian monarchy was founded, and Cyrus, then a little over forty years of age, began the career of conquest which has gained for him undying fame, and which was predicted for him by the prophet Isaiah, in words that had immense influence upon him when he became acquainted with them.

One of his first conflicts was with the Lydian kingdom, which had checked the progress of the great Cyaxares, and which, after the peace which was made upon the interposition of the Babylonian prince, had maintained an unbroken and faithful alliance with Media and Babylonia for so long a time.

The prince, who at the time of the treaty had married the daughter of Cyaxares, and who was therefore the brother-in-law of Astyages, was now upon the throne. His power was considerable, as he had so extended the bounds of Lydia that nearly the whole of Asia Minor, from the river Halys to the sea, owned him as lord, and his wealth was so great that his name, Cræsus, has become a proverbial designation for a possessor of vast riches.

Cræsus applied for counsel to the great Delphian oracle, having first submitted its claim to divine foresight to a remarkable test, which it bore in a manner that can only be wondered at and not explained; and moved by that counsel he entered into an alliance, offensive and defensive, first with the Greeks (thus for the first time attempting to bring Europeans upon the stage of Eastern conflict) and afterwards with the monarchs of Babylon and of Egypt.

Before these allies could join Cræsus he was attacked by Cyrus, and a battle was fought in Cappadocia, without decisive result either way. Cræsus imagined he had checked Cyrus, and was safe for the winter, which had actually commenced, and so drew off and partly disbanded his forces. Cyrus waited long enough to establish his foe in this delu-

sion, and then, winter as it was, crossed the river which formed the eastern boundary of Lydia, and marched with all speed upon Sardis, the capital city of Crœsus. Within a fortnight that great city was in his hands, and Crœsus was his prisoner. The Greek cities on the coast submitted or fell one after another, either to Cyrus in person or before the generals which he left behind him in Asia when he marched eastward.

In the East he was as successful as he had been on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea; year after year extended his borders and increased his fame, till at length he felt that the time had come for which he had waited and hoped for some sixteen years, when he might with fair certainty of success strike a resounding blow against the mistress of the East, "the beauty of the Chaldees excellency," the "great Babylon" which Nebuchadnezzar had built.

The actual course which events took in Babylon at this period and in that which led up to it cannot as yet be clearly discerned. Many competent modern scholars have accepted and supported the line followed by the older historians, and which was briefly sketched in a former article,¹ while others, such as the present Bishop of Durham, considering that in such a scheme no place can be found or made for "the reign of Darius," which is clearly an historical fact, have followed the great German historian Niebuhr in his view, which, expressed in very few words, was that there were *two* captures of Babylon, the first under "Darius the Median" (who is thought to have been the Astyages,² son of Cyaxares, to whom such frequent reference has been made), which is that referred to in Isaiah xii. and in Daniel v.,³ in which case

¹ *Needed Truth*, Vol. IV., p. 79.

² It will perhaps be remembered that "Astyages" was really a *title*, not a name.

³ It will be noted that there is no reference whatever to the *Persians* in either of these chapters: "I will stir up *the Medes* against them"; "Darius *the Median* took the kingdom."

Evil-Mewdach would be the Belshazzar of Scripture, while Neriglissar would be merely a feudatory prince reigning under the suzerainty of Astyages; and the second under Cyrus.

Whatever may prove to be the truth about this, one thing is certain and clear as is the sun at noonday, that Cyrus *did* take Babylon, that the gates of brass were broken in pieces and the bars of iron cut in sunder before him, and that he was given the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches of secret places, according to the word which the prophet spoke at the mouth of JEHOVAH.

This was in the year 538 B.C., and the results, the religious results, of the capture of Babylon by Cyrus became at once apparent. The gods of Babylon were cast out, their altars were overthrown. "Bel bowed down,¹ Nebo stooped, they stooped, they bowed down together." "Merodach was broken in pieces,"² the progress of the Magism that had been spreading there was checked, its votaries driven into the background, and the purer Persian worship of Ormazd, the one great god of heaven and of earth, became the national religion.

Even greater things followed. In Babylon Cyrus came into personal contact with the Jewish leaders, with the group which included Daniel himself. These teachers and leaders had passed through an unique experience: their souls had been chastened by adversity, their hearts enlarged by the words of some of their later prophets with their great possibilities in the way of hope for Gentile blessing, and were therefore singularly fitted for the help of the great king.

