

NEEDED TRUTH.

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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THE SCRIPTURES.

“FOR had ye believed Moses” (saith He), “ye would have believed Me; for he wrote of Me: but if you believe not his writings, how can ye believe My words?” Now I say, he that doth slight the Scriptures, and the testimony of the prophets in them concerning Jesus Christ, must needs be in great danger of losing his soul if he abide in this condition, because he that slights the testimony doth also slight the things testified of, let him say the contrary never so often; for as Jesus Christ hath here laid down the reason of men not receiving Him, so the apostle, in another place, lays down the reason again with an high and mighty aggravation (1 John 5. 10), saying, “He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record” (mark, the record) “that God gave of His Son.” The record, you will say,—what is that? Why, even the testimony that God gave of Him by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began (Acts 3.); that is, God sending His Holy Spirit into the hearts of His servants, the prophets and apostles. He by His Spirit in them did bear witness or record to the truth of salvation by His Son Jesus, both before and after His coming. And this is that place also to be understood, which saith, There are three that bear record in earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood. That is, the Spirit in the apostles which preached Him to the world, as is clear, if you read seriously 1 Thessalonians 4. 8. The apostle, speaking of Jesus Christ, and obedience to God through Him, saith thus, “Now he that despiseth, despiseth not us, but God, who also hath given us of His Holy Spirit.” This is, therefore, a mighty confirmation of this truth, that he that slights the record or testimony that God by His Spirit in His prophets and apostles hath testified unto us slights the testimony of the Spirit who moved them to speak these things; and if so, then I would fain know how any can be saved by Jesus Christ that slights the testimony concerning Christ, yea, the testimony of His own Spirit concerning this of His self? 'Tis true, men may pretend to have the testimony of the Spirit, and from that conceit set a low esteem on the Holy Scriptures; but that spirit that dwelleth in them, and teacheth them so to do, is no better than the spirit of Satan, though it calls itself by the name of the Spirit of Christ. To the law, therefore, and to the testimony, try them by that, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

BUNYAN.

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ERRATUM.

Vol. V., No. 25, page 192, line 5. *For* the Second Man from heaven, *read* the Second Man, the Lord from heaven.

ABBREVIATIONS.

In order to secure economy of the space at our disposal, the following abbreviations are made use of in these pages where quotations or references are given.

- A.V. Authorized Version.
- A.M. Margin of A.V.
- R.V. Revised Version.
- R.M. Margin of R.V.
- A.C. Rendering preferred by the American Committee of Revisers.
- LXX. The Septuagint Greek Version of the Old Testament.

NEEDED TRUTH.

VOL. VI. JANUARY, 1894.

A MISUNDERSTOOD VERSE.

MATTHEW 18. 20.

THE number of expressions used to describe what is called "The Ground of Gathering" by some, and by others "The Ground of Fellowship," and various other names, must prove perplexing to young believers.

Thus we hear, "*We gather in His name*"; "*We gather simply as Christians*"; "*We gather to Jesus*"; "*We gather around His person.*" We hear mention of this "gathering," and that "gathering."

There is a growing tendency to use unscriptural terms to describe the things of God of which we do well to take heed and beware. Can we improve God's words, of which we read, "Thy word is very pure"?¹ This carelessness about scriptural language is very noticeable among many Christians whose doctrines and theories cannot be borne out without the use of terms which *seem* correct, but are not couched in words which are God-breathed.² Are not the words sound? and must not the very form of them be held fast?³ In Matthew 18. we find the Lord Jesus speaking to His disciples while He was in their midst (verse 1). In verse 17 the church is mentioned. In that and the succeeding verses its powers are described. The words,

¹ Ps. 119. 140.

² 2 Tim. 3. 16.

³ 2 Tim. 1. 13.

“Whatsoever *ye* shall bind,” “Whatsoever *ye* shall loose,” “Again I say unto *you*, that if two of *you*,” are only addressed to those who have the Lord Jesus in the midst, who are going on in fellowship with Him. Verse 20 makes this plain. “For where two or three are, having been gathered together *into* My Name, there am I in the midst of them.” The little introductory word “For” shows that this blessing depends on their being as the two or three who have been gathered into His name. Only as we *have been* gathered can we bind and loose what has been bound or loosed in heaven! The word translated Church (*ἐκκλησία*, *ekklēsia*) simply means “Out-called.” Thus we find the Out-called in verse 17, and the In-gathered in verse 20. God does not call out without calling in also. With the Corinthians a choosing spirit is beginning to manifest itself. So, in addressing them, Paul reminds them that they are God’s Out-called in Corinth, and that God has also called them *into* the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.¹ Here it is the question of God’s call. In Matthew 18. 20, we have God gathering. Many Christians do not get beyond the first words, “Where two or three are.” Their joy was to leave the association of the ungodly in the systems of man, and *meet* simply as Christians.

They sing :—

“Lord, Jesus, in Thy name alone,
We soon shall meet around the Throne,
With this sole claim, on this sole ground,
Thy table here we now surround.”

And

“ ‘Meeting’ in the Saviour’s name,
‘Breaking bread’ by His command.”

Yet they do not understand the meaning of the words. So far from being or acting in *His* name, they meet in their own name—*i.e.*, as saved ones. They may rightly speak of such

¹ 1 Cor. 1. 2, 9.

meetings as *our* "meeting," *our* "gathering," etc. I would here remark that "meeting in His name" is *not* the term the Holy Spirit uses. We may *meet* a friend accidentally. But when we at God's call come together to break bread (Acts 20. 7), or for any other purpose, let us see whether we are there because we have been gathered together into His name. A brother once said, in reference to a meeting of a God-dishonouring sect, which, however, has no "clergyman," "I believe they gather around Jesus just as we do." Indeed! do they? The Jews many a time gathered around Him, ESPECIALLY AT THE CROSS. So now many profess to gather round the Lord Jesus, who have no desire nor intention of obeying His commands, nor of allowing Him as Lord to have His will carried out. We shall gather around the Lord Jesus; but now He is absent. Yet we have His name, and if we thus *by faith* go forth unto Him, we shall have Him in our midst. Not bodily indeed, but nevertheless truly present. Again, if these Christians to whom this brother referred possessed (not merely boasted) "Jesus in the midst," then our brother ought to have been there. The Holy Spirit gathers *together*—never into positions which are separate from one another. Yet many, referring to assemblies that they are not in fellowship with, say, "I believe they meet around Jesus just as we do." "God is *not* the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor. 14. 33). But, say some, What then is the meaning of these words, "Into My name"? We are so accustomed to meaningless names that we are apt to forget that meaning is ever attached to a name. The words "John Smith" give me no idea what sort of a man their owner may be. Not so with the names of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. There are three passages in reference to prayer which throw some light upon "the Name."

"And ALL things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *believing*, ye shall receive." ¹

¹ Matt. 21. 22.

“And whatsoever ye shall ask *in My name*, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask ANYTHING *in My name*, I will do it.”

“*Verily, verily*, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father *in My name*, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”¹

“This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything *according to His will* He heareth us; and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions we desired of Him.”²

Three things are here mentioned,³ *believing, asking in the name, and according to His will*, and when any of them is present the request will be granted. God says so. Yet many will say, “I prayed for such a thing, I believed I would get it, and I prayed in Jesus’ name, and yet I did not obtain my request.” So the sinner *says*, “I believe in Jesus’ name, yet I am not saved.” Our prayers do not obtain answer on account of the firmness with which we believe, but owing to the object of our faith. Whom or what do we believe? Do we believe *God*, or the fancy of our own heart? If I prayed for the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel next week, it would be impossible for me to pray believing, for I had no promise of God to believe. Thus we see there is no more contradiction between asking in faith and asking according to His will. The same can be said of asking in His name. If the Queen were to proclaim that she would only receive petitions in the Prince of Wales’s name, it would not be of any use for a petitioner to forge that name. No, the Prince himself must affix that name. Alas! it is a common thing for Christians

¹ John 14. 13, 14; 16. 23, 24.

² 1 John 5. 14, 15.

³ See also John 15. 5, 7, 16; 1 John 3. 20-24. Study these passages in connection with the subject of prayer.

to forge the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to the end of their prayers, imagining that some formula will enable God to grant their requests. In the illustration above, the Prince is at liberty to refuse his signature if the petition does not meet with his approval.¹

As the prayer may not be in the name of the Lord Jesus, so the saints who have come together may not be "in His name." They cannot be "*in* His name," unless they have been gathered *into* it. The words "out-called" and "gathered into" show how man's state naturally is not outside the camp.² So we are told to go forth. Then as the Holy Spirit leads us out from all that is contrary to God, whether it be the world, the filthiness of the flesh, or the filthiness of the spirit in ourselves, or the chosen evil of others who are saved; so the same Holy Spirit gathers us into a position which is described by the Lord Jesus as "My name." His name does not exist where things are not according to His will. His name is Lord. If we do not act in the Lord, we do not act in His name. He must have His rightful place among His saints. I have been at a "meeting" where saints sung words like these:—

"Jesus, Lord, we know Thee present,"

And again—

"Here rejoicing in Thy nearness,"

while one prayed "that Jesus would come into the midst," and another thanked God "that Jesus was in their midst." Afterwards saints would go on to sing:—

"While we remember Thee,
Lord, in our midst appear."

¹ The Holy Spirit is given to guide in prayer, as well as lead in other things (Rom. 8. 14, 26, 27; Eph. 6. 18). Just as we are led by the Spirit, and abide in Christ, will our requests be according to His will, so we shall be in His name, and shall be able to exercise faith in God.

² Heb. 13. 13.

What confusion of thought! Saints ought to be so gathered that the Lord Jesus *is*¹ in the midst; yet let no one boast of His presence with them; for boasting is excluded.² The one who boasts of His presence may be the one who has come, without having been gathered into His name, His Lordship being practically disowned. Those who have gathered themselves, and therefore not into His name, cannot call themselves God's assembly. A brother, though in a right position, and though God had once brought him into it, if he come to break bread without coming out from all known sin, including coldness of heart, may be present among saints, breaking bread and yet not in the name; His brethren cannot exclude him; his state is one of heart departure, not outward departure from God. If he takes part in worship and ministry, such cannot be God-given worship or ministry; and any work that is thus taken in the flesh, though professing the name, is like that of those who will say, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out demons? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto you, I never knew you." Thus, you see, He wants more than the saying "Lord! Lord!"—the doing the will of His Father.³ Thus we see that God is not satisfied with those who merely boast of His name. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe."⁴ Here again we find the righteous man in his natural state away from the name. He needs to run *into* the name to be safe. "A wise man feareth and departeth from evil."⁵ Why need he depart? Because man is prone to wander.⁶ When we come together, is it as

¹ Not "comes." He appeared among His disciples, who did *not* expect Him. Such a coming we look for as we show forth the Lord's death till He comes.

² Rom. 3. 27.

³ Matt. 7. 22, 23, 24.

⁴ Prov. 18. 10.

⁵ Prov. 14. 15.

⁶ Prov. 21. 2, 8.

those who out of pure heart call on the Lord, the leaven having been purged out from the assembly,¹ and the individual having purified his soul in obedience to the truth,² and having been gathered by the Word and Spirit into His name. Then there may be worship, ministry to saints, prayer, guidance, discipline exercised according to God. We have Him who is Lord in our midst; we have the Saviour in our midst. As Lord, He must rule; but, blessed be His name! He is also Saviour. He is present to bless, to give power, to save from all that is wrong. One is as much His name as the other. Time forbids us studying His name as Christ Jesus, etc. Of old the servant of God said, "We are Thine; Thou never barest rule over them; Thy name was not called upon them." He prays that God's name might be made known "to Thine adversaries." "There is none that calleth upon Thy name, *that stirreth up* himself to *take hold on Thee*."³ Did they never hear and not know Jehovah's name? What it implied they did not know. We do know His name to be the Word⁴—the Word of life.⁵ May we learn more of *Him*, and thus walk in the light. God's name had been manifested by the Lord Jesus, and they kept God's word; and so the Lord Jesus prays, "Keep *through* Thine own name those whom thou hast given Me, that *they may be one*, as We." The Lord Jesus when in their midst kept them in God's name; on leaving He gives them His word.⁶ "I have declared unto them Thy name, and *will* declare it, that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them."⁷ Solemn words! Are we learning the name? Gaze at the cross and learn the name. See it plainly written there—not alone by man, but by God. It is a mighty name, and a holy name. Learn His word and learn it as His name. "I am the Truth."

¹ 1 Cor. 5. 7.² 1 Peter 1. 22.³ Isa. 63. 19; 64. 2, 7.⁴ John 1. 1, 14.⁵ 1 John 1.⁶ John 17. 6, 8, 11, 12, 14.⁷ Verse 26.

“His name is called the Word of God.”¹ Through His name may we be one. The Lord Jesus prayed for that. May the word which is living and powerful come as the two-edged sword from His mouth to our hearts.²

WILLIAM MACDONALD.

ASSEMBLY AND CONGREGATION.

IN a time of controversy concerning truth, in the desire to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the Saints,”³ two things have to be carefully guarded against. First, the obscuring of the truth by personal contention, and next, in the endeavour to conserve the truth, the misapplication of any Scripture. When a word or text of Scripture is seized upon to strengthen that which is held, if a fuller meaning is attached than properly belongs to it, then such truth is in danger of being weakened, and instead of helping Christians to a fuller apprehension of what is God’s truth, we are only hindering them. Therefore it is well when, apart from the bearing any word of Scripture may have, we can trace it in its use, and see how it is applied apart from its bearing upon any particular subject. I was thus led to think when a few months since, in connection with the application of the term “Church of God,” as used in the New Testament, I noticed in one paper as to its reference made to the words “Assembly” and “Congregation,” and statements made as to them when used in connection with “God” and “Jehovah.”

As a result, I was led to look up more fully both words in every passage in which they occur in the Old Testament. And to complete the search followed it up both in

¹ Rev. 19. 13.

² Heb. 4. 12. Rev. 1. 16.

³ Jude 3.

the Greek translation of the LXX. and in the Old and Revised Version of the English.

It may be of interest at least to some if I seek to give concisely the result. The Hebrew word "Kah-hal" ¹ occurs 123 times, and is translated as follows:—

	A.V.	R.V.	In LXX.	
ASSEMBLY .	17	49	ἐκκλησία, ASSEMBLY	. 76
Company .	17	15	συναγωγή, CONGREGATION	36
Congregation	86	58	Different word .	. 1
Multitude .	3	1	Other Greek words	. 10
	123	123		123

It is used in 103 places as applying to Israel, and in twenty of other peoples. It occurs in Ezekiel fifteen times, but never as applied to Israel.

The Hebrew word "Geh-dah" ² occurs 149 times, and is translated as follows:—

	A.V.	R.V.	In LXX.	
Assembly	9	2		
CONGREGATION	124	133	συναγωγή, CONGREGATION,	130
Company	13	12	υἱός(son)	3
Multitude (of Bulls)			Ἰσραήλ, Israel	2
(Ps. 68. 30)	1	1	Different words.	. 9
Swarm (of Bees) (Judg.			Omitted	5
14. 8)	1	1		
People	1	—		
	149	149		149

It may be well to point out further that Geh-dah, = "CONGREGATION," occurs chiefly in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and almost disappears in the historical books. It occurs only three times after Proverbs—twice in Jeremiah and once in Hosea. It occurs in Exodus 15 times, Leviticus

¹ Hebrew words are spelt in different ways in English. This word, קָהָל, is spelt "qāhāl" in *N. T.*, Vol. V., No. 27, page 236.—Ed.

² גֵּה־דָּחַ, spelt "ēdāh" in *N. T.*, Vol. V., page 236.

12, Numbers 83, Joshua 15, Judges 5, 1 Kings 2, 2 Chronicles 1, Job 2, Psalms 10, Proverbs 1, Jeremiah 2, and Hosea 1.

It is also worthy of notice that when the Rulers, Princes, or Elders are referred to, they are always spoken of as "of the CONGREGATION," except in one passage, viz., "Let now our Rulers of all the ASSEMBLY,"¹—evidently referring only to those Rulers who were then present, and able to act in the matter referred to at the time, as the word the "ASSEMBLY" contemplates only those who were then gathered. It remains but to notice the passages in which the two words are used in connection with Jehovah, God, or Israel.

Geh-dah (congregation) of Jehovah 4 times : Num. 27. 17, 31. 16; Joshua 22. 16, 17. Geh-dah of Israel, 11 times. Geh-dah of the children of Israel, 28 times.

Kah-hal (Assembly) of Jehovah, 10 times : Deut. 23. 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 8; Num. 16. 3, 20. 4; 1 Chron. 28. 8; Micah 2. 5.

Kah-hal of God occurs once in Neh. 13. 1, where the reference is to Moab, as in Deut. 23., and it is interesting to note the change of expression. In Deuteronomy it is "of Jehovah," because used with special reference to Israel, whereas evidently in Nehemiah "God" is used to bring out, as in marked contrast that as to Moab, He was not *their* God.

It may be helpful to give a few passages where both words occur in the same verse.

"The whole Assembly (Kah-hal) of the Congregation" (Gehdah) (Exod. 12. 6).

Note the Assembly, regarding Israel as ONE, and as *gathered together as one*, on that Passover Night. Therefore, "shall kill IT"; although thousands of lambs, yet spoken of as ONE: one only—"the Lamb of God"—was represented by

¹ Ezra 10. 14, Newberry.

them all, and the multitude of Israel was as one before Jehovah in object and action.

“If the whole Congregation (Geh-dah) of Israel sin, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the Assembly” (Kah-hal) (Lev. 4. 13).

Note “Congregation,” because regarded as a whole, apart from the thought of being together. “Assembly,” the different word of fuller meaning to point out that, sin having come in, Israel had to be gathered together in exercise of heart and conscience as to it, and when so gathered were spoken of as “Assembly.”

“The calling of the Congregation” (Geh-dah) (Num. 10. 2).

“All the Congregation (Geh-dah) shall assemble” (Num. 10. 3).

“But when the Assembly (Kah-hal) is to be gathered” (Num. 10. 8).

Note here again the same distinction is maintained.

As a “Congregation” (Geh-dah) the calling reached them, but on obeying the call they were recognised as “Assembly” (Kah-hal).

“And the Congregation (Geh-dah) was gathered” (Judg. 20. 1).

“And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the Assembly (Kah-hal) of the people of God” (Judg. 20. 2).

“Who is there among all the tribes of Israel that came not up in the Assembly?” (Kah-hal) (Judg. 21. 5, R.V.).

“There came none to the camp from Jabesh-Gilead to the Assembly” (Kah-hal) (Judg. 21. 8).

Other passages might be given, but it would only be multiplying passages similar in their use of the two words. It seems evident from those given that Geh-dah is used of the Congregation of Israel as a whole, apart from the thought of their being gathered together at any time, in any given

place, with any special object before them; whereas Kah-hal, as to one special use of it, is evidently used to bring out the fact of a gathering for a specific purpose.

Thus Judges 20. 1 speaks of the Congregation (Geh-dah) being gathered; but when such gathering was an accomplished fact, then 20. 2 and 21. 5, 8 give Kah-hal (Assembly) as the more fitting word. And it is significant that in verse 8 "Kah-hal" is used, although as a fact some of the Congregation (Geh-dah) had not obeyed the call. None from Jabesh-Gilead came, nevertheless those who did were called the Assembly (Kah-hal).

Doubtless it was the change between these two words in such passages as these that caused Gousset in his *Lexicon* to write as follows, in seeking to show the difference between them:—

"Kah-hal regards the arranging of an Assembly out of its own materials, which consists of men brought together, thought of before distributively, but now brought together.

"Geh-dah regards the form of an Assembly of men assembling together in time unnamed, to place unnamed, as of favour and free will leading to other things, and thus being a legitimate Assembly."

Evidently the translators of the LXX. regarded the two words very much in the same light, as in almost every instance they translated Geh-dah by "sunagōgē" (congregation); and although they did not use the word "ekklēsia" for Kah-hal invariably, as they should have done, still, when they put "sunagōgē" in several passages, it was where the company of Korah was referred to (Num.), or other peoples (Ezek.)—evidently with a desire to mark a difference between them and the Assembly of Israel. Just as the English translators, with the same object in view, used the word "company" when referring to those who were in the rebellion with Korah. Therefore, when these passages are left out of view, in the largest number having reference to Israel, the LXX. kept up the distinction.

Vitringa (of Holland, about 1750) also wrote as follows:—

“Kah-hal properly signifies a collective number of certain people, constituting the unity and commonwealth of a corporate fellowship or a certain state. The word Geh-dah, out of its inborn qualities, and by the force of its own signification, describes an assemblage and convention of so many and whatever men, whether less or more.”

Again, when contrasting the Greek equivalents of these words, he wrote:—

“Sunagōgē, as Geh-dah, always signifies an assemblage brought together and congregated, although bound together by no strong band, but “ekklēsia”(=Kah-hal) describes a certain number which constitutes a people joined by laws and bonds among themselves, although it may not often be constituted an Assembly, or it may be brought together.”

As with all synonyms, these words touch one another at different points, yet, because they differ in other respects, the *two* words are a necessity, and in their use in Scripture certain differences are always in view.

But whether the one or the other is used, if the word Israel follows, then it is that our attention may be fastened upon the contrast between the Congregation of Israel and any and every other Congregation.

If “Jehovah” follows, then it is not to mark the contrast between one nation and another, but to establish the fact that Israel was Congregation of Jehovah.

And these two things are true all the way through. Whether the word Israel followed or not the Congregation was the Congregation of Israel. As a fact, “of Israel” only follows the word Congregation about 39 times, yet who doubts that the Congregation referred to in the many other places was that “of Israel”? And, in like manner, although the “Congregation (Geh-dah) of Jehovah” only occurs four times, who would be bold enough to say it was not His Congregation that was referred to in the other passages.

Kah-hal is used of the Assembly 103 times, yet in only 10 is it named as being “of Jehovah.” But was it any

the more "Assembly of Jehovah" at the time referred to in Deuteronomy 23. than when first they passed out of Egypt, and crossed the Red Sea?

If the "Assembly of God" had no existence in Nehemiah's day, then what was it the Moabite tried to enter? To say that the reference in Nehemiah is not to an "Assembly of God," then and in his day in the land, is to take from the Word of God. To say that Nehemiah only refers to an "Assembly of God" as existing in Moses' day, but a thing of the past in his day, is to take away all meaning from the passage, and to take away the emphatic reason for the necessity to keep out the Moabite from their midst; namely, that they were then Assembly of God. One fears such criticisms can only result from a desire to do away with what may seem to stand in the way of certain teachings.

The same thing may be said in reference to Micah 2. 5. The chapter opens with "Wee" pronounced upon the evil-doers; verse 3 tells of judgment from the Lord as the result; and then Micah adds:—

"In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say, We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields. Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the Assembly of the Lord" (Micah 2. 5).

Could anything be simpler? God would divide their fields in judgment, therefore there should be none to "cast the cord by lot," etc. That is to say, instead of each family enjoying their portion in Micah's day, as their fathers before them had done in Joshua's day, the enemy would be in possession. When did the dividing take place in Joshua's day? *Not* until the enemy was driven out. Thus the first half of Joshua is occupied with the history of the way in which they were driven out, and the chapters that follow give the dividing by lot as a result.

Micah tells out the reason why they would not have any to "cast the cord by lot." It was not because they were not "the Assembly of Jehovah," but because they were unfaithful; they had sinned, and therefore, until recovered for them, the lot could not be cast.

(To be continued.)

ATONEMENT.

THE earlier meaning of ATONEMENT, considered as a strictly English word, is an "at-one-ment,"—that is to say, reconciliation, or *making at one* of those who had differed. Thus an old English author says: "Moses would adventure on a second design to atone two Israelites at variance." Any one can see, however, that, in the Scriptures where the great Atonement of all is spoken of or typified, the thought is that of the satisfaction for the wrong which one party has committed against another, and not the reconciliation of two estranged parties.

The Hebrew verb commonly employed in the Old Testament is כִּפֶּר, kippēr,—the Piel, or intensitive form of כָּפַר, kāphār, "to cover"—signifying, therefore, "to cover thoroughly." Being usually coupled with על, 'āl, "upon," in respect to the object of the verb, it has the force of "to cover upon" so as to blot out the cause of estrangement—TO MAKE ATONEMENT or give satisfaction in respect to it.

The first occurrence of this word in the book of Leviticus, to which we turn naturally for typical instruction concerning the way of drawing near to God, is in the fourth verse of the first chapter: "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering" (literally, "ASCENDING OFFERING"); "and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." Here the worshipper presents his approach-offering at the entrance of the tent of meeting that he may be accepted before the LORD. He becomes identified with

the offering, and is accepted in all its acceptability as it *ascends* from the altar, "a savour of rest unto Jehovah." It may be that the satisfaction Jehovah is here considered as receiving is specially in view of want of conformity to the "first and greatest commandment" ¹—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind;" for the Ascending-offering was wholly for and to God.

It is, however, when we arrive at those offerings where the offerer came forward not as a worshipper, but as a guilty sinner, where the victim became identified with his sin and guilt, and was dealt with accordingly, that the thought of Atonement is brought into special prominence. In the law relating to the SIN-OFFERING,² and in that relating to the GUILT-OFFERING,³ such words as these are repeated, "The priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin." The consequence of this is that "it shall be forgiven him." The contrast to this, when the offering is not presented, is that "he shall bear his iniquity"; that is, shall remain subject to the penalty incurred by his transgression.

Still more full and explicit is the wording of the law in regard to the one day in the year on which the High Priest went alone into the second tabernacle with the blood of a Sin-offering, which was for the people generally, and of which the benefits were abiding for the entire duration of the year:⁴ "He shall make atonement for the Holy place, because of the uncleannesses of the Children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, even all their sins: and so shall he do for the Tent of meeting, that dwelleth with them in the midst of their uncleannesses."⁵ "On this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your

¹ Matt. 22. 37, 38.

² Lev. 4.; 6. 24-30.

³ So R.V. accurately: Lev. 5.; 6. 1-7; 7. 1-7.

⁴ Lev. 16.

⁵ Verse 16, R.V.

sins shall ye be clean before the LORD.”¹ “This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make atonement for the sons of Israel because of all their sins once in the year.”²

It might be well, in passing, to call the reader’s attention to the rendering in the R.V., according to which the SCAPEGOAT is made to stand alive before the LORD, “to make atonement for him.”³ The preposition *for*, instead of *with*, is very important here, as it shows that only on the ground of the death of the one goat could the other bear away sins.

In one respect the most important passage bearing on this subject is Leviticus 17. 11, as it declares the general principle on which all the particular statements concerning Atonement are based. “For the life (*soul*) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life (*soul*)”⁴—that is to say, because the life, or soul, is in the blood.

Here the BLOOD is the appointed means of Atonement because it is the bearer of the life or soul. This life is poured out unto death; even death by violence under the sacrificial knife. Death must alight on the sinless offering, in order that the sinner, whose life has been forfeited, may escape. The soul of the atoning victim is given for the soul of the one who offers it. And Jehovah, Who *gave* the blood as the means of Atonement, accepts the satisfaction which He thus receives.

Evidently these Scriptures indicate something in the character and government of God which presented a hindrance to the obtaining of pardon; an obstacle which had to be removed *for* the sinner, rather than *by* him. This obstacle consisted in the relation in which the sinner’s

¹ Verse 30, R.V. ² Verse 34, R.V. ³ Verse 10.

⁴ See R.V. “For the soul,” A.V., is inaccurate.

guilt placed him to the righteousness of God; as one under judgment to Him. They also teach the removal of this hindrance by reason of the stroke of justice falling on an atoning victim who stands in the sinner's place and suffers the penalty he has deserved. That which caused God to be at variance with the sinner is *covered* by the blood thus shed.

In the Greek translation of the Old Testament כִּפֶּר, kippër, is generally rendered by ἐξιλάσκομαι, exilaskomai, a compound verb-form which does not occur in the New Testament.

Three lines in the Psalms, however, are worthy of notice as containing the simple, uncompounded verb which is the N.T. equivalent for the word under consideration. These are:—

Ps. 65. 3: "But do Thou *propitiate* as to our impieties."

Ps. 78. 38: "But He is compassionate, and will *propitiate* as to their sins."

Ps. 79. 9: "And *propitiate* as to our sins for Thy Name's sake."

These quotations are literal renderings of the LXX. The word in italics in each case represents, in Hebrew "atone for," and in Greek ἱλάσκομαι, hilaskomai, "to propitiate" or "MAKE PROPITIATION." It is regrettable that the Revisers have not taken pains in their version to indicate the presence of every word bearing on this important subject.

It will be noticed that, in the last-mentioned Scriptures, the verb "to cover" or "make propitiation" is used in a secondary sense: "to put out of sight"—that is, as to sins, "to forgive." Forgiveness and peace arise out of Atonement. Hence the interesting fact that the New Testament very seldom uses the word for Atonement, but frequently those words which express the results to such as benefit thereby.¹

¹ "Atonement," Romans 5. 11. (A.V.) should be "reconciliation" (R.V.).

The verb *ἱλάσκομαι*, *hilaskomai*, only appears twice in the N.T. :—

Luke 18. 13: "God be propitiated to me the sinner."

Hebrews 2. 17: "To make propitiation for the sins of the people."

The R.M. gives the correct rendering of the first quotation, where the publican, standing near to the altar in the Temple court, appeals to God to be propitious to him on the very ground stated in Leviticus 17. 11; namely, what has been effected for the sinner by the shedding of blood.

The correct rendering of the second quotation, which refers to the work of Christ, is contained in the text of the R.V.

A. P. MACDONALD.

(To be continued.)

SUGGESTIVE GLEANINGS.

EVERY local company was an assembly of Christ. As such "All the Churches of Christ salute you" their salutation by the hand of Paul to the saints at Rome;¹ for the apostle wrote from Corinth, where he was staying with Gaius²—the brother whose hospitality and charity were always in the truth, and who thus was a fellow-helper to the truth, being borne witness to by those whom he had brought forward on their journey.³ Paul himself shared that hospitality when he wrote to Rome. It is "Gaius mine host and of the whole Church"⁴ (thus linking Diotrophes and the Church with Corinth), not the Gaius of Derbe.⁵ We thus find further proof, if such were needed, of the many assemblies in Corinth.

Condition is implied in the phrase Churches of Christ. See 2 Corinthians xi. 2: "I have espoused you to one hus-

¹ Rom. 16. 16., R.V.

² Verse 23.

³ 3 John 6.

⁴ Rom. 16. 23.

⁵ Acts 20. 4.

band that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." True to the One unto Whom we are espoused during His absence; chaste and separate to Himself in the scene in which He was cast out. Oh! to know thus the separating power of the Cross of Christ from "the *things* of the world"—its entertainments, its pleasures, its religious or social circles! May there be in this year 1894 that which in its condition will indeed answer to Church of Christ.

Rule, government, authority, do not belong to Church of Christ. The figure used would tell us this. "A chaste virgin!" Rule does not belong to the woman, especially the unmarried one, as here—"a chaste virgin."

Government belongs to Church of God. The apostle did not write to a Church of Christ to put away the man of 1 Corinthians v., but to the Church of God. Not any single company—not even that in which the man was—could of itself deal with him. If so, that company would have been *the* Church of God, to the exclusion of the rest. Neither was such a company *a* Church of God, for then you get many Churches of God in Corinth. The Church of God in Corinth was that which WAS ONE, and embraced all the Churches of Christ, and to it belonged government to carry out to the letter what had been legislated, and so put away that man into the outside place; thus owning position as belonging to Christ and condition as belonging to them. Condition *of heart* as true to the absent One to Whom they were espoused, *of will* to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. And at His bidding they put the man out, or at His bidding bring the man in again, as in the second Epistle. This should make many pause and consider—for this cannot be Body of Christ. It is not ours to receive into Body of Christ, neither can we put out of Body of Christ. That remains intact. Blessed be God! there is that which Satan cannot move!

ENCOURAGEMENT TO TRACT DISTRIBUTORS.

“DEAR BROTHER,—I am pleased to give you herewith the account of my conversion, and sincerely hope it may be the means used by God to awaken the tract distributors.

“It was in September of last year that, being very ill and simultaneously troubled about the condition of my soul, I was induced to consult a doctor as to my health, and after he had prescribed for my body, he, evidently having a message from God, handed me a tract, which contained an account of the conversion of a gipsy girl in Nottingham Forest. I was extremely thankful for it, feeling that it was just something which might be the means of bringing peace to my soul. I read it through, but having allowed doubts and fears to arise in my mind, I seemed more in the dark than before; and consequently more troubled.

“However, the doctor having ordered me away to the seaside to recruit my health, I packed off some days after, taking with me a book which I had brought in mistake, thinking it was a business book, and which, however, turned out to be an account of the conversions which had taken place amongst the North Sea fishermen through the efforts of an individual who had had marvellous answers to prayer for help. After reading the book I put the question to myself, ‘If these rough, uncouth North Sea fishermen can obtain forgiveness of their sins and salvation, why cannot I?’ But, notwithstanding being full of the facts I had read, I was yet more unhappy than ever, and although roused and awakened, everything seemed so confusing that I was more in the dark than ever. The time came, however, when, after having earnestly prayed to God to show me what I was to do, the day following I was out on the pier and had forgotten to take either books or anything else to wile away the time: I had been sitting on

one of the seats some time, when the desire to have the matter settled between myself and God became stronger than ever. Just at this time, the wind being so boisterous, I was obliged to seek a more sheltered spot in one of the glass shades on the pier, where, after having sat pondering for a time, I caught my eyes on the edge of a book protruding from one of the crevices in the seat, and on taking it I found it to be a copy of a little tract called 'Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment.' I had seen a copy of this before, but never with such a desire to know what it contained. I eagerly devoured the contents, and remembering that the day previous I had asked the Lord to find me, I took it as a special answer, and in reading it I came across the story of the ass redeemed by the lamb (Exod. 13. 13), which seemed so clearly to meet my case, and opened up to me in so simple a way the fact of Christ having given Himself up for me; and having applied it to myself, I went off that pier far happier than I had been before, and knowing that my sins had all been sent away by His precious blood, for He loved me and gave Himself for me.

"Yours affectionately in Christ,

"_____"

The foregoing letter speaks for itself, and tells out in the experience of its writer the ways of God in grace giving deliverance to a burdened heart. How in that deliverance one and another are used apart from all knowledge of the way God is using them, and the printed page a chief instrument in effecting the blessing. How unconscious of the result of penning those Gospel lines must the writer of them have been, and how uncertain of the outcome the doctor who handed the tract, and still more so the unknown one who placed the booklet in the crevice on the pier seat.

Others who had nothing to do with the sowing have seen

the fruit thereof, while those who cast the seed are left still to sow, perhaps with tears, yet looking on to the time when sowers and reapers will rejoice together and come to know the now hidden links, how all were divinely arranged, and ordered, and made to effect the purpose of blessing to the delivered soul, and thereby the glory of the Triune God.

How small the cost of that little booklet, perhaps less than one halfpenny, how little the labour of love, perhaps by some timid visitor to that seaside resort, unable, it may be, to give the tract into the hand directly, yet putting it in the very crack where the eye of the anxious one is made to fall upon it; yet out of such tiny circumstances the living God obtains eternal glory and the saved one eternal blessing; mightiest issues from so small a matter.

May such reflections stir us all up to more earnest effort in such gospel labour, and lead us to imitate the zeal and yearning over fellow-creatures which surely induced the action of those of whom we have read. We could speak of some who, moved to prayer for their neighbours, have posted the gospel to every householder in the vicinity of their dwellings, and again of others who have gone from house to house with special parcels of booklets prepared. No special gift is needed, a little ordinary courtesy will almost always open the door and secure the acceptance of the little messenger.

The true anticipation of the speedy return of our Lord Jesus Christ will quicken the footsteps and move us on from door to door; the voice of the Spirit to buy up opportunities will lead us to ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" and as we grasp the fact of thousands around us needing the words we may take them, as we ourselves once needed some to show us the way of salvation, we shall the more welcome the aid gospel booklets give us in measure to fulfil our responsibilities to hold forth the word of life.

But there is one thing we would impress upon our readers,—get good seed. The farmer cannot make his seed spring up and become fruitful, he needs moisture and sunshine from above for that; he can get the best seed obtainable, he can sow it wisely, and that is just what we can do and what we should and ought to do.

Then let me urge this upon all: see well to the selection of gospel literature. You would blame the farmer who bought any sort of seed and sowed it anyhow; how much more deserving of blame is he who thinks only of a few pennyworth of tracts, whatever sort they be, and indifferently scatters them? We live in an age of literary poison, the enemy is busy sowing his seed, let us be wise and earnest and diligent in the sowing of that which God has given to our hands.

“In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good” (Eccles. 11. 6).

CHARLES MORTON.

ATONEMENT.

(Continued from page 19.)

THE noun used in this connection, כִּפָּר, *kōphër*, meaning that which covers in the sense which is before us,—which obliterates the cause of disagreement and constitutes the ATONEMENT price,—is also derived from the verb כִּפַּר, *kāphär*. Both verb and noun appear in the decree concerning the ark,¹ which we might transliterate thus: “Thou shalt *kāphar* it within and without with *KÖPHER*.” The English Versions give the sense, “PITCH,” for which a different word is employed in Exodus 2. 3. The term in Genesis 6. 14 indicates the use to which pitch was applied—namely, as a *covering* or coating; and is not without reference, one would think, to the fact that the ark was a type of Christ, in Whom alone is shelter from the wrath to come.

The same name is given to the ATONEMENT SILVER,² of which the Hebrew text says: “Then shall they give every man an *Atonement* for his soul unto Jehovah, when thou numberest them.” As each one “passed over to them that were numbered”³ he paid the half-shekel of silver which was his Atonement-price. Wherever this word is found the idea is involved of liability to evil incurred, and of possibility of escape from it without personal suffering by the substitution of one being or thing for another.

There is a plural form, כִּפּוּרִים, *kippūrim*, also signifying ATONEMENT, which only occurs eight times.⁴ It forms part of the title יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים, *yōm häk-kippūrim*, “THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.”

¹ Gen. 6. 14.

² Exod. 30. 12.

³ Exod. 38. 26, R.V.

⁴ Exod. 29. 36; 30. 10, 16; Lev. 23. 27, 28; 25. 9; Num. 5. 8; 29. 11.

In Numbers 5. 8 the Vatican MS. of the LXX. contains, as its Greek equivalent, *ἱλασμός*, *hilasmos*,¹ the very word with which the New Testament student is familiar as applied on two occasions to Him Who is both the Propitiation and the Propitiator:—

1 John 2. 2: "He is the *Propitiation* for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (R.V.).

1 John 4. 10: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the *Propitiation* for our sins."

Propitiation is on account of the whole world. It is enough for the whole world; God requiring nothing more to be righteous in saving the whole world if all were willing to be saved; the value of the blood of Christ before God being all that is needed to make Him free to deal in grace with the whole world.

Still, the declarations of Scripture on this and kindred subjects are directed to the end of shewing what the Satisfaction rendered by the Lord Jesus is, and secures to those who believe in Him rather than of explaining the wider relation in which it stands to the disobedient and unbelieving. "Herein is love!" Real love, worthy of the name, had never been seen before. "He loved *us*, and sent His Son to be the Propitiation for *our* sins."

It remains to us to notice the name, still from the same root, given to the *Mercy-seat*—the plate of pure gold, of the same length and breadth as the ark, of which it formed the lid. This, in Hebrew, is called *כַּפֹּרֶת*, *käppōrēth*—that is, a COVER; not simply, however, in the sense of a lid or cover to the ark and its contents, but rather of its meeting and covering the guilt and liability to condemnation to which these bore witness. Upon it the blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement to blot out all the transgressions with

¹ The Alexandrine MS., however, gives the usual Septuagint word, *ἐξίλασμός*, *exilasmos*.

which the Law underneath was ever charging the people. On account of the relation of the Mercy-seat to the sins of the people, on the one hand, and the pardoning lovingkindness of God on the other, it is never mentioned as a mere appendage to the ark, but has a distinct place in the descriptions of the Tabernacle furniture,¹ and is even spoken of as the peculiar and characteristic object in the Holiest of all.² Not only so, but the Holiest itself is even named from **בֵּית הַכַּפֹּרֶת**, Bēth hāk-kāppōrēth, "THE HOUSE OF THE MERCY-SEAT."³

Taken together, the ark, with the Tables of the Law, and the Mercy-seat with the Blood, bear witness concerning God that "Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of Thy throne; mercy and truth go before Thy face."⁴

The Septuagint translators render **כַּפֹּרֶת**, kāppōrēth, in Exodus 25. 17 by *ἱλαστήριον ἐπίθεμα*, *hilastērion epithema*, "propitiatory covering," and thereafter τὸ ἱλαστήριον, τὸ *hilastērion*, THE PROPITIATORY.

This last Greek word, like the two others we have had to consider, is to be found in only two places in the New Testament. These are:—

Hebrews 9. 5: "Cherubim of glory overshadowing the *Propitiatory*" (R.M.).

Romans 3. 25: "Whom God set forth to be a *Propitiation*."

The quotation from Hebrews refers to the Mercy-seat, and is part of the list of the Tabernacle furniture as considered from the point of view from which the Holy Spirit there causes us to look upon the whole present dispensation; namely, as answering to the time that elapsed, on the Day of Atonement, between the entering of the High Priest inside the veil bearing the blood of Atonement, and his coming out again from the Holiest. For this reason no

¹ Exod. 25. 17; 26. 34, etc.

³ 1 Chron. 28. 11., R.M.

² Lev. 16. 2.

⁴ Ps. 89. 14, R.M.

mention is made of the altar of incense; while the golden censer is seen in the Holy of Holies.

In the quotation from the epistle to saints in Rome we see Christ Whom God set forth as the PROPITIATORY through faith in His blood, unto a shewing forth of His righteousness in respect of the *passing over* of the sins done afore-time (namely, the sins of God's elect in the ages before Propitiation was really made); in the *forbearance* of God; for the shewing forth of His righteousness in the present time, unto His being just and justifying him that is of the faith of Jesus.

The provisional institutions and inadequate atonements of the past have been superseded by the only real, valid, and effectual Propitiation accomplished in the shedding of the blood of Jesus. To this perfect Sin-offering we who are "of the faith of Jesus" now stand in the same relation as holy men of old stood towards *their* means of atonement; but with an infinite difference in the value of the blood by reason of which our transgressions are forgiven, our sin is covered.

And, as another has said, "we come to Christ as a Propitiatory that God has set forth before men, and we find on it the blood which gives us free access to God in righteousness,—God Whose glory is satisfied in the work Christ Jesus has accomplished, His blood upon the Mercy-seat bearing witness thereof."

A. P. MACDONALD.

ASSEMBLY AND CONGREGATION.

(Continued from page 15.)

BUT more sorrowful still is the misrepresentation in reference to Phinehas and others in their action toward the two and a half tribes.

“Instantly it was interpreted as of evil import”—“The lofty tone assumed”—“An attempt to attach to a human sentence authority that only pertains to the divine”—“It was *they* who were already failing to own the oneness of all Israel”—“Virtually they had already cut off the two and a half tribes,” etc.

Would not sentences such as these lead any one to suppose that Joshua 22. was written to warn against the action of Israel, and of such men as Phinehas and others, who had for their zeal in past actions been greatly praised by Jehovah?

Is it so that their action was evil, and resulted from pride and assumption? Supposing that, if any in the present day believe that the expression “Church of God” can be applied to an Assembly of Christians (albeit all Christians in the city are not found in it), they ought to be spoken of as proud and evil, etc., even then, would it not be wise to pause ere such an one as Phinehas should be so spoken of? For I apprehend attributing “evil” and “pride” to Phinehas, although he fell asleep long since, is as serious a matter as doing it of one still with us.

One would expect that Moses would be joined in the condemnation with Phinehas, for see how much more strongly he spoke: “And, behold, ye are risen up in your fathers’ stead, an increase of sinful men.”¹

The spies were sent (Deut. 1. 22, 23), but the moral condition of Israel was wrong, or they never would have been. In like manner the two and a half tribes, after pledging themselves to go with their brethren across Jordan

¹ Num. 32. 14.

to war, and not to return until the land had been taken possession of, were told by Moses they might then re-cross the Jordan, take up their place in the land they chose; but Moses was never blamed for speaking so strongly to them. They were influenced by lower motives ("land fit for cattle," etc.), and their action was calculated to discourage their brethren. They had chosen for themselves, but those who crossed the Jordan and accepted their portion as by lot given, not only did not act in choosing for themselves, but, when they sent Phinehas and others, told their brethren that if they reckoned their portion unclean they were prepared to have a smaller portion by sharing with them.¹ An action not dictated by pride and assumption!

The writer referred to, in his haste to make use of this scripture against those from whom he differs, entirely overlooks the fact that whereas they gathered to go to war, there was the utmost carefulness and deliberation in their actions. They sent Phinehas and ten princes of each chief house² to speak with them. Why? Because they remembered Baal Peor, and specially Achan—how they had then not acted until Jehovah compelled them to act. Are we to be told that Phinehas and others were to blame? Are the two and a half tribes to be held up as models of right action, and such as Phinehas held up to warning as men of pride and assumption?

"Arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and ALL this people, unto the land which I do give them,"³ was the command given.

The two and a half tribes did not go. But they felt Jordan was a border, that in some degree it separated them from their brethren, from the tabernacle, and the altar, etc. And an evident feeling of uneasiness taking possession of them, they devised a plan. Out of their own hearts they originated their great altar as a witness.

¹ Josh. 22. 19.

² Josh. 22. 14.

³ Josh. 1. 2.

It is not true that Israel acted in hasty temper and pride. They recalled Baal Peor (where Phinehas had so blessedly acted for God), and Achan's sin, and their own connection with it, and they evidently judged themselves before attempting to judge their brethren. If the two and a half tribes had not remained on the eastward side of Jordan, as result of their own choosing, they would not have had fear of this thing,¹ nor would they have had to devise an altar to see to, for they would have been on the same side Jordan with all their brethren.

When, in a later day, need arose for united action, Deborah and Barak had to say,—

“For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. . . . Gilead abode beyond Jordan.”²

They were also among the first led into captivity, and Gilead was never recovered.³

One would expect a spiritual mind to shrink from blaming Phinehas and the princes of Israel, when practically they only manifested the same uneasiness as Moses had done before them.

Joshua also had shared such spirit, and therefore solemnly addressed them.⁴

“The two tribes and a half return, but the Ark remains. The place that becomes a ransomed people, a dead and risen people, is left, and they return to *settle* where Israel had but wandered.

“And as soon as they reach the place they had chosen, *they* begin to feel it also. They are not fully at ease; and there is something specially significant in that.

“The calling and the election of those eastern borderers was not made sure to their brethren, who were living in the place of the Ark of God. I believe the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians is very much an Eleazar crossing the river to look after a pillar. There were things at Corinth which alarmed Paul.”

J. G. BELLETT.

¹ Josh. 22. 24.

² Judg. 5. 15-17.

³ 1 Kings 22.

⁴ Josh. 1.

It is many years since I read the article from which I have taken these sentences, and I am more than ever satisfied in reading them afresh that J. G. B. had the mind of God in this view and application of Joshua 22.

In conclusion, I would repeat that I regard with much sorrow an attempt to fasten a charge of pride and assumption, etc., upon Phinehas and others, to the complete loss (to those who take it up) of the lesson I still believe J. G. B., and many others with him, rightly learned and sought to press home. Nay, more, I rather think the interpretation of Joshua 22. as to Phinehas and others having acted in pride, etc., is completely novel, as well as being quite untenable. As to the way in which the princes of Israel spoke, I would point out that the Spirit of God calls them "the children of Israel" (vers. 9, 13, 32, 33), and more fully "the whole congregation of the children of Israel" (ver. 12); quite sufficient to show that they were not wrong in so speaking of themselves. If (and, mark it, God says so) they were "the whole congregation of the children of Israel," then they were "the congregation of Jehovah." When will Christians learn that calling hard names is not argument or proof? Is it not rather the result of lack of proof? If a Christian differs conscientiously from another, is he therefore proud, etc.? To say the least of it, it is no sign of humility on the part of the one who makes such charges.

Dr. Chalmers was known to be always ready to discuss points as to Melchizedec. On one occasion, one, who had found this out, called on him and introduced himself as having difficulties about Melchizedec. "Sit down," said the Doctor, "and let me hear what they are." The result was that, though slowly, the Doctor was able to convince the man, who finally expressed himself as quite satisfied. Rising to go, he lingered, and then asked the Doctor to give him some money, as he was in need.

It burst upon the Doctor in a moment why the man had

come, and with great indignation he opened the door and said, "Out with you! Shame on you to come like this, and then to lay it on the shoulders of Melchizedec!" Thus one feels in reference to such charges as have been referred to, and the shame of bringing it on the shoulders of Phinehas! Christians have rejoiced in the history of Phinehas, his zeal for God in his prompt action, and the bestowal on him of an everlasting priesthood. Are they now to believe that all that was eclipsed by his action as recorded in Joshua 22? God forbid! If writers will hurl their charges of "pride," "assumption," at those from whom they differ, do let them pause ere they attempt it by fastening the same sins on such an one as Phinehas.

R. T. HOPKINS.

RETURNING.

"If ye will return, . . . saith the LORD, return unto Me."—*Jer.* 4. 1.

THESE words, spoken from the mouth of Jehovah to a people returning from idol worship and a state of things in general grievous to the God of Israel, surely have a voice to saints to-day who are standing in the ways, looking and asking for the old paths,¹ with, we trust, a God-given desire to be what and where the Lord would have them. All such we kindly ask to ponder well this Scripture, and catch something of the deep longings of Jehovah's heart for His people's prosperity. A careless, superficial work will not do for God. It may seem right in the eyes of fellow-saints, who can only see the outward; but God trieth the heart, and He fully knows the disaster consequent on a mere nominal return from unscriptural associations and ways, and following not the Lord, but man.

It is well to remind ourselves of the Spirit's testimony

¹ See *Jer.* 6. 16.

concerning the Thessalonian saints, how that "they turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven."¹

This was not a temporary leaving one course of things for another, for the sake of novelty; it was not a jerking from one extreme to another, out of excitement or curiosity. God had spoken. They heard and lived. Sin had been seen in the light of the cross. The mighty grace of God had captivated them for ever to be His and to serve Him. The peerless love and beauty of the living One who died had made all old things as withered and worthless rubbish to them. The eye and heart were upward now, waiting for the Son from heaven.

This was beautiful! And it is ever thus that God worketh, whether in turning sinners out of darkness into light, or in restoring His backsliding children. But in the case of Judah, though a great revival had been given, there was evidently a sad lack of heart work,² a failure in discerning the deep dishonour done to the Name of Jehovah by the corrupt condition of things out of which they were now called upon to come. The carrying away into Babylon soon after proves this too truly for it to be gainsaid.

And should not this be a solemn lesson to us in a day like the present, when the enemy will doubtless employ every means in his power to persuade unrepentant ones to join themselves unto those who have taken high and holy ground, upon which none may steadfastly stand who have not known the power of God drawing them to Himself and the word of His grace? We believe that this would bring more dishonour to the Name than could be possible in the associations of "Brethrenism."

The truth of the assertion, made some fourteen months ago—namely, "The carrying out of the 'open' principle

¹ 1 Thess. 1. 9, 10.

² Comp. Jer. 3. 10.

has brought about as a result that those have been assembled whom God never gathered"—has been, we think, abundantly proved in the past year. Truth which God has been pleased to show to such as were willing to do His will has manifested on the one hand the marked unwillingness of many to yield to the claims of the Lord Christ. Some have gone back from that unto which they had, in the mercy of God, attained. "Turned back in the day of battle."¹

Some, alas! say of the truth that God has taught and made exceedingly precious to us, that it is only rubbish. While, on the other hand, many who are, we believe, sincerely desirous to please the Lord, seem to grope in thick darkness, showing that, although joined to assemblies professedly gathered into the Name, there has been little or no exercise of heart as to what House of God is, and how He would have His own behave therein. And if this has been the case in the past, is there not a danger that such may occur in the present and future?

We believe there is. Therefore the need that saints have the mind of God concerning that from which they would separate; that they judge themselves and their surroundings by the holiness of the truth; that they count the cost in the light of the judgment-seat of Christ.

For remember! while it will cost us something now to follow whole-heartedly in the right ways of the Lord, it will cost more *THEN* if the path has been attempted in self-will, and be not the outcome of devotedness to the Man at God's right hand. We earnestly entreat fellow-saints to dig deep. No foundation, save the rock, will be secure against the storms of these last days.² None but the delivered and sustained of God will endure the strain of the present crisis. Oh for a full return to the Lord in each individual case! What rest is here, what blessing, what fruit unto God!

¹ See Ps. 78. 9.

² See Matt. 7. 24-27.

But it will be sad if He has to say of *us*, as the Spirit testifies of Israel of old—"They did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongue, for their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant."¹

But to such as have come forth, having heard the call of the Lord, knowing, it may be, somewhat of trouble within, and much of persecution without, the words of the exiled David to Abiathar come with much comfort, "Abide with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."²

T. O'NEILL.

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 7. 17, R.V.*

QUESTION 46.—"*Does the fact that a believer has been, after his Conversion, baptized by aspersion prevent his being received to the Lord's Table?*"

QUESTION 47.—"*Would such a believer who sincerely believes in that mode of baptism, and who works for the Lord in an Assembly of God, be considered—he being in all other things of one mind with believers gathered to the Name of the Lord—a fit person to take part in the public testimony for the Lord?*"

These two questions are so connected that I would seek to take them up in one answer. Yet such answer, as it must of necessity be short, it is difficult to give so as to take up each point.

I pass over the wording "received to the Lord's Table" with the simple remark that Scripture is silent as to any such reception. As readers of *N.T.* sufficiently well have had pointed out to them in various articles, reception is into the Fellowship, and not to an act.

We are "gathered together." Then the act from time to time we continue steadfast in.

Again, it may be well briefly to note the word "sincerely," and to point out that an act done in the Name of the Lord will never be made right because done *sincerely*, nor will it thereby be rendered accept-

¹ Ps. 78. 36, 37.

² 1 Sam. 22. 23.

able. Only can it be so as Scripture leads to it. Scripture, not sincerity, is what we have to look for. However sincere one may be, therefore, in his teaching or practice, he must have Scripture for that which he advocates and seeks to do.

Again, I would point out that if a Christian sincerely believes that Scripture teaches "aspersion," then, having submitted to it himself, he will seek to teach others also to submit to it as he has done. This brings us at once to the simple query, "Where is such a thing to be found in the Word of God?" "Aspersion" (or "Sprinkling," the word better known and commonly used) is not the translation of the Greek word "Baptisma." There is a word for sprinkling, and it occurs twice—"Rhantismos."

"To the blood of *sprinkling*" (Heb. 12. 24).

"*Sprinkling* of the blood" (1 Pet. 1. 2).

And the verb is found in Hebrews 9. 13, 19, 21; 10. 22.

If the Greek language had been defective here, and contained no word for sprinkling, then one might have excused a person, perhaps, for imagining that "Baptisma" might express that.

But when not only is a word for sprinkling used, but also six other words connected with water, then surely all should see that a specific, fixed and invariable meaning is fastened to each word.

However *sincerely*, therefore, one had submitted himself to aspersion (sprinkling), a scripturally taught saint would say to him, "I do not question your sincerity, but I will not accept your teaching, nor will I for a moment accept your act as that of baptism." Such an one is as much an unbaptized person as any other one who has not yet been baptized (immersed) in water.

One who was unbaptized and owned it could not do the harm that one could who represented himself as obedient to God's Word in baptism because he had been sprinkled, when, whatever his sincerity, he was not baptized according to God's Word. David was sincere enough when he put the Ark of the Covenant on the new cart (2 Sam. 6. 3), and he rejoiced in his deed (see ver. 5), but he had only copied the Philistines, and, in so doing, displeased the Lord. But David learned; and when (mark it) he had learned himself, then he could teach others and say, as he instructed the Levites to bear it on their shoulders, "For because ye did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order" (1 Chron. 15. 13). He learnt that the Word of the Lord had to be obeyed down to its (seemingly) smallest injunction, and that God hated the copying of Philistines' ways. Sprinkling is not of God, and therefore is not for God, but is a substitute of the world for that which He has given—namely, immersion.

That being so, could instructed saints allow the thought that it could

be taught in His assembly? Or could they take on themselves to say to one, "You may teach on all points but this"? Why, a *sincere* believer in aspersion (sprinkling) could not agree never to speak of that which he believed, any more than rightly taught saints could allow for a moment another voice to be heard in their midst, confusion thus being brought in, and young ones stumbled, as one said "immersion!" and another "aspersion!"

In conclusion, I would only add that surely every effort should be made by Christians taught in the Word to help such an one when they meet him; and he, if sincere and anxious for all to "speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1. 10), should be most willing to open the Word, to take that, and that alone, as his guide. And surely when, as quickly he would, he found that there were so many Greek words connected with water, expressing fine shades of distinction, he would pause ere he said baptism was sprinkling; and once he learned the deep spiritual meaning of baptism it would be utterly impossible to do so. Therefore simple souls, who know nothing of Greek, and who are quite ignorant of these various words, are never troubled, because they have learned from Scripture:—

"Buried with Him in baptism" (Col. 2. 12).

R. T. H.

QUESTION 48.—"How is 1 Cor. 14. 38, 'If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant,' to be reconciled with the oft-repeated desire, 'I would not have you ignorant, brethren,' and the need of having 'compassion on the ignorant'?"

It is helpful in answering the above to point out the fact that the Apostle concludes this special section of the Epistle as he commenced it.

The section begins in chapter 12, the three chapters being occupied with "spirituals," concerning which he says, "Brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (chap. 12. 1). His earnest desire was that they should not be ignorant. He therefore tells them (ver. 2) that they had been so because "carried away unto these dumb idols." If, therefore, they were no longer to be ignorant, it must be because taught and led by the Spirit of God (ver. 3). Thus subjection to the Spirit of God in all ministry is the theme of these three chapters; and, in order to that being a manifested thing in their midst, the will must be broken, the flesh be kept down, and the Word of God alone listened to. Therefore there was to be no display of knowledge or attainment, as evidently there had been in 1 Cor. 14. 12-19.

Men had left the place God had set them in, with the result that women had also done so; and just as men were speaking for self-exaltation and display, not for God's glory and edification of the saints, so their women were forgetting their place, and speaking, etc.

Having, therefore, commenced by saying, "I would not have you ignorant," he then, by the Spirit, gives them the Word which, if bowed to, would save them from ignorance and would give them understanding.

But if the *will* was at work, then the Word would be rejected, and would not be allowed to govern; and, to that extent, they would be acting on the same principle as the unbelieving ones of whom Peter says, "For this they willingly are ignorant of" (2 Pet. 3. 5. Greek: "This escapes them, willing.") What then? Were the saints at Corinth who sought to bow to the Word to suffer the actions condemned in these chapters to be carried on? Nay, verily! "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (14. 37).

"I would not have you ignorant" (chap. 12. 1). "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant" (chap. 14. 38). But these are the commands of the Lord! and therefore the special and the only way in which they could prove themselves spiritual would be by bowing to them.

Ignorance was not for a moment to be allowed to have a place. If one said, "I do not see why I should not speak with tongues in the assembly, nor do I see why our women should be prevented from speaking when they believe themselves called upon to do so," then the Word in all its force is, "These are the commandments of the Lord." Listen to Him alone. "If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant"—that is, let him be if he *will* be so; but in letting him be ignorant be careful that you are not like him. Turn your ear away from the many and different wills of earth to the one will conveyed in this Word, which you not only hear but seek, with all carefulness, to carry out.

"I would." Oh, how earnest the Apostle was that all should learn, and not be ignorant! How, "in season and out of season," in constant ministry, with tears, he sought to save the saints from ignorance! But, I repeat it, at the close of this precious teaching on ministry, in contemplating the thought that any through self-will might remain ignorant, he sternly, as by the Spirit of God, says, "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." Let him be, but let not others be. If his will governs him, let it not govern any others among you.

R. T. H.

QUESTION 49.—*What is the Cloud of Witnesses with which we are compassed about?* (Heb. 12. 1).

We have to avoid fanciful interpretations. The "Cloud of Witnesses" does not, in any sense, refer to any looking on as we run the race. The "race" may be apt to suggest this, but evidently the only

proper application is to those referred to in chapter 11. as having lived, walked, and acted by Faith. They are as a Cloud of witnesses to the power of Faith and as to how God estimates it, as shown in Abel, Enoch, and others; but the Cloud of Witnesses is not to occupy the eyes. From them we are to "look off" to Him who alone was the "Author and Finisher of the Faith" (12. 2). Mark that "*our*" in italics only mars the sense and hinders from seeing the meaning of the passage. He is not spoken of as the perfecter of "*our* faith," but, in contrast with all those named in chapter 11, He alone perfectly lived out the life of Faith.

Thus the reference is not to spectators of our course, but to a Cloud of Witnesses, that we are to look at, carefully observing how they sought to lay aside every weight.

How Moses refused the palace, and women would not "receive deliverance" at the expense of Truth, and all thus sought to cast aside what might hinder them in the race. Thus they are not spectators—the Greek word is not so used—but witnesses¹ to Faith and endurance. No Scripture refers to such a thought as that of saints who have gone before being spectators of the struggles and trials of saints still on earth; and therefore it would be utterly wrong to attempt to make a passage like this teach it. It could only be done through not seeing that two very different and distinct metaphors are used in the verse to illustrate things quite separate from one another.

Who would think of calling the spectators on a racecourse a Cloud of Witnesses! A Cloud! Then why here? Surely because, having in the Epistle already referred to the Sabbath (chap. 4.), the Priesthood, the Sacrifices, and the Tabernacle, all connected with the Wilderness, he now finds a fitting illustration in the Cloud given for witness and guide, etc. As the Pilgrim People were thus helped in the past, so now he calls attention to the fact that we do not lack direction or encouragement as we look into their path of faith, with its trials and triumphs.

R. T. H.

¹ *i.e.*, Testimony bearers. It should be well noted that the fact of a person seeing something does not make him a witness. A witness is one who bears witness of what he sees or knows. A witness is one who gives evidence, who bears testimony.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

OF the Cherubim it was written, "Every one had four faces." And thus is it with all the excellencies that attach to the person and to the work of the Son of God.

In particular, as to the blood that He shed, it is brought before us in the Sacred Writings in connection with different names belonging to Him.

We may here briefly contrast the teaching that is linked with the expression—

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

with that which is conveyed in the words—

THE BLOOD OF JESUS.

We first note as to the Blood of Jesus, God's Son, that it is this which cleanseth us from every sin.¹

It is therefore to be connected with the Old Testament teaching conveyed by

THE SIN-OFFERING.

We remember that the Scripture saith: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for it is He that shall save His people from their sins."²

Atonement for sin is, then, the thought going with the words "The Blood of Jesus."

" All our sins were laid upon Him,
 Jesus bare them on the tree;
 God, who knew them, laid them on Him,
 And, believing, we are free."

Sin was one of the two mighty barriers that towered between man and God, hindering our access into His holy presence. Therefore it is in the Blood of Jesus, who has

¹ 1 John 1, 7.

² Matt. 1. 21, R.V.

borne the penalty of sin, that we have liberty for the entrance into the Holy Place.¹

“How precious is the blood He spilt!
Our ransom from the dreadful guilt
Of sin against our God.”

But, besides the terrible load of positive sin that barred our access into the Divine presence, there was also to be taken into account our nakedness, our emptiness, our utter lack of anything acceptable to God; and this in view of the Divine saying: “None shall appear before Me empty.”²

Not only, however, has the Blood of Jesus fully settled the question of sin—righteousness also has been accomplished. Therefore we read of “The Blood of Christ, who by the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God.”³ Christ offered Himself to God.

This is that of which Old Testament speaks under the name—

THE BURNT OFFERING,

or, as otherwise translated—

THE ASCENDING OFFERING.

The question of sin is not here to the front at all. It is not atonement for sin; it is atonement for righteousness.

Turning to the account in Leviticus 16. of what was to be done on the Day of Atonement, we first read of Aaron making atonement with a sin-offering for himself and for his house. Then the first of the two goats for the people is also made a sin-offering, and afterwards the sins of the people are sent away on the head of the second goat. Thus we read of atonement for sin and forgiveness (that is, sending away or remission) of sins in verses 6 to 23. But in verse 24 the burnt-offering is the subject, and here also atonement is taught. But it is not here atonement for sin at

¹ Heb. 10. 19.

² Exod. 23. 15.

³ Heb. 9. 14.

all, for the sin question has been settled. The burnt-offering speaks of that aspect of the work of Christ given in Hebrews 9.—He offered Himself to God.

This too is that of which God smelled the savour when Noah took of every clean beast and offered burnt-offerings. For herein God smelled beforehand a savour¹ of that perfect satisfaction and rest which He was afterwards to experience in the perfect obedience unto death of the Beloved Son in whom He was well pleased.

This too is that positive righteousness whereof the Holy Spirit is a witness to us through Paul in his letter to Rome; for though it is indeed true that by works of law shall no flesh be justified in His sight,² and that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, it is also a blessed fact that apart from the law, a righteousness of God hath been manifested, . . . through faith of Jesus Christ, unto all them that believe.²

Turning on further in this letter to Rome, we read that it is through the obedience of the one that many are made righteous.³

How mighty, how vast was the act of Christ when He offered Himself to God!

“How perfect is the righteousness
In which unspotted, beautiful dress
His saints have always stood!”

For verily He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham⁴ and links them on to Himself in all the perfect acceptance of Himself and His work with God.

We direct attention here to the corrected reading of Leviticus 1. 3, 4, in the Revised Version. For, whilst, as to its true efficacy to Godward, He Himself has united us with Himself in the perfect satisfaction which God has in Him and His work, it is also true that, as taught in Leviticus 1.,

¹ Gen. 8. 20, 21.

² Rom. 3. 20-22.

³ Rom. 5. 19.

⁴ Heb. 2. 16, R.V.

it is ours experimentally—that is, by faith—to lay hold of this truth, in analogy to the laying on of the hands of the offerer upon his ascending offering in Leviticus, and know for ourselves the blessedness of presenting to God the Lamb whom He Himself has provided for us.¹

Thus, while He takes hold of us, yea, and brings us near to God in His blood (the Blood of Christ), so it is ours to come to God with Him and by Him; yea, never empty-handed to come to God. For ever can we bring to God that precious, wondrous offering; and though our puny hands can but grasp a small part of its worth, yet it is a whole burnt-offering that thus we lay hands upon, and it is in the perfect acceptance of a perfect Christ that we are accepted by God. Thus may we know in our daily experience, not only the blessedness of sins sent away by the Blood of Jesus, but also of righteousness imputed because of the Blood of Christ.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SERVICE.

PART I.

GOD has been graciously pleased to revive many of the principles concerning His House. Amidst opposition and ridicule, through sorrow and failure, He has taught us that there still can be a house for Him upon earth, and already the outlines, distinct and definite, are beginning to appear. The truth has made us free from the traditions of Open brethren—traditions which for years have hindered the progress of Divine Testimony. There is now liberty to examine the Scriptures with an open mind, without the fear of any further light received from our God being treated with contumely, or compromised to meet the views of men from whom nothing but opposition could be expected. We

¹ Compare Gen. 22. 8.

can no longer be called upon to respect practices which existed before we were born, for we are prepared to test every doctrine by the Word of God, and to cast aside every tradition which is not in accordance therewith. And this is the only safe path for the disciple of Christ to tread. For in the days of His flesh the Lord Jesus had to testify against the lawlessness that obtained in the House of God, until with only a few followers He disowned it with the sorrowful condemnation,—“Behold, *your* house is left *unto you* desolate.”¹

With the revival of the principles of God’s House come those that affect the service. And it is to this particular part that we propose to address ourselves, hoping that our God may be pleased to give light and help for our guidance. As the governmental principles of God never vary, we would first examine the Scriptures which refer to the service of the House of God during the past dispensation.

Those who study carefully the opening chapters of Exodus will discern two great powers in conflict, represented respectively by Moses, the man of God, and Pharaoh, the King of Egypt. The object of their contention is Israel—the nation of slaves, yet the people of God. To deliver them from the dominion of that mighty monarch appear two old men, unaccompanied by anything that suggested earthly power. They had not come to negotiate, but to state the claim of Jehovah: “Let *My people* go, that they may *serve Me*.”² The mingled pride and contempt in Pharaoh’s reply³ revealed his ideas both of Jehovah and His servants. The king regarded Israel as his property, and was prepared to retain them. Their service to him was great, and rendered at little cost. But Jehovah had a prior claim.⁴ The people were His by *election* and by His own *purposes*, and the time had now come when He called them to *His service*; therefore

¹ Matt. 23. 38.² Exod. 5. 1. and 7. 16.³ Exod. 5. 2.⁴ Exod. 2. 24, 25.

Egypt soon learned by sad experience that the words of these two men were clothed with Omnipotent power. Step by step the king retreated, point by point was wrung from him, until he consented to let the men go, yet sought to retain their possessions.¹ This was his final concession.

We would call especial attention at this juncture, because the battle now wages over the *temporal things* of Israel. The word of Moses—"not a hoof shall be left"—tells out the value of this. Their flocks and herds *must* go with them, for they were *necessary* to the service of God. Satan's subtilty is here revealed. When he saw that it was impossible to retain Israel, his next device was to cripple them for service. Let the possessions *remain in Egypt* and the service of a redeemed people would have been stultified.

But this also teaches that the people were not expected to bring their flocks and herds *for their own gratification*. God had to deal with Egypt in order that they also might be delivered; therefore they were to be at the disposal of God. Both the people *and their goods* were alike brought out for the service of God.

How plain is the word in this respect: "Our cattle also *must* go with us, . . . for *thereof* must we take to serve the Lord our God, and we know not *with what* we must serve." Clearly then may we deduce from these passages that (a) the people might have been redeemed from Egypt's bondage, but had they left their flocks and herds *behind*, the service of God would have suffered. Further (b), even when in the wilderness, a saved and happy people, had they *withheld* their goods the service would have equally suffered.

But while the people were responsible to hold *all* their goods for the service of God, there was no *indiscriminate* giving. A careful examination of the Scriptures will reveal

¹ Exod. 10. 11-24.

a most elaborate *system* both in the offerings and in the service. That "God is not the Author of confusion"¹ is manifested in a marked degree in our present subject, and when His will was obeyed "all things were done *becomingly and in order.*"

The mode of Israel's giving may be described under two heads—namely, that which was *obligatory*, and that which was purely *optional*. But in both cases the *object* was the same—that is, the offerings were brought *to God*. Those of an *optional* character stand out in marked relief; for example, all that was brought to God for the building of the Tabernacle, also the great offerings of the princes. And in later days the gold and silver for the Temple were of this description. They had to be "*willingly*"² given and "from the heart." In almost every revival amongst the people the offerings of this character were prominent.

This mode of giving may also be designated *exceptional*, for it was not expected to interfere with the *regular* offerings of Israel. In most cases it was an expression of thankfulness to God for some special blessing or interposition in their behalf. To follow out this line closely both time and space forbid, but we would ask fellow-saints to do so in their private reading, and they will find it clearly established as a *precedent* that special blessing received was followed by special offerings to God.

But it is well to point out that *great sacrifice* in optional giving did not always bring glory to God. In the day of Israel's apostasy Aaron demanded their *ornaments*; but it was to make a calf.³

The *regular* or obligatory offerings of Israel were definitely associated with the tabernacle service; so much so that if they failed the service entirely broke down. God ordained that the service should be the expression of the

¹ 1 Cor. 14. 33-40.

² Exod. 25. 2.

³ Exod. 32. 2.

spiritual condition of His people, together with His own especial claims upon them.

We would here notice the difference between the *building* of the Tabernacle and the *service* of the Tabernacle. Towards the former all the "willing-hearted" and "wise-hearted" in Israel could contribute, although guided by, and subject to, those to whom God had bestowed special gift.¹ When this work was completed, then—and not till then—could the service be arranged. The glory filled the House, and the voice of God was heard from off His throne. The books of Leviticus and Numbers contain the Divine arrangements for all Israel in relation to that House. The people take up definite positions around the Tabernacle as appointed by God. The camp becomes the Kingdom of God—the only community that acknowledged the rule of God.

Under such circumstances the appointment to the service took place. God chose His own servants, and in His own way. We would request our readers to study carefully the eighth chapter of Numbers at this part of our subject. The sons of Levi are taken from the tribes of Israel, and when cleansed brought before the Lord. All Israel is then gathered to the door of the Tent of Meeting, when they learn for the first time the purpose that God had in view when He saved their first-born in the dark night of Egypt's doom. Jehovah redeemed the first-born *for Himself*. They were His in an especial sense. Yet, with that respect for family ties which is so characteristic in all His dealings with the sons of men, He took the tribe of Levi *instead*.

While the appointment to the service was the reward of God to *Levi* for their previous faithfulness, yet the tribe of Levi was the ransom accepted by God for the first-born of the nation. They were the sacrifice of the people. What a picture is here presented of the grace and love of our

¹ Exod. 31. 2-6.

God! Israel's hands upon the Levites expressed *their identification* with them as an offering to the Lord *for service*. The hands of the Levites upon the sacrifices expressed their *entire dependence* upon the grace of God to perform that service. They were *accepted* by God for service upon the ground of sacrifice,—“The Levites shall be *Mine*.”

From that moment the Levites were called servants of Jehovah. Separated *entirely* to the service of the Tabernacle, earthly ambitions were laid aside: They lived *only* for the work of God. The talents and abilities that might have secured distinction for their possessors were now consecrated to God.¹ No inheritance was allotted to them among the people, for *He* was now their inheritance. He undertook to supply their need, and when the will of the Lord was fulfilled that need was *richly supplied*.

We now turn to consider *the means* by which that need was supplied. When God came down to deliver Israel out of Egypt, He promised to bring them into a land which flowed with milk and honey. They had nothing which they did not receive from Him. In virtue of this His claims were *definite*. “And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, *is the Lord's*: it is *holy unto the Lord*. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the *tenth* shall be *holy unto the Lord*.”² Therefore Israel was under the most distinct obligation to render unto God *the things which belonged unto Him*. To withhold the tithes was to *rob God*,³ and to bring disaster upon themselves. The *tenth was His*, and He disposed of it in His own way.

And His way is revealed in the 18th of Numbers: “And, behold, *I have given* the children of Levi *all the tenth* in Israel for an inheritance, *for their service* which they serve, even the service of the Tent of the Congregation.”

¹ Num. 18. 20.

² Lev. 27. 30, 32.

³ Mal. 3. 8.

“But the tithes of the Children of Israel . . . *I have given to the Levites to inherit.*” Therefore the Levites were under *no obligation* to the sons of Israel. The tithes were *not brought to the Levites*, but to God. The Levites *received them by His appointment.*

Under this arrangement *every one* in Israel could have fellowship in the service. The *poorest*, as well as those who had abundance, were responsible to bring their tithes. And the *smallest offering* was accepted by God with the offerings of the great.

How simple, yet Divine, was this order! While the principles applied to all, yet *each one* was directly responsible to God to perform *his own part*. The relationship between the Levites and Israel was so perfectly adjusted that there could be no friction. *They did not serve the people*, they served God,—yet their service was in behalf of the people. *The people did not maintain them*, God did,—although it was with the offerings brought by the people.

This order could not be improved. It was appointed to *all generations*. As long as Israel was a witness for God they were responsible to obey it, whether *before* the captivity or *after* it. It was part of His law, and the last exhortation in the Old Testament is to “remember the law of Moses, . . . with the statutes and judgments.”¹

The climax of all this teaching is found in Deuteronomy 26., and again we would urge our readers to study it prayerfully. The chapter is divided into three parts, each of which we will notice separately.

Verses 1-11. The people are now in the land, at rest from all their enemies, and enjoying the peace and quiet of the heritage of God. At the appointed season they appear before God in the place which He had chosen to put His Name. A basket of first-fruits is in their hands,—the witness that God has been true to His promise.

¹ Mal. 4. 4.

This symbol of worship is a very striking parallelism to the half shekel of silver¹ which God accepted as a ransom for their souls. While the monetary value of both was exceeding small, yet to the spiritual mind what a mine of wealth lay open. As those ransomed ones stood before the altar of their God with the first-fruits of their inheritance in their hands, and the words of grateful praise and adoration flowing from their lips, Jehovah had a savour of that time when His Son—the first-fruits of a new creation—would return to the throne bringing many sons to glory with Him. It was *for this* that God saved them out of Egypt. The joy of the Lord was now their strength, and they were commanded to rejoice in all that God had given them.

Verses 12-15 show us the other side of the picture—*i.e.*, the individual aspect. The worshipper now tells Jehovah that His laws *have been obeyed*, that the tithes have been given in the appointed way. In view of the altar the tithes are now called “the hallowed things.” The two important points here are (a) that the tithes *have been given*, and (b) that they have been given *to the persons designated by God*. The worshipper can look up to the face of God and ask for continued blessing. And it is God who puts the words in his mouth.

The contrast to this is found in the dark days of Malachi,² when the tithes are withheld and the offerings polluted. The message of the Lord’s servant reminds them of this passage: “Bring ye *all* the tithes into the storehouse, . . . and *prove Me herewith* . . . if I will not open you the windows of Heaven and pour you out a blessing.”² It is, therefore, obvious that Israel’s blessing depended upon the fulfilment of their divinely imposed obligations.

Verses 16-19. In them we see what God meant to be Israel’s *normal condition*. A people subject to God, render-

¹ Exod. 30. 13.

² Mal. 3. 10.

ing obedience with all their heart and soul. No law but His for their guidance, and no God but Jehovah to serve.

Thus the highest and most lasting blessings—the blessing of being the peculiar people of God upon the earth, the *holy* and the *separated* unto God—came only by an unflinching obedience to the plain but practical commandments of God.

WILLIAM LAING.

PROGRESS AND RETROGRESSION.

WE ought to be deeply dissatisfied if we find ourselves in a place where, as God shows us truth, we cannot act it out. Yet we must have all respect, all patience, towards those who perhaps may be slow in learning the truth of God. We are apt to forget the steps by which we arrived at our present knowledge of divine things. Perhaps one of the most painful and sorrowful things some of us have to look back upon has been the resistance we ourselves have given in the past to what we have eventually learned to be the will of God.

But there comes a point where resistance to the truth calls upon us most firmly to stand for that truth, and that is when resistance arises from a determined opposition to it. The greatest grace needs to be ours where there is a soul enquiring into the things of God; the greatest firmness when there is a deliberate rejection of, and refusal to look into the truth of God.

We find written in Deuteronomy 12. 8: "Ye shall not do after all the things that ye do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes. For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which Jehovah your God giveth you." Here is a progressive people.

They are a long way in advance of Exodus deliverance. If we look at the chapters intervening between Exodus 12.

and Deuteronomy 12., we find a mass of truth which God has made known to them. They are not a people declining from God; they are a people coming into the light of God's presence. They are not a people who are turning their back upon God, but a people whom God, in His wonderful patience, is leading on into a deeper knowledge of Himself. The Song on the banks of the Red Sea was a precious point in Israel's history, but not a point where God intended them to linger, or to go back to continually as the perfection of the will of God learned. It was the experience of a people progressing in the knowledge of their God and Saviour.

In Deuteronomy 12. they have progressed a great way beyond the deliverance out of Egypt, yet in the verse we have read they were doing many things that were "right in their own eyes."

We may understand that passage in the sense that until the will of God had been revealed Israel, as learners, were not held responsible by God for acting out what had not been revealed to them. Here is a people who had much to be set right that was wrong, but who were in a position where God could come in and set right what was wrong.

In Judges 17. 6, "In those days there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes," we have a parallel expression to that in Deuteronomy 12. 8, but a totally different condition of things. Here is a people whom God has brought into the light, and to whom He has revealed His mind and will, but who are deliberately turning away from the light, away from God, and going back into darkness. Solemn contrast! Oh! the patience of God with Israel as they are coming into the light. Oh! the stern words of warning, the stern discipline of God who loved His people, when they deliberately turn away from the light given them and go back to do that which every man thought right in his own eyes.

(From an address by J. A. Boswell.)

“HATH GOD SAID?” *VERSUS* “GOD HATH SAID.”

THE fall and ruin of man has been caused by believing Satan's lie. In order to reach the citadel of the heart, he first gained the ear, and into the ear of woman he hissed his delusive and deceptive insinuation, “Hath God said?” To parley with the Devil as to God's word is to give him the vantage ground, and weak woman, in the presence of the mighty power of Satan, falls an easy prey to his subtlety; and the divine commentary of the Spirit of God is declared to us, “The woman being deceived was in the transgression.”¹ The ear of Adam is turned from God to listen to the voice of his wife. As a result his heart is turned away from God, and he disobeys His commandment. Disobedience is sin, and sin separates from God. Death follows in the train of sin—spiritual death, which is separation from God. Man, separated *from* God, becomes lost *to* God, sold unto sin, a bond-slave of Satan, led, guided, and controlled by him, and a fitted instrument in his hand for the accomplishment of his will.²

Man having given up God, God gave man over to his own devices, with the certain result of a *nature* of evil, manifesting itself in *practices* of evil, such as to merit and call forth the righteous judgment of God, which they who do such things shall not escape.