That help was neither withheld on their part nor declined on his: taught by them, doubtless especially by Daniel, who

¹ Isa. xlvi. 1, 2. The force of these words can only be understood by one who has seen the images of these gods in the British Museum, and noted how characteristic is their unbending rigidity, their unyieldingness of their pride.

² Jer. 1. 2.

is specifically said to have "prospered" in his reign, he recognised, as we have said, in JEHOVAH the true *Ahura-Mazda*, the "great Giver of life"; and bowing himself before Him acknowledged Him as the One to whom he owed his victories and his dominion; and in the year 536 B.C. issued his great decree for the building of the LORD'S House in Jerusalem, which is in Judah,¹ and followed this up by bringing forth (by the hand of his chancellor of the exchequer) the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from the former house, and by handing them, with many other treasures, over to the Jewish leaders, whose spirit God had raised to go up and to build the house in Zion.

Seven years after this the great career of Cyrus was closed, not unfittingly, by a warrior's death. He fell in battle against some of the Parthian tribes, and his tomb is still shown at the ancient Pasargadæ (now known as *Murgh-Aub*) in Persia proper, probably chosen by himself as his burying-place because he had there gained the great victory over Astyages, which had made him the head of the Medo-Persian empire, and had thus launched him on the career so briefly sketched here, which gave him place amongst the few great heroes of the East, and, better and greater far, made him the instrument in the LORD'S hand by which He effected the deliverance of His people when He turned again the captivity of Zion, and the captives were like them that dreamed, when their mouth was filled with laughter and their tongue with singing, and when it was said among the Gentile nations, "JEHOVAH hath done great things for them." JEHOVAH *had* done great things for them, they were glad; and to their honour and to that of their children be it said they never forgot the name and the fame of the great king, Cyrus the Persian, through whom the great things were in the first place done.

W. H. HUNTER.

¹ Ezra i.

PLAIN FARE.

THE fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of Luke form a threefold cord that is not quickly broken. Indeed, they afford strands wherewith man is at once seen to be both drawn and bound—some to bliss eternal; others to eternal judgment, guilty of eternal sin, suffering the justice of eternal fire. Each alike by commandment, and according to the righteousness, of the Eternal God.

Happy is the man who yields to the love of such drawing and submits to the righteousness thereof. His experience now and always will be:—

“ His truth, not mine, the resting-place ;
His love, not mine, the tie.”

Whereas the man who spurns that love and will not be reconciled shall know the drawing and the binding of the cord of truth given by God in those chapters. In the bundle that is made up and cast out, as surely shall such rejectors of the Son of God be, as the receivers of Him shall for ever be bound in the bundle of life.

We entitle this fourteenth chapter Plain Fare; the fifteenth chapter a Royal Feast; and chapter xvi.—

ETERNAL FAMINE.

Others have remarked that these three chapters reveal realities of Earth, of Heaven, and of Hell.

Continuing to speak of Plain Fare, we learn that on a certain Sabbath day the Lord Jesus went into the house of a great religious man to eat bread. Those present determined among themselves to watch Him. He, however, needed not that any should bear witness to Him as to what was in man, for that He knew. Wherefore,—

“ With the froward He showeth Himself froward.”

Hence it is we find how closely He watched and how clearly He exposed them.

Before the Lord there was a man who had "the dropsy." His observers knew how He delighted and was accustomed to do good and to heal. Why then should they not watch Him in such a case and on such a day? Before manifesting His authority and power and grace, He propounds a simple definite question to His observers. He asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" But they held their peace. Their silence does not hinder the Lord, who answered His own question first by practice, in healing the dropsical man. Then by speech, exposing their practice of professed obedience to God in regard to their own property. Not one of them would have allowed his ox or ass to remain in a pit, but, Sabbath day and all, would have immediately sought to get them out. Thus, by His own well-doing, did the Lord Jesus put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

They watch Him. Ah! how terribly clear and sore does He make them feel that He is watching them. He marked that each one strove to get the chiefest unoccupied place. Had He done so, oh! how they had answered Him.

"He did no glory borrow,
No majesty from earth."