Man is expelled from Eden. Saved in figure, doubtless, on the ground of the provision of God for him, in the coats of skin provided (through the death of another) wherewith God clothed them. Yet the judgment of God must be executed, which put him *outside* the sphere of God's government on earth, which was Eden, displaying divine justice, expressively seen in the cherubim and flaming sword, demanding a full and perfect answer to all the claims of

¹ 1 Tim. 2. 14.

² Eph. 2. 1, 2.

God's holiness, which, alas! have ever been so sadly ignored to the destruction of man.

From that time the lie of the serpent (Satan) has surely become the creed of man, and now the thoughts and suggestions or insinuations of man (as man naturally) in the things of God can no more be trusted than the suggestion of Satan. Both have their origin here, in *questioning* what "*God hath said,*" which is to challenge God's word in its accuracy or its entirety, and to which we would reply, "*Yea, let God be true,* and every man a liar; as it is written, *That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings,*" etc.¹ Again, it is written, "*For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven*";² and for the thorough furnishing of the child of faith there is the sword of the Spirit, which is a *saying of God*, as see the effectual working of the same as used by Christ in the temptation.³

It is written, *God hath said.*

"GOD, WHO CANNOT LIE,"⁴

"The DEVIL, . . . he is a LIAR, and the father of it,"⁵ give clearly and decisively the characteristics of the One and the other.

We would look now at some instances showing how full and complete will be the triumph of Satan through this his masterpiece of deception in the future. "The working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish: because they received not *the love of the truth*, that they might be saved. And for this cause God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe *the lie*: that they all might be damned that believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."⁶

But Satan will meet his doom, and in his downfall the

¹ Rom. 3. 4. Compare also Ps. 51. 4.

³ Matt. 4. 4, 7, 10.

⁵ John 8. 44.

² Ps. 119. 89.

⁴ Titus 1. 2.

⁶ 2 Thess. 2. 9-12.

true character of his working will be revealed. "And the great Dragon was cast out, that old Serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which *deceiveth* the whole world."¹ This further attempt at deception is evidently most complete, and being his most successful weapon, he again wields it against the dwellers on the earth. He knows his time is short, and so he is intent on making the most of it; to be met at length with his downfall and defeat, and to be cut short in his work by an angel coming down from heaven and laying hold on him—"even the Dragon, that old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the abyss, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him (striking contrast to Matt. 27. 62-66), that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled."²

At the close of the thousand years, during the little season of his release from his prison, again his character is revealed: "He shall go out to *deceive* the nations," and again succeeds "to gather a host as the sand of the sea, and leads them up against the beloved city"; only to be repulsed and driven back, his army of poor deceived dwellers of the earth to be overthrown and devoured with fire which cometh from God out of heaven; and he himself, the Devil that deceived them, cast into the lake of fire, which had before been prepared for him and his angels³—his final and eternal doom.

Why write we thus? Because we are persuaded that many, very many, little realize as should be realized what a great and mighty power is at work *to-day*, during the present age, under the guiding hand of the "*god of this age*," Satan, the deceiver; deceiving and deluding the souls of poor guilty men and women unto perdition under a cloak of a profession of religion, without Christ, satisfying enough to the carnal mind in lulling the conscience to sleep, but

¹ Rev. 12. 9.

² Rev. 20.

³ Matt. 25. 41.

valueless to save. “But and if our Gospel be hid, it is hid in them that are lost, in whom the god of this age hath blinded the minds of them that believe not.”¹

Not less successful is the work of Satan in the deception of many, very many even who are saved, with reference to God’s will concerning them, inasmuch as God willeth that “all men should be saved and *come unto the knowledge of the truth.*”² As it is written again, “For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ.”³

A heart drawn away from the person of Christ, through the ear being lent to others, rather than His word, resulting soon in manifest departure in ways; and a conscience at one time keen and tender, now dulled and seared through oft-repeated upbraidings, being stifled, until, a good conscience having been put away, concerning the Faith shipwreck is made, and many, once bright and useful, are now, like the remains of a stranded vessel, a picture of sadness to behold. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, but to be ignorant of Satan’s devices is to fall an easy prey to the same. Therefore be not “ignorant of his devices,” for to *know* them is in a great measure to be delivered from them.

Yet, alas! how few apparently who do know them in these last closing days; and why is it so? Simply because, in many cases, they assume a character little suspected or understood, and the only preservative being turned away from, such unsuspecting ones are easily ensnared.

In 1st and 2nd Timothy we have presented the character of the latter and last days, by the unerring testimony of the

¹ 2 Cor. 4. 4.

² 1 Tim. 2. 4.

³ 2 Cor. 11. 2, 3.

Spirit and Word of God.¹ Penned that we may *know*, and knowing may give good heed. Chapter 2. gives a record of two men who concerning "the truth" have erred. Men in relation to the truth—God's truth. It was the truth and the lie at the beginning; it is the truth and the lie at the close. Men who have received the lie, they next *proclaim* it. Sad result of a previous stage of error in "not rightly dividing the word of truth," too oft-repeated, with as sad issues. Here it is that error oftentimes begins, which not only hinders a coming to a "right knowledge of the truth," as God's will has been and is,² but eventually leads to the ensnaring by Satan from the will of God; out of which God alone can and may give repentance unto the acknowledgment of the truth, leading to recovery unto God's will.

But further, in chapter 3., it is men *holding* a form of godliness, but having *denied* the 'power, which gives character to "the last days," and is that which makes them so difficult. It is the difficulty of detecting a counterfeit when it is so like the reality, the deception is so complete. "From such also turn away." For of such are those who are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." As a Jannes and Jambres, by their imitation of God's reality resisted the truth, so is it with these.

But are these things so to-day? Yea, doubtless! The characteristics of "the last days" are too plainly manifest at the present time, and in present circumstances, to admit of question or doubt. The time that the unerring testimony of the Spirit and word of God has said will come has come, when evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; when, moreover, "they will not endure sound teaching, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching

¹ 1 Tim. 4. 1, and 2 Tim. 3. 1.

² See 1 Tim. 2. 4.

ears, and shall turn away their ears from the Truth, and shall be turned unto fables." ¹

Yet, some there are, alas! who pretend not to see this; and some there are who, although they see it, are quite satisfied to have it so, and remain hopelessly fettered in the midst of it. Even as it was in days of old, such is it to-day. "A wonderful and horrible thing (astonishment and filthiness) is committed *in the land*. The prophets prophesy *falsely*, and the priests bear rule by their means." ² "But it is not *with us*" is the cry of many to-day, thinking thus to get rid of their responsibility in the matter. But is it so? Do such things exist? and are such tolerated? Then what *God hath said* is true; and His estimate is, that it is astonishment and filthiness, whatever men's thoughts may be, and "Let God be true, and every man a liar." But, alas! how true it is that even now God's word is being so fully verified, "My people love to have it so."

"Why," some may be inclined to ask, "are these things so?" In Deuteronomy, chapter 13., in connection with the arising of the false prophet and dreamer of dreams in Israel, seeking to turn them away from the living and true God, unto idolatry, God hath said, as the reason for such things, that "the LORD your God *proveth* you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul"; and, alas! the test proved a severe one to Israel, and does to many of God's people still, for, like them, they "have departed from the living God," ³ and have given up the truth, and have received the lie. "*He that saith*, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." ⁴

DAVID SMITH.

¹ 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4.

² Jer. 5. 30, 31.

³ Heb. 3. 12.

⁴ 1 John 2. 4.

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 7. 17, R.V.*

QUESTION 50.—*Given that all the grown-up people in an assembly have an equal amount of spare time, are all equally bound to care for the sick by nursing them personally, visiting, etc., where necessary; or do these duties devolve first upon bishops and their wives—if they have wives?*

From 1 Corinthians 12. 25 there would appear to be a ministry of the members of the body one to the other, very different from the special ministry spoken of in other places. So likewise in the matter of oversight (Heb. 12. 15) there is that which is fit and becoming for all saints. At the same time, the warning given in 1 Peter 4. 15 must not be neglected, or we shall be found doing bishop work in a contrary to God fashion. Were there more self denial among saints in seeking to serve one another, thus following the example of Him who, took upon Himself the form of a servant, there would be more true fellowship. The seeking to cast all responsibility upon one or two has resulted in clerisy in the past, and is ever tending in the same direction to-day.

J. A. B.

LOOKING OFF UNTO JESUS.

“THE next day, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which beareth the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a Man who is preferred before me: for He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing in water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven, like a dove, and It abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize in water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth in Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples. And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus” (John 1. 29-37).

The Gospel according to John specially presents to us the Lord as Son of God, yea, God Himself; and in the first chapter, which is as a prologue or preface to the book, He is brought out in sevenfold way under seven distinct titles. The first three reveal Him in the past as Word and Life and Light. Then He is declared to be the Lamb of God, the Lamb to which every other lamb in sacrifice pointed; and, having done that work, He now occupies the one central place as the Lamb on whom every eye is to rest. The Lamb that John the Baptist rejoiced to point to, exclaiming, “Behold!” satisfied to “decrease” as He increased; and disciples who had hitherto followed with him now turned away to follow the Lamb alone.

The Lamb of God, the one Sacrifice God could accept, becomes, as result of His death, One able to save, to bless

and to gather unto Himself His own. This is shewn to us in connection with the three following titles: Son of God, King of Israel, and Son of Man.

As Son of God He is seen in connection with the Church. Simon Barjona having confessed Him to be "Son of God," He at once, and for the first time, intimates to them the fact that He must suffer and be crucified.¹ To Paul afterward God reveals Him as the Son of God (Gal. 1. 16), and he straightway preaches Him in the Synagogues of Damascus as the Son of God (Acts 9.), and Paul is therefore the chosen one to unfold the mystery of the Church (Eph. 3. 2-6).

As King of Israel He is seen blessing the nation, sample of which is given in Nathanael, who freshly from under the "fig-tree" comes to Him confessing Him as King of Israel.

As Son of Man He completes the purposes of God in connection with earth, giving the blessing to widen out till it embraces all (John 1. 51). Notice how the "ascending" is put before the "descending," thus showing that Earth is regarded as the scene, not Heaven.

The One thus presented is seen throughout the Gospel in these varied ways presenting Himself to many, but rejection invariably following on the part of the people as such. Rulers, Chief Priests, Scribes and Pharisees to the front in so doing. "He came unto His own (things), and His own (people) received Him not" (John 1. 11).

Does He present Himself as the Word? they reject Him (ch. 6.). As the Life which He gives to Lazarus? (ch. 11.), He is rejected (ch. 12.). As the Light which also He bestows, proof of which He gives in connection with the Blind Man, whose eyes opened are only as an outward sign of the light

¹ See Matt. 16. 16-21: "I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I *will* build My church. . . . From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must . . . suffer . . . and be killed."

that had shone into his soul, giving him to become a worshipper and an acknowledger of Jesus as Son of God and Lord? (ch. 9. 35-38), still He is rejected; not only so, but the blind man is given the place of rejection with Him. So in whatever way He presented Himself to them, and in however many manifestations of grace, such as miracle, healing, even raising the dead, He brought Himself before them, still they persistently rejected Him; their enmity increasing with every fresh manifestation of His power, urging them on to kill Him, and never ceasing until they had succeeded in so doing.

But it is to the central title, which occupies so many verses, that I wish to call special attention. The Lamb of God. Who is He? Whose Son is He? Canst thou tell? "He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me" (ch. 1. 15), was the witness of John the Baptist, as in the wilderness he cried, exulting in the glory of the only begotten Son. He who was after him, and came after him in earthly generation, was before him, thus clearly establishing the fact that the Lord Jesus was no creature of time. When stooping low to take on Him the body prepared (Heb. 10. 5) He was the eternal Son; He who "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1. 1.) Thus the Baptist spoke of Him who claimed to be God Himself, equal with the Father. "My Father worketh hitherto AND I work" (John 5. 17) were words which told it out, and the Jews were aware of it. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (ver. 18). Not only by the expression "My Father" did He do so, but further by the words "and I." The "and" having the force of accordance suggests combination of action, and declares operation on part of Father and Christ which only could result from their being equal. This the

Jews saw, and because He thus spoke, charged Him with blasphemy. How such precious, simple verses taken into our hearts, and linked there with the blessed Person to whom they apply, enable us to shake off the lie of Satan that the Lord Jesus is a mere man! Nay, more, how our hearts resent the very suggestion, not only as dishonour sought to be done to Him who has made Himself so precious to us, but as one that if true would rob us of the only One who could, as the Lamb of God, have given Himself a sacrifice for us. It is no question of doctrine that can be received or rejected, and leave us as we were. Ever let it be remembered such teaching takes Him away from us and leaves us in our sins, absolutely hopeless as to any means by which they could be purged away. It is therefore a soul-destroying doctrine, and the one who holds or teaches it is seeking to destroy the foundations, and this once seen enables us with holy horror to judge it as one of the very worst attacks Satan could make upon the truth. In the present day the constant effort seems to be to lower the dignity, the person and the character of the Lord Jesus Christ; to make Him a mere man, however superior to any other, and yet to speak as if He could still be to the sinner all he needs. "He was before me." Is that the One you claim as your Saviour, and rejoice in before God? If not, your Christ is a sham and is not the Christ of Scripture. Your Saviour is no Saviour, and you are a poor guilty sinner left under the wrath of God, in your sins, without any way of ridding yourself from them; because the only One who could accomplish this for you is denied in the place and in the power in which alone He could put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. If, therefore, you have a Saviour, He is such an one as Jesus the Son of God. And this truth is the touchstone as to the "common salvation" (Jude 3.). But the salvation was not "common" in the sense that applies to that word in our day; it was a "fellowship" salvation; but Jude only knew a salvation

with those who owned Jesus as Son of God, the eternal Son.

When Henry Martyn was in Persia, translating the New Testament into Persian for the first time, Mahomedans said to him, "What think ye of Christ?" He replied, "He is the Son of God, God Himself"; and they spat upon him, and rejected him and his testimony; for the Christ they had was no Christ at all. Let us then ever remember the Christ we have, and trust alone in, is Jesus the Son of God, in the beginning with God, God Himself.

John the Baptist, pointing to One who stood before them in humble, simple garb, who had just come forth from Nazareth's carpenter's shop, Himself "the carpenter," bows before Him, owns His supremacy; "He was before me"; and with gladness of heart as thus he points exclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God, which beareth the sin of the world." And if, reader, you are a Christian, that is just how you became one: you beheld Him. You looked away to Him, and knew that He had stood in your place, and had borne your sins on the tree (1 Pet. 2. 24). And thus believing in Him, with confidence you can repeat, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be continued.)

THE BLOOD OF THE SON OF MAN.

The Blood of the Lamb speaks of the aspect of the Atoning Death which concerns the whole human race. "The Lamb of God beareth the sin of the world."¹

The Blood of Jesus, God's Son, is that which cleanseth from every sin those that believe on His Name.²

The Blood of Christ is that in which we are made nigh.³ So far-reaching and immense are the benefits accruing to

¹ John 1. 29, R.M. ² 1 John 1. 7; 5. 13. ³ Eph. 2. 13.

us from Christ's offering up of Himself, that fellowship of the Blood of Christ is a very cup of blessing.¹

The Blood of the Lord tells not of any special efficacy of the Blood, but of the supreme excellence of Him who shed it.²

Now let us look somewhat more closely at the expression,

THE BLOOD OF THE SON OF MAN,

which occurs in **John 6**, in the account given of the Lord's sayings in the synagogue in Capernaum.

In this most important scripture we also read even more concerning

THE LIVING BREAD—THE FLESH OF THE SON OF MAN.

We first observe that bread and flesh are both food; that is to say, they speak of that which can sustain life. Among foods, some are more nourishing than others, but the use of all foods is to provide that which is needful for the continuance of life, the difference between bread and flesh simply being that one is the fruit of vegetable life and the other of animal life. In either case, whether we eat bread or eat flesh, we are partaking of that which has been produced at the expense of the life of a plant or an animal, as the case may be, in order to sustain our life. In this respect every meal-offering and every flesh-offering of which the priest or the offerer partook pointed on to Him who gave the Living Bread, even His Flesh, for the Life of the World.³ And very especially was this aspect of His work shown forth in the

SACRIFICE OF PEACE-OFFERINGS.⁴

But from the first day when God granted to Noah every moving thing that liveth as food He strictly reserved the blood as being that in which the life of the flesh is.⁵ This

¹ 1 Cor. 10. 16. ² 1 Cor. 11. 27.

³ John 6. 51. ⁴ Lev. 7. 11-21. ⁵ Gen. 9. 3, 4.

restriction has never been removed. It was repeated again and again in the law given by Moses. Finally, the Apostles themselves charged believers from among the Gentiles to abstain from blood.¹

From animals as well as from plants men may obtain food to sustain life, but not thence can life itself be obtained.

But the Son of Man not only gave the True Bread, His Flesh, for the support of the spiritual life—He shed His Blood that He might impart life. This, then, is the efficacy of His Blood as signified under the expression,

THE BLOOD OF THE SON OF MAN.

It is that by which life is imparted to those that drink thereof.

Let us note that the subject of these words of the Lord is,

LIFE IN OURSELVES.²

The question of having life may be looked at in more than one aspect:—

As believers in the Name of the Son of God, we have eternal life. God gave us Eternal Life, and this life is IN HIS SON.³

As being “in Christ,” and “raised together with Christ,” our life is hid WITH CHRIST IN GOD.⁴

Moreover, it is as the Son of God that He speaks to dead ones, so that hearing they live.⁵

Whereas our experimental possession of the life; our practical use and enjoyment of the life

IN OURSELVES

is linked by Him with two things, namely,—

EATING HIS FLESH, AND DRINKING HIS BLOOD.

Here let us earnestly direct attention to the fact that at the feast of the Remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ

¹ Acts 15. 29.

² John 6. 53, R.V. ³ 1 John 5. 11. ⁴ Col. 1. 2; 3. 1, 3. ⁵ John 5. 25.

we do not eat the Body of the Lord nor drink the Blood of the Lord.¹

What we eat is a loaf of bread, which is His Body; that is, which speaks to us of His Body, which brings His Body to our remembrance. Just as when the Lord showed to His servant John the vision recorded in Revelation 1., and said, "The seven lampstands are the seven churches." What did He mean by so speaking? Surely, that the lampstands represented the churches. Just so, as babes and sucklings may understand, did the Lord mean when He said, "This is My Body."²

So the cup of wine which we drink is His Blood. What we drink is wine, but telling us of what He shed, and who He was who shed it.

Only Bread and only Wine,
Yet to faith the solemn sign
Of the Heavenly and Divine;
We give Thee thanks, O Lord.

Let us not, however, allow the false connection that some would seek to make between the drinking of the Blood of the Son of Man and the drinking of the cup of wine in remembrance of the Lord to blind our eyes to the vast importance of knowing in daily experience what it is to

DRINK HIS BLOOD.

And the Blood of the Son of Man is efficacious to those who drink it unto their having life in themselves, which efficacy it shares with no other blood. No other blood is drink indeed.³ From no other source can life be drawn.

Life is found alone in His blood. Indeed, He came that we might not only have life, but might have it more abundantly.⁴ Further, we should carefully observe that it is as we eat His flesh and drink His blood that we

ABIDE IN HIM, AND HE IN US:⁵

¹ 1 Cor. 11. 27. ² 1 Cor. 11. 24.

³ John 6. 55. ⁴ John 10. 10. ⁵ John 6. 56.

and thus, as He elsewhere tells us, may bring forth much fruit.¹

In the Blood of Christ we are made nigh, and to us are given accordingly great things from our God, and it is indeed happy to bless God for this cup of Blessing.² But if we would bless others, we must needs be continually eating the flesh and drinking the Blood of the Son of Man, for thus doth the Life flow into our souls, and thus as He lived because of the Father may we live because of Him.³

Let us contemplate the blessed use which the Son of Man made of His life, and wonder why such a life needed to be laid down! He came, however, as the Son of Man, not only to minister, but to give His life a ransom for many.⁴

Because, as the Lamb of God, He was about upon the cross to bear the sin of the world,⁵ to Him, as Son of Man, was given authority on earth to forgive sins.⁶ But not only had He, and has He, authority on earth to forgive sins—to Him has been given authority to execute judgment also because He is Son of Man.⁷ Alas, alas! when the appointed day⁸ shall come for those whose sins have not been remitted, who have died in their sin and in their sins, because of not believing that He is! Concerning such He hath said, "Whither I go ye cannot come."⁹

We would further note how closely God links together the name of "JESUS" with the title of "SON OF MAN," as witness the Scriptures above quoted, and also very particularly Hebrews 2., especially verses 6 to 9.

And indeed that His name should be called "Jesus" because it is He who shall save His people from their sins,¹⁰ brings Salvation to the front; whilst Salvation, as God speaks of it, is not to be severed from the thought which we have sought to bring forth from the Scriptures before us concerning the important subject of

¹ John 15. 5. ² 1 Cor. 10. 16. ³ John 6. 57.

⁴ Matt. 20. 28; Mark 10. 45.

⁵ John 1. 29, R.M.

⁶ Mark 2. 10.

⁷ John 5. 27.

⁸ Acts 17. 31.

⁹ John 8. 21, 24.

¹⁰ Matt. 1. 21.

HAVING LIFE IN OURSELVES.

But let us seek, by God's help, to know the Spirit that quickeneth.¹ When these things were spoken in Capernaum, some said, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?² Let the whole of our Lord's reply to such words be carefully perused.³

It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that He speaks to us are Spirit and are Life.⁴ Surely, then, the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood signifies the attentive hearkening of our hearts to His Voice, as by His Spirit He speaks to us in the Word concerning the work He accomplished when He, as

SON OF MAN, DIED

that we might live.

BOLDNESS.

Acts 4. 13. Peter and John were in the presence of great men, great scholars, and being themselves unlettered, we would naturally suppose they would have been timid. But they were bold—not impudent, two altogether different things, and we should never mistake one for the other. They had been with the Lord Jesus, and they had got some of His Spirit, and it showed itself in their testimony; it was not a half-hearted testimony, it was so bold that they did not flinch from accusing their audience of the murder of the Prince of Life. Does not this suggest that if we are to do anything in Gospel work there must be boldness, courage to speak to one's neighbours? We won't be catchers of men if we don't let down the net. There was a persistency also about these men-catchers: they were not to be turned from their purpose. If they were put in prison they would speak there; and when let out they would speak again. They were threatened, beaten, imprisoned, but they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name. What a reflection that is upon our half-heartedness, indifference, lukewarmness, negligence, dilatoriness!

¹ John 6. 63.

² John 6. 52.

³ John 6. 53-58.

⁴ John 6. 60-63.

EPAPHRAS.

DUE attention to the lives of both Old and New Testament saints, as given to us in the Scriptures, is very profitable. Biography has a great influence over the minds of readers. The life of Christ particularly and, in less degree, the lives of servants of God generally, as detailed in the Word, will be an incentive to faithfulness and whole-heartedness in the Lord's work on our part.

But, it may be, whilst we are helped to study well the history of prominent servants of Christ, like Paul and Peter, we may overlook entirely the testimony the Word bears to men who, not being nearly so frequently mentioned in the Scriptures, nevertheless have a distinct place there, and what is said regarding them marks them out as those worthy to be followed.

EPAPHRAS, a servant of the Lord in Colosse, and probably belonging to that city,¹ is one of those concerning whom little is recorded; yet that little particularly expresses the character of the man, and also his continued devotion to the work of the Lord. The Apostle Paul, as far as we know, never visited Colosse.² Tidings of their faith, love, and hope, bringing forth fruit amongst them, were apparently carried by Epaphras to the Apostle; and he (Epaphras) is referred to, in Colossians 1. 7, as the one who had in their midst taught them those things for which they are specially commended by Paul, and is also further recognised as a faithful servant of Christ. This commendation of the Apostle as to the spiritual condition of the assembly in Colosse is a tribute to the abiding character of the work of Epaphras as a teacher in their midst; especially when we remember that Satan had already come in seeking to cause havoc amongst the saints by the introduction of the wisdom of the world and the philosophy of men. And

¹ "Epaphras, who is one of you" (Col. 4. 12).

² Col. 2. 1.

here the remark may be made that the teacher who, like Epaphras, is truly a gift from God, will ever seek to instruct the saints from the inexhaustible treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are in the written Word; this Word directing our hearts to the living Word, who in heaven has treasured up in Himself for us all the resources of wisdom and knowledge. And this character of teaching is particularly the feature of the Epistle to Colossians: the fulness of the Head from whom, for the nourishment and increase of the Body, every needful blessing flows. Nothing will more certainly fit us to resist and turn aside the purposes of Satan, in whatever form they may come to us, than sound teaching and knowledge imparted to us from the Word of God; and to this end those who teach as Epaphras taught in Colosse ought to be valued as God's gift to the assembly, as they surely also are a help and blessing to saints.

Colossians 4. 12 furnishes us with the second occasion on which Epaphras is spoken of in the Scriptures. He is no longer in Colosse labouring amongst saints, teaching and building them up in the faith, but probably the distance between Colosse and Rome separates him from the scene of his former labours, and from the saints he so much cherished. The Apostle's testimony, in this verse, brings out even more fully the character of Epaphras than does his former one, and furnishes us with a feature in the life and testimony of this devoted servant of the Lord too sadly lacking amongst us; and, further, supplies a reason why our service is far less fruitful than it should be, and is so frequently weak and void of power. Though no longer amongst them, he labours fervently for them in prayer, and particularly in connection with his past service amongst them, for he prays that they may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Paul prays, in Colossians 1. 9, that they might know all the

will of God. Epaphras prays, in chapter 4. 12, that they might do it. If God has called us to labour in the assembly, whether in greater or lesser degree, we should ever remember (and who is there but is prone to forget it?) that the throne of Grace, as well as the Word of God, and our ability and gift to teach that Word, is necessary if the results of our service are to be to the glory of God and the abiding blessing of those amongst whom we minister. Thus a deeply important lesson in the briefly recorded life of Epaphras is here brought before us, and, as we read the epistles of Paul, the same lesson is more forcibly brought home to us in an enlarged degree. How much he prayed for, and continuously remembered, the various assemblies he visited and all that were within! How much he recognises the value of their prayers, as again and again he beseeches them to seek the Lord for him and the work he does! Did we know as we ought the value of waiting upon God for our service, and looking to Him in that service, we would know as we have never known the power of God manifest both amongst children of God and in the Gospel of His grace to the salvation of many.

Only three times is Epaphras named in the New Testament, and the third time is in Philemon 23: "There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus." Time produces many and great changes even in the best of men. Some of those who shone brightest for their Lord and Master in days past, whose hearts appeared all aglow with love and zeal for Him, have cooled down in their affection, and their brightness and zeal have departed. Many things arise in the path of the Lord's servant which may produce this condition of things, and, alas! how many have fallen! how many have been laid aside! Not so with Epaphras. The path of suffering and persecution may be his lot, but even this is not sufficient to crush his testimony, and he fears not the dungeon at Rome, nor yet the death that

possibly awaits him. How often it is that God permits this suffering and tribulation to come to us, that our service may be more effectual for Him. Great as was the service rendered by the Apostle Paul in those days when in fullest liberty he moved about from place to place, yet may it not be said that the period during which he was "a prisoner of Jesus Christ" at Rome God more mightily used His servant, and more highly honoured him, than during all the previous periods of his life work? The fact that it was during this time that the Apostle wrote the Epistles to Ephesus, Philippi, and Colosse, as well as others (and touchingly does he refer to his chain, etc., in every one of these letters), shows how the Lord can and does use His servant, even though circumstances apparently are contrary, for mightier ends than previously. Brightest lustre is given to the testimony of Epaphras in this last mention of him, in that he is seen as a fellow prisoner with Paul at Rome. We know not how he ended his career, but, as Scripture leaves him here, may we not rightly conclude that, whether by a martyr's death or otherwise, Epaphras finished his course here with joy and gladness, and in that day will surely have a prominent place in the kingdom and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ?

How striking is the contrast in the close of Scripture testimony regarding Demas! "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world,"¹ and no more we read concerning him. One feels that if God had aught to say as to his restoration, He would surely have told us. Many a man like Demas has shone brightly in the mid-day of his life, but in the evening his sun has gone down behind darkest clouds, and the sadness of this fact makes the closing features in the career of Epaphras to be most refreshing. God recognises with *present* joy, and the Lord

¹ 2 Tim. iv. 10.

will *publicly* recognise at the judgment-seat the faithfulness of His servant here, and will bestow its merited reward. May we know more fully the grace and faithfulness of Him who is "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness," preserving and keeping us real, and warm, and true in His service "till He come!"

THOMAS SELBY.

WHAT SHALL WE SAY TO THESE THINGS?

ROMANS 8. 31.

WHAT things? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Oh, the joy we have sometimes in sitting down and meditating on the various ways in which our God manifests Himself for us! As we think how the Spirit brings before us *these things* in this precious epistle, our hearts are drawn out to our God, and we exclaim with ravished hearts, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"¹ But, while His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out, He has been pleased, blessed be His name! to reveal part of them unto us who believe in His Son; for He has given us the Holy Spirit, "that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God."² Let us look at some of *these things*, and ask ourselves the question, "What shall we then say?" and, as we think upon them, may our heart be ravished so that we shall indeed joy in God.

Now before we could know God *for* us, we had to know God *against* our sins. There can be no knowledge of God for us apart from first knowing God against our sins, and, oh! as we look back on the time when we in the grace and mercy of God learned ourselves in the light of Romans 3. 10-19, when we stood before our God alone, and heard *Him*

¹ Rom. 11. 33.

² 1. Cor. 2. 12.

tell us our condition as sinners, and also our judgment, what did we *then say*? We put our hand on our mouth and exclaimed, "Guilty! undone!" Oh, what a contrast now! As we look back at that time, we remember the misery of soul we had, as our own condition came before us, and as we tried to find a way of escape in our agony. How utterly hopeless and undone we saw ourselves to be. We saw, indeed, God against our sins. But, oh! the joy that filled our souls as we learned the truth of Romans 3. 21-26—a righteousness of God manifested apart from law, and that righteousness being unto all them that believe. We gladly accepted the gift of God, and our hearts rejoiced as we were led to see that work on the cross. We saw One taking our place; for He was made to be sin for us, He who knew no sin, that we might become righteousness of God in Him.¹ What did we then say? We said thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift, for

"All our sins were laid upon Him,
 Jesus bore them on the tree;
 God, who knew them, laid them on Him,
 And, believing, we are free."

We had the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. We saw God for us, in that He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and that was what was troubling us. We were justified by faith, and we have peace with God. Bless His name!

But we soon learned that although our sins were all forgiven, they were only the branches of a great root, and we were brought into a position analogous to God's earthly people, when coming out of Egypt, with Baal-zephon on the one hand and Pihahiroth on the other; with the Red Sea before them and Pharaoh's host behind them; delivered from the judgment of God in Egypt, but now afraid of their

¹ 2 Cor. 5. 21.

old master. And, oh! how afraid we were of our old master, Satan, till we learned the truth of "Know ye not that so many of you as were baptized unto Christ Jesus were baptized unto His death?" "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed," or made of none effect, "that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin."¹ God's earthly people, in the position mentioned, were afraid till they saw God's provision, in the opening of the Red Sea; and on the further bank of the Red Sea they looked back on the strength of their old master gone. Pharaoh was rendered powerless by his host being drowned in the sea; and they, free to serve God, could sing unto Him as they saw His works for them. And, oh, how we looked at the power of the Devil gone!² He rendered powerless by our God's provision for us, in the Cross work of our Blessed Lord. We indeed saw God, for us, and, in seeing our deliverance from our old master, and our freedom to serve our God, we rejoiced in God.

Alas! as we think on the havoc that sin has wrought in our members, we are reminded of Israel's wilderness experience, freed to serve God indeed, but we read they vexed Him sore.³ Is not this like ourselves? How often do we find ourselves, though free to serve God, doing our own will? finding a law within ourselves that, when we would do good, evil is present with us? But, while humiliated in this body, as we again look at the ways of our God, even in this we are caused to rejoice, as we think on the deliverance. When we ask ourselves the question, "Who shall deliver us?" we are enabled to say, Thanks be unto God, it is through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁴ And we look for His coming, Who shall change this body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory.⁵

¹ Rom. 6. 6. ² Heb. 2. 14. ³ Psalm 78., with Hebrews 3.

⁴ Rom. 7. 24, 25. ⁵ Phil. 3. 20, 21.

As we look at the past we see ourselves saved from wrath. In the present we are delivered from our old master. As we look to the future, we know that we shall be changed, when we shall be what we would be, and also what we should be. Oh, the joy as we see the ways of our God towards us! Truly He is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith He loved us. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."¹ Oh, what we owe to that Cross work of our Lord Jesus Christ! As we look, and learn from our God, we can truly say, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."² Truly in this body we are humiliated, for have we not found, when we had a strong desire to commune with God, strange and evil thoughts coming in between, and hindering such communion? How loathsome this evil seemed to be, and with what feelings of joy we thought upon God, who, knowing all that we were, and all that sin had done in us, has been pleased to save us!

Now in the 8th chapter of Romans we have the same things brought before us with many others. First verse, "No condemnation,"—so justified that no one can condemn!

"No condemnation! precious word!

Consider it, my soul!

Thy sins were all on Jesus laid;

His stripes have made thee whole."

Verse 5, our standing; no longer in the flesh, but in the spirit. Debtors we are, but not to the flesh.

"When I see Thee as Thou art,

Love Thee with unsinning heart;

Then, LORD, shall I fully know,

Not till then, how much I owe!"

Verse 17, "Heirs of God." What a contrast to being heirs of wrath! Verse 23, "Waiting for the redemption of the

¹ 1 John 4. 10.

² Rom. 8. 1.

body." Blessed hope! may we with patience wait for it! Verse 26, the intercession of the Spirit. How humbling the thought that we know not what to pray for yet! How comforting the thought that the Spirit maketh intercession according to the will of God! Consequently, "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Verse 29, "To be conformed to the image of His Son," by the decree of our God. What a wonderful salvation! Verse 33, so delivered that no one can lay anything to the charge of God's elect. Verse 35, so joined that no one can separate us from the love of Christ.

What shall we say to these things? When we are led to think on them, we are persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Blessed persuasion! May the consideration of these things lead us to present our bodies "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service"; and to be "not conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect thing, the will of God." May it be the burning desire of our hearts to *know Him*, "who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich." Know Him who pleased not Himself, but the Father who sent Him. And as we think on what God has made us in Him, and how fitly He represents us before the face of God, may we seek to represent Him faithfully before our fellow-men! In all our doings may we seek to win Christ, in the sense of winning His approval, so that we may be "blameless and harmless, children of God, without blemish, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation," being seen amongst them "as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Life."

Knowing that "God has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness," may we use these things for the glory of our God, who is indeed "FOR US."

JAMES ALLAN.

"DO THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST."

Two things characterize unregenerate persons—their hatred to God, and their ignorance of God as He is revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The work which God does by His Holy Spirit, through His Word, as the outflow of the mighty work of Christ upon the Cross, is to make men to know God that they may love Him. The characteristic difference between one who is born again, and one who is not, is this: that the one has begun to know God and begun to love Him, whilst the other has not. The evangelist is the agent in the hand of God for bringing about this beginning. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and the evangelist says to men, "We beseech you, be ye reconciled to God." What is reconciliation? It supposes that the one who needs to be reconciled is at cross purposes with the one to whom he needs to be reconciled. Men of this world are at cross purposes with God; and their reconciliation means that they are being so changed that they cease to be so; which change is brought about by God, through the working of the Holy Spirit, making them to know something of Himself. The operation consists in the Holy Spirit presenting the Cross-of-Christ work unto the heart of the unregenerate person, God's purpose being the exaltation of His Son: for the first end or object of the Gospel is the glory of God in the glory of Christ: "That He may head up all things in Him." The Lord Jesus Christ fills the heart of God; and any one who desires to serve God in the Gospel must have before him what God has before Himself—viz., the glory and the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ. It has ever been the way of God to take the base things of the world, and the things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence. The Cross itself tells us that the weakness of God is stronger than men. Thus in most marvellous grace does God often choose men whose natural abilities are of the very smallest, and uses them as His agents to perform in the hearts of men the most stupendous results.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SERVICE.

PART II.

IN continuing our subject from the New Testament, we would remind our readers of one great advantage which we possess over early saints. For many years the ministry among them was chiefly, if not altogether, oral, and largely dependent upon the gift of prophecy. The *written* Word of God came gradually into existence, but many years elapsed before any one Church had all the New Testament Scriptures before them.

Now we have before us a perfect revelation from God to meet our need throughout the dispensation, not only regarding doctrine, but also practice. The *Gospels*, besides unfolding to us the peerless life of the Lord Jesus, foreshadow the character and object of the New Testimony. The *Epistles* contain its doctrines, while the *Acts* show their application under widely divergent circumstances. We can now trace, guided by the Holy Spirit, the Testimony from its inception to the time when the apostles passed away, leaving behind them a complete record of the will of God. Hence the Apostolic benediction, "I commend you to God and the Word of His grace."¹

But early saints had one special advantage over us—viz., they had a *perfect pattern* submitted to them. The apostles, unlike many who pass as the Lord's servants to-day, had not different doctrines and varying modes of procedure for different places, therefore *every Church* was formed by Divine power, and built upon the *same* foundation. There were at first no spurious companies in the fellowship of the assemblies with *crystallized* doctrines, partly Divine and partly human, whose gates were effectually closed against

¹ Acts 20. 32.

the entrance of the Word of the Lord which would correct their unscriptural ways, and who yet claimed to be in fellowship. Their difficulties were of a different character to those which attend any effort to maintain scriptural order to-day.

It is necessary to point out that the Churches did not merely copy their pattern from each other. This is clearly demonstrated by Paul commending the saints in Thessalonica for their reception of the Word of God and their obedience thereto; he stated that *in so doing* they became imitators of the Churches of God . . . in Judea.¹ As the apostle taught the same word in every Church in every place, so obedience to that word produced *identical results* in Thessalonica as in Judea.

Among the Churches in Judea, the Church in Jerusalem is evidently destined to become the pattern for all assemblies, to imitate *after* the departure of the apostles, as God inspired Luke to record every detail of its construction, government, and administration. Our position to-day is, like the remnant who returned from Babylon, to work back to the pattern, for without it our best endeavours will only result in creations foreign to the Word of God.

In approaching this subject we require to remember the apostolic injunction to "hold fast the form of sound words," because "all Scripture is God-breathed," and to study carefully the exact usage of words in the Scriptures. It is important that the force of this should be clearly understood. When we remember that *all* the writers of Scripture were inspired by "One Spirit," then it is obvious that His usage of words must be *uniform*. A few instances will suffice to illustrate this, even with words derived from the same root, *e.g.*, *baptismos* (masculine) and *baptisma* (neuter) both come from *baptō*, and are given as equivalents in Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, yet without exception the former is used to

¹ 1 Thess. 2. 13-14.

denote "washing," while the latter is only used to express the Divine ordinance of baptism. Kathairō and katharizō are also given as equivalents in Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, yet they have a different usage. The latter, in its various forms, always signifies *to cleanse*. The former is not so used in Scripture. It only occurs once in the N.T. (John 15. 2), where its meaning is obvious; and, as has several times been pointed out, only twice prefixed by the preposition ek = ekkathairō. In both passages the meaning is *to purge out*. Had this been understood, what may now be described as the *washed-out vessel theory* would not have led so many of the saints astray.

Again, pneuma and anemos both mean *wind*, and are stated as such in the Lexicons. Yet in Scripture pneuma is always used to signify "spirit,"—whether of God, or of man, or of evil spirits. The use of anemos is clear from its context to be wind—*i.e.*, the air in motion. This obviates the scientific difficulty that has been frequently raised towards the A.V. of John 3. 8, when the subject is the New Birth, and the word used pneuma.

From the above it may be inferred that correct ideas of the Testimony can only result from accurate knowledge of the words which describe it.

The opening chapters of the "Acts" reveal the Divine pattern of the Testimony. During the forty days the Lord remained upon earth, after His resurrection, He appeared to the Apostles and instructed them in the things concerning the Kingdom of God. He also informed them that they would become His witnesses to the uttermost ends of the earth. But He also commanded them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

We hope our readers will prayerfully consider this point. Although "all authority was given unto Him in Heaven and upon earth," yet His commandments were given through the Holy Spirit. How important then that the

Apostles should take heed to His *special* command, and to wait for the Spirit, through whose presence and power alone would they be able either to obey or testify.

The reality of this is apparent in the subsequent deportment of the Apostles and *some* of the Saints: "They all steadfastly continued with one accord in prayer."¹ The instruction received from the Lord, prior to His ascension, taught them what to expect; therefore day by day they bowed together before the Throne, until their minds were blended in holy unity in the presence of God. They were brought into harmony with the will of the Lord.

"And in those days . . . the number of names together were about one hundred and twenty" (ver. 15).

We would call attention to the *number* of the Saints described as being together. It is recorded that the Lord, prior to His Ascension, appeared to over five hundred brethren *at once*.² It is evident, therefore, that all the Saints were not together at this period.

But those here referred to were not merely together in the sense of being *in one place*. This is not the meaning of the phrase in the original here translated "together." This leads us to examine the different words usually translated "together." There are three words generally so translated in the New Testament.

I. There is a "together" *of persons*, which is represented by the preposition *sun*=together with. This is the word in such passages as Matthew 18. 20; Acts 1. 6, 20. 7; 1 Corinthians 11. 17. The prime thought in these passages is that the persons are *together*.

II. There is a "together" *of place* represented by the adverb *homou*, which occurs in the following passages: John 4. 36, 20. 4, 21. 2.

III. There is the "together" *of purpose*, represented by the phrase, *Epi-to-auto*, which literally means—upon the

¹ Acts 1. 14.

² 1 Cor. 15. 6.

same thing; or, as its context always shows, with the same object in view.

And this last is the together of Acts 1. 15. The hundred and twenty were brought by the Word of God and continuance in prayer to have the *same object in view*.

How precious is the analogy between the recognition by God of the Tabernacle built by Israel and this Divinely-created unity! Both were the result of building according to the pattern, and God owned each in the same way.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all together (homou=place) with the *same object in view*”¹ (Epi-to-auto).

The glory of God filled the Tabernacle, and His voice was heard from off His Throne in blessing to the people. The Pillar of Cloud rested upon the Mercy-Seat in the Holiest, but was visible from without, to attest the presence of Jehovah in that House. It was by this Pillar that He indicated His will as to the movements of the Camp, etc.

How complete is the analogy! “And suddenly there came out of the heaven a rushing sound as of a violent breathing, and filled the whole house *where they were sitting*. And there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to *speak* as the Spirit gave them utterance” (vers. 2-4).

Comment upon this scene is unnecessary. Only as that same Spirit dwells within us ungrieved, moulding our wills to His, and subjecting our thoughts to the obedience of Christ, can the Divine impression be left upon us. Then, and *only then*, shall we be enabled to turn away from the wreckage on every side, and seeking unto God humbly confess that hitherto we have known little of the pattern.

The House of God is again established upon earth, and *from it* His work begins. What Gospel preaching there

¹ Acts 2. 1.

was that day! Ministry in the power of an ungrieved Spirit who had found an habitation among men. What blessing also resulted from the faithful dealing of these men! They did not make the Word of God *easy* either for saint or sinner. They were not afraid that their bold declaration of the claims of the Lord would "hinder the work." And that ministry, emanating from a Divine centre, drew the saved ones to it, but in a *condition* to be added thereto.

The order is plain and definite. "Then they that received His Word *were baptized*: and the same day there were *added* about three thousand souls. And they continued *steadfastly* in the apostles' doctrine, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers."¹

It is worthy of notice that here, for the first time in the N.T., the word "fellowship" occurs; also that this word is the first *name* given by God to His testimony. How beautiful is the thought of the fellowship! The circle in which one will *alone* obtains, and all subject to it. Where the hopes and purposes of all are the *same*, and both centred in the Lord upon the throne. All knit together by the power of the Holy Spirit, the things of the world fall into their proper place. There is no room for worldliness in such a company, for the world and its fashions are *outside*.

The power of this testimony is so great and so manifest that *all* are reached, and for the *first time* we read that "all who believed *had the same object in view*" (Epi-to-auto).

The *harmony* is maintained with the *unity*. There were not two discordant elements contending for the mastery, and distinguished by the desire to *uproot* what each planted, and to *throw down* what the other builded. All were animated by *common* hopes and purposes, and therefore we need not wonder that regarding their temporal things the Divine record is, "*They had all things in common.*"

Like Israel in the wilderness, they were brought out with

¹ Acts 2, 41, 42.

all their possessions for the service of God. They understood the meaning of the fellowship. The love of God dwelt in their hearts, and the *need* of each one was accordingly met, for no sacrifice was too great for them in the holy and happy position they occupied.

The Spirit further records, "The Lord added daily those who were being saved *with the same object in view*" (Epi-to-auto).¹

There are three points that we would especially press upon the attention of the overseers in the assemblies. (a) It was the Lord who added. This is His work, and nothing but failure can attend any attempt on our part to interfere with it. (b) Those whom He added were described as *being saved*. Not only saved from the penalty of sin, but knowing experimentally the daily Salvation of God. Their wills were subjected to His will, and their own thoughts and opinions concerning the House of God were left *outside*. (c) The third point is the manifestation of the two former—viz., They had the same object in view as those *already* in the fellowship. There was no test as to their knowledge, or any barrier unnecessarily raised, but the Apostles *did* look for a subdued spirit,—for the evidence of the work of God in their souls.

The spirit seems to dwell upon this holy and happy condition, until the record is,—“And the multitude of them that believed were of *one heart and soul*.”²

They were not merely together with an empty profession of unity and fellowship, sinking their differences for the time in view of some special object. This unity was the work of the Holy Spirit, and the answer to the prayer of the Lord Jesus,—“That they *all* may be *one*.”³ This was a reflex upon earth of the Holy Unity of the Triune God. The will of the Heavens done upon earth.

¹ Acts 2. 47.

² Acts 4. 32.

³ John 17. 21.

Earthly position and possessions were held with a light grasp, and easily parted with when the occasion required, for "great grace was upon them all" (ver. 33).

But this voluntary and hearty expression of the fellowship must not be confounded with human ideas of communism. In Israel Jehovah legislated for rich and poor, for ruler and princes, and so in the Churches of God. We hope to deal with the definite commandments of our Lord in this respect in a future paper.

We would also point out the solemn judgment upon the first attempt to mar this Divine Unity. Fear came upon the people when they beheld the manifested blessing of God, and fear came upon the Church when they beheld that solemn interposition of God. "The Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth"¹; and "Righteousness and Judgment are the establishment of His throne."² Therefore the presence of God is equally manifested by judgment upon sin, as well as by blessing to the people, for "the Judgments of the Lord are right."

We would ask our readers to carefully and prayerfully study these chapters referred to, and then compare this record of Divine Fellowship with the counterfeit presented by open-brethren. These very scriptures are made the handle by which their own lawless ways are expounded, and their own traditions enforced. The Lord's table is transformed into an indefinite something which they are pleased to call *the Father's table*. The door of *their* association is open for all believers from sects, who, to use their own term, are "godly in walk and sound in doctrine." Therefore a sectarian man is *by them* considered sound in doctrine, while the definite commandment of the Lord concerning such is (if he be in the assembly) after the first and second admonition *to reject him*.³ Thus in their associ-

¹ Psalm 9. 16.

² Psalm 89. 14.

³ Titus 3. 10.

ation of meetings the Word of God is displaced by the traditions of men.

And this unhallowed alliance with sectarianism is openly advocated in various ways by many of their leaders. Pamphlets that had passed into oblivion are brought out and *reprinted* to further these unscriptural principles. Books are written, and the Word of God perverted, to show the liberality of their writers. Men who years ago were strong in their denunciation of sectarianism may now be found on platforms with clerics of almost every denomination.

Then we are calmly told by others, who have evidently given up the principles they formerly held, that there is no scripture to separate from this corruption. We would fain review some of the specious arguments put forward by this latter school, but time and space now forbid.

WILLIAM LAING.

Fragment.

Luke 5. 1-7. This is just like His way with all His servants. It is a great honour He puts upon any of us to make use of us at all; but He never makes use of us without giving us something for it. We find His service is remunerative indeed. He made use of the twelve disciples on another occasion to carry the bread to the hungry multitudes, but how gracious on His part to remember the servants as well as those whom they had served, and He gives each of them a basketful of fragments.

LOOKING OFF UNTO JESUS.

(Continued from page 65.)

JOHN having referred to Him as the Lamb bearing sin, again speaks. Looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, "Behold the Lamb of God" (ver. 36). Looking, he spoke. Power was with those words, as they were uttered by one who looked himself. The disciples had not only the words falling upon their ears, but before them stood one, as an object lesson, himself doing that which he called upon them to do. Never let us forget it. We ever want to be looking ourselves, and for ourselves, if successfully we are to say to others around, "Behold the Lamb of God." The rapt, fixed gaze of John the Baptist would of itself cause the disciples to turn their eyes upon Him who so rivetted him to the spot as he sought to call others to do that which he was then doing himself. "Go to Jesus" would have little pith in it. "Go!" Such a word if used would tell its own tale, that the one who spoke had little or no interest himself in what he was speaking about. "Come to Jesus!" Ah, then we take our place where it should be: at the Cross beholding Him, our heart's love going out to Him for His great love to us; the value of His finished work before us, infinite and exceeding precious. *Then* to say "Come" attracts attention, and the sinner thus addressed is by grace constrained to comply with the invitation.

Only as thus looking can we rightly speak. "I have believed, therefore have I spoken," said the Psalmist (Ps. 116. 10), and Paul took up the words, repeating them to the Saints at Corinth (2 Cor. 4. 13).

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life" (1 John 1. 1), are the opening words of John's first epistle. What a real thing it all is with him! The sim-

plicity of the language, and yet the unfathomable depth of meaning in them! How deeply experimental! And is there not a need to-day of knowing more of Him, Himself? Not only had John heard, but he had "seen with his eyes"—nay, more, "looked upon." Two very different expressions. An intensity of meaning in that "looked upon" which you do not get in the word "seen." "Looked," observed diligently. As you pass down the streets how many things you see, but presently stopping, you look on one thing that has not only caught your eye, but so attracted your attention that you stop and linger over it. The many things you have "seen," this you have "looked" upon, that by so doing you might fasten it on your memory. So, as we not only "see" but look upon Christ, He gets His right place and power in our hearts, to the end that we might be "holy and unblameable and unreprouable in His sight" (Col. 1. 22).

"Behold the Lamb of God" is not therefore the word that meets us at the beginning, and from which we start, but it is the word we carry with us, and out of the sound of which we should never be. Right on and all the journey through we need it. Not a single child of God can be found so strong or ripe in years, experience, and wisdom in the things of God but what still it comes as a needed, welcomed voice, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

This way of presenting truth by the word "Behold" or "Look" is not new. When Israel, bitten by serpents, lay dying, and the brazen serpent was lifted up, the word rang through the camp, "Look!" "And it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived" (Num. 21. 9). What gladness thrilled in the heart of one who had given up hope and laid himself down to die; how the eye would turn toward and then fasten upon that serpent; till, leaping to his feet, in a moment healed, he could speak from his own experience of the blessing brought through a look,—

“There is life through a look at the crucified One,
There is life at this moment for thee.”

Thus we sing, but have we it in our hearts, the source of constant joy? Then in fresh power we can tell it out, and blessing follows the word. Sinners are brought to Christ. Oh! that God's children may get such fresh, vivid views of Him, the Lamb of God, that, constrained by His love, they may turn to the careless ones on every hand, and shout aloud, “Look and live! Look and live!” Then, all doubt and questioning swept away, the blood, the blood will become the theme; Jesus, the Lamb of God, the constant name on our lips; Christ presented simply and fully once and again as the Lamb of God.

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be continued.)

SINCERITY.

THE words translated “sincere” (Phil. 1. 10; 2 Peter 3. 1, R.V.), “sincerity” (1 Cor. 5. 8; 2 Cor. 1. 12, 2. 17), concerning which we propose to write, are of rare occurrence in the Word of God, being found in these five places only. Other words are rendered into English by the same word, but have really a different meaning, and are outside the scope of our article.

“Sincere” and “sincerity”: *εἰλικρινῆς*, *eilikrines*, *εἰλικρινεῖα*, *eilikrineia*. These words are translated uniformly in the R.V.¹ Our English word “sincere” appears to be its equivalent. The meaning of the word is “judged in the sunlight.” It is derived from *εἶλη*, *eilē*, sunshine, and *κρίνω*, *krinō*, to judge. The meaning of the English word “sincere” is very similar, being derived from two Latin

¹ And in the A.V. except in 2 Peter 3.

words. It is supposed to have had its origin in the following way:—

The palaces of the rich in ancient Rome were built of costly white marble, large sums of money being given for the slabs in which no flaw could be found. On one occasion the sunny side of one of these palaces suddenly gave way with a terrible crash. At first no one could tell the reason, but on close examination it was found that what at a distance appeared to be veins in the marble were in reality only flaws filled up with white wax. The heat of the sun very soon found out the deception by melting the wax; and the building tottered to the ground. Ever afterwards merchants dealing in the same were compelled to write on each slab the words *sine cera*, "without wax"; and hence it is supposed we derive our English word "sincere."

Thus will be seen the very close connection of the original meaning of the words, and this can be summed up in one sentence, "Capable of being judged in the sunlight."

Bearing in mind the meaning of the word, we are very much helped to a better understanding of many scriptures.

"Sincere"—Philippians 1. 10: "So that ye may prove the things that differ, that ye may be *sincere* and void of offence unto the day of Christ" (R.M.).

2 Peter 3. 1, R.V.: "I stir up your *sincere* mind by putting you in remembrance."

"Sincerity"—1 Corinthians 5. 8, R.V.: "For our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened (bread) of *sincerity* and truth."

2 Corinthians 1. 12, R.V.: "For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and *sincerity* of God, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."

2 Corinthians 2. 17, R.V.: "For we are not as the many, corrupting the word of God: but as of *sincerity*, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ."

In the first of these verses we have "sincerity" connected with the day of Christ, and in the second the "sincere mind" in connection with the commandment of the Lord; for let it not be forgotten that what will not bear the test of the Word of God now will by no means stand the light of heaven then (John 12. 48). See how abiding in Christ is inseparably linked with His word (John 15.; 1 John 2. 27). There is no such thing as abiding in Him apart from abiding in His written word. Again, unless there is the *sincere mind* first, the most important teaching of 2 Peter 3. 2 little avails: "That ye should remember the words that were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandments of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles" (in connection with this read Acts 2. 41, 42). But to whom is this reminder addressed? To those of a sincere mind, manifested in ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well.

One fails to find in Scripture such a thought as being what God calls spiritual and yet in a wrong condition and position. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well" (Isa. 1. 16, 17). "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14. 37).

Again, what may have had the applause of man here may at the judgment-seat of Christ be burnt up as so much dross.

On the other hand, the putting into practice of what man despises, and in some cases calls *rubbish* (a common expression just now on the lips of many for the precious truths lately come to light), will in that day have the praise of Him (Rom. 2. 29). "For the Lord seeth not as man seeth;

for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart " (1 Sam. 16. 7).

In connection with 1 Corinthians 5. 8 we cannot fail to be much helped, for the contrast between that which *cannot* bear the light and that which *can* is most striking, especially when we bear in mind that the nature of leaven is to work secretly and in the dark (see Matt. 13. 33). Moreover, has not the teaching of this verse been much lost sight of? Is it merely that leaven is to be purged out, and have sincerity one day out of seven, or for an hour or two on the Lord's day? No such thought. If the typical reference in Exodus 12. is looked up, it will help. Leaven was to be put away for the whole period of seven days; and this after the lamb had been slain and the blood sprinkled. The "hath" in 1 Corinthians 5. 8, R.V., makes this plain. The number seven, standing as symbolical of perfection, would in this place mean a complete period, answering to the present time, during which it is the blessed privilege of the saint, as well as his responsibility, to do the will of God. Jehovah's purpose in Israel's redemption was that they should serve Him. Thus we read, "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me in the wilderness" (Exod. 5. 1). With this compare the marginal reading of 1 Corinthians 5. 8—"keep festival." Our whole life a feast for Him: "The Lord's portion is His people" (Deut. 32. 9; 1 Cor. 7. 23). This can only be as all that which is contrary to His will and which cannot bear the light is put away; for this there must be a coming to the light (John 3. 19-21; 1 John 1. 7), so that we may invite His closest inspection of our every motive (Ps. 139. 23, 24). Then indeed shall we be walking as children of light, bringing forth the fruit of the light (Eph. 5. 8, 9, R.V.). "God is light." "I am the Almighty God; walk *before Me* and be perfect," (sincere, A.M.) (Gen. 17. 1). If we are walking thus *before Him*—"Not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. 2. 4)—it matters

little what man may say or think. Oh, for the ear closed to all but His voice, and the mouth which openeth not in the vindication of its own! (Ps. 38. 13, 14; 1 Peter 2. 23).

It is said of another, "He did that which was right *in the sight of the Lord*, and became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God" (2 Chron. 27. 2, 6).

And in connection with "sincerity" please read carefully Psalm 26. The "integrity" of verse 1 led to the holding of the truth in separation. The word "congregation" in this Psalm should read "assembly." The expression "reins" in verse 2 (the symbol of the motives and inward thoughts), taken in connection with Leviticus 3., where it speaks of the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon them, and the two kidneys (otherwise reins), and the fat that is on them (verses 3 and 4), speak to us of what God alone can see, He only accepting those motives which are actuated from sincerity of heart, which will eventually bear the test of the light of His presence (1 Cor. 3.).

Has loyalty to the Lord Christ brought me into the position which I now occupy? If so, one has the blessed consciousness of pleasing Him, in spite of what man may think or say (Ps. 35. 11). Oh, the happiness of the undefiled (sincere, A.M.) in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord! (Ps. 119. 1).

And *in that day*, from those lips once parched for us, may come, "Well done, good and *faithful* servant!"

"Oh, how will recompense, His smile,
The sufferings of this little while!"

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

EARLY ZEAL FOR GOD.

THERE are fruitful and instructive lessons to be learned from the early history of Jehoshaphat. At any rate, he began well. In the flush of early piety and first love his zeal for Jehovah was manifest in "strengthening himself" against apostate Israel, placing "forces in all the fenced cities of Judah," and setting "garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had taken away." Also removing "the high places and groves out of Judah," and sending "princes," "Levites," and "priests" into the different cities, who "taught the people" out of the "book of the law of the Lord" which they had with them.

When the heart is right there will be godly and holy jealousy for "God's glory," and "zeal" according to "knowledge" for the welfare of His people and His assembled saints. There will be the "pulling down" and the "building up." The removing of that which is manifestly contrary to His revealed mind and will and the establishing of that which is in accordance with the teaching and divine principles of the Word of God; faithfulness will not wink at anything which seeks to usurp the place of God any more than it will fail to strengthen and establish in the truth.

Paul not only censures the Corinthians for allowing the wicked one to be in their midst, but commands them to put him away. There is a solemn responsibility to act as well as rebuke in regard to known sin, and there should be the "putting away" of, and the "coming out from" all that which is inconsistent and derogatory to the Word of the Lord, whether it be ecclesiastical, doctrinal, or moral. The negatives are as commanding and absolute as the positives of Scripture. To begin right is as essential

for an assembly or Church of God as it is for the individual believer. Let there be laxity in discipline in the assembly or looseness of walk in the individual, we know what the inevitable consequences will be. Dishonour to the Lord and deserved reproach from the world.

There are two distinct qualifications needful to those who teach and guide—viz., doctrinal and moral. Both should be seen and manifestly linked together. Scripturally they are inseparable; let there be the lack of these divine and essentially combined qualifications, the saints must suffer. If such are doctrinally unsound and morally reprehensible, worldly, carnal, striving with the potsherds of the earth in politics, going in and out among the “sects,” and having fellowship with that which is ecclesiastically and doctrinally wrong, their teaching vague, shadowy and indefinite, those under their influence will instinctively drink in the same spirit, and their life and walk will be on a par with their “guides.” In short, be “Like priest like people.”

No one with an unbiassed, unprejudiced mind can read the New Testament and say it does not inculcate fellowship, not only with God and His Son, but with one another. Fellowship not only God-ward, but man-ward. Fellowship with “Church” and “Churches of God.” Fellowship with “overseeing” brethren or “guides.” Not only in a “local” assembly, but in a city, district, or province. Surely “Independency” of assemblies or individuals is not characteristic of the “Oneness” revealed or enforced in Ephesians 4. and John 17. It was in the days of the Judges, when there was no king in Israel, that every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Let the lordship of Christ be ignored and the divine authority of the Word of God be lightly esteemed—independency, and not fellowship, is the sad, baneful result. Have we not seen whole assemblies, as well as individuals, carried away by this lawless, self-sufficient spirit, acting indepen-

dently of each other; and so-called "teachers" and "guides" forming different schools of action, thought, and judgment, confusing, perplexing, and stumbling saints in their midst, instead of establishing and building them up on their most holy faith? One teaching and practising one thing; the other another. Each antagonistic and conflicting. One converting the professed assembly into a "mission," of which he becomes the sole "director," calling it "unsectarian," "undenominational," where women can have as free scope to teach and preach as the men. One withdraws from a "society" because he sees it to be unscriptural, while in the meeting where he may be they invite one of its "agents" to hold some special services. One condemns the use of instrumental music, another, in the same meeting, advocates and uses it.

How contrary all this is to the mind of the Lord, and what a "Babel" of tongues, and, also, what a corruption "from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ."¹

S. BLOW.

BY THE WAYSIDE.

TRAVELLING one day near London, a young man entered the carriage, whose dress indicated his connection with that which is now called "The Salvation Army."

He seated himself opposite the writer, and we entered into conversation. He informed me that he had been three years converted, and seemed to have been preaching for that length of time.

On being asked if he had been the means of the conversion of any, his reply was, "Yes."

¹ 2 Cor. 11. 3, R.V.

Being asked if he was able to teach such to observe all things, whatsoever the Lord has commanded us, he said he was.

I told him that when I was converted, the first thing that came before my mind was my duty to be baptized.

"Oh," he replied, "I do not believe in water baptism; the baptism of the Spirit is all that I believe in. Get a man saved, that is the thing."

"Yes," I answered, "but salvation is something more than being saved from the wrath to come. Take your Bible, and see what God says in 1 Timothy 4. 16."

He read it, and exclaimed, "Oh! Mr. Booth says, If you look for bones in the Bible, you will find them."

Again, turning him to Acts 10. 44, I pointed out that Gentile disciples received the Holy Spirit on believing, yet after this, in verse 47, Peter says, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"

Poor fellow, he looked at the verse and seemed sorely puzzled what to say, but at last exclaimed, "If I should live till I am grey-headed, I would never believe it!" He had passed his station, and hastily got out to retrace his steps.

How sad! his final appeal Mr. Booth, not the Word of God, which he refused to take in its simplicity—no, not even were he to live to grey hairs. The texts that do not suit the thoughts of some they call "dry bones," and thus the revealed will of our God is lightly esteemed.

J. A. B.

LOOKING OFF UNTO JESUS.

(Concluded from page 92.)

“BUT we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord ” (2 Cor. 3. 18).

Having stated before that the Christian not only begins by looking, but is intended to continue looking, and only as he does so grows and makes progress in the divine life, the above verse is one of many that proves such statement to be according to Scripture.

Before looking at the passage of which this verse forms a part, it may be well to call attention to the fact that “open ” means “unveiled,” thus keeping up the thought. Also that “hid ” (2 Cor. 4. 3) should be “veiled,” as still continuing the subject.

The vail over Moses’ face, type of the vail over heart of Israel; when Moses was read their minds were blinded. Christ should have been seen by them in all, but was not, while Christians with unveiled face behold. The Gospel, though in all its fulness of grace and glory proclaimed, is veiled to (or in) them that are lost; and, for the selfsame reason, they are blinded by the god of this world.

The vail on Moses’ face, to hide the glory reflected there, as the result of his intimate nearness to God on the Mount, was but typical of the distance at which Israel was. The vail was on his face, for in a day of ministration of condemnation they could not behold the glory; but now, writes Paul, the vail is done away in Christ, and with unveiled face, beholding as in a glass (mirror) the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image. Note the designed contrast brought out so clearly :—

Ver. 6.	Old Covenant.	New Covenant.
" "	Letter.	Spirit.
Vers. 3 and 7.	Stones.	Heart.
Vers. 6 and 7.	Death.	Life.
Ver. 9.	Condemnation.	Righteousness.

No nearness to God was secured then; there is now, for the vail of the Temple is rent. Christ in the flesh has died. Risen and ascended, He, as High Priest, is in the presence of God for us, having passed through the heavens, and by a new and living way given us access through Himself.

“Beholding, . . . are changed into the same image, from glory to glory” (ver. 18). What progress, what growth, is thus brought before us as the result of beholding! The glory is the standard for everything. As the glory becomes all to us, the thoughts, character, habit, and spirit of the glory become ours, and the glory becomes the standard by which we measure everything. A disappointed man, unsuccessful in what he has attempted in the world, or, though successful, finding no happiness in having attained to that which in his ambition he sought after, will professedly retire from the world and its vanities. Why? Not because he has reached the point Paul did—“I have learned in whatsoever state I am *therewith* to be content” (Phil. 4. 11); but for an entirely opposite reason—namely, that he is discontented with himself, and consequently with all around him. And shutting himself up will not help him. Thus neither monastery nor convent have ever helped the one who, satiated with the world and its pleasures, retired to the one or the other in the vain hope that change of place would accomplish a change of state, and bring to him a peace and quietness to which hitherto he had been a stranger. Impossible! Such men but carried the world with them, and also found it there, though manifesting itself in very different forms. Let one go to such, pointing out some very different pursuit in the world

never tried by them, and confidently assert that therein lies the goal that they seek, and they would be willing to come forth to pursue that object with unceasing and untiring avidity.

But a child of God does not give up the world as a disappointed person. Whether it be the world in its friendships, or in its pursuits of pleasure, or otherwise, he leaves it not with regret because it has not yielded him all he expected, but because a higher object is before him. He gives them up, not because he has to, not because he can no longer pursue them, not because age has come on and he has not naturally the power to enjoy them any longer, but simply because Christ has become precious to his heart, because he has seen and looked upon Him. "I have heard Him and observed Him" (Hos. 14. 8) is the language of his soul; and he can say, "What have I to do any more with idols?" (Hos. 14. 8). It is the glory that has changed him; he is a participant in the glory, he is going on to the One in the glory, he will soon be with Him and like Him for ever; and the glory already is fashioning and transforming him in his habits and ways, according to the glory in which he is, into which he has been brought, and from which he is passing, not back into a poor world, with its vanities, but into a higher glory still, as he goes on from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. To have the glory before us is our need. It is the sight of that glory, withering to the flesh in us, that helps in the divine life. The flesh can never stand in the presence of it. The flesh ever retires before it. Isaiah in presence of it, all his corruption present to him, cried out, "Woe is me!" (Isa. 6. 5). Yet remaining in presence of it and learning by it, as the live coal touched his lips he could say, "Here am I; send me" (ver. 8). Though it compels man to fall down in presence of it, as it did Daniel, and John also in his day of suffering in Patmos Isle, yet it never drives from the

Lord's presence, but, attracting the heart, draws forth praise. Peter, condemned by the manifestation of His glory and power displayed in the miraculous draught of fishes, may cry out, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Luke 5. 8), but, instead of getting farther away himself, he only approaches nearer as he falls on his knees in the presence of the Christ Who has thus displayed Himself. Stephen, with unvailed face, could behold with steadfast eye, as looking through the opened heavens, the glory of God, even Jesus standing at the right hand of God (Acts 7. 55), and was thus enabled to endure the most terrible death by stoning. And it was the same glory and the same power that carried Paul on through those months and years of trial and affliction, of difficulty and opposition, because the transforming power of the glory had taken hold of his heart.

He had been in the third heaven before God as well as in the basket before man, and his difficulty was not in entering into the glory, but in the telling it out to the saints at Corinth, their low condition being that which hindered. "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3. 13, 14).

The next chapter in this letter to Corinth furnishes us with the "look" from a different standpoint, and yet in as important a way as any of the others. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look, not at the things which are seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal" (2 Cor. 4. 17, 18). The apostle was not one who hid from himself the difficulties and trials of the path, or that resulted from faithfulness in carrying on to its completion the work given him to do. Yet he was not cast down

nor dismayed. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Cor. 4. 8, 9). How such verses bring before us the constant opposition against which he struggled; the way in which he carried his life in his hand as he went on his travels for the Lord Jesus. Yet he fainted not in the service, for the simple reason that he ever looked away from "things temporal" to "things unseen and eternal." "We also believe, and therefore speak; knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Cor. 4. 13, 14). Therein lay the secret of his power, and ours must spring from the same blessed source. With the eye of faith penetrating the unseen, with heart engrossed with the promises of the Eternal God, he could pursue his way undaunted. Not terrified by his adversaries, though he never overlooked them, any more than he made light of them; but he knew those promises were "in Him, YEA, in Him" (2 Cor. 1. 20), as he knew that resurrection was an assured fact by Christ Jesus, and that, even though persecution resulted at last in martyrdom, then man had done all he could, and the mighty power of God, beyond and above all "temporal" power, would, in resurrection, manifest itself.

Had Roman and Jewish power risen up in its might, and hurled itself upon Jesus Christ Himself? What then? Had not God, His purposes accomplished in that death, and His righteousness for ever satisfied by it, laughed them to scorn? And when Herod and Pontius Pilate—yea, all the world's power—had done its worst, He, by His own hand, had raised Him up, seating Him in eternal glory, there to wait the gathering of His own in grace, until the moment when the world's power should be cast down for ever; nay, more, when those who, under it, had been persecuted, hated, and put to death, many with tortures indescribable,

should be raised up also, and made to share in all that glory which belongs to Him as fruit of His toil and passion.

“Our light affliction worketh FOR us.” Precious thought to Paul, as it should be to us! Cheering words for all His under every trial! “FOR US!”

But, again, “TEMPORAL!” “ETERNAL!” These two he sets over against one another. Things seen—temporal. Things unseen—eternal. All that one can apply the thought of time to is seen, is the contrast to eternal. Such a passage, beyond all dispute, settles the meaning of the word. From it learn; and, having learned its deep, solemn meaning, never allow your mind or heart to be disturbed by the reasonings of men as to it.

Then, established in the meaning of the word *eternal* from Scripture itself and alone, as you read it in connection with *God*, or *life*, or *punishment*, you know what it is He would teach. The opposite of temporal. That to which time can be applied, even though the finite mind can scarce grasp the thought of it by reason of the immensity of duration expressed, is still only temporal, and not, therefore, eternal. We are not helping men to see their position under the wrath of God, or to see their danger in rejecting Christ's finished work, by making light of *eternal* punishment; but we are doing the very opposite, if we dare reduce it to that which is only *temporal*.

Unseen things, eternal, yet so real and so constantly present to the eye of faith that the child of God can endure and faint not! His eye filled with the glory, he can triumph over all the circumstances of life! Light afflictions, but for a moment—who can thus speak? Only the child of God! And when can he? Only when and as he looks upon unseen things, eternal. What importance, then, is this constant looking unto Jesus. The afflictions are counted light, for they are not looked at from earth's stand-

point. They are carefully weighed against the eternal glory, which is of exceeding weight. Then we see them light, as enduring but for a moment. As soon as you bring the trials and sufferings of this present scene and compare them thus, your heart is free. You can rejoice. The trial is not removed, but the burden of it is not felt in the presence of a joy filling your heart, and enabling you to praise Him. Why, some of the Psalms of David, filled with the brightest expressions of faith and rejoicing, were written at the darkest periods of his life! At the very time when he seemed hemmed in on all sides by the power of Saul, then he could, and did, rise superior to all. Thus have God's children in the past been enabled to triumph over all, and they have come out more than conquerors, proving His promises, and enabled to write "Tried and proved" over against them. No mere theory this. No! the eye of faith ever fastened on the glory with its exceeding weight, then affliction, heavy and insupportable otherwise, reckoned light, and borne in dependence upon Him to His praise.

The gold of the sanctuary is cast into the fire purposely; it will lose none of its value there. He who cast it there watches and gathers all up for himself!

In closing this paper, be it remembered that the apostle specially referred to affliction which befel him in his service for Christ. Let it be ours, therefore, to look more fully on things unseen and eternal, that with quickened purpose and increased love we may go forth to serve Him. Even though we know these things await us, Resurrection lies before. We know that nothing can prevent the believer being with Christ, a raised-up one at His coming. In our service let His coming be borne in mind. Soon He will come, then beyond the afflictions and trials we shall be with Him and like Him for ever, the eternal weight of glory ours. Look then, believer, look up! look on! and as you do so, having estimated the afflictions light, work on!

in the energy of an Indwelling Spirit, treading the path with firm foot of faith, singing as you go :—

“ I journey through a desert drear and wild ;
 Yet is my heart by such sweet thoughts beguiled
 Of Him on whom I lean, my strength, my stay,
 I can forget the sorrows of the way.”

R. T. HOPKINS.

Fragments.

Acts 2. 42 is not the beginning of the fellowship, “ Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations ” (Luke 22. 28). These were gathered around Him in allegiance to Him as Lord. The essence of the fellowship was that they listened to Him Whom the world rejected. So in Acts 2. they had something in common—namely, allegiance to the Lord and the certainty of receiving His promises in due season.

‡ “ Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.” When we hear anything which differs from what we have understood to be right, the proper thing to do is not to turn up the Scriptures merely to satisfy ourselves that we are right and the other is wrong, not to turn to the Word of God for arguments that will tend to make our own position good, but we ought to test that which we have heard, and seek to prove from the Word of God whether that is or is not right.

John 7. 17. If there be the honest desire to do the will of God, there shall be given to that one who has such a desire a knowledge of the will of God. If, on the contrary, there be no desire, if there be no exercise of heart about things that are asserted to be the will of God concerning His people, so long as I am in that condition I have no warrant for expecting that God will make His will known to me. So that there should first be a looking within to ask ourselves—If this be right, am I prepared to act according to it, and to abandon what will not bear the test ?

If you have found some fragments of the living bread, pass them on for others to partake of also. “ There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth ; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.”

SATAN'S CHARACTER.

(NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY J. A. BOSWELL.)

ONE of Satan's fixed purposes is to get people to look lightly on his power. There is a religious organization at the present day in which many of God's children are ensnared, which is systematically training the minds of those who come under its influence to think and talk lightly of the Devil. This is part of his plan for blinding the eyes of poor sinners, and of God's own people too, as to the increasing energy with which he is working in these last days. The only safe way to be guarded against error is to be built up in the truth. It is well for some of us never even to look into errors unless we cannot help it, or into false doctrines unless they are forced upon us; but rather let us try, as far as we are able, so to get the truth of God into our minds and hearts that when thrown into contact with these things they may come without any power to us. A safe principle, for young Christians especially, is not to dabble in error. God says, "Canst thou touch pitch and not be defiled?" There should not be an unholy looking into things for the sake of novelty; but there should be in us a knowledge of what God has revealed in His Word. There is no error that Scripture cannot be wrested to prove, and there is scarcely a scripture that may not be wrested from its divine meaning.

The character of the Devil may be ascertained in some measure by observing the characteristics of his children. And, again, his dealings with the Lord Jesus give us an insight into it; they enable us to comprehend somewhat of his audacity; they seem to convey the thought that Satan has never yet been convinced, and never perhaps will be convinced until his final doom is passed upon him, that he is unable to thwart the purposes of the living God. For

Satan has so succeeded in taking up and using tools that God has used that he would seem almost emboldened to think that he will carry his purposes against the will of God; so determined is he in his self-will and rebellion, so blinded by pride and hatred against God, that he would seem to imagine that he will carry his purposes. There was Satan in the wilderness yonder, watching that Blessed One who came for our redemption; he marked out the Lord Jesus Christ as the tool he wished to get into his own power. After that, there is nothing that we might not expect him to try and do. Just think of the purpose of Satan as he laid before the Lord Jesus that offer of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. He said, in effect: I know the purpose for which you have come into the world, and you know the price you have got to pay for it. Just break off your allegiance to God—in other words, become a rebel, as I am, own me as your lord, bow down and worship me, and I will give you that which you have come to purchase, at the price of your own life's blood; all these things are mine, and I give them to whomsoever I will. Thus he did not hesitate to seek, as his tool, the very Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Let us apply this. If God has led any one to the forefront in any measure among fellow-saints, that is the very one whom Satan will seek to get into his own power to use for his own purposes. Look at Aaron, the man who helped to lead Israel out of Egypt's idolatry,—he was the man who led them back again into demon-worship. These thoughts should make us tremble, lest that power which God has given to fit any for His work should be used against Him. For if Satan did not hesitate to claim the Lord Jesus, no wonder that he seeks to get every child of God into his power.

Satan is thus shown up in one part of his character as the most utter rebel against divine authority, blinded by pride. It was pride that cost him his place—a position of

high authority formerly ; and we see in Jude's Epistle, verse 9, Michael, the archangel, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, "The Lord rebuke thee." Yet Michael is the one who is appointed of God to finally turn Satan out of heaven.

We may gather something more of Satan's character by looking at his typical children. As a child of God who is living in fellowship with God (not the life of fits and starts, which, alas ! so many of us lead) always seeks to raise up to his own level those around him, bringing them into the presence of God, so, on the other hand, the Lawless One is at work by his spirit—"the spirit which now worketh in the children of disobedience"—through his children, seeking to drag down every child of Adam's race to his own ruin and final judgment, as shown in Revelation 20.

It is written of the Lord Jesus: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness" (in contrast to the Lawless One), "therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Heb. 1. 9). And "He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness" (Titus 2. 14).

So then, there are these two powers at work: on the one hand, the Lord Jesus Christ as the One in whom the will of God was done, raising men up to be with Himself, to be children of the light and children of the day; and, on the other hand, Satan is using every power he possesses to accomplish man's ruin, and will yet find a man on earth who will do what the Lord Jesus refused to do. This is most important to be clear about, because if we look for Satan as an ugly Devil, we shall not see him. He is a being who was created full of wisdom and perfect in beauty (Ezek. 28. 11-19), and by these means he is seducing men on every side to their ruin. And the Anti-Christ who is coming will, no doubt, like Saul, be a man of good personal appearance, an attractive man, a man with power of mind

beyond his fellows; indeed, the nearest approach to perfection apart from godliness that has been seen upon earth. As the Lord Jesus walked this earth the image of the Father, so the Anti-Christ will walk this earth in all the beauty and power and wisdom of the one who will choose him to represent himself.

THE PATH OF USEFULNESS.

THE divine path of usefulness in the service of the Lord lies straight through the valley of humiliation. Those who tread it find that it takes much more grace and holy boldness to bow to the will of God, and say, in the simplicity of faith, "Not my will, but Thine be done," than to act as a zealous Peter, who in haste drew the sword and cut off the high-priest's servant's ear. "He giveth more grace" (Jas. 4. 6). Therefore, although the path is a path of need, we are encouraged to tread it, remembering that He has promised to "supply all our need according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4. 19). And as we tread it, fully realizing the depth of our need and the abundance of His supplies, we are constrained to cry, as did the sweet psalmist of Israel, "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness: and the little hills rejoice on every side" (Ps. 65. 11, 12); and every step makes us sing, "'Tis better on before." For this is indeed "the path of the just, which is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. 4. 18).

Many of the by-paths into which God's children are beguiled are bright and attractive-looking at the entrance, but they lead to disappointment, darkness and sorrow. When Jonah fled from the presence of the Lord and found

a boat going to Tarshish, he doubtless thought she was a gallant ship, and quite like a vessel that would land him in safety. The crew also seemed to be all that could be desired and Jonah evidently felt so much at home that he went down into the sides of the ship, and he lay and was fast asleep (Jonah 1. 5).

How long he slept we are not told, but he was awakened up by the master shouting, "What meanest thou, O sleeper?" Jonah woke up to find what Abraham had found—that it was much easier to leave the path of faith than to retrace the steps he had taken in departure from his God. And who can tell the sorrow of heart through which he learned that "they that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy"? (Jonah 2. 8).

In the mercy and grace of God Jonah is again restored, and has the unspeakable joy of hearing the voice of Jehovah a second time, saying, "Arise, go unto Nineveh" (chap. 3. 2); and we read, "So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord" (ver. 3). "So the people of Nineveh believed God" (ver. 5). Thus the simple testimony of God's restored servant was owned and blessed by Him in the repentance of one hundred and twenty thousand persons that could not discern between their right hand and their left (chap. 4. 11).

We have no conception of how great things God would do for us and by us if there was that condition of heart and spirit found in us to make us indeed vessels "unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2. 21). "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6. 8).