Having shown them the path of uprightness, the effect of His watching shines forth with increased luminosity. Addressing His host, He tells him what kind of persons he should seek to entertain. He laid hold of the very motive of the heart. Not, said He, that you may be asked in return, as in the poor world's way, but as seeking to supply real need in present time, which brings its own fruit in time to come.

Another who sat by—evidently a watcher—seems to say at this point, "Good! good! how clever, how well spoken"; for not one could gainsay a word nor answer. An uncommitted critic readily becomes a sympathising patronizer

when the winning side is an elevating of himself. Thus, alas! too commonly the flatterer passes among men unreached and unhelped. Not so with the man Christ Jesus. The listener who seems alone to have lauded and appreciated thus far is also watched and followed. It was, methinks, in a pious tone and manner, that he exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." But although from his lips came such a confession, in his heart there had not been any appreciation of such blessedness. Therefore the Lord turned to him and spoke of a supper made, invitations given, nay, a servant sent to bring the guests, as now all was ready. When, lo! they each and all with one consent had an excuse, backed up with a prayer. The servant returned with their answers to his Lord, who, being angry, answered their excuses and prayers by stern and absolute rejection of them all, and by seeking unto others for whom nothing had been prepared. All which shows that He who provides the supper of the Kingdom of God can be angry, yea, so angry with even His own invited and reminded guests, that because they do not come in His time, He utterly refuses to have them in their time, as witness the words,—

"Not one of them shall taste of My supper ;"

while unto others He seeks, if peradventure His house may be filled and the supper enjoyed.

Among which, O reader, art thou ?

Those various incidents are greatly enhanced in their solemnity and importance by what the Lord said to the crowd that followed him.

If any come to Him, no one and no thing is to be suffered to weigh with obedience to His will. Coming to Him entails the bearing of one's own cross (and never His). Ay, bearing that as struggling to follow Him. Whence He would that any coming to Him should count the cost ; lest, having laid a foundation, he cannot finish, and so be like unto a foolish

builder ; or be like a foolish king, who makes war without reckoning his own resources or his enemy's power. For salt that loses its saltness, wherewith can it be salted? It is neither fit for the land nor for manure. How searching the closing word—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Yet how comforting the opening of chapter xv.—"Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners, to hear Him." How strange that their doing so should cause Pharisees and Scribes to murmur, saying, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them."

JOHN BROWN.

"WHOM THE KING DELIGHTETH TO HONOUR ;"

OR, SOME OF THE NAMES AND TITLES OF THE SON OF GOD.

THE object of these lines is to draw out the hearts of God's people to Christ, by attempting to unfold some of the Titles of our Blessed Lord, and to show their scriptural significance. It is hoped that they may be of service by way of an incentive to the reader to "search the Scriptures" for himself, that he may see Divine beauty, accuracy, and precision in the way in which God has been pleased to unveil to us the person and character of the Lord Jesus.

To the natural mind there may seem little or no difference between the phrases "Jesus Christ" and "Christ Jesus." A little patient study of the passages where they occur, however, will suffice to show that God intends us to understand that a different revelation of His Son is to be perceived in the use of each.

There are no needless redundancies in the Scriptures, and when God gives a Name or Title to His Son, it is that we may know Him in the special character in which the title

reveals Him. It is by those who have respect to the "jot and tittle" of Scripture, that the Bible is seen in its minutest details to be "inspired by God."

1. JESUS.

This is the translation of the Hebrew word *Jahoshua*, *i.e.*, "*The Salvation of Jah.*" "Thou shalt call His name *Jesus*, for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21). It is applied to Him as the One who was God, and therefore able to save His people from their sins.

Jesus is the title of His humiliation. When it stands alone it brings before us Him, who, though he was God, stooped to become man to effect the carrying out of the will of God in the stupendous work of Redemption. He was God, but He became man, that He might be the Saviour of men.

Jesus is the One who humbled Himself and appeared among men as man, and who trod this earth in complete subjection to the will of God as a man. Hence, in the Gospels, where the record of His earthly life is the subject, "*Jesus*" occurs alone 566 times. The following are examples: "When *Jesus* was born" (Matt. ii. 1.); "then cometh *Jesus*" (iii. 13); "and *Jesus*, when He was baptized" (iii. 16); "then was *Jesus* led up of the Spirit" (iv. 1.); "and *Jesus* went about all Galilee" (iv. 23).

He "was born," He "came," He "was baptized," He "was led of the Spirit," He "went about," etc. All these mark out *Jesus* as He who came to this world and took His place as man in it, in perfect submission to God. "*Jesus*" is the usual name given to Him *in the Gospels*, whereas it occurs alone in *the Acts and Epistles* only 29 times, of which 16 are in the Acts. That is, in the Acts and Epistles it is the special testimony to Him as the rejected and crucified One, whom God raised from the dead and exalted. The following are examples:—

"This *Jesus* hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same *Jesus*, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 32, 36).

"The God of our fathers raised up *Jesus*, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree" (v. 30).

"We see *Jesus*, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour" (Heb. ii. 9).

2. JESUS OF NAZARETH.

Nazareth appears to have been regarded as a place from which no good could be expected. So much is manifest from John i. 46. Nathanael said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" If not a positively bad place, it was at least suspected of being so. But it was the place God had chosen for the early life and surroundings of His Son, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matt. ii. 23). "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up" (Luke iv. 16). This would teach us how God's way is ever different to the ways of men. From man's point of view Nazareth was not a place of sufficiently high standing for such an one as the Son of God to be "brought up" in. Had the choice been left to man, no doubt Jerusalem would have been selected as being more in keeping with the dignity of the Messiah. But "as for God His way is perfect" (Ps. xviii. 30), and if considered, will teach us wondrous things. "He is despised and rejected of men." "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not" (Isa. liii. 3). Such was Jesus from Nazareth. A despised man, who came from a despised place. They saw as little beauty in Him as in "the place where He had been brought up."

When they came with lanterns and torches and weapons to take Him, He asked them, "Whom seek ye?" They

answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth" (Jesus the Nazarene, Gk.); Jesus saith unto them "I am" (John xviii. 4, 5), thus confessing Himself to be the despised of the people.

"And Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. And there was written, Jesus of Nazareth (the Nazarene, Gk.); the King of the Jews" (John xix. 19, R.V.). The Jews objected to the latter clause, and wished Pilate to write that He said, "I am King of the Jews" (verse 21), but it remained unaltered; and the title conveys a truth that is most dear to the heart of all who have learned to know and love the Saviour. It tells that this same "Jesus the Nazarene," the despised and rejected of men, shall yet hold the sceptre as "King of the Jews." God's King was rejected and hurried off to Calvary's cross, but He shall yet sit on the throne and be owned as "King of the Jews."

"Jesus the Nazarene" had a stigma attaching to it which the Jews sought to make the most of, but it was all in keeping with His being despised and rejected.

3. CHRIST.

This is the Greek form of the Hebrew "Messiah," and signifies *anointed*. The Hebrew term was applied to those anointed with the holy oil, for which see Leviticus iv. 3, 5, 16.

"CHRIST" therefore serves to express the source of His relation to man, as of Divine appointment—He was anointed by God.

"The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord (Jehovah), and against His *Anointed* (Messiah)" (Ps. ii. 2).

"For of a truth in this city against Thy Holy Servant Jesus, whom Thou didst *anoint*, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together" (Acts iv. 27, R.V.).

"God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth (from Nazareth, Gk.), with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts x. 38).

As the name *Jesus* declares to us our Lord as the Man of sorrows, the humbled One; so the title "*Christ*" tells of His anointing by, and acceptance with, God. When it occurs in the Gospels with the article, "THE CHRIST," it is as the official designation of the One offered to Israel.

"Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not *the Christ*, but that I am sent before Him" (John iii. 28), "Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?" (truly the Christ, Gk.). "Howbeit we know this man whence He is, but when Christ (the Christ, Gk.) cometh, no man knoweth whence He is" (John vii. 26, 27).

He was the anointed of God, but only anointed eyes could recognise Him. When He asked the disciples, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" they said, "Some say, John the Baptist; some Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." But when He asked, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art THE CHRIST, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 13-16, R.V.). Peter's eyes were anointed (see Rev. iii. 18), and he recognised in the Son of Man none other than "THE CHRIST, the Son of the living God." To the world He was "Jesus from Nazareth," but to the few to whom the Father had willed to reveal Him (Luke x. 22), He was "THE CHRIST," the Anointed of Jehovah.