Remember, brethren, that the one who slew the Goliath of Gath without spear or sword was none other than the youth who could stoop in the bed of the brook to lift the five

smooth stones. The steward who was entrusted with God's abundance for Egypt's deep need during the seven years of sore famine was Joseph, who had been stripped and put in the pit, and knew the depth of Egypt's dungeon.

Again, let it be remembered for our encouragement that the apostle who, through grace, could say at the end of the path, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4. 7), began the race humbled and led blind to Damascus, to be let down from her wall like a child in a basket (Acts 9., 2 Cor. 11).

Oh, beloved, the faithful Witness (Rev. 1. 5), the Greater than Jonah, He who rendered powerless him who had the power of death (Heb. 2. 14), the Greater than David, the One in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (Col. 2. 9), the Greater than Joseph, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession—Jesus (Heb. 3. 1), the Greater than Paul, was the One who, "being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross" (Phil. 2. 8).

We are called upon to follow His steps (1 Peter 2. 21). Let us seek grace in humility to do so. The path of love and self-sacrifice which He trod is the only path that leads to usefulness and honour, as God accounts; and the one who can stoop to do the most humble service is the one God takes up to do the boldest and greatest work. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14. 11).

The lad who was faithful in keeping his father's sheep was the one who slew the lion (1 Sam. 17. 35). The boy who was ready when God called upon him, and answered promptly, saying, "Here am I" (1. Sam. 3. 4), became the prophet who afterwards judged Israel all the days of his life (1. Sam. 7. 15).

The Boy Jesus (Luke 2. 43), who was subject to His parents (ver. 51), is He "in whose name every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, of things on earth, and things under the

earth ; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father ” (Phil. 2. 10, 11).

Again, it is written, “ For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled ” (Luke 18. 14, R.V.) The two hundred and fifty princes who with Korah exalted themselves against the servants of the Lord perished as in a moment, and of their censers the Lord caused to be made brazen plates to cover the altar, as a sign or witness to the Children of Israel. These censers were taken out of the fire as a memorial of the Lord’s righteous judgment against the pride, the contention, the evil-speaking of those who were indeed men of renown (Num. 16.).

One of the greatest Gentile monarchs that ever reigned, or ever shall reign, was, because of his pride, sent to the fields to eat grass like an ox, until his hair had grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws, until he learned that “ the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it unto whomsoever He will ” (Dan. 4.).

Lucifer, Son of the Morning, who said in his heart, “ I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north : I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the Most High,” Hell from beneath has been moved to meet him at his coming, and presently he shall be brought down to the sides of the pit (Isa. 14.).

These are most solemn and instructive lessons for us who have been saved by grace, and serve indeed as plates to cover the altar of Romans 12., as we seek daily to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, our reasonable service, and serve as witnesses to us, lest we should think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think. Paul thought much of His Lord and Master. He said of Him, “ He loved me, and gave Himself for me ” (Gal. 2. 20). He thought much of the saints. He said of

them, "Ye are in our hearts to die and live with you" (2. Cor. 7. 3). He thought much of the Scriptures. He charged Timothy before the Lord to preach the Word (2. Tim. 4.).

But he thought very little of himself. He said, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves"; and again, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given" (Eph. 3.).

His self-sacrificing spirit evidently endeared him to all who knew him. What a sight it must have been for angels to behold when he was about to part with the elders of Ephesus, as they fell on his neck, while they wept to think they had heard his voice for the last time on earth. What memories of the past awoke in the heart of these elders as they thought of the apostle's untiring love and faithfulness, and that caused their eyes to be as a fountain of tears, none can tell. They will not leave him until they must, so they accompany him unto the ship (Acts 20.).

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2. 5).

JAS. McLACHLAN.

REDEMPTION.

METHINKS there is no truth in the Word of God more precious to the heart of the believer than that of Redemption.

The word itself may mean two things—purchase, in the sense of buying for oneself, or setting free. The context determines in which sense it is used. For instance, Moses was commanded to say unto Israel, “I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will REDEEM you.”¹ There it is used in the sense of setting free.

In the Book of Leviticus we read, “If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to REDEEM it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.”² (Even in the things pertaining to this life Jehovah graciously condescends to act as Legislator for His people. As in the past so in the present.)

It was a kinsman only who had any right to REDEEM, purchase, or buy back that which had been sold. This is beautifully seen in the Book of Ruth. Here we see a family—Elimelech, his wife Naomi, with their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion—leaving Judah, the place where Jehovah was wont to bless and supply the need of His people, and going to the country of Moab, because of famine being then in the land. Is not this one of the many ways in which God tests the condition of His saints? It was by famine that He tested the spirit of an Abram, and he was soon found spirit, soul, and body down in Egypt, away from altar and tent.³ In a short time Naomi is bereft of her husband; her two sons take them wives of the women of Moab. This they did contrary to the command of God.⁴

¹ Exod. 6. 6, and 3. 7.

² Lev. 25. 25.

³ Gen. 12. 10-20.

⁴ Deut. 23. 3.

They also died. Thus the backslidings of this family were general, the parents having helped their children to the path of evil. Naomi hears in Moab that the Lord had visited His people in Judah, in giving them bread; and she returns with her daughter-in-law, Ruth, to Bethlehem. "The people of the city were moved about them, saying, Is this Naomi? And she said, Call me not Naomi, but Mara: for the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me. I went out full, and He hath brought me home empty."

She received all her fulness when in Judah with her God; she lost it all when away from God in Moab. So with the young man of Luke 15. He got all that he possessed when at home with his father, and lost it all when away in the far country. Beloved of God, how solemn these things are for us, for whom they were written as warnings or examples.

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, whose name was Boaz, one who had right to redeem. But there was a nearer kinsman than he (who is not named), who, because of the conditions, and lest he might mar his own inheritance, could not redeem the field of Naomi, or purchase Ruth, the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon. So Boaz did it in his stead; and out of him came David, the king, the man after God's own heart, as recorded in the end of the chapter. So this book of four chapters (which all should read), with its sad beginning, ends well.

But it is in the redemption of persons that God's wisdom and matchless grace is seen. No earthly kinship nor all the wealth of this world can suffice in this, as it could in the redemption of inheritance. "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a RANSOM for him. For the redemption of their soul is precious."¹ May God help us to learn from this our

¹ Ps. 49. 6-8.

deep, dire need and absolute dependence upon Him to make provision for the redemption of lost man, sold under sin. God required a greater ransom than man could give. Is it not with joy we hear Him say, "Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found the ransom"; even His own blessed Son, the delight of His heart, who gave Himself a ransom for all?¹

In order to accomplish this, the Lord Jesus Christ had first to become kinsman to those whom He redeemed. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of blood and flesh, He also took part of the same (as Kinsman Redeemer), that through death He might destroy him having the power of death, that is, the Devil: and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."² "When the fulness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."³

To Mary the angel of the Lord said, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God."⁴ This was the manner after which God prepared Him a body.⁵

In due time Christ died on the cross.⁶ Thus He bruised the head of the serpent⁷ through His death and resurrection, and He is now entered into heaven, having obtained

ETERNAL REDEMPTION.

R. WATSON.

¹ 1 Tim. 2. 6. ² Heb. 2. 14, 15. ³ Gal. 4. 4, 5. ⁴ Luke 1. 35, R. V.

⁵ Heb. 10. 5. ⁶ Rom. 5. 6. ⁷ Gen. 3. 15.

UNTIL THE LORD COME.

UNTIL Thou come, Lord Jesus,
 Until Thy face we see,
 And all Thine own Thou'st gathered
 In one bright band round Thee ;
 Here wait we, here would serve Thee,
 Would own Thy glorious name,
 Where Thou hast been rejected,
 Where Thou wast put to shame.

Thee God's right hand exalted ;
 Thou'rt glorified, Thou'rt crowned :
 With robe and reed men mocked Thee,
 With thorns Thy brow they bound.
 Heaven's highest ones and strongest
 Thy blest commands fulfil ;
 Earth's feeblest, Lord, earth's meanest,
 Dare disregard Thy will !

The firm, sure word is spoken :
 Soon every knee shall bow,
 Each tongue shall own Thy Lordship,
 Though proud, though silent now.
 Until we see Thy glory,
 Until we see Thy face,
 We would not, Lord, be silent,
 Who know Thy name, Thy grace.

Unto the cross obedient,
 Thy service brought Thee low !
 Exalted Lord, what service
 Do Thy redeemed ones owe !
 Worthy art Thou, oh, worthy
 To be obeyed, adored !
 'Tis Thou alone, our Saviour,
 'Tis Thou alone art Lord !

ON MIRACLES.

I.

A MIRACLE is an act of the omnipotent God which deviates from or suspends what men call the ordinary course of nature. Therefore it is an extraordinary event, producing an impression by the very circumstance of its singularity, and by its being unaccountable so far as ordinary causes are concerned. A miracle must be therefore the act of One superior to man. What is generally spoken of as "the course of nature" cannot be such strictly speaking, as lifeless matter can control nothing, having no power and being entirely unable to obey any laws as of itself. Therefore it can only be the will and pleasure of God acting so constantly and almost invariably in one way that leads men to talk as if that action must continue unbroken and that way never be interrupted. By using the expression "course of nature" they practically hide from many what such an expression implies and of necessity carries with it. Leave out nature and think of the will and guiding Hand of the omnipotent God, and then when one says, "The course of nature must continue; it cannot be interrupted," we see that, whether wittingly or unwittingly, he is limiting the Power of God to act upon His own will. He says, in short, "God must continue through all time to act in one uniform way, and He cannot, though He wills to, alter His actions or vary them in any way."

When thus stated surely Christians should be able to see the issue involved, and should turn at once with disgust from such teaching. It may be well to point out here that a sudden variation of His ways of action can never be spoken of as a violation of His laws. He has never given us such a statement of His laws as would enable us to make what in reality is so absurd a statement.

Yet this was at the foundation of Mr. Hume's arguments

against miracles. He contended that "a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as complete as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined." But the uniformity of experience in favour of any fact is not a proof against its being reversed or altered in any particular instance.

Testimony is necessary for any one to know what has been "the course of nature," as he calls it, before his own time. For surely no one would take on himself to say that the few years in which he may have carefully observed these matters is sufficient to enable him to speak with confidence. Let this be considered, and then testimony is a necessity.

But if testimony of others, supposed credible witnesses, is an actual necessity to be able to affirm what the general course has been in years past, and if one is right in receiving that testimony, then, if there be testimony forthcoming on the part of many credible witnesses, whose integrity is undoubted, that such general course has been interrupted by a startling display of power, who shall say that such testimony cannot be equally well received?

One long since laid down in connection with this four tests as to the miracle being an actual genuine fact, and not a pretended one.

First, that the fact be a *sensible* fact, such as men's outward senses can judge of. Secondly, that it be *notorious*, performed publicly in the presence of witnesses. Thirdly, that there be *memorials* of it, or monuments, actions and customs kept up in commemoration of it. Fourthly, that such monuments and actions commence with the fact.

Apply these to the miracles performed by Moses at the exodus of Israel, and see how they can be found. How could Moses have persuaded Israel he had led them out, etc., if he had not done so, and how could he have written it without

being at once detected as a forger? The books in which the records are have been carefully handed down and preserved from that very time.

Supposing twenty persons of sound judgment, in a calm and dispassionate manner, came one by one, and each told the same thing as having happened, giving details and circumstances alike, would we not be prepared to believe what they said? But to drop such an illustration, what shall we say when Paul, within twenty-five years of the death of Christ, states that He was seen by Cephas, by the Twelve, and by 500 brethren at once, and then adds "of whom the greater part remain" (1 Cor. 15. 6)? Thus his statement went broadcast at the very time when there were more than 250 witnesses left of the Resurrection, men who said, "We have seen the Lord."

We receive such evidence now as being of the same value as it was then, for distance of time cannot lessen its value, nor weaken it in any way whatever.

To one who believes in the Living God there can be no difficulty. He plainly sees and rejoices in the fact that God can reveal Himself as and when He pleases, and can act at any moment in the world and in regard to persons and things in it quite differently to the way in which He usually does, and thus, by what we call a miracle, accredit one sent by Him as His messenger, or His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

And thus, in fact, the mission of Moses was specially accompanied by miraculous power in Egypt and in the wilderness.

So also the mission of Joshua, Elijah, and Elisha, in their days, when sent to the House of Israel, which had departed in their ways, and taken up with false gods and an idolatrous worship, they performed miracles.

And when the Lord Himself came and wrought miracles among men, "they believed when they *saw* the miracles

which He did" (John 2. 23). And one of the number came to Him, saying, "We know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest except God be with him" (John 3. 2). Nicodemus admitted with others that the One who did such things had come from God.

And the Lord Himself appealed to them to believe on Him because of these works.

"The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (John 5. 36). "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake" (John 14. 11).

And when John's disciples came from the prison to Christ with the inquiry whether He was indeed the Christ, His reply was, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up," etc. (Matt. 11. 4, 5).

The coming of the Son of God into the world had to be, if accomplished, a miracle in itself. And when He thus came He accompanied His presence by the working of miracles to prove beyond dispute His mission. Not the useless miracles that legendary and false gospels narrate, but miracles fraught with blessing to man as they were performed, until all Galilee and Judæa rang with His praises. "He could not be hid" (Mark 7. 24). "He hath done all things well" (Mark 7. 37).

The absurdities and superstitions connected with the marvellous doings of saints, as given by a corrupt system, are separated by a very broad line from the blessed workings of the One who, when here, went about doing good. I repeat, the very coming of Christ into the world (I do not refer to the manner of it, miraculous as that was) was a miracle in itself, and therefore it would be incredible that

He should be here and no manifestation of His power accompany His presence.

All is miracle as the child of God sees it. Christ's Coming, His Work, His Death, His Resurrection, His Teaching. And especially does he see it in the beauty of all He taught symbolically, in the cures that He wrought, how by the Spirit such are brought together in certain parts of the Gospels for the very purpose of arresting our attention and bringing this home to our hearts.

Take one chapter ere we pass on (Matt. 9.), where we get classed together manifestations of His power so as to bring before us Pardon, verse 2; Healing, verse 22; Life, verse 25; Light, verse 29; and Confession, verse 33. Sufficient to point out how these are thus made to succeed one another for the youngest Christian to see how Pardon, Healing, and Life bestowed, Light is given, and surely then Confession will follow.

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be continued.)

AN EXHORTATION TO ENDURANCE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

“WHEREFORE, seeing that we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience (endurance) the race that is set before us, looking off unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Heb. 12. 1-3).

The Epistle to Hebrews might rightly be called a "word of exhortation" (see chapter 13. 22); and, in keeping with this, we notice throughout the constantly recurring expression "Let us." Chapter 4. 1: "*Let us* therefore fear, lest a promise being left us, of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Verse 11: "*Let us* labour (or give diligence) therefore to enter into that rest." Verse 14: "Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, *let us* hold fast our confession." Verse 16: "*Let us* therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." So again in chapter 6. 1: "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, *let us* go on unto perfection." And happy are we if we can say in the language of verse 3: "This will we do" (*i.e.*, we will go on unto perfection), "if God permit." Then again in chapter 10. 22-24: "*Let us* draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. *Let us* hold fast the confession of the hope without wavering (for He is faithful that promised): and let us consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works."

Then there are also the words in chapter 12. 1-3 given at the head of this paper. And in the same chapter, verse 28: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, *let us* have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

Chapter 13. 1: "Let brotherly love continue." Verse 5: "Let your conversation (manner of life) be without covetousness." Verse 13: "*Let us* go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." Verse 15: "By Him therefore *let us* offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually."

How characteristic of the Epistle to Hebrews is this expression "Let us"; and it would be profitable to look into

the various ways in which it is used, and to follow out the lines of teaching connected therewith.

Whilst the epistle opens the heavens and gives us a view of Jesus, the enthroned One, enthroned as the Sin-purger, and as the great High Priest, and as the expectant One, looking on to the time when His enemies shall be made His footstool, and enthroned, too, as having reached the end of His faithful service for God upon the earth, yet our minds are brought down to responsibilities that we have upon earth to the living God, and we are exhorted to mindfulness of those responsibilities, and to faithful conduct in the light of them. It is blessed to look up and see Jesus there; but it is important also to be mindful of responsibilities that we have here upon earth.

We are exhorted to lay aside, first, in order that we may run, continue running, keep on running with endurance, keeping at it until we have reached the end of the course; not stopping half-way, not breaking down, as did the Galatians, of whom the Apostle says: "Ye did run well; who did hinder you?" And in order to run well the exhortation is: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us."

RESPONSIBILITY is suggested in those words, "Let us lay aside." We are ourselves to lay aside that which impedes.

We rejoice in the knowledge that God, through the Cross of Christ, has put away our sins; we know that the sin question is settled. Now comes our responsibility, as in 2 Corinthians 7.: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of (the) flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." We need to look at that side of the question as well as the other. While we rejoice in the cleansing which the precious blood of Jesus has brought about, yet God tells us to cleanse ourselves.

As regards deliverance from the wrath to come, we know

that to be a blessed reality, true of us from the moment we trusted Christ, as we have it in 2 Timothy 1. 9: "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." We know that we shall not come into condemnation. In that sense we know a present salvation, and we know that it is a complete salvation, and, therefore, we shall come into the fullest enjoyment of all that we are saved to through the finished work of Christ. But then in Philip-
pians 2. comes in our responsibility in regard to salvation. Verse 12: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." It is a salvation that we are to work out, a salvation that God speaks of as "your own salvation." That is the daily, the continual deliverance from the sin that doth so easily beset. "Work out your own salvation." How? By hearkening to the Word of God, and submitting to it. It is God operating in the believer, stirring up desire,—that is the will,—and then enabling the believer thus desiring His will to fully conform to it; and so the believer works out his own salvation.

"Let us lay aside every weight" ("every weight;" not some of them), "and the sin which doth so easily beset." There are things that hinder our walk with God and our work for God that perhaps could not strictly be characterized as sinful, and yet we know them to be hindrances. It will be our happiness, to say nothing of our duty, to lay everything aside that hinders us in going on with and for God. Anything that deprives us of fellowship with Him will take away our strength, and is a weight, and we do well to lay it aside. It has been suggested that the sin which doth so easily beset is unbelief. If it is, put that aside. But, in addition to that, it points to some particular besetment that each one of us knows in his or her

own personal experience to be a hindrance to our continuing with vigour the race that is set before us. Let us lay it aside.

“Let us run.” It is not merely a question of moving, but moving with smartness. Some Christians make very slow progress, and even in the best there is great room for improvement. But there are some who make so little progress that it is very difficult to discern life in them at all. That is not to the honour and glory of God.

Now, in order to help us to this endurance the Holy Spirit brings before us the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who endured. Verse 2: “Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross.” And again in verse 3: “Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.” Thus God sets before us the perfect example of endurance. The sojourn of the Lord Jesus Christ upon earth was one of endurance. How much He went through who can tell? How much at the hands of God? How much at the hands of men? How much at the hands of Satan? And yet, having entered upon His course, He went on until He finished it. “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work.” “Thy will be done.” Such expressions as these show how He recognised fully the responsibility that rested upon Him in the work that God had put into His hands to accomplish. Nothing turned Him aside from His course. He went on and on until He bowed His head on the cross. We think of the cross as expressing the love of Christ; so it does: His devotedness to the Father; so it does. We think of the death that He died as expressing the wondrous wisdom of God, and the righteousness of God; so it does. But that scene on Golgotha is also the culminating point of the endurance of the One who endured such contradiction of

sinner against Himself. And the Holy Spirit here holds Him up to us as the example to follow, as the One to keep before our minds, in order to help us to run, and to run with endurance, the race that is set before us.

In verse 2 FAITH stands out conspicuously in Him as going along with endurance. He endured as the One who had faith in the living God. In chapter 11. we have a cloud of witnesses as to the power of faith. Abel, by faith, offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; Enoch, by faith, walked with God; Noah, by faith, builded an ark; and so on. Faith shone out in the lives of these men in all the particular things mentioned; but it was not a faith that characterized them through their whole course. In the 12th chapter, however, the Holy Spirit speaks of the Lord Jesus as the "princely Leader of faith." His faith was in the living God throughout the whole of His course. In this connection Psalm 16. comes in: "Preserve me, O God; for in Thee do I put my trust." This psalm tells us of the inward exercise of heart of Christ, His prayer to the living God as He went on through the contradiction of sinners, which He endured to the very last. He had taken the servant's place, and as a servant He exercised a servant's trust in the One whom He served. In Isaiah 42. we have God's answer to that prayer: "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth." How wonderful a thing it is that though He was very God He stooped to the dependent place, He came down into the circumstances of a serving man down here. His confidence was in the living God, He trusted God step by step, at every turn, from moment to moment, and He was then upheld by God.

And so the Spirit of God, while holding Him up to us as the One who endured, holds Him up side by side with that, as the Author and Finisher of faith. Does it not point out to us the secret of endurance on our part, that which

shall enable us to continue running—viz., faith in the living God? We cannot do it in our own strength; we have proved that over and over again. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." If our prayer from the heart is: "Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust," we shall experience in our measure the answer of God, "Behold My servant, whom I uphold."

In connection with this subject of endurance and the secret of it, it is helpful to look at the lampstand in the tabernacle. It was in the sanctuary; it was made according to the pattern shown to Moses in the mount; it was beaten out of a talent of pure gold, which was worth more than £5,000, and weighed one cwt. We may view the lampstand as teaching the subject of ministry. What a valuable ministry! and what a weighty ministry! Underneath each pair of branches of the lampstand was a knop, suggestive of support to those branches under which it came. In 2 Corinthians 3. 5, 6, the Apostle Paul could speak of ability as he grasped the sufficiency there was in the living God. So may we in ministry count upon the support of the living God. If any service is given to any by God, we may count upon God in the doing of it. Paul had grasped the mighty power of God; he knew the strength of the hand that holds the stars (Rev. 2. 1), as well as the sheep (John 10. 28). It is well to remember that He holds both. The same hand that holds us for our eternal safety holds us in our service. But there was not only a knop under the branches, there was the oil for the light. Every morning and every evening the high priest entered the holy place and trimmed each lamp, and poured in the oil, so that the light might shine continually. "Continually" is the word that God uses in connection with the light of the sanctuary. It was to be a constant light, as well as an undimmed light. God would have us see that He has made the fullest provision for us to enable us to go on with Him and for Him to the very close, endur-

ing in the race, going on until the journey is ended and our work accomplished.

So that we have an exhortation to run with endurance the race that is set before us; and God shows us in the person of His Son an example to encourage us by fixing our eye and our heart upon Christ, thus helping us to the fulfilment of that which He bids us do. And He also points out to us all that is available for us to meet our need, and bids us put our faith in Himself, the living God, counting upon His strength, realizing the help of the Holy Spirit, who, like the oil in the lampstand, will enable us to fulfil the responsibilities resting upon us to His praise and to His glory.

CHARLES MORTON.

GOOD THINGS FROM HARD NAMES.

NUMBERS 3. 17-20.

IN these verses we have the names of Levi, his sons, and their families. Our object is to look at the names and their meanings. We have here twelve names, first Levi, next Gershon, Libni, Shimei, then Kohath, Amram, Izhar, Hebron, Uzziel, lastly Merari, Mahli, Mushi. Now putting the meaning of these names in this order suggests some very precious thoughts to us; and we hope that looking at them may stimulate some readers to familiarise themselves with every part of the Scriptures, knowing that all Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Tim. 3. 16).

The meaning of LEVI is "joined"; but before considering the meaning let us first look at the condition of Levi. As

we look back at Exodus 32. we find that Levi was part of that company who sinned against God and consequently forfeited all right to God's favour along with the rest of that people. This suggests to us our condition as sinners before God, for we were by nature the children of wrath even as others, being connected with the first Adam, for we read that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed unto all men, for all had sinned (Rom. 5. 12); so, like Levi, we had forfeited all claim to the favour of God. Then we ask the question, What was it that gave Levi such as he had? Was it his character? Ah! no; for we remember when his father Jacob was blessing his sons, he says concerning Levi, who was united with Simeon, "Instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come thou not into their secret conference (*Newberry*); unto their assembly, mine honour be not thou united, for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel." Here we learn their father's thought concerning their personal character, fierce anger, cruel wrath, self-will, so that he said, "I will divide, I will scatter." So it was nothing in them. Then what was it? Exodus 32. supplies the answer; there the sin of Israel is brought home to them, and Moses, taking his place outside of them, said, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me"; so the tribe of Levi went over (verse 26), accepted of God by hearing and believing. Surely the personal character of Levi magnifies the grace of our God. Like Levi, we had no good personal character to look at. We find that Titus 3. 3 describes our own personal character, for we were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another; but, like Levi, we are the monuments of God's grace, for we

have been joined to another, even Christ, who died for us. But how? Just like Levi: even by listening to God's description of what we were, and what sin had done with and for us. And oh! in that condition what a joy it was to us when we heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto Me"; and we gladly accepted the invitation, and so got rest! Jacob said because of Levi's character, "I will divide, I will scatter"; but by Levi believing God He took them out from among those that had sinned and gave them to Aaron. We too remember, when some of our friends had given us up and had stopped praying for us, that God saved us through believing His word, and joined us to His Son.

"On such love, my soul, still ponder,
Love so great, so rich, so free;
Say while lost in holy wonder,
'Why, O Lord, such love to me?'"

Levi was not given to Moses, which suggests "doing," but to Aaron, which speaks of a position in grace; and what a mercy that we are joined to Him who lives for ever, one with Himself! "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. 6. 17).

Now the next name is GERSHON, which means "a stranger here." Once we were strangers to God, alienated from God through the ignorance that was in us; but, by God's grace being joined to Christ, we are now strangers in this world—in the world, but not of it. May we keep ourselves unspotted from the world, that we may maintain our stranger character, and, Abraham-like, confess that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth; and, like him, may we not only be persuaded concerning the promises, but may we embrace them, seeing that, with all that God promised Abraham, He has provided something better for us. May the better things promised us stimulate us to live for Him down here.

The next name is LIBNI, which means purity; and this suggests what should be our character now. Oh, what a

contrast to what we once were! "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Before we were joined to Christ we heard God tell us our condition and our judgment, but now we listen to our God telling us our position in Christ. It was His grace that joined us, it was His grace that made us strangers, and it is His grace that has made us pure or holy, and so we say,—

"Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding,
Ransomed souls, its tidings swell;
'Tis a deep that knows no sounding,
Who its breadth or length can tell?
On its glories
Let my soul for ever dwell."

But while we see ourselves pure or holy in Christ, it is also the will of our God that we should be holy in our walk and manner of life, for it is written, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1. 16).

This is brought about by what the next name, SHIMEI, suggests, the meaning being hearing and obeying, which we would here remark is our business in this world. Hearing what God says and doing the same brings about a manner of life that is pleasing to Him. "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4) is, we believe, the expression of the heart of God concerning His children. What a thought that it is possible to bring joy to the heart of God by our behaviour in this world! How we have the heart of our God told out concerning the life of His Son our Lord when in the flesh. "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold, Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth" (Isa. 42. 1). God would have us behold His Son, who brought Him pleasure, and who could say, "I

delight to do Thy will, O my God"; and again, "I do always the things that please Him." We think of the joy of God as expressed in these oft-repeated words: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God had indeed One on the earth, and only One, whom He could behold with the utmost complacency; and in like manner we also may in our measure bring pleasure to our God. We hear His enemies say, "Never man spake like this Man." But in Isaiah 50. we see the secret, for in verse 4 we read, "The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." "He wakeneth morning by morning; He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as they that are taught" (R.V.). Ah! as we behold Him, we say, "What a Servant!" As we watch Him leaving the busy crowd and being all night in prayer to God, leaving the praise and flattery of the people, ay, and the frowns, to be alone with God, may we indeed behold Him and do likewise. May we often look at our example, so gaze at Him that from the very innermost part of our being we shall say,—

"Saviour, Thou art enough the mind and heart to fill,
 Thy life to calm the anxious soul, Thy love its fear dispel;
 Oh, fix our earnest gaze so wholly, Lord, on Thee
 That, with Thy beauty occupied, we elsewhere none may see."

Oh, the healthy, helpful, subduing times of gazing on Him whom we love! But not only does hearing and obeying bring pleasure to our God: it also purifies us, for we read: "Seeing ye have purified your souls (or selves) in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1. 22); and we also remember the words of Moses to Israel (Deut. 4. 6): "Keep therefore and do them (that is, the words of God); for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the

nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people"; and again in Proverbs 6. 20-24: "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: to keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman." Hearing and obeying enables us to be a sweet savour of Christ unto God, and also to be living witnesses before our fellow-men for God. May we hear and obey. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" is a question put, and the answer is given: "By taking heed thereto according to Thy word." And in that never-to-be-forgotten prayer of our blessed Lord in that night in which He was betrayed He expresses the wish: "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth." Thus we see that, while our God, in filling up His purpose in Christ, has made us holy and without blame before Him in love, it is also His will that we should be holy and pure in our practical life, and this is brought about by hearing and obeying.

(To be continued.)

CHASTENING.

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of His correction¹: for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."² But "he that spareth his rod hateth his son."³

¹ Prov. 3. 11.

² Prov. 3. 12.

³ Prov. 13. 24.

Beloved saints, you who may be for a little while suffering under the chastening hand of our good and merciful God, be comforted and cheered therein by the knowledge that God is confirming His love in and for you in thus dealing with you.

The purpose of Jehovah in thus dealing with His own is that they may become partakers of His holiness.¹

And, oh! how lovingly and condescendingly He admits that "no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness, unto them which are exercised thereby."²

It is through being chastened that these hearts of ours, so prone to hardness, become softened and filled with gratitude, as we, being exercised therein, are caused to remember how absolutely dependent we are upon God for everything that pertains to life here; yea, in Him we live, and move, and are.³ We know of no scripture which shows us our deep poverty more than this. And oh! how thankful we who are saints should be for what we are and for what we have, no matter what our circumstances may be, seeing that we merit nothing good at the hand of God, against whom we oftentimes rebel.

If we were not chastened, we would readily forget that we are under authority, and ultimately be found running in the path of lawlessness, to the dishonouring of the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself that He might redeem us from such.⁴ God forbid that we should get so far away from Him that He should have to say of us what He said of Ephraim—"He is joined to idols; let him alone."⁵

How much better for us to be subject to the divine rod of correction, for it is in such times as these that we are humbled before our God, and enjoy closer communion with

¹ Heb. 12. 10.

² Heb. 12. 11.

³ Acts 17. 28.

⁴ Titus 2. 14.

⁵ Hosea 4. 17.

Him, and learn much that we could not otherwise have learned.

Truly, we are thankful to God for what we have, and may yet learn, through the evangelist, pastor, and teacher. Still methinks the gentle and loving voice of the God of all comfort,¹ heard by us in such seasons of realized need, refreshes our spirits, strengthens and cheers our hearts, and enables us, like the Apostle, to say, "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."² Thus when we, through chastening, have been brought near to our Heavenly Father, we learn more of His love for us, our affliction becomes lighter, and our hearts are filled to overflowing with joy; for, after all, He only woundeth that He may heal again.³ And one has well said, in referring to John 15., that the Husbandman is never nearer the branch than when the pruning-knife is in His hand. Fellow-believer, you who may be undergoing a process of divine pruning, know this, rejoicingly, that God is at your very side, and He is seeking to cut away the little fleshly twigs that would hinder you from bringing forth more fruit.⁴

It is written, "The servant is not greater than his Lord"⁵; and Christ, "though He were a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."⁶ The sinless Son of God, the perfect Servant of Jehovah, suffered from Bethlehem's manger to Golgotha, at the hands of those He came to save. God permitted them so to do. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,"⁷ they took by wicked hands and slew; and yet this severe

¹ 2 Cor. 1. 3.

² 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18, R.V.

³ Deut. 32. 39.

⁴ John 15. 2.

⁵ John 13. 16.

⁶ Heb. 5. 8.

⁷ Acts 2. 23.

chastening was accompanied with love, for in John 3. we read, "The Father loveth the Son."

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord." "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end (or purpose) of Jehovah : that Jehovah is very pitiful and of tender mercy." ¹

Now Job had three friends, and when they "heard of all this evil that had come upon him they came every one from his own place ; Eliphaz, the Temanite, and Bildad, the Shuhite, and Zophar, the Naamathite : for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him." ² And, although Job said that they were miserable comforters, ³ it is to their credit that they did *try* to comfort him. But it is only those who have been comforted of God themselves ⁴ that will be able to comfort others ; only those who have had cause to weep that will be able to weep with weeping ones. ⁵ The Lord Jesus, our example, when in His deep need, looked round for comforters, but found none. ⁶ He then cried to His God, who heard Him "from the horns of the unicorns," ⁷ "having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears." ⁸ Let us do likewise, fellow-saints ; and, having been brought through the trial to the end (or purpose) of the Lord with us, assuredly we will be able, like David, to say, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." ⁹

ROBERT WATSON.

¹ James 5. 11.

² Job 2. 11.

³ Job 16. 2.

⁴ 2 Cor. 1. 4.

⁵ Rom. 12. 15.

⁶ Psalm 69. 20.

⁷ Psalm 22. 21.

⁸ Heb. 5. 7.

⁹ Psalm 119. 71.

ON MIRACLES.

II.

WHEN speaking of miracles in connection with the Lord Jesus we have to distinguish as to them. Practically they resolve themselves into two classes. First, His miraculous birth, transfiguration, and resurrection, etc. And then those miracles wrought by Himself and His apostles, as confirmatory of His mission as the sent-one of God.

“And these signs shall follow them that believe: in my Name shall they cast out demons,” etc. (Mark 16. 17). “God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles,” etc. (Heb. 2. 4).

“What sign showest Thou, that we may see, and believe Thee? What dost Thou work?” (John 6. 30). Such were the questions of the Jews; and they added, referring to Moses, “Our fathers did eat manna in the desert” (John 6. 31), pointing out that in connection with his mission the manna was given. From that Christ proceeds to show them that Moses did not give them that (it should be **the**) bread from heaven. He was “the true bread,” “the bread of life” come down from heaven. Thus He substitutes Himself for the manna, and shows how in so coming the Father had given a sign, and they should have received Him. The rejection of the evidence to a Divine Commission, by the working of signs or miracles, involved the one who rejected in a greater condemnation. Therefore the Lord Jesus said, “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you” (Matt. 11. 21, 22).

The signs or miracles recorded in the Gospels are but a

selection, a few out of many. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (John 20. 30, 31). This being the case we should expect to find that they were selected with an object in view. They are not simply recorded to show how the Jews in that day had the fullest testimony given to them that Jesus was the Christ, nor were they only given with the additional purpose of confirming the faith of believers, but they were undoubtedly given by the Spirit to each writer of the Gospels, only to record those that especially fell in with the definite purpose for which such Gospel was written.

Therefore some occur in one that do not in all the others, if even in one other; and, therefore, a fuller account is given by one than another. But beyond this they evidently have underlying them deep and important truths which as types and illustrations they convey to us. All the miracles, therefore, connected with bodily healing bring out the spiritual healing He alone can bestow who wrought the miracle, as well as speaking loudly to us of the disease that needs such healing.

It may be well to point out here that whilst miracles are intended to confirm faith, and are evidences of a mission from God, yet miracles have been wrought under the power of the Evil One. The magicians imitated Moses, but could only do so up to a certain point; beyond that they could not go—they could not bring forth lice (Exod. 8. 18). They had been able to imitate Moses up to the bringing of frogs upon the land, but they could not remove them, and Pharaoh had to entreat Moses to do it. But when it became a question of producing life they could not do it. Their power stopped at death and uncleanness. Thus what they could do, as also the warnings and cautions contained in Deuteronomy

13. 1, 2, as to a sign or wonder coming to pass under the word of a false prophet, and passages familiar to us in the Epistles and Revelations, all warn us that a miracle in itself is not conclusive evidence as to the mission of any one being divine. If such sign or wonder is accompanied in any way by words that would lead astray from the path laid down in Scripture, or turn away the heart from God, then we are to recognise it as of Satanic origin, and we should turn from it with abhorrence. Thus Moses told Israel to put to death any who by such wonder-working sought to turn from God.

Conscience has to be aroused ; and not only so, it has to be controlled by the Word of God absolutely ere one can be in any way fit to enter into the deeper reasons for such miracles and the teaching that underlies them. Taking for granted that the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles are authentic and genuine, proof of which does not need to be brought in at this point, then it is clear that Christ when on earth performed miracles of such a nature as to surpass all human power and skill. The blind received their sight, and some of the Pharisees even asked, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" (John 9. 16). As for the man himself, it had brought such conviction to his own heart that he addressed Jesus as "Lord" (John 9. 38), and he challenged the Pharisees when they tried to confuse and baffle him in his simple testimony as to the fact that his eyes had been opened :—"Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of the blind" (John 9. 32).

And when Lazarus was raised from the dead we read, "Much people of the Jews therefore knew that He was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead" (John 12. 9). Unbelieving Jews stood round his grave at the very time he was raised. They had ample

opportunity to prove whether it was Lazarus or some one else. There could not have been any pretence about it. Mary started out four days after he was buried to visit his grave, as they thought, and to weep over it. They followed her: when they reached it, they did not find that without witnesses Lazarus had been raised, or was said to have been. No, they stood by, they saw Jesus weep, they said, "Behold, how He loved him" (John 11. 36). Some said, showing they knew and believed in the miracle done upon the blind man, "Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?" (John 11. 37). But to have caused him not to die would have been as great a miracle as to raise him from the dead after he had died, although it would not have appeared so to the people; therefore, for God's glory (John 11. 4), and that they might believe (John 11. 15), He tarried two days.

And still further we find that many of the Jews believed on Him as the result of the miracle (John 11. 45), though others, fastened in their unbelief by their prejudices, went off to tell the Pharisees, who considered it so important a matter that at once they called a council, in which they said, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all *men* will believe on Him" (John 11. 47, 48). It was at that council Caiaphas uttered the remarkable prophecy as to His death being for the nations, and that He should gather together into one all the children of God.

The death and raising of Lazarus were so public, had been witnessed by so many, had resulted in such a number believing, that the Pharisees then and there determined to compass His death as speedily as they could. Besides, Lazarus was walking in and out among them, and when Jesus six days before the Passover went to Bethany, and they made Him a supper (John 12. 2), Lazarus was one that sat at the table with Him, and "Much people of the Jews

therefore knew that He was there: and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead" (John 12. 9). This again called forth the anger of the Chief Priests, and they consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death, forgetting that, even if he was put to death, many would be left to bare record that he had been raised (see John 12. 17).

Purposely this miracle had been performed on the eve of His last entry to Jerusalem. Multitudes had seen His miracles, and come under their power in Galilee as elsewhere, but now the most striking had been performed close to Jerusalem itself, with the result that the people who came out to meet Christ, crying, "Hosanna," etc. (John 12. 13), did so because they had heard of the miracles (John 12. 18). "The world hath gone after Him," said they; "we prevail nothing." Could testimony be clearer as to the facts involved. A mighty miracle performed so publicly that it stirred Jerusalem to its centre, urging on the Chief Priests to crucify Him, leading all the people to surround Him and hang upon His gracious words. Can we wonder that every effort of Satan is made to try and set aside the Gospel according to John? For if it be authentic, and genuine (and, blessed by God, there is no "if" about it), then these things were done, and done in such an incontestable way as to their publicity, and as to the amount of credible testimony concerning them, that sceptics have realized there was no other way of getting rid of them than by boldly asserting, as Hume did, that "No testimony can prove a miracle!" And, again, he asserted, "A miracle is contrary to experience." What experience have men in the tropics, who were never out of them, of ice? Is it contrary to experience? No! but it is beyond *their* experience, they never having witnessed the freezing of water; but it is in the experience of multitudes, and they can believe it on credible witness.

An earthquake, in like manner, is beyond the experience of most, but not contrary to it, and, although they have never felt one, they can receive the testimony of others: and the testimony concerning the terrible earthquake in Lisbon in 1755, in which 50,000 perished in eight minutes, is not one whit impaired because more than a century has gone by since it occurred, any more than the testimony is to the destruction of Pompeii, as given to us by an eye-witness, Pliny, in his letters written at the very time. And so with the miracle. The credible witness borne by many, and recorded in the books of the New Testament, can never be impaired by time. They can be accepted as easily now by us as by those into whose hands these writings first came. A miracle may have been contrary to the experience of Hume or any other, just as an earthquake very likely was; but was it to all? His experience was very limited: to say contrary to all experience of mankind is, as one has aptly put it, "a manifest assumption of the whole question. We assert that mankind in different ages and places have experienced them."

If such an argument were true, then it would show that miracles cannot be proved at all. They talk of God, but the God they have is limited by "their experiences"; by their thoughts of what He should or could do. And, whereas man can communicate his thoughts and make known his power to and through others, their God cannot. I say "their God," for assuredly such an one is not the God who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures, and who has chosen to confirm His messengers, and, last of all, His Son, by miracles.

To believe that God could work a miracle, and yet could not make that credible to man, but that He must in all ages and to every man directly give a miracle, so that it might be clear to them by their own senses, and not by testimony, is too absurd. To state it should be sufficient. And yet

that is the position Hume and Deists in general are driven to find refuge in.

We have seen that the miracles were wrought so publicly that multitudes believed in them; and so credible were they that such sceptics of the second century as Celsus could not deny them: therefore they attributed them to magic! But, as I have already pointed out, they were not done in secret or only in the presence of unscrupulous persons ready to certify to anything. They were wrought in the very presence of His enemies—men full of prejudice and cruel hatred. Would such have allowed them to pass if there had been pretence, magic, or imposture to detect? Yet they were so unable to deny the works done that they loudly asserted they were done under the power of Beelzebub!

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be continued.)

Fragments.

In Luke 22. 31 the Devil was longing to get at Peter. But it could not be till he was permitted. The same with Job. How it shows that saints of God are in the care of God. There is a limit to the temptation and trial that comes from the hand of the Devil. Yet see how this is connected with the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ: "But I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." The Devil goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour; but there is One in the heavens for us Whose intercession will never fail: "He ever liveth to make intercession for us." He is in the presence of God for us, Who was out of the presence of God for us on the cross. Satan, the enemy of our souls, is made use of by God for our very gain and good.

God brings us through trials and temptations, not only for His glory, but for our advantage and our good; that we may be fitted for helping others. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

GOOD THINGS FROM HARD NAMES.

(Continued from page 137.)

THE next name is KOHATH, the meaning of which is "assembly." While Gershon and his sons, Libni and Shimei, suggest our position in this world, our character and our business, as individuals, Kohath suggests our assembly position; and it is remarkable that in the service of Kohath and his sons, in connection with the tabernacle, everything was covered: they were not privileged to look upon the things they carried. Their part of service, when on the march, was carrying the Ark, the table of shew bread, the lampstand and its connections, also the golden altar with its vessels; but before they touched anything Aaron and his sons put on the various coverings (see Num. 4. 5-15). This suggests to us the thought that our assembly service is not for our eyes, nor yet for the eyes of others, to behold; for our God is showing unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places His manifold wisdom, by means of the assembly (Eph. 3. 10). In second chapter of this epistle and seventh verse we see the purpose of God concerning the Church, the body, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus; while in the third chapter and tenth verse we see His purpose for the present time. Oh! that we may learn this, and as we learn it lay it to heart! And like the Kohathites, who did not see the things they carried, but because of being appointed to this service by God carried it out to His pleasing, may we, though not understanding anything about what is going on in the heavenly places, seek to carry out His will, that we may please Him, and, like our blessed Lord, have the glory of God in our hearts; so that neither our affection for those we love, nor yet the warnings of those who love us, will draw

us from the desire to seek the glory of our God (see John 11. 4-7). And may we be so yoked to the will of our God that, as the kine that the Philistines yoked to the cart with the Ark of God in it took the straight road to Bethshemesh, neither turning to the right hand nor the left (1 Sam. 6.), so, while our affections might lead us some other way, may we take the one way; ay, though, indeed, like them, it may terminate in our death, remembering the words of the apostle to Timothy, "Consider what I say, and the Lord shall give thee understanding in all things"; "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel." Oh, that what God is doing at the present time by means of the assembly may so take hold of our hearts that it will mould our wills and give character to all our actions. No wonder that the apostle said to the Ephesians, "I therefore beseech you"; truly, indeed, God's purpose for the present time had taken hold of his heart.

We next look at the sons of Kohath, the first being **AMRAM**, which means "a people exalted." Surely it is wonderful grace of our God that we should be exalted to such a service! That God will give our Lord a bride who shall be holy and without blame is something He has been pleased to reveal, and that we should be taken by Him to compose that bride is wonderful, and causes us to look forward with adoring hearts to the time when our blessed Lord will present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that He has been pleased at the present time to make manifest His wisdom by means of us is exaltation indeed.

The next name is **IZHAR**, the meaning being "anointed"; so we read: "Now He that stablisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God." We have heard it said that Izhar also means "covering." This suggests to us the words of the ninety-first Psalm: "He that dwelleth in

the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"—an exalted people, an anointed people. What a privilege!

Our assembly position is also a place of "fellowship," this being the meaning of the next name, *HEBRON*: "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another" (1 John 1. 7). It is recorded concerning a remnant of God's earthly people, returned from Babylon (*Ezra 3. 1*), "They gathered themselves together to one place"; (*ver. 9*) "They stood together"; (*ver. 11*) "They sang together," and (*chap. 4. 3*) They builded together; and this they did because of each and all having one object in view. We have fellowship one with another, because of being knit together through having one object in view, that being that God's Son, our Lord, should have His will done in us and by us; it is also a position of fellowship with God, concerning His Son, whom He hath made both Lord and Christ. It is evidently the will of our God that in the scene where His Son suffered so much humiliation, shame, ignominy and death, He should have a company of people whom He has redeemed brought together, so that His Son might reign over them. And as we look back at the time when He had fellowship with God concerning us, and see what He endured in order that God's love could flow freely out to us, and now learn that the will of God was fully done by Him, and that—

"Justice now withstands no more,
And mercy yields its boundless store,"

we now see Him the one whom God delights to honour. As we look at Him in the past, and also at the present, we say, He is worthy to receive all honour, and we desire indeed to have fellowship with God, concerning Him in His Son's place.

"Engrave this deeply on our hearts,
Conform our ways to Thine;

That so we may, in some degree,
Reflect the light Divine."

What a wonderful position! But it can only be carried out by that which the next name means, UZZIEL—"In the strength of Jehovah." It is worthy of notice that when the Princes of Israel offered their offering to the Lord, they gave two wagons and four oxen to the sons of Gershon, and four wagons and eight oxen to the sons of Merari, but none to Kohath, as their work was all to be carried on their shoulders. How minute God's ways are! They could only use the strength that God gave (see Num. 7. 1-9). And see how jealous God was concerning this matter, even though David—a man after God's heart—should seek another way of doing the right thing, but could only bring down judgment (2 Sam. 6. 1-11). We also read in Ephesians 3. 14, 15: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, of whom every family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man" (R.V.); and this coming in after, telling the purpose of God by means of the Church. No amount of knowledge, or gift, or utterance, or faith (though all these are good in their own place), can enable us to carry out assembly service to please God. Nothing but the strength of God, strengthened with power by His Spirit, in the inner man can do this. We sometimes think where there is great gift and much knowledge there may be the introduction of something new, which can only bring down the judgment of God,—as in the case of David, who undoubtedly had great gift and much knowledge. Such things carried out in fleshly energy displease God; and while our assembly position is exalted, anointed, a place of fellowship, it is also a place of keen judgment. Truly indeed it is only in the strength that God gives being exercised that He finds pleasure. No carnal weapons, no enticing words of man's

wisdom, nor excellency of speech, will avail in this service, —nothing but the strength of God. We need God, as well as the Word of His grace (Acts 20. 32).

For it is truly in difficult times that our lot is cast; and as we look around and see the strife and confusion and lawlessness that prevail, we long to see men like the men of Issachar who came to David. They had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do (1 Chron. 12. 32, also ver. 38), but it seems to us that there was a secret in the men of Issachar, being understanding ones. When we turn to Genesis 49., we have Jacob describing the character of his sons as only a father can; and concerning Issachar he said, "He is a strong ass, crouching between two burdens; also he bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant to tribute." He humbled himself, and in due time God exalted him. May we not only covet to be men of understanding, but, like Issachar, may we humble ourselves, and, like him, God will exalt us in due season; for God giveth grace to the humble, but resisteth the proud, and in such a case God will find pleasure. Seeking the strength of God for this service, we will be Church of Living God, pillar and ground of the truth, God manifesting His wisdom in the heavens by means of us; and we shining as lights in the world, holding forth the Word of life (Eph. 3. 10, with Phil. 2. 15, 16).

We now look at MERARI, which means "bitterness"; and as the Kohathite's work suggests our assembly service, Merari suggests our evangelistic service. As the Merarites went first with the boards, bars, pillars and sockets, they laid the foundations; and in our evangelistic work the foundation is laid, and in the doing so there is sometimes much bitterness, as was the case with Stephen before the Sanhedrim, who was made sad at heart because of their rejection of what he spake, and had much bitterness shown unto him. So also Paul in entering into Philippi: he was sorrowful to see the

effect the word had upon them, and suffered much from them. And we often feel sad at heart while standing at a street corner, proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ, and seeing the scornful smile on the lips of the passers-by. There is bitterness, indeed, comes from this work, but there is also joy.

This brings us to the next name, MAHLI, which means "my song." We remember after the Apostle Paul entered Philippi, and suffered much there, being scourged and cast into prison, he had his song; in the midst of the sorrow, they sang praises to God. And, again, we have him expressing himself thus: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of His knowledge by us in every place" (2 Cor. 2. 14). The thought of pleasing God brought a song in the midst of the bitterness, and as we see the hand of our God working in the salvation of some, it causes us to sing praises unto Him, looking forward to that which the last name, MUSHI, means—"taken up." Having been joined to Him, we wait for Him to take us to Himself, looking for that blessed hope which, in the midst of our battles, is our helmet of salvation (1 Thess. 5. 8), and in the midst of our storms is our anchor (Heb. 6. 19), and in the midst of our darkness is our morning star (Rev. 22. 16). Blessed hope:—

Oh! the blessed joy of meeting! all the desert past;
 Oh! the wondrous words of greeting He shall speak at last;
 He and I together entering those bright courts above,
 He and I together sharing all the Father's love.

May we labour that, whether present or absent, we may be well-pleasing to Him.

JAMES ALLAN.

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* 7. 17, *R.V.*

QUESTION 51.—*In a Magazine article published lately by a brother it was said "scholars knew" that 1 Timothy iii. 15 did not mean that the Assembly was the pillar and ground of the truth, but that God was the pillar and ground. Is this the meaning of the passage, or is there any uncertainty in the Greek?* S. B. G.

If S. B. G. has given all that was written in connection with this verse,—that is, if no references were given to any "scholars,"—then certainly it was a very slipshod statement! Any one who takes upon himself to write "scholars knew" should be, at least, prepared with his authorities, and should, in fact, have referred to some undoubted scholars.

But I fear, as is sometimes done, bold assertion takes the place of proof, and "it is so" is accepted by many without inquiry.

"Most commentators answer this question, 'Does it apply to the Church?' in the affirmative; and if appeal be made to authority, it must be admitted that the majority of interpreters are decidedly in favour of this view. Our translators so understood it; indeed, such would appear to be the all but universal acceptance of this important passage."

Thus E. H. Haskins, a Church of England minister, replied to the question in *The Christian Annotator*, Vol. ii. p. 130. He then went on to urge that Chillingworth was correct in saying it applied to Timothy, yet anticipating exception would be taken on critical ground—that is, that the accusative would have followed, and not the nominative; in which case the words "pillar" and "ground" are put in the text.

Thus at the outset it does not appear that "scholars know" that the words refer to God, most holding it to apply to the Assembly.

Bloomfield, in his *Greek Testament*, 9th Edition, 1855, says:—

"These words have been variously interpreted. In order to ascertain their sense, it is necessary to determine their scope, and whether they should be taken with the preceding or the following words. Some ancient and several modern expositors, and many recent interpreters, refer them to what follows. This method, however, lies open to insuperable objections, as stated by Poole, Benson, and Scott. It involves an anti-climax nowhere found in Scripture, and very rarely in any good classical writer. The natural connection of the words is doubtless with what precedes." He then adds: "It would never have been so taken by Protestant expositors had they not wished to rescue the passage from Romish perversion." He further

adds: "Almost all ancient expositors take it as referring to Church, also Gratus, Bishop Hall, Calvin, Hammond, Weber, Schmid, Deyling, Wolf, Whitby, MacKnight," etc., etc. And closes by saying, "Any other mode of explanation is both philologically and otherwise quite untenable."

With this Wordsworth fully agrees in his Greek Testament, New Edition, 1877. Alford says, in reference to taking these words "pillar" and "ground" with what follows: "I can only say, that if any one imagines St. Paul, or any other person capable of writing this Epistle, able to have indited such a sentence, I fear there is but little chance in arguing with him on the point in question. To say nothing of its abruptness and harshness," he asserts, "it betrays the botching of modern conjectural arrangement in the wretched anti-climax." "If a sentence like this occurred in the Epistle, I should feel it a weightier argument against its genuineness than any which its opponents have yet adduced." He then refers to the fact that Chillingworth, others mentioned in Wolf, and Conybeare take them as referring to Timothy. But then *σε*, "thee," should have been inserted, and *στυλος* should have been definite *ὁστυλος*, "the pillar," and the *και ὁμολογουμεως*, "and confessedly," would then need to refer to Timothy! Which would be most unlikely?

"Not only do I agree with Alford and Ellicott in their rejection of a dislocation so abrupt and artificial, but I maintain that it would strip the Assembly of its essential place here defined, and that it would detract from, instead of adding to, the true dignity of the mystery of godliness. Scarcely better is the reference to Timothy." (W. Kelly: *Bible Treasury*, Vol. xv. p. 170.)

It is most foolish on the part of any one to say "scholars knew" unless prepared with proofs. It is an assumption of knowledge as to scholars that in this case is not correct; and one can only conclude the one who wrote was not able to acquaint himself thoroughly on the matter, or took for granted that others had done it, and thus made a statement which, when sifted, proves quite beside the mark.

To sum up what the scholars referred to abundantly prove. First, there are *three* special ways of taking the passage: (a) To apply them to Timothy; (b) To put a comma after living God, and then read the words with "and confessedly"; (c) Or to apply them, as almost all have done, to the Assembly.

Their application to Timothy evidently arose from the word "pillar," which is applied in Galatians ii. 9 to apostles. Quite an insufficient reason in itself, though likely to lead some to do it who did not consider the difficulties in the way. A most strained application, for Timothy is himself written to, to know how to behave himself; no thought of honouring him by pointing him out as a pillar.

Their being taken with words following Bloomfield and Alford both call an anti-climax! As if one took you to the top of a hill and before you could stand to look around took you quickly down part way. And, as has been pointed out, the nominatives go against it.

There is nothing against the natural view that falls in with the construction in every way but the pretensions of Romish or other Churches, that led men to cast about for any possible way of taking from them any passages that might seem to help them in their assumptions.

If it be a question of scholars, then, as Mr. Haskins stated, nearly all take the last view of it.

If it be looked at from the standpoint of construction and cases, then the last view is the only one that can be taken from it without what Alford called "botching," "abruptness and harshness." Our first object should be to get what is the fair construction, and never seek to put another in order to escape seeming difficulties.

But in any case it is most reprehensible to print "scholars knew" as to any part of Scripture when evidently no trouble has been taken to ascertain what they say. The many names of undoubted scholars given by the scholars I have cited would certainly make one pause ere holding any other view of the passage than the one making the words apply to Assembly; but even then, in all fairness to readers of a magazine unable to look up for themselves, statements should be carefully made and the whole facts placed before them.

R. T. H.

QUESTION 52.—*Does Romans 7. teach that a person may be "born again" and not have the Holy Spirit?*

No. Neither Romans 7. nor any other part of Holy Scripture teaches that a person may be "born again" in this present dispensation and not have the Holy Spirit. Of all such this word is absolute and true: even—"In whom ye also (trusted), having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. 1. 13. 14, R.V.)

J. B.

THREE ETERNALS.

THERE are three Eternals which, if some measure of their fulness be comprehended by the child of God, must fill him with joy unspeakable. The first of these we find in John 10. 28, "Eternal life!" What a contrast to eternal death! We have never fathomed the depth of either, for it will take eternity to understand what they mean. Of the latter none have fathomed its awful lengths, breadths and heights, but the man Christ Jesus, who is now upon the Throne of God. But what is life? Unquestionably something far beyond existence, for there may be, and often is, an existence even in time quite unworthy of the name of life. But eternal life, what is it? Try, child of God, afresh to grasp the thought. When the ages have waxed hoary, and worn-out worlds have ceased to be, your eternity will be but as the unfolding flower of the early spring, with all the wealth of summer still beyond.

But what of this life; where and with whom will it be spent? To help us in this inquiry, let us turn to our second text (Heb. 9. 15), "An eternal inheritance." Will this not satisfy? Is this not enough? I once heard of a father who had an only son; the father was wealthy, and the son was heir to all, but the inheritance was lost; the son never possessed it. Another father had an only daughter; he too possessed great wealth; but the daughter died, she could not be kept for the inheritance.

But what of your inheritance, child of God? Of it we read that it fadeth not away, "reserved in Heaven for you," and you are "kept by the power of God" (1 Peter 1. 4, 5). The power that keeps the universe keeps you. How safe, how unspeakably secure. Does not this satisfy you, child of life and glory? Is there yet room in your cup of joy?

Yes, for were we to stop here, there would be a blank, a void still unfilled.

But let us look at our third text. "Eternal redemption" (Heb. 9. 12). This is needed, and this is given to fill the cup of joy to overflowing. What a mine of wealth is in these words. To know them would be to know the love of God which passeth knowledge. An Italian once said, when speaking of the clear blue sky of his native land, "You can look up, up to the very feet of the Lord Jesus." And this, our last Eternal, takes us right up through space and time, and things that pass away, to gaze in adoring love at the Man, who died on Calvary's Cross of shame, and through His death purchased for us eternal life, and through His weight of woe secured for us a weight of glory, an inheritance unreachable by earthly moth or rust. No life could be life apart from Him, no inheritance could satisfy, but where He is there shall we be also, to behold the King in His beauty, and to be *like* Him. Redeemed, yes, purchased back to God—a redemption as eternal as the Throne itself, yea, as eternal as Him who sits thereon—a scheme of love and mercy evolved from the wondrous Trinity and carried out by Father, Son and Spirit. God loved the world, Christ loved the Church, the Spirit won us trophies of His grace. We could not find a Heaven without Him. It will be our Heaven to be with Him. The fellowship begun on earth (so oftentimes hindered by things temporal and the many shadows that cross our pathway) established, and that for ever, in the very sunlight of His presence. And as we stand in his bright glory, spotless, it will but show our meetness to be there, redeemed and with Himself. This fills our cup of joy to overflowing as we await the day when we shall behold His face in righteousness, and be satisfied when we awake in His likeness.

J. A. BOSWELL.

ON MIRACLES.

III.

WE have also to observe that Judas, so closely linked with the Lord Jesus as one of the Twelve, accompanying Him in His journeys and seeing more of His miracles performed than any other, save apostles, though a traitor and ready to betray Him, never attempted to give Him up as an impostor, which he certainly would have done if he could. And who for a moment could believe that the Twelve, the seventy, the three thousand at Pentecost, the "myriads" who very shortly were found in Jerusalem believing in the Christ, and, above all, such an one as Paul, from Gamaliel's feet taught in all the wisdom of the schools, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, and one of the bitterest and most active foes the truth ever had,—who could believe that all these were deceiving themselves in taking up the cause of the persecuted, rejected Nazarene? And for what? Honour, fame, and glory among men? Nay, verily, but the very opposite: they became the offscouring of earth, were in prisons oft, in perils constantly. Yet enduring suffering unto death gladly for the Name's sake.

Sceptics even have been forced to recognise the authenticity and genuineness of four of Paul's Epistles—those to the Romans, Galatians and Corinthians. But these are the very epistles that in the strongest way claim place for miracles in the apostolic age. Thus during a period of more than fifty years signs and wonders were wrought in the most public fashion by Christ and by the apostles. All the people saw the lame man "walking and praising God, and knew it was he which had sat for alms" (Acts 3. 9, 10), and the rulers and elders could not deny it (Acts 4. 16). They never attempted to, but only sought to prevent it going any further.

But apostles prayed for increased power (ver. 30), and the Lord gave it (Acts 5. 12, 15, 16); so that once again they were laid hold of, and the council had to own that already they had "filled Jerusalem with the doctrine" (ver. 28), the doctrine and miracles going hand in hand. As Pascal said, "Miracles prove the doctrine, and the doctrine approves the miracles."

Presently Stephen was found full of faith and power, doing "great wonders and miracles among the people" (Acts 6. 8). And Philip also (Acts 8. 6).

Peter raises the dead, and Dorcas was known throughout all Joppa as the one on whom such power had been exerted (Acts 9. 42).

And Paul was soon found not one whit behind the chief of the apostles in working signs and wonders in the Name (Acts 13. 11, 14. 3, 19. 11). And of these the Apostle writes in Romans 15. 18, 19. Miracles were also performed among the Galatians, and were wrought among them by the Spirit as a testimony upon the preaching of faith (Gal. 3. 5). Thus the existence of miracles is most fully and positively stated, and in the apostolic age, as well as during the personal ministry of Christ. And witness is borne to them not only in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, but in these four Epistles, which extreme neologians have been compelled to admit came from the pen of the Apostle Paul. But miracles in the apostolic period would lead us to expect them in the ministry of Christ; it would not be conceivable that they should be found in the one and not in the other. Thus, while we get in the Acts of the Apostles the record of many occurring in the one, in Luke, the writer of the Acts, we get them as occurring in the other. And all were only intended to bring out the Divine mission and to call attention to the doctrine they accompanied. That teaching embracing the ruin of man as a sinner, and the redemption accomplished by Christ on the cross, and therefore the

needed power of the Spirit, convincing of sin and showing the need of a Saviour.

The miracles accompany the teaching and agree with it; therefore the kindness of God constantly seen in them. They were not performed that glory might attach to the apostles when done through them. But in false miracles it is ever so.

Some quote in proof that miracles were performed by others apart from Christ and His apostles—one referred to by the Latin historian Tacitus, who relates a miracle performed by the Emperor Vespasian. He says (although he writes as if he did not believe it) a man's leg was healed. But Suetonius also referred to the same, only he said the man's arm was healed! The whole thing was to glorify Vespasian, was evidently false, and the records of these two conflicting.

The more we study the miracles of Scripture the more fully and clearly shall we see that they were specially intended to convey a spiritual meaning.

Bodily cures wrought by Christ were not only for blessing on earth to the ones healed, but they were intended to bring before us spiritual healing and blessing. The miracles may be classed under special heads:

Christ's power over (1) diseases, (2) demons, and (3) death; and (4) over natural objects, as when He walked on the sea, turned water into wine, gave miraculous takings of fish, taking the stater from the fish's mouth, or withering the fig-tree.

Thus, while the primary object was to drive away disease, to cast out demons, or to bring life back to the dead, as well as to manifest the power of God, yet how much we should lose if we did not see that they are types and illustrations. That they contain special instruction is evident, and therefore their special value to the Christian, as in them he constantly has before him the ways of God in grace and love.

Two miracles stand apart as being very different from all the rest—the demons being allowed to go into the swine, and the cursing of the fig-tree.

With reference to the first, notice that from Leviticus 11. they were forbidden to eat the unclean animal, the swine being such. Yet through greed of gain they were being fed. As to the fig-tree, note, not “a,” but as in margin, “one fig-tree.” We have to remember that it was a special type of Israel, as were the olive and the vine. We learn from Luke 13. that Christ had warned them that judgment was nigh. The fig-tree was fruitless, judgment was deserved, but the entreaty availed, and as a nation time was given up to the cross. “I will dig about it and dung it.” Yet, awful fact, the ministry of Christ did not bring them from out their profession, fruitless though it was; and therefore judgment must fall. This He told out by withering up the one leaf-clothed fig-tree on the Mount of Olives, which said by its leaves fruit was there and yet it had none.

The day will come, however, when the Lord of Hosts, having removed the iniquity of the land, and having accomplished all His purposes of grace toward Israel, as pourtrayed by Zechariah (chap. 3.) in the cleansing, clothing, and crowning of Joshua, the high priest, will give every man to be able to call his neighbour under his vine and under his fig-tree. In that day there shall be no lack of fruit or joy. Once “no wine” (John 2.) revealed the poverty that existed, and told what man was when left to his own resources, but in millennial days the vine and fig-tree shall flourish, and there shall be no tree with leaves only.

There are thirty-five miracles specially recorded in the four Gospels as being performed by Christ Himself which come under one of the four heads referred to.

Twenty-eight of them in connection with persons raised

MIRACLES RECORDED IN THE GOSPELS.

	MATT.	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
1 <i>Turning Water into Wine</i>	—	—	—	<i>ii. 1-12</i>
2 <i>Nobleman's Son Healed</i>	—	—	—	<i>iv. 43-54</i>
3 <i>First Healing of a Demoniack at Capernaum</i>	1 <i>Sabbath</i>	i. 21-28	iv. 33	—
4 <i>Peter's Wife's Mother healed</i>	2 <i>Sabbath</i>	viii. 14-17	i. 29-34	iv. 38-41
5 <i>Draught of Fishes</i>	—	—	v. 1-11	—
6 <i>First Cleansing of a Leper.</i>	—	viii. 2-4	i. 40-45	v. 12-16
7 <i>Man sick of Palsy</i>	—	ix. 1-8	ii. 1-12	v. 17-26
8 <i>Man with withered hand</i>	3 <i>Sabbath</i>	xii. 9-14	iii. 1-6	vi. 6-11
9 <i>Man at Bethesda Pool</i>	4 <i>Sabbath</i>	—	—	v. 1-18
10 <i>Healing Centurion's Servant</i>	—	viii. 5-13	—	vii. 2-10
11 <i>Raising Son of Widow of Nain from Dead</i>	—	—	—	<i>vi. 11-17</i>
12 <i>Healing a Demoniack Blind and Dumb</i>	—	xii. 22-37	—	xi. 14
13 <i>Woman's Infirmity Cured</i>	5 <i>Sabbath</i>	—	—	<i>xiii. 10-17</i>
14 <i>Stilling of the Storm</i>	—	viii. 18-27	iv. 35-41.	viii. 22-25
15 <i>Healing two Demoniacs</i>	—	viii. 28-34	v. 1-20	viii. 26-39
16 <i>Raising Jairus' Daughter from the Dead.</i>	—	ix. 23-25	v. 22-43	viii. 41-56
17 <i>Healing Woman with Issue of Blood.</i>	—	ix. 20-22	v. 25-34	viii. 43-48
18 <i>Healing Two Blind Men</i>	—	<i>ix. 27-30</i>	—	—
19 <i>A Dumb Demoniack Healed</i>	—	<i>ix. 32-33</i>	—	—
20 <i>FEEDING FIVE THOUSAND MEN (only one in all Gospels)</i>	—	xiv. 17-21	vi. 30-44	ix. 10-17
21 <i>Walking upon the Sea</i>	—	xiv. 22-36	vi. 45-52	—
22 <i>Healing daughter of Syrophenician Woman</i>	—	xv. 21-28	vii. 24-30	—
23 <i>Healing Deaf Man with Impediment in Speech</i>	—	—	<i>vii. 31-37</i>	—
24 <i>Feeding Four Thousand Men</i>	—	xv. 32-38	viii. 1-9	—
25 <i>Healing a Blind Man near Bethsaida.</i>	—	—	<i>viii. 22-26</i>	—
26 <i>Casts Dumb and Deaf Spirit out of Child</i>	—	xvii. 14-18	ix. 17-29	ix. 38-43
27 <i>Fish from Lake with Stater in its Mouth</i>	—	<i>xvii. 24-27</i>	—	—
28 <i>Gave Sight to a Man born Blind</i>	6 <i>Sabbath</i>	—	—	<i>ix. 1-41</i>
29 <i>Heals Dropsical Man</i>	7 <i>Sabbath</i>	—	—	<i>xiv. 1-6</i>
30 <i>Raising Lazarus from the Dead</i>	—	—	—	<i>xi. 17-46</i>
31 <i>Cleansing of the Ten Lepers.</i>	—	—	—	<i>xvii. 11-19</i>
32 <i>Blind Bartimæus and his Companion</i>	—	xx. 29-34	x. 46-52	xviii. 35-43
33 <i>Withering of Barren Fig-tree</i>	—	xxi. 19	xi. 12-14, 21	—
34 <i>Malchus' Ear Healed</i>	—	—	—	<i>xxii. 50</i>
35 <i>Draught of Fishes</i>	—	—	—	<i>xxi. 6-11</i>
Total in each	20	18	20	8
Special to each	3	2	6	6

ON MIRACLES.

*

from the dead or healed: thirty-three men and five women coming under His power. Seven were connected with natural objects.

It is to be noticed that seven were performed on the Sabbath, in connection with five men and two women.

Finding interest lately in taking out these miracles as recorded in the Gospels, it may interest others to present them in tabulated order, showing at a glance not only the number recorded in each, but especially enabling them to see those which were only recorded in one Gospel.

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be concluded.)

THE KING ON HIS THRONE.

SUFFERING precedes glory. It was so in the experience of Joseph, and equally true of David. The road that ended with splendour was all along strewn with thorns. Both these Old Testament saints in this picture to us Him whose own lips declared, "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" And those who, as joint heirs, suffer with Him will be glorified together.

The purpose of God made the exaltations of Joseph a certainty; hence he is spoken of as being sent before to preserve life (Gen. 45. 5; Psalms 105. 17). The trial and temptation, instead of hindering, only made this the more evident, and as man's wrath was at work to crush the object of that purpose, the more impotent and puny the creature comes to be seen compared with the God of all might. If that is discerned in God's ways with Joseph, it is equally so with David. The path which began in the valley of Elah led to Hebron, and all the sneers of his own kin, the strength of his foes, and the bitter trials of many kinds that lay along that path, kept not God's king from the

throne when Jehovah's time came to set His king upon His holy hill of Zion. The purpose that had taken the shepherd lad from his father's sheep to feed God's people, stood like a rock immovable, against which the rage of enemies of God and His anointed might dash, but only to break, like restless waters foaming out their own shame. And if that precious fact again and again in Old Testament pages is presented to our adoring gaze and worshipping hearts, what shall we say when we behold the heavens open to receive Israel's murdered King, and Jehovah saying to Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool"? but "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11. 33).

Divine rule shall prevail, and prevail the wide world over, as well as in the Heavens; but a day of small things precedes it, like as when David was captain over only four hundred at the cave of Adullam. How small that following, yet was it real, for never had the anointed shepherding more loyal hearts than when that gallant band, known as "David's men," were ready to do or die for him. Their deeds of valour and of daring furnish a brilliant chapter in David's history, and stand recorded in the annals of his reign (2 Sam. 23.). Bit by bit he moves on, and more and more rally to his person and his cause. The four hundred of Adullam became six hundred at Ziklag, and these also were among his "mighty men"; and then "day by day they came, until a great host" of many thousands at Hebron owned his sway, and with perfect heart determined to make David king over ALL Israel (1 Chron. 12.).

Now turn to the upper room (Luke 22.; John 13.), and see Jesus, Israel's persecuted and rejected King—rejected by His own—and with Him there ELEVEN. Eleven! A "day of small things" in very truth; aye, and to be smaller yet, for soon these all forsook Him and fled. The darkest hour

was near—an hour that David never knew, nor any till then, nor since. The dawn soon followed, and then came the turning of the tide. Eleven; one hundred and twenty (Acts 1.); three thousand added (Acts 2.); five thousand more (Acts 4.); then multitudes unnumbered, who bowed the heart, and will, and knees to Jesus Christ as Lord. Blessed be God! Precious forecasts of His coming reign, when *every* knee shall bow and *every* tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2.).

How helpful it is to thus look forward, in a “day of small things,” to a day of greater things, and, more, it is as faith and hope look on to a day of great things, sustainment is realized in “the day of small things.” It was so with Zerubbabel. His hands had laid the foundation of the temple. “His hands also shall finish,” said the word of the Lord to him by Zechariah, and from foundation to top-stone his eye is lifted in faith, while as yet only the foundation stone was there; and his hands became strengthened for that good work. Surroundings might well have discouraged the man who walked by sight. The word of the living God, “I am with thee . . . Fear thou not,” is enough for the man of faith. The “day of small things” makes us feel our need of God, and therein lies our strength. As we get to know with increasing fulness the word of the living God, “I am with thee,” and see how continuous is the flow of oil along the golden pipes (Zech. 4. 12), strength and courage come. Our smallness ceases to trouble. The smallness of the things of our day does not distract, and we reckon it to be no small matter after all to be with Him in suffering here, till with Him there in the glory of His rule.

David reached the throne, and soon made evident the character of his government (2 Sam. 8.). “David executed judgment and justice unto all the people.” “And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” (2 Sam.

9. 1). Justice and kindness, grace and truth, became the characteristics of David's throne, and therein reflected the throne of God. "Thou satest in the throne judging righteously" (Ps. 9. 4). "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Ps. 89. 14). Thus his reign foreshadowed the coming reign of David's Lord, when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory, and in the punishment of evil-doers, and rewarding the nations according to their deeds, will declare His sceptre to be one of righteousness. The "Come, ye blessed," etc., and the "Depart, ye cursed" (Matt. 25.), shall introduce a reign that throughout shall speak of mercy to the poor and oppressed, and the overthrow and punishment of the oppressor (Ps. 9. 7-9, Ps. 72.).

Jonathan's kindness is remembered, and David requites it in true regal manner, and Mephibosheth is brought to the king's table. The cup of water gets its reward. The blessed in the kingdom shall know how great reward comes from so little service. And such is the character of Divine rule now, administered through those raised up to rule with diligence, and to feed the flock, taking the oversight thereof. Justice and judgment that takes knowledge of evil doing, and warns the unruly, admonishes the disorderly, rebukes the sinful, charges impartially the rich and poor, masters and servants as to their relative duties and responsibilities towards God; and as fully and freely comforts the feeble-minded, supports the weak, ministering to the poor and distressed, entering with sympathy and succour into the sorrows, needs, trials and difficulties which lie in the journey home, and are bound up with infinite wisdom in the lot of fellow-saints.

Oh for such well-balanced rule that sin shall not be tolerated in any; nor the feeblest, the weakest, the most trying and troublesome, lack the consideration and care that godly rule provides; mercy and truth, blended in their

dual exercise, reflecting in all their acts the throne in the heavens and the God of light and love, and pointing onwards to the reign of the Son of Man, and earth's long, bright, blessed day of righteousness and peace.

CHARLES MORTON.

THAT WORTHY NAME.

(JAMES 2. 7.)

Which should we glory in?

HIS NAME (Acts 3. 16). THE NAME (Phil. 2. 10).

OR A NAME, as in Gen. 11. 4 ?

OR NAMES, as in 1 Cor. 3. 3-5 ?

Let no man glory in men (1 Cor. 3. 21).

It is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the LORD (1 Cor. 1. 31).

HIS NAME!

What is His Name? What shall I say unto them?

I AM THAT I AM. . . . Say "I AM" hath sent me unto you (Exod. 3. 13, 14).

Who is this? . . . This is Jesus (Matt. 21. 10, 11).

Who art Thou? Jesus said. . . . Even that I said unto you from the *beginning* (John 8. 25).

Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I AM¹ (John 8. 28).

Whom seek ye? Jesus. Jesus said unto them, I AM.

As soon as He had said unto them, I AM, they went backward and fell to the ground; then asked HE them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus. Jesus answered, I have told you that I AM (John 18. 4, 8).

¹ The word "He" which comes after "I am" is in italics, therefore it is not in the original Greek; by omitting it you will grasp the meaning of the Name more readily.

Now I tell you . . . that ye may believe that I AM (John 13. 19).

Pilate said unto Him, Art thou a king ?

Jesus answered, Thou sayest it because I AM a king (John 18. 37, R.M.).

I AM THAT I AM.

It has been observed :—“In tracing through the Scriptures the different titles by which God reveals Himself, we find He ever presents Himself in such a way as just meets the needs and conditions of His people.” Thus when this wondrous Name first comes under our notice (the Name expressive of Almighty Power and Sovereignty) it is in connection with delivering His people out of Egypt.

1st, by Grace (Exod. 12.). 2nd, by Power (Exod. 14.). 3rd, by His Wisdom (Exod. 13. 21, 22 ; Num. 9. 15, 10. 34.)

In the lamb slain we have (in type) the riches of His Grace.

In the divided sea we have (in type), the greatness of His Power, and

In the desert the manifestation of His Wisdom in leading His people.

“In the desert, God will teach thee
What the God that thou hast found,
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy—
All His grace shall there abound.”

God said unto Moses, “I AM THAT I AM.”

Moses had been in the desert alone with God, and at the end of about forty years’ training in *God’s school*, he learned this wonderful Name ; it includes every other Name, title, and attribute of the triune God.

No less than three times does the Spirit of God present to us the title I AM in Exod. 3. 14. We are thus reminded of the triune God : the Father, and Son, and Spirit.

This title, I AM, embraces unitedly the three persons of the Godhead. It is also true of each, but especially is that

endearing and instructive title referred to in connection with the Son, Who is the only-begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth, Who came to declare God, to make Him known, to interpret the Name I AM (John 1. 14-18).

Every thought, and word, every look, every step, every action of His was an expression of God, who was manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3. 16).

Who is the image of invisible God (Col. 1. 15).

The whole fulness of God was pleased to dwell in Him (Col. 1. 19, R.M.).

In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2. 9).

Who being the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance (Heb. 1. 3, R.V.).

I AM THAT I AM.

“Jehovah,” says one, “in taking this title was furnishing His people with a blank cheque, to be filled up to any amount. He calls Himself I AM, and faith has but to write over against that ineffably precious Name whatever we need.”

Oh, what tongue can tell or words describe how much this Name unfolds!

Oh, who can tell *The Power, The Preciousness, The Strength, The Sweetness, The Fragrancy, The Loveliness, The Attractiveness, The Comeliness, The Greatness, The Almightyness, The Tenderness, The Glory, The Riches*, of this wonderful Name? Who in heaven can be compared unto Jehovah? Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto Jehovah? (Ps. 89. 6).

The answer is found in Jeremiah 10. 6. There is none like unto Thee, O Jehovah!

Who art Thou, Lord? . . . The Lord said,
I AM Jesus (Acts 9. 5).

I AM (John 4. 25, 26).

I AM the Bread of Life (John 6. 35, 48).

I AM the living bread which came down from heaven
(John 6. 51).

I AM the light of the world (John 8. 12).

Before Abraham was, *I AM* (John 8. 58).

I AM the door of the sheep (John 10. 7).

I AM the door; by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved.

I AM the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.

I AM the Good Shepherd, and I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me (R.V.).

I AM the Son of God (John 10. 9, 11, 14, 36, R.V.).

I AM the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on Me, though he die, yet shall he live (John 11. 25).

I AM the way, and the truth and the life (John 14. 6).

I AM the true vine (John 15. 1).

I AM the vine (John 15. 5).

I AM the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (Rev. 1. 8, R.V.).

I AM the first, and the last, and the living One, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore (Rev. 1. 17, 18).

I AM the root and the offspring of David, the bright, the morning star (Rev. 22. 16, R.V.).

“Heaven and earth alike confess Thee
As the ever great I AM.”

HIS NAME is:—

The salvation Name (Acts 4. 12).

The healing Name (Acts 3. 16; Exod. 15. 26).

The fragrant Name (Song of Solomon 1. 3).

The worthy Name (Jas. 2. 7; Rev. 5. 9, 12).

The reverend Name (Ps. 111. 9).

The mighty Name (Jer. 10. 6).

The enduring Name (Ps. 72. 18, 19).

The holy Name (Isa. 57. 15).

The gathering Name (Matt. 18. 20).

The good Name (Ps. 52. 9, 54. 6).

The helping Name (Ps. 124. 8, 46. 3-6).

The defending Name (Ps. 20. 1).

The great Name (1 Sam. 12. 22 ; Ps. 45. 3).

The strong Name (Prov. 18. 10 ; Ps. 89. 8).

The everlasting Name (Isa. 63. 16).

Jehovah His Name (Jer. 33. 2 ; Isa. 42. 8).

The rejoicing Name (Ps. 89. 16 ; 1 Pet. 1. 8).

The wonderful Name (Isa. 9. 6).

The excellent Name (Ps. 8. 1, 48. 13 ; Heb. 1. 4).

The Name which is above every name, the Name of Jesus (Phil. 2. 9).

The jealous Name = The Lord whose Name is *jealous*, a jealous God (Exod. 34. 14).

The glorious Name (1 Chron. 29. 13).

The prevailing Name (2 Chron. 14. 11 ; 1 Sam. 17. 45-47).

Dear fellow believer, the Lord is jealous over you, He wants you wholly for Himself. To this end He gave Himself for you to cleanse and purify you unto Himself (Titus 2. 14).