"Then charged He the disciples that they should tell no man that He was THE CHRIST" (Matt. xvi. 20, R.V.).

According to Deut. viii. 15, Acts iii. 22-26, John i. 21, and John vi. 14, Christ was THE PROPHET whom God promised to Israel. The only instance of a prophet being anointed, that I am aware of, occurs in 1 Kings xix. 16, "Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abel-meholah, shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room."

The HIGH PRIEST was anointed with oil by order of Jehovah, as see Leviticus viii. 12. He could only enter into the holiest of all once a year, and that not without blood

(Lev. xvi. 1-6). But "CHRIST being come an HIGH PRIEST of good things to come," by His own blood entered in once for all into the holy places, having obtained eternal redemption (see Heb. ix. 11-14).

"Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (verse 24). As the High Priest appeared in the presence-chamber of Jehovah—the holy of holies—so "we have such a High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens" (viii. 1, R.V.). And as the high priest, bore the names of the tribes of Israel on his breast (the place of love), and on his shoulder (the place of power), so CHRIST, our High Priest, now bears us up in the presence of God (see vii. 25). The saints, therefore, are never said to be "in Jesus," or "in Jesus Christ"; but always "in Christ," or "in Christ Jesus." They are blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places *in Christ* (Eph. i. 3, R.V.), raised up with Him (ii. 6, R.V.), and made to sit with Him in the heavenlies (ii. 4, R.V.).

Then, as KING, Christ is the Lord's anointed. And so, while "kings of the earth set themselves, and rulers take counsel together," He says, "Yet I have set MY KING upon My holy hill of Zion" (Ps. ii. 1-6).

Christ was offered to the nation of Israel as their King. As Son of Abraham, He was Heir to the land (Gal. iii. 6, and Gen. xii. 7); and as Son of David, Heir to the throne (see 2 Sam. vii. 12-17, etc.).

When Pilate sought to release Him, the Jews cried out, "If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." "He saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! But they cried out, Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar" (John

xix. 12, 14-15). The rightful King was rejected by the Jews; but we see Him within the holiest of all, the anointed of God.

Thus, while as *Jesus* He is Saviour, and thus near to man; as *Christ*, He is anointed by God, and thus specially near to Him. And being *in Christ*, the believer is accepted in all the dignity and excellency of His blessed Person and eternally abiding work, according to the estimate of Jehovah Himself; for "God hath made that same *Jesus* . . . both *Lord* and *Christ*" (Acts ii. 29-36).

4. CHRIST JESUS.

Here the emphasis is on *Christ*, and speaks of the anointed One who was once humbled. It tells also of the One whom God anointed coming to this world to be the Saviour. Hence, when we read of His coming, it is not "Jesus Christ came," but "Christ Jesus, that is, from God to man. "*Christ Jesus* came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15). But for sin He never would have become *Jesus*, but always was *Christ*, the anointed One of God. Consequently "Christ" stands nearest God, while "Jesus" is next to man.

CHRIST JESUS contains the thought of from God to man, while *Jesus Christ* suggests man being brought to God by Him. "For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and *men*, Himself man, CHRIST JESUS" (1 Tim. ii. 5, R.V.). "Christ Jesus" tells of all the path from heaven to earth; while "Jesus Christ" fills up all the way from earth to heaven (see 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22).

In Ephesians i. the "faithful in *Christ Jesus*" are said to have been predestinated into sonship through *Jesus Christ*. It is very instructive to compare passages where "Jesus Christ" and "Christ Jesus" occur, and to mark their distinction. This, however, requires other help besides that which the A.V. affords. The R.V. and other readings should be carefully compared.

5. JESUS CHRIST.

The emphasis here seems to be on *Jesus*, as the One who was once humbled, but now glorified. The chief thought seems to be the One who brings man nigh to God. "Who hath reconciled us *to Himself* by *Jesus Christ*" (2 Cor. v. 18); "We have an Advocate *with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*" (1 John ii. 1); "The resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, who is gone into heaven" (1 Pet. iii. 21, 22), seems to indicate that this title expresses what He is to God for man. CHRIST *Jesus* came from and for GOD to *man*; JESUS *Christ* goes from and for MAN to *God*.