You are not your own, for you are bought with a price (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20); even with His own most precious blood (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19). And that being the case, you are *His own*, and His for ever; His property, His possession. Hence you are to live unto Him who for you died and rose again (2 Cor. 5. 15).

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. Not in man, even though he be an apostle, by saying, "I am of Paul," or "I of Apollos" (1 Cor. 3. 1-7). Those at Corinth were charged by the Lord, through the Apostle Paul, with being carnal for taking these names (1 Cor. 3. 1-4).

Here we have an illustration of the fact that the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God.

He did not want the glory which was due to Himself given to an apostle, as it is written, "I am the Lord, that is My name, and My glory will I *not* give to another" (Isa. 42. 8).

And again: "Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, . . . for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

Now, beloved fellow Christians, what is your estimate of Christ?

Is His precious Name and adorable Person sufficient for you? You have had some of His loveliness, His glories, wonders and excellencies presented to you from God's own Word. You have had God's own thoughts of His well-beloved Son brought before you. Have you received them into your heart? Have you appropriated to yourself somewhat of all that He is in His all-sufficiency?

Then there will no longer be room in your heart for another name. Thus you will be able to say, "Whom have I, Lord, in heaven but Thee? and on earth there is none that I desire beside Thee" (Ps. 73. 25).

Or, as it is expressed in the hymn—

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find."

or, as in another—

"Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other *name* for me;
There's love and life and lasting joy,
Lord Jesus, found in Thee."

You may often have sung this, but has it been "with the spirit and with the understanding also"? (1 Cor. 14. 15).

No one can sing or repeat the above words in truth who says, "I belong to St. Paul's Church," or "I belong to the

Wesleyan Church," or "to the Baptist Church," or any other Church which is not found written in *The Book*. You know that it is sin to say or *sing* anything that is untrue.

The WORTHY NAME is

The Name to glory in (1 Cor. 1. 31),

The Name to trust in (Zeph. 3. 12),

The Name to gather unto (Matt. 18. 20),

The Name to praise (Ps. 113. 1-8),

The Name to bless (Ps. 145. 1),

The Name to give thanks unto (Ps. 140. 13),

The Name to love (Ps. 5. 11, 69. 36),

The Name to exalt (Ps. 34. 3),

The Name to remember (Ps. 45. 17),

The Name to hold fast (Rev. 2. 13),

The Name to do all in (Col. 3. 17),

The Name to call on out of a pure heart (2 Tim. 2. 22),

The Name to be named by those who depart from unrighteousness (2 Tim. 2. 19).

OLA MATTSSON.

BAPTISM.

Essay by a Young Believer.

WHAT DOES BAPTISM SHOW ?

BAPTISM is a type of our death, burial and resurrection with Christ as we find in Romans 6. 3-5, and again in Colossians 2. 12. Baptism is an open profession of our faith, because it lets both the Church and the world know that we are dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6. 11), or, as we get in Galatians 3. 27, that we have put on Christ.

WHO OUGHT TO BE BAPTIZED ?

The Scriptures teach us that it is only believers who are fit subjects for Baptism, as we see in the following passages:—

Acts 2. 41.

Acts 10. 44, 47, 48.

„ 8. 12, 37, 38.

„ 16. 14, 15, 25, 34.

„ 9. 17, 18.

„ 18. 8.

All these passages show us clearly that the people they are written about believed first, and after having believed they were baptized; so therefore Baptism is for believers only.

HOW OUGHT BELIEVERS TO BE BAPTIZED ?

Believers ought to be baptized by immersion or dipping, as we find in Matthew 3. 16, where Jesus, when He was baptized, went up out of the water; so He had to go down into the water before He could possibly come up out of it. And the same thing is again recorded in Mark 1. 10. And it tells us in verse 9 that he was baptized in Jordan, so we know that Jordan would be deep enough to dip one in. And again we read about the eunuch in Acts 8. 38, 39, that both he and Philip went down into the water, and came up again out of the water; so this shows us that baptism actually means to bury one under the water just the same as you would bury a dead body under the ground, for the one that is being baptized is reckoned dead unto sin, therefore, because they are dead, they have to be buried; but when we are buried with Christ by baptism unto death, we are also raised up again with Him in the likeness of His resurrection.

WHY OUGHT BELIEVERS TO BE BAPTIZED ?

Believers ought to be baptized because they are commanded to be in Matthew 28. 19, 20, and again in Acts 10. 48; and we are told in John 14. 15, that if we love Him we

are to keep His commandments, and again in 1 John 5. 3, we are told that His commandments are not grievous; and in being baptized we only go through the shadow or form, for Him, of what He went through in reality for us, and we are told in John 13. 17 that if we know these things, happy are we if we do them; and in 1 Peter 3. 21, that Baptism is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God. It does not make our salvation any surer than it would be were we not baptized, for that is sure enough, because we have God's Word which says in John 10. 28: "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." But it gives us the inward joy of knowing that we are well pleasing to God, because we have done what He wishes us to do.

Therefore I think believers ought to look upon Baptism as a privilege and a command, and ought to obey it as such; for God is better pleased with obedience than sacrifice, as we see in 1 Samuel 15., where the Lord, in verse 3, commanded Saul to go and smite Amalek, and to destroy all that they had, and to slay man, woman, infant, and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. Then verse 9 shows us how Saul saved the best sheep, oxen and lambs, and all that was good; and verse 15 tells us that the people brought them to sacrifice unto the Lord: a very good thing in its way, but it was not what God had commanded so that He had no delight in it. And we see in the 23rd verse that, because Saul had rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord also rejected Saul from being king.

“NOT FIT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD.”

MANY and interesting are the groupings together by the Spirit in the Gospel according to Luke, those of chapters 9. and 10. being most pertinently so for the present time. Seven times therein is the Kingdom of God mentioned. The particular incident that brought out the startling statement, “No man having set his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God,” affords most searching instruction on the eternal principles of truth.

Here, with one and another volunteering to follow Him, yet having some prior earthly thing to do, or wish to gratify, the Lord lays the axe to the root of every tree as opposed to that from which alone the abiding fruit of discipleship can be gathered.

These words have to do with the born-again—the born of God. The unconverted has neither the ability to see nor power to enter the Kingdom of God (John 3.).

Alas! alas! that of those who, because born from above, have ability to see and enter that Kingdom, so many should see and not enter therein; while others enter, yet, “looking back,” become not fit for the Kingdom of God. The plough—the instrument for breaking up what has lain close together. On that he laid his hand, causing thus the Kingdom of God to break up, and break up, that the ground might be prepared to receive the seed of that good word which yieldeth fruit to remain. Ay, and to go on to that whose seed is in itself. Thus producing in others what has been produced in oneself. Compare 1 Thessalonians 3. 8.

But, ah! me, the soul that thus entereth the Kingdom through many tribulations by-and-bye may become discouraged because of the way (Acts 14. 22; Num. 21. 4); then shall the heart turn to that and to those once separated

from through the work of the plough, on which the hand has been willingly laid. For truly opportunity to return is findable by those who may have a mind for such. Compare Hebrews 11, 14, 15, R.V.

The evil heart of unbelief causes the possessor thereof to LOOK BACK; when, lo! such an one becomes a pillar of salt.

“Remember Lot’s wife!”

She had known deliverance both merciful and great. She had heard words of solemn and plain warning. She had begun well. Yet afterwards she looked back—that is, to those and to that she had left behind; and thus became a sore yet sure beacon of warning against the sin of looking back.

It is well to understand clearly what the Kingdom of God is. For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but (is) righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit; in which things he that serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God and approved to men. Whereas, he who becomes not fit for the Kingdom of God may have righteousness, and peace, and joy, that neither is nor can be in the Holy Spirit. Not only so: he may offer service to Christ therein, and thus not please God nor be approved to men. “For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth” (2 Cor. 10, 18).

Besides, the churches of God are bidden to know that there must be, not only rents in them, but also choosings (heresies), in order that the approved may become manifest among them (1 Cor. 11, 18, 19).

Do we not well to inquire—Approved by whom? Manifest to whom?

It was as Christ He suffered, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps. Wherefore, as we tread those steps in reality, the characteristics left on record thereof we shall find repeated in our own experience. For which reason

we should cause ourselves to be well instructed there-ament, so that we may not think it strange nor be disturbed when the evidence of our walking in His steps stares us in the face.

LOOKING BACK

is but the precursor of a more readily-discovered form of backsliding—namely,

GOING BACK.

We must crave our readers' indulgence while we point out that the word translated “*back*” in all the Scriptures we here speak of is given by God in the neuter plural, and means, “The things, or all, once left behind.” Thus, he who is not fit for the Kingdom of God is one who looks back to things and all he had turned from when he laid his hand on the plough in the energy of the Kingdom of God.

Those of John 6, 66, on learning that “with Him, in His steps,” the flesh profiteth nothing, departed from Him unto the things and all they had previously left behind unto being with Him ; and so they walked no more with Him.

A careful examination of the ways of those who so act to-day will always discover the activities of the flesh on the lines of “no profit” to one's self by continuing in obedience to such doctrine.

Very proof from actual deeds we are almost tempted to publish. The true path and ways of him who maintains fitness for the Kingdom of God is set forth in the words of Philippians 3. 13 : “One thing I do, forgetting those things

WHICH ARE BEHIND,

and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press (pursue) according to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

Thus, indeed, is the heart fortified against looking back, and the whole being saved from going back ; while one is also kept on guard that no man take one's crown, neither lose

what one has gained, but rather that a full reward be received, because "I have fought the beautiful fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the Faith." Hallowed possibilities of winning, as also solemn probabilities of losing. He that thinketh he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall. The Judge is at the door. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. The coming of the Lord has drawn near. "The night cometh, when no man can work." Wherefore 1 Corinthians 15. 58. Amen, amen.

JOHN BROWN.

THE KING'S FALL.

WE now come to the saddest and darkest part of David's history: the king's sin with Bath-sheba, the murder of Uriah, and the toleration of Absalom (2 Sam. 11.-15.)

The best of men have failed, and do still fail, and that fact may well humble both writer and reader of these lines, and induce us to watch against the workings of evil; and, in increasing dependence upon God, cry constantly to Him to be kept, lest our feet turn aside from the Lord, and our conduct grieve His Spirit and dishonour His Name. Aaron, the Saint of the Lord, Samuel, Solomon, Peter, and other men of prominence and special gift and service, have turned aside; and since they have, who may not? "Let him who thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Our prayer may well be, "Cleanse Thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be perfect, and I shall be clear from great transgression" (Ps. 19.). Nor does our experience of past help and previous attainment make us proof against present assaults, or relieve us of the need of present vigilance. The circumstance of Peter, one moment in the thoughts of the Father, and uttering that which flesh and blood had not revealed, and almost the next speaking

the suggestion of the Devil, then pronounced "blessed," now called "satan" (Matt. 16.), surely is evidence enough; we cannot, dare not, trust ourselves a moment out of the presence of God.

Think of David, and with what enthusiasm he brings back the Ark (2 Sam. 6., 7.), how God filled his heart, and how joyously he danced before the throne of Jehovah, for God had enabled him to perform his purpose, as Psalm 132. shows. Think of him again as he sat before the Lord, a worshipper, his heart filled with the desire to build a house for the Ark, and though in this his wish might not be gratified, blessed by God, as He, as always, took knowledge of His servant's thoughts and love. Think of all this, and then see the worshipper becoming the adulterer, and the once earnest restorer of the Ark degenerating into the cunning strategist, encompassing the overthrow of the man whose wife he had dishonoured, tarnishing his reign with unrighteousness, and putting a deep, dark blot on the throne whereon God had set him to execute judgment and justice to the people. Let us think of it till, deep, deep down, and yet deeper, the conviction works its way into our hearts, we are only kept as God keeps us, and that conviction stirs us up to lay hold on God.

The sins of David to which we refer were of a two-fold character, however different the circumstances which drew them out. The one was the displacement of truth by the most shocking cruelty. The other, putting aside the kindness of God (see 2 Sam. 11.-14.) for the mere workings of human affection, and indulging that affection against the demands of Divine judgment. At one time the lust for a beautiful woman, at another the love for a beautiful son; and by means of both not only did Satan succeed against David as a man, but accomplished the terrible failure of God's king. As king he was responsible to be the exponent of Divine rule; such rule rests upon righteousness, and

that rule of righteousness goes hand in hand with mercy, and where that righteousness cannot be, mercy will not go.

When the throne is brought into view, David's sin is seen to be greater. It was not only Satan's attack on the man, it was his thrust at God—supplanting God by moving David to act contrary to God. God's king, and the throne, are used by Satan against the Lord, and therein lies the masterpiece of Satanic action.

The Scripture quoted, God's children and God's servants used by Satan, the adversary arming himself from God's armoury. Alas! how Christendom exhibits his success. Error based on Scripture (only Scripture, of course, perverted), gift misused, and its possessor put in the place of the Holy Spirit, and in its multiplicity of ways the creature is put up and God is put out: put out as to His work in first days, as in Romans 1., and from His word as in last days, 1 Timothy 4., 2 Timothy 3.

How deeply solemn and instructive all this is as we ponder the striking contrast: David on the throne executing judgment and justice, and therein reflecting the God of light; then David, moved by his passion, reflecting the Prince of Darkness. David showing the kindness of God to Mephibosheth and Hanun, and therein presenting the mercy-side of his rule; then David allowing his fondness for Absalom to override the Word of God. His failure became easily accomplished through the suggestions of Joab and the woman of Tekoah, owing to the consuming longing of David's soul for his son (2 Sam. 14.).

If Satan tempted David, it might be said that David had tempted the Devil to his work—lazy when he should have been in the battle on the one occasion, and allowing the natural feelings of a parent to turn him aside from the truth on the other.

And now comes David's sorrow. The way of transgressors is hard. The sweets of sin are but for a season, and then

comes the poignant sorrow and the deep distress. Like Peter's bitter tears soon followed the denial of his Lord, so Psalm 51. tells out the King's overwhelming grief, and thereby shows how dearly David had bought his sinful pleasures. The troubled conscience, the broken heart, the loss of joy, no praise for God, the ever-present consciousness of his sin, the agony of mind, as all is brought home to his conscience, tell out what, in David's case, and truly in that of others of God's people, the terrible consequences of sin indulged. Nor is this all: the chastening hand of God brought him to the earth, and took from him the child Bath-sheba bore him; and then in Absalom he found a far deeper sorrow still. Out from *his very sins arise his stings*. That in which his heart had taken sinful pleasure became the very whip to scourge him. Solemn lesson to him who ponders well the ways of God.

Absalom plots for the kingdom, and by his hypocrisy so far succeeds that David has to fly. The man whom human kindness had spared at the expense of truth rises against the very rule under which he had been allowed to live. And is there not something of this to be seen to-day in the crop of trouble and sorrow reaped through sparing, by a misnamed grace, men who should have been avoided, warned, rebuked, and even put away? If Divine rule does not have its righteous way sooner or later, its lack will cause disaster.

The king's kiss made no difference to Absalom's design against him. Firmness, rebuking sharply, is as truly needed in hatred of evil and love of the truth, and no loving words will fitly take their place.

While, however, the king's flight was the outcome of his folly, there lie other lessons for us in the narrative. Scripture, like the living Word Himself, presents more on closer inspection than what appears upon the surface.

David leaving the city, crossing Kedron, ascending Olivet, rejected by his subjects, presents a picture of the Lord Jesus

Himself, who, centuries after David's experiences, left the same city, crossed the same brook, and went to the same mountain, and did so as rejected by His own, who were as ready to cry, "No king but Cæsar," as truly as Israel had acknowledged Absalom their king. In David's time Divine rule was for a time forced out, and a throne of iniquity brought in, and was that not so again when God's Christ, Israel's King, was given to the Cross, and the hour of the creature and of the power of darkness prevailed?

CHARLES MORTON.

ON MIRACLES.

IV.

ONLY one miracle is recorded in all four Gospels: the feeding the five thousand. Eleven are found in three Gospels, six in two Gospels, and seventeen are only named in one Gospel.

Three were raised from the dead, seven had their eyes opened, and six demoniacs were healed.

Mark is the one who presents events in their order of occurrence, and who in doing so crowds events together, yet giving most graphic details, and the rapid, constant ministry of the Son of God stands boldly out before us. Whereas Matthew and Luke arrange and group together incidents that did not happen at the same time, with the object of dispensational teaching in the one, and moral teaching in the other.

The first miracle recorded by Matthew, therefore, is one taken out of its time-order. It is the sixth in that order, but is presented first by Matthew—the healing of a leper by a touch. How fitting this is can be seen as we enter into the fact that this Gospel presents Jesus as the King of the Jews, and shows Him specially in relationship to His

own people. Leprosy, which is pre-eminently the type of sin in connection with Israel (Lev. 13., 14.; Isa. 1. 5, 6; and Isa. 6.), is presented as being among them. That terrible and incurable disease, so far as man was concerned, proclaimed the fact that Israel was at a distance from God. But Jehovah is among them, and He manifests Himself. For in the healing of the leper Christ loudly proclaimed Himself Jehovah, the One able to deal with it. If any other on earth had but touched the leper, he would have been rendered unclean. Not so Christ. The leper kept his distance, and besought His pity. But He drew near, touched, and the touch could not defile, for in that touch the leper was healed. There had been but one leper healed—namely, Naaman (2 Kings 5.). But this man believed. "If THOU wilt, THOU canst." And He healed him, and straightway sent him to the priest to offer the things commanded by Moses. Thus another reason is seen for the leper being put first by Matthew. For a cleansed leper (Lev. 14.) had to offer two birds alive and clean, and thus the fullest testimony was given to the fact that Jehovah present in power was among them.

Immediately following, the healing of the centurion's servant is given, thus conveying to Israel the fact that while He had come in blessing to them, that blessing would widen out and embrace the Gentile. And they are also shown by it that whereas, alas! unbelief was manifested on every hand among the Jews, here was a Gentile whose faith so abounds that Christ marvelled as the centurion said, "Speak the word only" (Matt. 8. 8). Direct power he looked for apart from all natural causes, and it needed neither His presence nor His touch. His will in a moment could accomplish it. The man believed, and found it to be so. "The last shall be first."

In Mark and Luke, however, the healing of the demoniac at Capernaum on the Sabbath comes first. And what a

Sabbath that was! In the synagogue itself a man under demon possession on the Sabbath! Rest! Was there any rest for such a man? Could Christ rest with such an one in His presence,—one who at any moment might be “torn” violently by the demon within him? Impossible. Formalists might. Proud Pharisees, with their broadened phylacteries, who utterly disregarded the miseries of others; and not only so, but were ready to gnash their teeth with indignation at Christ for working, as they called it, on the Sabbath! He would not yield to their prejudices for a moment. The man was there, type of the nation. They must publicly learn that HE only can overcome Satanic power. He does. The demon owns Him as being “the Holy One of God” (Mark 1. 24). Will He accept their testimony? Not for an instant. “Hold your peace,” He quickly says; or, as the word literally is, “Be muzzled”—the words that would apply to a beast.

All who saw were astounded. They cried in sharp sentences, forced from them by such an utterly unheard-of thing. Never before had their synagogue re-echoed with such words, for never had demons been silenced and cast out before. “What thing is this? What new doctrine is this?” (Mark 1. 27).

But Christ, passing out of the synagogue, goes at once to Peter’s house. His sympathy must be shown for one who follows Him. And, entering, He takes by the hand and lifts up Peter’s wife’s mother, who, instantly restored, ministers to them. It is no case of fever passing off and leaving in extreme weakness. But from a “great fever,” as Luke calls it—that is, typhus—she is brought, and all her usual strength comes back at the same moment.

But though Christ will not respect their Sabbath so far as miracle-working is concerned, the people do. Thus only two miracles are recorded as taking place in the day.

But “when the sun did set” (Mark 1. 32), when the

Sabbath was over, what a night scene occurred! "They brought all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with demons. And all the city were gathered together at the door" (Mark 1. 32, 33). Had there ever been such a stir? The whole city moved. What a crowding together of sick and suffering! "And He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them" (Luke 4. 40). What a scene as in the darkness He moved in and out among them, scattering blessing on every hand!

The Gospel according to John, and what it gives of miracles, is almost entirely different from the other three. Eight are recorded—seven during His ministry, and the eighth in resurrection.

The first is at Cana of Galilee—the turning of water into wine. It is evident that it was intended to bring the miracles of Moses and those of Jesus Christ into bold contrast. The one representing law turns water into blood, grace into judgment; but Christ, as representing grace and truth, turns water into wine, grace into glory.

And the miracles selected by John to narrate under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit are all chosen as telling out His glory in different aspects.

Thus we read, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory" (John 2. 11).

This first miracle is evidently intended to display the character of His whole ministry. It is the substituting the better thing. Joy and glory He gives. The second miracle is given so as to bring out the prominent teaching of the Gospel that His glory is seen in leading men to believe His word, apart from all outward signs. The nobleman besought Him to go, but He simply said: "Go thy way, thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way" (John 4. 50).

The feeding of the five thousand—the only one recorded

in all—is brought in specially, as it links with the teaching that followed from it, and Christ in His glory is seen as the Bread of life. The opening of the eyes of the blind (John 9.) displays Him as the Light, and the raising of Lazarus as “the Resurrection and the Life.” Whilst in His walking upon the sea He specially proclaimed Himself as the Creator who had full power over it.

The one miracle recorded as taking place after His resurrection contrasts with the previous miraculous take of fish (Luke 5. 1–11). There the net broke. Here it was not so. “This is now the third time that Jesus showed¹ Himself.” In the first miracle He manifested His glory, and in the last He manifested Himself. And how at home He made His disciples; even Peter boldly hastening into His presence, though lately he had fallen so deeply; now restored, he can feel at home in the presence of the glories of Him whose love had given him such boldness.

The moral glories thus displayed set the miracles of Scripture completely apart from the legends and ridiculous stories of ecclesiastical miracles. Absurd, useless stories, with only one object, the glorifying of a mere man, are not to be compared with these miracles of Scripture, that are so interwoven with the teaching that they make up one beautiful whole.

One who absolutely denies there is a God may be consistent, and, alas! is, in denial of all supernatural power. But when one admits God, he is grossly inconsistent in his denying God’s ability to manifest Himself and His power. To say that such an one as a Divine Being, the self-existent Eternal One, cannot reveal Himself or His power, and cannot at any given time when it pleases Him vary His ways of action, is not only absurd, but it manifests that God is not known.

¹ Same word as the one translated “manifested forth” (John 2. 11).

Given man a sinner, then all is miraculous that connects with redemption work and man's salvation.

R. T. HOPKINS.

"THINE ARE WE."

"Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse"
(1 Chron. 12. 18).

Not on the side of Saul, the popular choice; but with the man of God's own choosing.

Not with the king, who could give them fields and vineyards, and make them captains of hundreds and captains of thousands; but on the side of the despised, hunted, persecuted David.

Not with the man who could not find it in his heart to carry out God's whole command against the Amalekites; but with him who in measure could say, "I delight to do Thy will, O God; yea, Thy law is within my heart."

Others, with little thought of God's will, might say: "We stand by the existing state of things: we can't bear change. Saul is king now, and didn't Samuel anoint him? What more do you want? There's a deal of truth in what rich Nabal said—'There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master.'"

And yet others, with more intelligence, might say: "Oh, yes, we are David's; we believe he is the king to come! Yes, we are David's; but we don't feel like leaving our friends and neighbours, our vineyards and olives, and going out after a man who is down in the world like that. 'Tis true, Jehovah has rejected Saul from being king, and he isn't all he ought to be, we know; but fancy going out to a penniless man, who is hunted like a partridge on the mountains, who has to live in caves and dens of the earth!

Why, it would spoil our prospects in life, and ruin our constitution into the bargain—roughing it like that.”

But it was not so with those who came with Amasai to the hold. They saw God’s choice in that hunted, persecuted David, and nothing would satisfy them but to leave all and go forth to stand or fall side by side with the one to whom their hearts were knit.

Was he hunted? So would they be. Was he persecuted? Their place was at his side. God raised their spirits, so that by their actions they proved the truth of their words—“Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse.”

Beloved, this is not mere matter of history; it is written “for our admonition”; for us “upon whom the ends of the ages are come.” Let us seek to turn it to practical account.

Why are we not to-day with the popular religious leaders of the time? Why are we not even now listening to the eloquent words that fall from the lips of some of them? Why not? Because God has taught us that sectarianism is sin in His sight. Because we have been gathered into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore could not, dare not be anywhere else than in the separate place unto which God has called us, with the One whom He has made Lord as well as Christ.

Why are we not with those of power and influence, where we might gain temporal advantage, where we could win the smiles of the religious world, where all men would speak well of us, calling us large-hearted and liberal-minded, instead of bigoted and narrow-minded? Because God has bidden us come outside of the religious world, which crucified His Christ, and then to go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach—esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of this Egypt.

In these days, when His authority is disowned and His

commandments are disobeyed, may it be ours to emulate those of old, who, in spite of everything, went forth to God's chosen, though as yet uncrowned, king, with the words, "Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse."

May God stir us to true allegiance and loyal obedience to our risen Head, that we may be His not only by redemption, but "on His side," remembering the Lord's own words, "He that is not with Me, is against Me : and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth."

E. M.

Fragments.

LINES quoted, a few hours before his departure, by a brother in Christ :—

"I know that He has, waiting
 For the coming of my feet,
 Some gift of such rare blessedness,
 Some joy so strangely sweet,
 That my lips can only tremble
 With the thanks they cannot speak."

· *From J. F., New Zealand ; 4th May, 1893, 11 p.m.*

"BEHOLD, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest. He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto eternal life. . . I sent you to reap." (John 4. 35 and 38, R.V.). "But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then said He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matt. 9. 36-38, R.V.).

"He that gathereth in summer is a wise son, but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame" (Prov. 10. 5).

Brethren, does the compassion that moves the heart of our blessed Lord and Master, as He beholds the teeming multitudes who are being blinded by the God of this Age, and who are floating down the stream of time to an eternity of woe, move our hearts ?

Are we wise sons, gathering in summer, or are we asleep in harvest, as sons that cause shame ?

“BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY.”

OUR Lord will soon be rising
 Up from His Father's side,
 And come towards the trysting place
 To meet His promised Bride.

Ye ransomed, shout with one accord,
 The joyful news proclaim;
 Bid welcome to our coming Lord,
 Hosannah to His name.

Through death and hell He reached the goal,
 All Satan's powers defied;
 The travail of His spotless soul
 Will soon be satisfied.

The world's smiles and Satan's wiles
 Hold now for us no charms;
 Our resting-place is on His breast,
 Our strength lies in His arms.

Our home is by the crystal sea,
 Beyond the golden gate;
 For ever with our Lord to be,
 We can't have long to wait.

O Spirit, flash the tidings back
 Upon Thy downy wing;
 We'll follow in Thy shining track,
 Bright Harbinger of Spring.

Through pearly gate and golden street,
 Far as the eye can roam,
 And lay our message at His feet,
 “Your Bride is waiting, Come.”

“*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*”

THE LAWLESS ONE.

WE are under the impression that there is a widespread misunderstanding among the Lord's people concerning the coming reign on earth of the Anti-christ. Satan is continually presented before our minds, even from infancy, in a revolting and hideous aspect. Now, whilst this is true in a sense, there is another sense in which it is not only untrue, but becomes a real source of danger.

If we are taught only to be on the outlook for Satan as the "roaring lion," the "old serpent," or the "dragon," we shall fail to recognise him in perhaps his far more dangerous character—that of an angel of light (2 Cor. 11. 14), retaining the beauty and wisdom which proved so fatal to his continuance in his high calling. This beauty, wisdom and power is now being used to the working out of his fixed purpose, or, we would rather say, purposes upon earth; for whilst God has a double purpose—which it would be well, we believe, if His saints better understood—so has Satan.

The first purpose of God is the individual salvation of souls. Sinners may be saved, and never have the opportunity of carrying out the purposes of God upon the earth. Saints will be saved in multitudes so as by fire, who have lost the opportunities they had of doing the work of God in the way God would have it done; yet in the personal salvation of these God will be glorified, and the work of the cross will so far triumph.

But whilst God has, as we have said, the personal salvation of the sinner as one great object in the plan of redemption, there is another purpose, and that is the setting up of the Kingdom and the bringing all things into subjection to Him who is now at His right hand, waiting until His enemies are made His footstool.

Some may say, "That day is yet in the future, the kingdom of God will yet be set up in the earth." Just so, and the present kingdom of God upon earth is almost lost sight of. This is the very thing that Satan desires, for whilst God is opposing Satan, and through the Spirit's work is delivering individual souls from his power, fitting them to be by-and-by in the glory, He is also opposing the workings of Satan towards the setting up of his earthly kingdom by the present kingdom of God, or rule of God, amidst His saints in the present age.

Satan's double purpose is, first, to destroy individual souls—to secure their eternal damnation with him in the Lake of Fire. But, secondly, he is working to set up his kingdom upon earth, and to reign through his christ (the Anti-christ), whose coming will be with power and signs and lying wonders, sufficient, if it were possible, to deceive the very elect. Solemn words these, beloved reader. Are you awake to the subject? Are any of us awake to it? Some have for long seen it, but as the glimmering light of the dawn, and such are waiting with longing hearts for the clearer light of day.

There is something most instructive, most solemn,—we would even say most terrible,—in the audacity displayed by Satan when seeking to accomplish his purposes. The temptation in the wilderness furnishes us with an example of this. He had watched the scene in the busy wayside inn, he had gazed on that Babe, heralded to earth with angels' song, of all spectators perhaps the most concerned. He had sought, through Herod, his earthly tool, the destruction of that princely Babe; for not only was Herod troubled and guilty Jerusalem with him, but Hell was troubled, and Satan, too, for that Babe had come to claim a kingdom and a crown. Yet, though baffled in this his first attempt, he only waits to lay his plans with more subtlety and power, and now in the wilderness he stands face to face with Him

who has come to wrest the kingdom of earth from his grasp, and remodel it into the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. Yet at what a stupendous price this was to be accomplished!

Now, mark the Satanic plot. He takes the Lord to an exceeding high mountain, and shows Him all the kingdoms of the earth in a moment of time, and then comes the offer. Reader, does it not almost make you hold your breath and tremble? Is Hell to be victorious? Is Satan to triumph? Will the One who has come to do the Father's will yield to a temptation of which we can but feebly understand the power? "All these things will I give Thee, and the glory of them. They are mine; I give them to whom I will." The tempter seems to say, "I know your mission; I know the price you will have to pay. You know it, too, but I can save you all; only yield me the homage you now give your God; break off your allegiance to Him, and all I have is yours, and you shall carry out my will on earth." We know what followed. With indignation the blessed Master spurned the proffered gift, discomfiting Satan with His withering rebukes. He went forth with His disciples to preach the glad tidings of the Gospel of the kingdom. The powers of Hell were shaken, and the kingdom of the usurper was made to tremble, for it was against the power of Satan upon earth and his authority that the Lord Jesus directed His Heaven-given mission.

Yet Satan seems to triumph again; and as we look at that lonely Man, forsaken by the multitude, forsaken by His disciples, forsaken by the Twelve, and at last forsaken of His God, we ask, Is God defeated? Are the wiles of the Devil successful? They have laid the Lord in the tomb, they have sealed the stone, they have set the watch, but an empty grave and One at God's right hand proclaim the lawless one as baffled and defeated by the One who hated lawlessness, and who is now exalted.

If our line of thought has been followed thus far, it will be seen that the special thought brought before us is that Satan with unwearied energy has been seeking to accomplish his purposes upon the earth by his ministers as angels of light, and through the varied instrumentalities that are continually under his control. He will yet find one who will accept the kingdom of earth at his hand, and then the lawless one will reign, and the will of Satan be done on earth, in so far as God permits.

But let it not be supposed that this reign of the powers of darkness will consist in that which is hideous or unsightly, and opposed to what man in his fallen nature admires. We believe it may be the very reverse of this. Yet, whilst there will be all that is fair and pleasing to the natural man, there will be that which is in desperate opposition to, and rebellion against, the will of God.

Now, to bring our thoughts to our present surroundings, there may be much around us that is beautiful; there may be the devoted life of the unrenewed man—the beauty that takes the eye and charms the senses, and yet is the herald of coming death and dissolution, perfect order in the eyes of man, yet disorder and rebellion as seen of God. But we may go further, and looking at the busy activity that prevails amongst God's own saints, we may ask the question, how much of this is of God? We do not ask how much of it is pleasing to the natural senses, how much we may admire and wish for the same devotion, but we ask how much will stand the test of that solemn coming day, when every man's work shall be tried by fire? How far is God's will being done amongst His saints? The answer is not for us to give. But we shall be present when the Judge of all the earth gives His decision.

But as to ourselves, beloved brethren, we would ask again how far are we who have sought to take our stand afresh for Him who loved us unto death—how far are

we subject to Him whose will shall yet be done on earth as it is in heaven? We may have left the various sects around us; we may have even left those gatherings of saints in which we found there was no room to carry out the full will of God as He has revealed it, and yet our own rebellious will may still, in great measure, be unbroken and unjudged; lawlessness in our own hearts will soon produce the same fruits in the assemblies of His saints. We do not write thus to discourage any, but to be forewarned is to be forearmed; if many have to-day taken and are taking afresh a place of separation, because they desire to carry out the will of God yet more fully, let us not be surprised if all the power of Satan is stirred up to hinder and defeat—defeat, we say, not order, but God's order; for there may be that which bears the name of order which is but the outcome of rebellion.

If we are to be at peace amongst ourselves, there must be obedience to God's authority in those that rule (1 Thess. 5. 13). Some may argue, "But those that seek to rule are so imperfect." Did God ever rule on earth by any other means? Have you ever noticed the imperfection of all the tools that God has raised up to do His mighty work upon the earth? You might as well reason that all marriage should be abolished because the husband is not perfect in his rule of the house, as argue that elders are not to be recognised or honoured to-day because they are imperfect. We are not called to yield obedience to what is contrary to the revealed will of God, but we are called to yield obedience to that which is in accordance to that will, even though there may be failure on the part of the instrument, as there has been with every man that God has used in the past.

The step which many of us have taken in the last two years has been a costly one; we trust our hearts do not grudge the price. No; we thank God with unfeigned

gratitude that we are free, free from a position in which we found we could not do His will, in which we saw plainly His will could not be done—free to carry out His will now as we learn it.

We have had to leave behind us, for the time being, many that we loved; but many such, we doubt not, in the goodness of God, will yet follow. Joseph was sent before his brethren to preserve life, and if God has in His grace sent us before our brethren to preserve a testimony, many will yet follow when they find the famine increasing where they dwell—not a famine of bread, but of hearing the Word of the Lord. But Joseph was tried before he was exalted; he would not have been fit for his exaltation, nor could he have borne it, had he not first been tried.

Are those who are standing for the truth to-day being tried? Are they being falsely accused as he was? Are their imperfections and failures being pointed out? Let them not be discouraged; the way to power was through the dungeon. The dream of supremacy was pleasant enough to Joseph, he talked of it to his brethren; but the pathway to that supremacy was quite another thing.

It is often easy to point out the failures of others, to show how they have gone wrong, to denounce their inconsistencies; and this all may be done whilst we are losing sight of our own condition and walk before God. We may point out lawlessness all around us, whilst our own lawless wills may be bringing sorrow into the assembly. But it is quite another thing to be patiently and quietly carrying out the will of God; this requires a continuance in well-doing that will ever test and try us. Any man may destroy a piece of machinery because he can point out some imperfection in its workmanship, but it is not any man or every man who can make a perfect machine. Let us remember this, and that the perfect machinery of the

House of God, if it is to accomplish His purposes, requires something more in men than an ability to destroy all that they consider is not of God.

J. A. BOSWELL.

LOOKING OFF UNTO JESUS.

(Continued from p. 108.)

THERE is still further and precious teaching linked with this practical exhortation. The object of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to remove anything and everything from before us, that we may see "Jesus only." "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10. 9) is that which characterizes the epistle. Angels, Moses, Joshua, Sabbath, Aaron, Sacrifices, all put on the shelf as shadows done with, the great Antitype and fulfiller of all having come, and death being accomplished. He being risen is seen to faith as having passed through the heavens and set down at the right hand of God. "We see Jesus" (Heb. 2. 9) "crowned with glory and honour."

Wherefore consider Him "Apostle and High Priest of our profession," or "confession" as the word is (Heb. 3. 1). Not for the purpose of imitating Him (that elsewhere and in other connection), but as the One who on our behalf before God bears us in and bears us up. Consider Him in His suitability as Apostle and High Priest. Faith takes the place of sight.

The old has passed away, the new has been ushered in. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Heb. 11. 1). And properly to illustrate the life, walk, trial, and triumph of Faith this chapter crowds in a host of those who lived and acted in faith. Partakers of the heavenly calling, we are called upon to see this cloud of witnesses, and admire the steadfastness of their faith, God given. Nay, more, to be encouraged by it. But

our eye is not to continue fastened on these ; there is One exalted above all. The Spirit of God seized upon the one grand act of faith with these Old Testament worthies, and named it ; but Christ is the Perfecter of faith. Perfection in all His life, thoughts, and acts. It could not be otherwise. This gives force to the opening verse of Hebrews 12. : “ Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking (off, full force of word) unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of faith,” the Beginner or Prince and Perfecter of faith. For the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, He despised the shame.

What a cloud of witnesses ! Men of whom the world was not worthy. Men of whose faith the record is on high, and whose record is in the Scriptures to stimulate us in this life and walk of faith. Look at them. Contemplate them. All the time ? No ; “ looking off” unto Jesus,” not the Perfecter of our faith : “ our” is in italics—leave it out. It is no question of our faith, but having shown to us a cloud of precious witnesses, whose faith is to be admired and imitated yet by these words, he points out that after all they are not perfect. The one who walked most closely with God failed. All was not perfection ; but Jesus, the Prince and Perfecter of faith, never failed. As man here His way was perfect. We read of the meekness of Moses and the patience of Job, but never is the Lord Jesus thus spoken of. They were marked out by these graces in particular ; but in Christ every grace was present in fullest perfection. Therefore, “ looking off” unto Him, we ever have a perfect example. These verses are only given after the full standing of the Christian is unfolded—not until he is seen having boldness to enter into the holiest as a purged worshipper with no more conscience of sin (chap. 10.).

Then the difficulties and trials that befall in the path of faith down here are brought out, and the only successful way of running the race spoken of—"looking off." He does not take His people at once out of them, but He leaves in, for His glory and their blessing, as "tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed" (Rom: 5. 3-5). The hope set before us giving the power to endure while left in the trial, for the perfecting of faith, for blessing to self and to others, as we learn never to trust in the flesh, but in the living God. Having looked to Jesus as the Lamb of God, and thus obtained life, Satan, if he can, will, as the adversary, hinder in continuing to look. Looking, we have life; but looking off, we endure—the life is displayed to His glory. Because, when looking off, we can lay aside every weight. The man about to run in the race leaves off all superfluous clothing. He casts aside, not because of what it is, but because he is going to run. Nothing must be allowed to hinder. So with the Christian. He is running: every weight must go, and the sin that doth so easily beset us. Evidently, in its first application, seeing that it is common to all, it refers to the sin of unbelief—that which besets every Christian alike. As soon as Satan comes in with the whisperings of unbelief, we are in danger. Only as faith lays hold of the unseen are we enabled to live superior to all that is of the flesh within and the world without. Christ at the right hand of God, and our association soon, very soon with Him in His joy and eternal glory seen brings victory. Lose sight of Him, and we are overcome. Then we may also see how it can refer to that sin in particular which we have constantly to watch against: the sin that held power over us in particular before our conversion. Were you a drunkard, proud or selfish, fond of worldly pleasures, then whatever it was by which he kept you from Christ at one time that he will try to use in drawing you away from Him

now that you are His. Unhindered living for God and true looking off unto Jesus can only result from daily childlike trust in Him. Anything that was the weak point before you were converted, watch against it. Let love for Him become less, and at once the eye off Him sin besets, and gains ascendancy. It is a very small thing, it may be, that will come in, but, if not resisted, greater will follow, and that very quickly.

Nothing is trifling if Satan can use it to turn away the eye from Christ. Resist the first inroad of sin, watch against ever with prayer.

There is one other verse in connection with looking that I would link with those already referred to: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: FOR WE SHALL SEE Him as He is" (1 John 3. 2). We began by looking, and we are to go on looking until that moment when He takes us to be with Himself, when we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is—a lifelong looking unto Jesus as the Lamb of God, as the One in the glory, as the One who endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, as the Risen and Coming One. Whereas 2 Corinthians 3. shows to us that while on earth it is only in measure that we can be like Him. "From glory to glory," with ever a succeeding glory beyond us. This chapter tells us we shall be like Him, for we shall see. Looking now, we progress; looking then, we shall be like. It is a measure of progress in the one; it is full perfection in the other. Looking by the glory's transforming power, we become more like Him; but looking in that moment of His return, we shall be fully like Him.