6. THE LORD JESUS.

This is the title that brings before us the *authority* of Jesus, for "God hath made that same Jesus . . . both Lord and Christ" (Acts ii. 36). It tells of Jesus as Lord in resurrection.

Everything is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. iii. 17). He is to be acknowledged in everything as the One who is Lord—who has all authority (see Matt. xxviii. 18).

As to those who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus," the *Lord Jesus*—He to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been committed—shall take vengeance on them (see 2 Thess. i. 7, R.V.). Compare also Acts ix. 5, 6; Rom. x. 9; 1 Cor. v. 5, etc.).

When saints are called upon to act for God, it is "in the name of our *Lord Jesus*," and "with the power of our *Lord Jesus*" (1 Cor. v. 4, R.V.).

7. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

This seems to be His full official title, when the Spirit, through Paul, would remind the Corinthian saints of Him whose ownership they had denied, in contrast to the many names they were glorying in, it is said, "I beseech you,

brethren, through the name of our *Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Cor. i. 10, R.V.).

At the conclusion of most of the Epistles it is "the grace of our *Lord Jesus Christ* be with you."

There are several other phrases used throughout the New Testament; but, although these are mostly combinations of these we have mentioned, each has its own place and peculiar significance, and serves to express the character and person of the Son of God to "him that hath ears to hear."

THOS. WINSHIP.

Fragment.

Do you not yet bear away with you some of the things that you were then conversant withal?

Yes, but greatly against my will; especially my inward and carnal cogitations, with which all my countrymen, as well as myself, were delighted; but now all these things are my grief; and might I but choose mine own things, I would choose never to think of those things more; but, when I would be doing of that which is best, that which is worst is with me.

Do you not find sometimes as if those things were vanquished, which at other times are your perplexity?

Yes; but that is but seldom; but they are to me golden hours in which such things happen to me.

Can you remember by what means you find your annoyances at times as if they were vanquished?

Yes; when I think what I saw at the Cross, that will do it; and when I look upon my brodered coat, that will do it; also when I look into the roll that I carry in my bosom, that will do it; and when my thoughts wax warm about whither I am going, that will do it.

And what is it that makes you so desirous to go to Mount Zion?

Why, there I hope to see Him alive that did hang dead upon the Cross; and there I hope to be rid of all those things that to this day are in me an annoyance to me; there they say there is no death, and there I shall dwell with such company as I love best. For, to tell you the truth, I love Him because I was by Him eased of my burden; and I am weary of my inward sickness. I would fain be where I shall die no more, and with the company that shall continually cry, "Holy, holy, holy."

Bunyan.

Correspondence Department.

"Hearken to me,
* * * * *
I will answer also my part."

—*Job xxxii. 10, 17.*

LETTER FROM AN INDEPENDENT.

WE give some extracts from the letter of a reader in the North of England who is connected with the "Congregational" denomination. His heart has often sunk, he writes, at the things which are done in the name of the Lord, at the means used for the raising of funds—drawing-room entertainments, in which the edifice professedly devoted to God's service is fitted up like a drawing-room, with pictures hung on the walls; games, such as draughts, chess, charades, etc., besides promenade concerts, social teas on Lord's Day afternoons, with other schemes too numerous to mention. He continues, "I hardly know which way to turn in order to worship God in that simplicity and truth that I ought. *Needed Truth* has come like a beacon light amidst the darkness."

We were glad to comply with a request for numbers "for gratuitous distribution; for I should like," he says, "to help a few others who, like myself, feel sore at heart." He concludes: "I have just had a conversation with our minister respecting the methods named as savouring of the world. All I can get from him is, 'We must compromise in order to win men and women to the Lord;' but I do not know his authority for so doing. Oh, I pray God to open the understanding of the people who are thus led."

Department of Question and Answer.

"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God."—*John vii. 17, R.V.*

QUESTION 33.—*Is it only a matter of form, or would it come under the scriptural rule, "Let all things be done decently and in order," for sisters to remove their glove for the breaking of bread and drinking of the wine on Lord's Day morning?*

We judge that the "consider one another" of Hebrews x. 24 requires that those sisters who are in the habit of wearing gloves in places of public assembly should remove them during the breaking of bread, unless they are afflicted with any cutaneous disorder, when the same injunction would require them to keep their gloves upon their hands.

W. H. H.