"Every man that hath this hope in Him" (in Christ) "purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3. 3), is what the Apostle adds. Thoughts, purposes, habits, character, all will be brought under the power of the glory, and

regulated by His coming. For this we have been led to Christ. Those who have that hope as a living reality in their souls know what it is to seek to walk in the path of holiness and in self-judgment before God. The result of beholding Him will be that we can gladly throw aside the old things of earth, as the constraining love of Christ takes and keeps possession of us. He is coming, quickly coming; any moment He may be here. By faith we grasp it; then we are equipped. Satan finds us watching. He is defeated. Trial awaits us here; much tribulation in the path homeward, but how soon it will all be past!

“ Now we watch and struggle,
 And now we live in hope,
 And Zion in her anguish
 With Babylon must cope.
 But He whom now we trust in
 Shall then be seen and known,
 And they who know and see Him
 Shall have Him for their own.”

R. T. HOPKINS.

COUNTED WORTHY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

IN the First Epistle to the church of Thessalonians, chapter 2., we learn how very much the Apostle concerned himself as to the manner of life those believers lived.

He reminds them of his nursing-mother-like tenderness in nourishing and cherishing them, as also of his fatherly nurturing of them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord (comp. Eph. 6. 4).

He explains that the end of all this care was unto their so valuing God's grace to them that, in grateful, holy appreciation thereof, they would walk worthily of Him Who was calling them into His own kingdom and glory (see chap. 2. 12, R. V.). The fact that God was CALLING them into His kingdom establishes the truth that being a believer

(a born-again person) does not of itself ensure one's being in that kingdom.

However, in the Second Epistle to the church of Thessalonians, chapter 1., it is made plain how heartily and fully those of Thessalonica had responded to God's call.

Their position and condition as a church are here shown to have been of such a nature that the Apostle boasted concerning them in the sister assemblies of God. Thanks also he felt bound to give to God because their faith grew exceedingly, while the love of each one of them all abounded toward one another.

Their faith and patience in all the persecutions and tribulations which they endured did manifest God's righteous judgment of them; that is, His estimate of what He accounted them worthy to receive at His hands. It is a necessity in present life circumstances that through many tribulations we enter the kingdom of God. The tribulations which these Thessalonians endured consisted in suffering for the kingdom of God (see verses 3 to 6). The purport and meaning of the expression

"BEING COUNTED WORTHY"

finds helpful explanation and corroboration in two other scriptures where the word and phrase occur; namely, Luke, chapter 20. 35; Acts, chapter 5. 41.

From the doctrine of those verses we are instructed of an election unto honour and glory according to the will of God. When the Lord spoke to the disciples about "His rising from among the dead" they kept the saying, questioning among themselves what rising *from among* the dead should mean (Matt. 9. 9, 10).

The resurrection *of the dead* they had well understood, but a rising from among the dead they did not understand. Indeed, we may remark, in passing, that the distinction made in these phrases is that which makes easy of understanding the first resurrection as being "Of those raised *from among*

the dead" (Rev. 20. 5, 6), as the after resurrection is of *the dead* (John 5. 28, 29; Rom. 2. 1-16; Rev. 20. 11-15).

Not all who are Christ's—not all the saved dead—shall know resurrection from among the dead. Nay, verily; only those whom God accounts worthy shall obtain such. Of these we believe "the dead in Christ" (1 Thess. 4. 16-18), "Old Testament saints" *according to the order of Hebrews 11.*, "The Infant dead," "The two Witnesses" (Rev. 11.), "The slain under the Antichrist" (Rev. 20.), alone *shall be* counted worthy,¹ as the blessed firstfruit thereof is Christ Himself.

There were thousands and thousands of believers in Jerusalem in the time of Acts 5. Yet of such the Apostles alone appear to have been *counted worthy* to suffer dishonour for THE NAME. At any rate, they were so accounted, for which grace and honour they rejoiced and waxed bold (Acts 5. 41, 42, R.V.); in the light of which the fitness and necessity of the Apostle's prayer (2 Thess. 1. 11) stand out in bold relief. For which causes let the like-minded exercise themselves on behalf of kindred assemblies of God. Even praying always that our God may count these worthy of the calling of them, and fulfil every good pleasure of goodness, and the work of faith in power; that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in them and they in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Happy indeed is the people in such a case. Yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord—knowing neither breakings-in nor breakings-out, but the blessedness of Psalm 144., with the assurance that neither looking back nor going back (will ye also go

¹ We understand that the dead in Christ are counted worthy to obtain resurrection from among the dead in the exercise of God's sovereign grace entirely apart from any personal worthiness. Whereas being counted worthy of the Kingdom of God whilst in the body depends upon the working of the Spirit of God on our hearts and ways, and our obedience thereto.

away?) becomes them unto whom such grace and truth have come.

Nay, rather, that, counted worthy to obtain that Kingdom, with redoubled "Looking unto Jesus as the Author and Perfecter of the faith," let such press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high (or upward) calling of God in Christ Jesus, unto fighting the good fight, unto finishing the course, unto keeping the faith and the gaining of His surely recompensing word "Well done," "Well done"—even His Who cometh quickly, having His reward with Him, Who shall render to each man according as his work shall be (or is!) (Rev. 22. 12, R.V.).

JOHN BROWN.

"REMNANT DAYS":

THEIR HISTORY AND LESSONS.

It hath been said (whether rightly or wrongly may be open to question) that history repeats itself; yet, what cannot be questioned is, that principles of God in His ways and dealings with His people Israel in a bygone age furnish help and instruction unto the learning and understanding of His principles for His people's guidance in the present age, which such Scriptures as Romans 15. 4 and 1 Corinthians 10. 11 should be amply sufficient to prove.

In the light of this we would seek to consider some of the ways of God with the remnant of Israel, in the day of their remnant history and testimony, as told out in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, with the messages of Jehovah, through the lips of His prophets, for them in those days.

It is instructive to notice that the appeal of Jehovah to the remnant of His people—Judah in Babylon—was to the "spirits" of the same. The Lord first of all "stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia" (Ezra 1. 1). He who is the God of the spirits of all flesh (Num. 16. 22), and who

holdeth the king's heart in His hand, and turneth it whithersoever He will (Prov. 21. 1), uses Cyrus as an instrument in His hand, for the accomplishment of His purposes, and through him appeals to the spirits of His people. Is there not in all this much to guide one in the matter of subjection to the powers that be, which are ordained of God? As in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, their Gentile ruler, to whom God hath handed over His people, on account of their rebellion and disobedience, in order that through His disciplining of them thus He may work godly sorrow unto repentance; yet, where that is accomplished, on the part of some, at least, His bringing of them back is with the full consent and response of Cyrus' spirit to the purpose of God concerning them. His will bent in unison with God's will, so that in responding to and obeying that which the enlightened spirits of those of Judah knew to be the will of their God, they were yet in complete subjection to the authority of him who was over them, in the purpose and will of God.

In such a manner God made it *possible* for those whose spirits He had raised to render obedience to all the claims of Jehovah upon them, in being where He would have them to be, and in doing that which He had appointed for them to do. He did not forcibly take them from their Gentile Ruler's grasp; neither did He, as far as the people were concerned, make it a *forced* necessity their going up, as had been their bringing down; but rather a test of their spirits' response to the claims of His will learned and known, and their souls' devotedness to Himself—Jehovah, the Unchanging One. Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem. Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, with all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up and build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem (Ezra 1. 3, 5).

Here is a response from some at least such as well might be expected to such an appeal. "The chief of the fathers," responsible ones to guide into the will and ways of God (while, alas! it is so often otherwise)—they, with all whose spirit God has raised, having heard His call, by faith, prepare to obey. Had the call of God some earthly advantage to offer, some possible opportunity of becoming famous, or at least afforded them some inducements to go, many more might doubtless have been found to respond to it; but, as it is, there is no prospect of anything further, to the natural eye, than a heap of ruins, involving much hard work; enemies to meet, and no end of difficulty; and so the response is small indeed—at first, at least; and the greater part, the majority, preferred their ease and their comfort in their Babylonish cities, in the midst of Babylonish worship and ways, and to remain without the Name, and consequently without the presence, of Jehovah, indifferent to His claims, His commandment and will.

How fully this has its answer to-day we do not pretend to be in ignorance of. Children of God, hopelessly, shall we say? mixed up with all the abominations of apostate christendom in its many forms and phases of evil, so dishonouring to the character and claims of Him who hath made them His—saved from Hell, and to be in Heaven! yea, doubtless; and yet how little appreciation of what God expects from them as His! of what His purposes with them presently are, and of what His will for them to know and obey is! Should not such a word as this find its response from the spirits of many who are thus ensnared: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you in, and will be to you for a Father, and ye shall be to Me for sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6. 17, 18); and again, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" (2 Tim. 2. 19).

The spirit raised by God to hear His commandment, and thus to learn His will, there is then love to Him as the response of soul, without which there might have been the knowledge of His will, but the obedience thereto lacking; now spirit and soul control the body, so that the feet tread the ways which He hath before prepared for them to walk in, and hands do service which is well-pleasing to Him. "Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity . . . and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city" (Ezra 2. 1). The recording of the names and numbering of the families tell out Jehovah's appreciation of this response to His will. "God is not the author of confusion." The total number is but a small proportion of the once united and large host of Israel's tribes, and but a small proportion of those carried into captivity of Judah and Benjamin; but God's thought and purpose is not now to restore the kingdom as it once was, but to bring out from such a people fitted and prepared of Him for the accomplishment of His will. Hence it is not quantity he seeks, but quality: condition and position such as He can own, a people with whom He can walk, and through whom He can work. All this is sufficiently clear and instructive to lead us to know, and thus preserve us from, the device of Satan, used with such complete success toward many at the present time, to blind them as to God's purpose, and to turn them away from His will; who reason, that if it were of God, greater and fuller would be the response. In the light of the present teaching, will it be reasoned that, because the ten tribes were in the majority as to numbers, therefore they were right? or again, that those that remained in Babylon, because they were more in numbers, that consequently they must be right? Surely not! Yet such is, alas! a most common way amongst many of reasoning such things.

(To be continued.)

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 7. 17, R.V.*

QUESTION 53.—*What is the difference between the four living creatures in the midst of the Throne, and the four-and-twenty elders round about the Throne, as given in Rev. 4. and 6.?*

The living creatures of Rev. 4. seem to be one with those described by Ezekiel, chapter 1. verse 5, and chapter 10. 15. In this last verse we see that the living creatures are synonymous with the cherubim. The cherubim, then, seem to be connected with the very presence, power, and majesty of Jehovah, so that when a habitation was built on earth which was a copy of the things in the heavens (Heb. 9. 23) cherubim are made in beaten work, and it was from the inner sanctuary that the glory of Him who dwelt between the cherubim shone forth. In Rev. 6. we find each of the living creatures crying “Come”; and in response to this fourfold summons the wrath of God is seen let loose upon earth in all its terrible and living power, “for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” This fourfold period of judgment is afterwards extended into other imagery, but all emanates from this centre.

When we come to the elders, they are round about the Throne, occupying a near position, but not the same as the living creatures. We understand the elders to represent God’s governmental dealings *on earth*. Twelve seems to be the governmental number for earth, and by this number the earth was divided (Deut. 32. 8). When the rule of God was rejected by the nations, a nation was separated to God, and the land of Israel divided by twelve. In this sphere the elderhood was called to act for God in rule on earth. When Israel failed, and was set aside, then heavenly rule was set up in the Church and Churches of God, twelve coming out again in the twelve apostles. First the Church of God in Jerusalem became the one and only sphere of Divine government on earth, afterwards the Churches of God. Twice twelve, or twenty-four, being used at this point seems to us to indicate this solemn fact; till this point there had ever been a government of God on earth, but now earth is left to the wrath of God and the power of Satan. Thus that which represents the government of God on earth is now seen round about the Throne in heaven, the number being doubled seeming to us to indicate two things: first, that the rule of old and new dispensation is for the moment passed; secondly, that there is perfect safety for the saints of both dispensations away at this point from earth, its plagues and judgments, and seen in the elderhood round about the Throne.

QUESTIONS 54, 55.—*What is the Scriptural order of reception into the Church? Can Acts 2. 41 be contended for in any case in the present day? Please answer and prove from Scripture the ground and order of receiving into Church of God.*

These questions if fully answered would involve more than our space admits.

In reference to Acts 2. 41, we must bear in mind that this was a condition of things for the time being. To appeal to this condition as the pattern for our action at the present time would be much the same as if an Israelite in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah appealed to what was done by the nation of Israel immediately after their deliverance from Egypt, setting aside all that God had revealed to the nation as to His will after that period. It is easy to see what utter confusion and disaster such a principle would have produced, yet we believe the appealing to the second of Acts alone has produced and will produce much the same results.

Yet there are points to be noted in the above chapter. "All that believed were together," but they were together as those who continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. They were together as owning the authority of the Lord in baptism. We say emphatically they were not together *simply as believers*.

The thought conveyed by this expression, we believe, is utterly opposed to the Word and to the order of the House of God.

We would remind our readers that we occupy to-day not the position of the second of Acts, where we see a delivered people corresponding with the delivered people of Israel prior to the setting up of the Tabernacle, also prior to the entrance into the land where they received fuller revelation of the will of God concerning the kingdom, but we occupy the position of those who are seeking to return to where the whole will of God, as it has been revealed to the Churches of God, can be carried out.

In connection with reception into the Churches of God one among many important points to be considered is the responsibility of the eldership. This we find running through Old and New Testament. Read and consider carefully Exodus 12. 21, where the elders have the ordering of the Passover Feast, also Joshua 20. 4 and Deuteronomy 19. 12, where the reception and delivering up of the man-slayer is their responsibility.

Was there a second mode of action, which set all responsibility of the elders aside and permitted the friends of the man-slayer to receive him into the city of refuge—in other words, a way by which to-day unbaptized persons, and those who have no intention of continuing in the apostles' doctrine when that doctrine prevents their carrying out their own will, can be brought in to the breaking of bread by a

friend, or on their own testimony to one or two at the door of the meeting-place, without the elders, much less the Church, having the opportunity of acting for God? If there be such a way let those who believe it show it from Scripture, for this has never yet been done.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 56.—*What is the sense of the word "as it is fit in the Lord" (Col. 3. 18)?*

This question opens up to us a wide field of thought, which we seek to touch on briefly.

There are five things which we find spoken of in the Word of God: "in one Body" (Col. 3. 15); "in the Church" (1 Tim. 3. 15); "in the Kingdom" (Rev. 1. 9); "in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7. 39); "in the Spirit" (Rev. 1. 10). Each of these expressions has connected with it a distinct line of thought: all saved in the present dispensation through faith in Christ are in the Body, but all are not in Churches of God.

One may be in a Church of God, yet not married in the Lord. Marriage in the Lord implies much more than two Christians being united, for if one of these is associated with the lawlessness of sectarianism and the other seeking to walk in obedience, such a union would not be "in the Lord." "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" In the text cited the wife is to obey the husband in the Lord, but this can only be as obedience to the husband does not set aside the prior claim of the Lord's authority over all His children. It is not a mere unintelligent yielding of obedience to one whose own walk is that of disobedience.

A Church of God is the only thing on earth to-day that has any claim over God's people, because it is for a Church and Churches of God only that there is collective legislation.

If there is no Church of God to-day there is no sphere on earth in which the purposes of God can be carried out. (We do not mean that God is not over-ruling all things according to His good pleasure; this is utterly different.) It is within the circle of God's government that marriage in the Lord and obedience in the Lord should be manifested.

John in Patmos was in the Kingdom; he was associated with the Churches of God, owning the same authority as they, although we do not believe there was any assembly in Patmos with which he was gathering. We also find that he was in the Spirit; this is not identical with the Spirit being in us, which is common to all those that believe.

J. A. B.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SERVICE.

PART III.

IN our two former papers we endeavoured to present the perfect analogy between the principles of *service* in the past and present dispensations, viz., that service, to be in all points acceptable, must emanate from a Divine centre, "the house of God."

We also endeavoured to show the identity of purpose in the revelation of God regarding the *testimony* of His people, viz., they were saved to witness for God and to serve Him with *all they possessed*.

We would now examine the Scriptures in the New Testament which reveal to us the will of God regarding the offerings of the saints. Under law the offerings of Israel were apportioned among "the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow."¹ We will not attempt to define precisely the New Testament analogy of "the stranger"; the others may simply be defined thus: the Lord's servants and the Lord's poor ones.

For a more accurate understanding of the will of our God on this subject, we will consider these points separately, namely,—

I. The Lord's poor ones.

"The poor *always* ye have with you."² These words were uttered by the Lord Jesus when He was the Guest of the poor, and who also said regarding Himself, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Born into this world in its most humble circumstances, He knew and experienced the lot of the poor.

What grateful thoughts arise in our minds while we

¹ Deut. 26. 12.

² John 12. 8.

meditate on the reasons which led "the Lord of glory" to become "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief"! When we in any measure enter into the thoughts of God concerning these words: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich,"¹ we adore the God who so loved us and gave up His Son to endure poverty.

He left the glories of heaven in obedience to His Father's will, and by that same will found Himself a *poor Man* upon the earth, not only dependent upon God as His Servant, but in a large measure upon those whose hearts were opened to minister unto Him. Amongst the many miracles wrought by Him for the benefit of others, we have no record of any wrought to supply His own need, for He preferred the ministry of loving hearts to the exercise of His Divine power. And those who enjoyed these blessed privileges were chiefly found among the poor.

We would impress upon each of our readers that this great self-denial of our blessed Lord was for *our sakes*, and for *our blessing*. We cannot understand the fulness of the glories which He left, but we can enter into the poverty that He endured. We can also appreciate the great privilege bestowed upon those who ministered to His needs, and are apt to exclaim,—

"How I wish I had been with Him then."

When we also remember that *one* of the reasons for His humanity, with its attendant circumstances, was that, being "made like unto *His brethren*, He might be a merciful and faithful High-priest,"² etc., we can understand in some degree His solicitude for His poor ones. The words of praise and commendation to those who have ministered to them are, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto *one* of the *least* of

¹ 2 Cor. 8. 9.

² Heb. 2. 17, 18.

these *My brethren*, ye have done it unto *Me*.”¹ What a blessed truth is here foreshadowed! The corn of wheat fell into the ground and *died*, but springing up in the power and beauty of resurrection life, it has borne much fruit. And not only so, but each ear on the stalk, each blade and fibre, is a part of the whole. Here then is a great foundation truth of this dispensation, the Body of Christ. *Every* sinner redeemed by His precious blood has been baptized “in one Spirit into one Body,” and now the relationship to Him is “members of His Body.”²

This great truth is further exemplified in the voice from heaven which aroused Saul of Tarsus to a sense of his sin: “Why persecutest thou *Me*?” Oh that this twofold principle may be impressed upon our hearts, that we may fear to unnecessarily wound a fellow-member of His Body! But grasping the truth in the power of God, may we realise that we are called to the highest service on earth, viz., to minister *unto Him* through His members.

There is another relationship through which God appeals to us in this service: “Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth *his brother* have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”³ Such action as is here described would be rightly accounted unbrotherly in the relationships of life; then how much more so among the children of God?

Again, we are reminded in that Epistle of practical exhortations that “pure religion and undefiled before God *and the Father* is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows *in their affliction*.”⁴ A little more attention to these precepts might form a valuable corrective to some of us who may be in danger of being entirely absorbed in less practical matters.

It is only when we understand these relationships that

¹ Matt. 25. 40.

² Eph. 5. 30.

³ 1 John 3. 17.

⁴ Jas. 1. 27.

the fellowship shall be manifested, for the will of the Lord is plain and definite on this matter. As in the Old Testament there were "exceptional" and "regular" offerings, so in the New. When any *special* need arose it was promptly met. The case in Acts 11. furnishes an illustration of exceptional giving. Agabus prophesied that a dearth would come upon the habitable world, and the saints responded at once. This shows not only the *continuation*, but a *development* of the principles of Acts 2. and 4.

The *continuation* of these early principles is seen in that there is no record of any appeal for help by the prophet. He simply declared a prophecy, in the power of the Spirit, that certain facts would eventually take place. It appears to us that *no appeal was required*. So thoroughly did the early saints in many cases understand the principles of the fellowship, that facts had only to be stated, when the disciples *determined* to send relief unto *the brethren*, each man according to his ability. The *development* of the principles of the fellowship is also very marked in this passage. In Acts 2. and 4. the need was *before their eyes*. It arose in the midst of the assembly in Jerusalem. But at Antioch the gift was for brethren whom they *had not seen*, and only knew by report, yet the response was as hearty and spontaneous.

This development is also attested by the general response of nearly all the Gentile Churches in the same circumstances. Being in the fellowship meant that the need of any was undertaken by the whole, because in the will of the Lord "they had all things in common."

Concerning the "regular" offerings for the Lord's poor ones, very little need be added. In 1 Cor. 16. 1-4, the Apostle declares what may be termed a *standing order* amongst the Churches of God. On the first day of the week, the day when, in fellowship with the Lord, we

show His death, the saints are exhorted to lay by them in store *as God has prospered them*. Here is the New Testament endorsement of the principles we previously examined in the Old Testament, the regular offering upon Resurrection Day. And this blessed ministry is forcibly illustrated in Gal. 2. 9-11. While the two great apostles recognised that their spheres of ministry lay in different directions, yet they both understood that wherever they were the obligation was laid upon them to remember the poor. For "the poor *always* ye have with you."

II. The Lord's servants.

"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28. 19, 20); "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16. 15, 16). These definite commandments of our Lord will obtain "till the end of the age"; therefore so long will the privilege belong to the Churches of having "fellowship in the gospel."

The analogy between the Levites and those whom the Lord has specially called to the service in this dispensation is very striking. The Levites were not self-appointed officials, neither were they appointed by the people. They were definitely chosen by God. Even so in the Churches: "He gave some . . . evangelists, and some shepherds and teachers" (Eph. 4. 11).

The Levites did not require to establish their own claim to the service, for God made it manifest to the people. So "God hath set" (placed) "some *in the Church*," etc. (1 Cor. 12. 28). Also: "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit *did set* you overseers," etc. (Acts 20. 28). Thus the gift bestowed by Christ is put into its proper place by God and by the Spirit.

The sons of Israel were commanded by God to lay their hands upon the Levites *before* they undertook the service of the Tabernacle, establishing the principles of fellow-

ship in that service. The laying on of hands is the symbol of identification both in the Old Testament and in the New; and it is this dual principle that creates and maintains the fellowship of the service. A careful examination of the Acts of the Apostles conclusively shows that the above principles were uniformly adhered to. (See Acts 8. 5-14, 13. 1-5; specially 14. 26-28, 15. 40, 16. 1-3, 18. 24-28.)

There is nothing in the above scriptures that would suggest the course that has been followed by many in the past. A brother left his calling asserting his claim to be "recognised" as a servant of the Lord. He usually styled himself an "evangelist." Without any identification by those with whom he had been associated, and even against their advice and entreaties, he went forth, and was accepted by assemblies whose principles were similar to his own.

The Word of God shows such procedure to be grossly independent, mere *human will*. We would solemnly appeal to overseers to consider the above scriptures, lest by any means, even unwittingly, the assemblies be corrupted by this form of lawlessness. For such men in the past have always proved themselves to be apostles of Independency.

What authority have we from God to encourage such men in their unscriptural ways? Where are their credentials? It would be the very kindness of God to such persons to resolutely refuse to have any fellowship until they were commended by the assemblies where they are known, and overseers of any district would be guilty before God if they did not warn other assemblies of any one who persisted in this lawless course.

When the principles of Scripture are understood, the service becomes very real to us, and fellowship with the Lord's servants very sweet. It is no longer "a week's meetings and a week's pay," and no further exercise until

next "visit." May such mechanical ideas be put far from us.

But we would remind our readers that the gifts were brought *directly to God*, and He gave His own instructions for their disposal. If this is lost sight of, then the blessed relationship between the Churches and the Lord's servants ceases to exist. In its place arises what is revolting to every godly man. The Churches, or the moneyed individuals in them—become the *patrons*, and the labourers become the servants of men. It is painful to behold the patronage bestowed by wealthy men and women upon those who profess to work upon scriptural principles. The self-elected committee of the sect first approve a man and then send him round to expatiate upon his newly found zeal for the work of God. He is then named in their organ and at their conference and thereby constituted an accredited man. This latest form of clerisy admirably adapts itself to the views of the wealthy members of the system, and, of course, there is rarely any lack of funds. We sincerely hope that this pernicious mode has been left in the sect that originated it.

While we deprecate patronage in any form, we would also avoid independency on the part of the Lord's servants. The Lord Himself was ministered to by the very poorest of His disciples; therefore the servant ought not to be above his Master. When the will of the Lord is obeyed, the Lord's people and the Lord's servants occupy the simple standing, viz., mutual dependence upon God and fellowship with each other.

Oh that these principles were written upon our hearts, that the fellowship may be so manifested in this respect, that the windows of heaven may be opened, and that the blessing of our God may be poured upon us! The Lord *loveth* the cheerful giver, because such an one is a reflex of Himself.

As our space is limited, we would urge upon our readers an attentive and prayerful study of 1 Cor. 9., with 2 Cor. 8. and 9., upon this subject. In the former is revealed to us the obligation to maintain accredited servants of the Lord, culminating in the very definite statement, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

In the two latter chapters the same obligation is viewed in the light of the example of Christ—His self-denial. This cuts at the very root of worldliness or extravagance. When we meditate upon the self-denial that led to the poverty of our blessed Lord, where is the excuse for self-indulgence on the part of those who have taken their place "outside the camp"? We have known the children of believers to be indulged with more money to buy "sweets" and other trash than their parents thought necessary to give for the work of God. May we all be stirred up by our God to look these matters fairly in the face and to remember His very definite commandments:—

"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn";

"The labourer is worthy of his reward";

"Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto" (have fellowship with) "him that teacheth *in all good things*";

"We ought therefore to receive" (sustain) such, that we might be fellow-helpers *to the truth*" (1 Tim. 5. 18; Gal. 6. 6; 3 John 5-8).

These commandments of our God are part of "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," and for which we are exhorted to contend. They also form a part of "the order of God's house." How easy to contend for these terms in the abstract and forget that these very principles are one of the ways by which the fellowship can be manifested.

And the solemn fact is also manifest that where these commandments are not obeyed the profession of the fellow-

ship is an empty form, a name to live while they are spiritually dead. The assembly in Corinth was "of God," yet the principles of the fellowship were scarcely discernible among them, necessitating the apostolic reminder that "*they were called* unto fellowship of His Son" (verse 9).

We cannot close this paper without contrasting the above with the Divinely drawn picture in the Epistle to the Philippians. This assembly stands prominent in the New Testament as a manifestation of Divine order; "the saints . . . together with the overseers and ministers." Each in their own appointed place, the will of the Lord was accomplished. And for this assembly Paul unceasingly gave thanks to God for their "fellowship in the gospel *from the first day till now.*" Theirs was not an ephemeral effort produced by the stirring words of some teacher, but a *continuous obedience* to the commandments of God. And such obedience ascends "an odour of a *sweet smell*, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God."

And such obedience brings out the "precious promises" that strengthen the faith of disciples, but which are only known to those who merit them. "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches *in glory* through Christ Jesus."

May the Churches to-day be found imitating this pattern, and the saints shall know *experimentally* the words of our Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Amen.

WILLIAM LAING.

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

REVELATION 3. 2.

Down from the very heart of the Man Christ Jesus whom God has exalted and crowned with glory and honour, come these words—words of yearning desire on His part, and of strong and loving encouragement for us.

He well remembers and knows this scene through which He passed. Though a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered (Heb. 5. 8). He could say, "I delight to do Thy will, O God; yea, Thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40. 8). It cost Him much thus to *delight* in and *do* the will of God. "For Thy sake I have borne reproach." "The reproaches of them that reproached Thee are fallen on Me." "Reproach has broken My heart" (Ps. 69. 7, 9, 20). Yet hear Him say, "The Lord God hath opened Mine ear and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back" (Is. 50. 5). He set His face like a flint; His steadfast purpose was to do the commandment His Father gave Him.

Satan's deepest subtilty was tried against Him to draw Him from perfect dependence in a path of obedience and suffering (Matt. 4. 3). Sin's foulest blasphemy was launched against Him (Matt. 12. 24). The Holy One of God became "the song of the drunkard" (Ps. 69. 12). In the upper room at the Passover feast, He was "troubled in spirit" (Jno. 13. 21). In Gethsemane, His "soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. 26. 38). In Pilate's judgment hall and at Calvary His body was sore wounded (Jno. 19. 1, 2, 18). Yes, the path of the faithful Servant, ever beset with trial, ended amidst sorrows which stretch far beyond our utmost ken. But for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Heb. 12. 2). And as He scans the desert o'er which His

exile bride comes plodding homeward, His heart goes out to His own in strong and tender longings; and eyeing the day of nuptial joys, He cries, "Surely I come quickly!" (Rev. 22. 20).

But to those of the "born again" to whom in His grace He has revealed much of His will; who have been drawn into the path of obedience, allured by the peerless beauty of the "Fairer than the sons of men;" who have by the ever-abiding Spirit had eye and heart opened to learn in measure Him whom God hath made both Lord and Christ, and have dared in the face of every opposition, and in the midst of abounding unreality, to build God's house according to the Divine pattern, and to behave therein to His well-pleasing; endeavouring to confess the Name, and to keep the Word of His patience, these words come as the shout of Faith's Princely Leader to encourage and embolden Faith's warriors in the scene of conflict. "Behold I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown." Fellow saint, dost thou find the path a trying one? Are those of thine own house thine enemies because of thy faithfulness to thy Lord? Has thy holding fast the confession of the Hope¹ severed thee from beloved friends? and John-like—because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ—art thou separated from the surroundings into which thy Lord cannot go? Take courage then. It is there that faith is privileged to see and hear as John saw and heard. The very wilderness into which God leads the obedient one, becomes by His presence a sanctuary out of which faith looks on all below and estimates it in God's light. There trials are reckoned joys; and rejoicing follows being "counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name" (James 1. 2, 3, 4; Acts 5. 41). There Christ is seen, chief among ten thousand, all of Him desirable. There His words are heard in their sweetest

¹ Heb. 10. 23, R.V.

melody. There all things apart from Him are counted but dung, that He may be gained (Phil. 3. 8). There the heart rests and rejoices in His word, "Behold, I come quickly." That the rough desert may be changed for eternal rest; that tears may be for ever wiped away; that this body of our humiliation may be transformed into the likeness of His body of glory; that a crown may be given to the overcomer, He says, "Behold, I come quickly."

Let us remember that the truth given us is for the purpose of moulding us and holding us for Himself. Compare 2 Tim. 3. 16, James 1. 21. Truth is easily held while it holds us (1 Tim. 4. 15, 16). God never gives us truth apart from a corresponding supply of grace. He is able to make all grace abound. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4. 6).

The moment the heart wanders from God's great centre of attraction, Jesus, creature claims and interests demand attention. The man of God has to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, casting all cares on Him who careth for him. Unless this is done the beautiful fight will soon be abandoned, the servant-character lost and the crown forfeited. We believe that God has a work marked out for each, the word to fit the servant thereunto, and a reward at last for the faithful one. Although the name of relationship entered in the Book of Life can never be erased, yet as servant it may, because the word has been refused, the work left undone, the race unrun, and that crown of reward gained by some other one who had a heart leal and steadfast for the rejected Lord.

Let us encourage ourselves in God, and stand like the brave, in nowise daunted though a sterner conflict awaits us e'er He come. Though some fall around us, let it but stimulate us to self-abnegation. Though the difficulties of these last days increase, let them but cast us more on our faithful God and the Word of His grace.

Though the darkness of the religious world deepens, let it be but a reason why we should walk as children of light. Though with the many flesh is pandered to, and holiness is but holiness in name, let this but make us careful that our garments are kept unspotted from the world, and that we are cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; so that *now* we may be vessels suited for the sovereign Master, and *then*, when He comes, there may be much joy for us in His presence.

Oh! beloved, let us give joy and refreshing to our Lord; for what is done to Him, done in the constancy of love, He will never forget.

T. O'NEILL.

"REMNANT DAYS": THEIR HISTORY AND LESSONS.

(Continued from page 209.)

THEY now come to Jerusalem,—the beloved city,—the place where God had chosen to put His name. They have been there before,—some of them, at least,—but in what different circumstances! Jerusalem, the city of their God, and Judah the land of their Fathers, at one time the joy and praise of the whole earth; now a waste, a desolation; nothing for God's heart to delight in, nothing for His eye to look upon with pleasure—all this is sufficiently sad and humiliating, and more so in the remembrance that their sins and their disobedience has been the *cause* of it all; but as godly sorrow worketh repentance, so here; and amidst all they have an unfailing resource. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity . . . I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" (Isa. 57. 15).

They have now reached the good and pleasant land, and are at rest in their cities. They are now out of captivity,

and find to a certain extent the realization of their hopes, and rejoice in the liberty that is theirs. What a temptation to settle down here! They are all right now; their comfort is secured, and what more need they trouble themselves about? But, the claims of Jehovah! What as to them? Is this all that He intends for them? Is this the purpose He has had in bringing them where they are? No; there is something further. So in the history of this people we find they make progress; it may be slow, yet sure. They are a progressive people, as God ever intends His people to be. "When the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem" (ch. 3. 1). In response to the will of Jehovah, they are found together; together in one place—Jerusalem; together as one man—with one object. "*They* builded the Altar of the God of Israel." "*They* set the Altar upon his bases." "*They* offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord," giving thus the answer to His claim, and fulfilling the condition upon which alone He could meet with them (see Exod. 29. 38-45). "But the foundation of the Temple of the Lord was not yet laid" (ch. 3. 6).

There is much to be thankful for, but there is very much yet that remains to be done; but even then, zeal must not be allowed to outrun knowledge. Anything will not do for Jehovah, and in order to have a House for Him, it must first of all be of Him; and the work, to meet with His approval, must be done in His own divinely appointed way; so the importance of there being a foundation, and of that foundation being right, is very necessary to be pointed out; for if a mistake is made here, it will not matter how good and skilful the other workmanship may be, this defect will mar the whole building. A wrong foundation can never make a perfect building. That which engages their attention now is the foundation of the House. "Then stood Jeshua, his

sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together (as one); to set forward the workmen in the house of God. . . . And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord . . . they sang together . . . and all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord; because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid" (ch. 3. 9, 11). Here is fellowship, beautiful, because Divine. There is no independent action, but together, as one, they stand and forward the work. Fellowship, not only in "*being* together"; but fellowship in "*working* together." Their way is one. Their work is one, although in it there is diversity; and their worship is one. One heart and one mouth—they sang together. No discord, but fullest, sweetest concord.

In all this there is much to help unto the understanding of what the will of the Lord is concerning His people's way and work in the present age. We view a company again in Jerusalem, and there, by the special appointment and commandment of the now risen and exalted Lord and Christ (see Luke 24. 49), and in response of spirit to His commandment, and of soul to His blessed person, they are *where* they are, and as they are, gathered together into His name, He being in the midst of them (Matt. 18. 20). "*These all* continued with one accord. . . . The number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty" (Acts 1. 14, 15). They are not there by force of circumstances, neither are they there as brethren simply (of whom at that time there were others not together with them); but the one will, and the one commandment, and that of the Lord Christ, which they have heard and obeyed, guides to their being there. They are there under His authority, subject to Him, gathered into His name. Unto these others are *added*, even such as have been pricked in their heart, to whom repentance has been given to believe in and own Him whom they had previously denied in His

new character and claims as Lord and Christ. "Then they that received his word were baptized, and the same day there were *added* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' teaching, and in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers" (Acts 2. 41, 42). Unto such there are further addings of such like ones, "believers being the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5. 14), forming many companies, yet the called out and gathered together people—the assembly of God in Jerusalem (Acts 8. 1). In striking contrast to this, another assembly is spoken of (Acts 4. 25-27; Psalm 22. 16), "the assembly of the lawless." Such are "gathered together," *not* under the authority of God's anointed, but in rebellion against Him; under the control and guiding hand of Satan, and led on by the religious leaders of the people. It is the outcome of the denial of His claims and rejection of His person; they are gathered together, but it is against the Lord and His Christ. They count Him worthy only of a malefactor's death, and this they give Him. *Their* manifest appreciation of Him is seen in putting Him upon the Cross. When, witnessing His works of power, the people would have taken Him to make Him king, many were professedly *for Him*; but as the hour approaches that is to close that path of full obedience to the will of God, and He willingly and submissively chooses to die, how few of those for Him are now *with Him*. Their being with Him now involves reproach, suffering, and rejection, and there are few indeed prepared for that. Such principles are at work in every age. Many for Him who have never learned nor known what it is to be with Him. "He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12. 30). "Ye are they which have *continued with Me* in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom. . . . That ye may . . . sit on thrones" (Luke 22. 28-30). "If

we suffer, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us" (2 Tim. 2. 11, 12). In the light of the above we would again turn to the remnant people (Ezra 4. 1).

"Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel, then they came to Zerubabel and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you, for we seek your God as ye, and we do sacrifice unto Him since the days of Esarhaddon, king of Assur, which brought us up thither." In every work of God, Satan's determined object has been to resist, and, if possible, to spoil, and manifestly so here. Satan is the *real* adversary (see Zech. 3. 1), and as such His work is to resist. He may, as he does, use different means and methods (and, solemn thought, he often attempts, and, alas! sometimes succeeds in using the most gifted and honoured of God to do his work), but his aim and object is one and the same. What need for godly discernment was here! Who would even have suspected such to be adversaries. In fact, *their words* would convey the thought that they were real friends. So deceptive in his working is Satan. His wiles are more to be dreaded than his power. Our safety lies in "*trying* the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 John 4. 1). "We seek your God as ye," by many would have been reckoned sufficient reason why they should build with us; and that "since the days of Esarhaddon, which brought us up thither." And, sure, they are *there*; but the question is, what brought them there? Was it the call of God heard, and the will of God learned, and in response to which they are where they are, or was it merely the force of circumstances? For answer, 2 Kings 17. 24-41 affords an instructive account of those "who assayed to join themselves" to the delivered remnant of Judah in the work unto which their God had called them. Adversaries, they are un-

doubtedly, with all their profession of sincerity, and to be reckoned not of us, and anything but helpers in this great and noble work; so their application meets with a decided and emphatic refusal: "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God, but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord our God" (ch. 4. 3). To be sure, Zerubbabel and his fellow-workers would be thought and possibly spoken of as narrow and bigoted, and thinking themselves better than others. Certainly their answer and their stern refusal of the proffered help was greatly resented, and drew forth the enmity and opposition which only manifested the true character of those very ones professing to be in sympathy with them. Their faithfulness to God preserved them from the snare of the Devil, while it brought trouble and suffering to themselves. Thus will it ever be, and many, rather than suffer, choose to compromise God's claims to appear gracious and loving, forgetting that the true test of love to the children of God is "to love God and keep His commandments" (1 John 5. 2).

Again, we find the beautiful expression of fellowship here: "We ourselves together will build"—each and all in their various sphere and measure contributing their portion to the advancement of the work; not one building up and another pulling down, but all as one man helping forward in the building and rearing up the House of God, out from the desolation and ruin that had hitherto existed—a testimony for Himself, His honour and His name. The work progresses as work of God must and ever will, but at every stage of progress the opposition of their adversaries becomes more determined; and seeing they cannot stop the work by weakening their hands and troubling them in building, they now resort to another and a more successful scheme—hiring counsellors, and writing accusations against them. Such has ever been and still is the way of the enemy.

DAVID SMITH.

THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

GOD has as definitely a salvation for His saints as He has for sinners; and just as the sinner rejects God's salvation for him and is lost, so can the saint neglect God's salvation for him and have his whole life lost. This brings us to **Matthew 16. 24-28**, which has no bearing whatever on unsaved sinners, for they are not saved by taking up their cross. But this is the principle upon which God saves a saint. **Exodus 12. 2** teaches that God begins to count the saint's life as soon as He saves him as a sinner, and He counts until the end of that saint's life on earth. That is the life it is possible for us to save, that is the life it is possible to lose.

1 Peter 2. 2: "As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation." This is written to children of God. Again, in **James 1. 21**: "Laying aside," etc., . . . "receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." This is written to those of whom he says, in verse 18, "Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." The salvation of the soul in New Testament scripture always applies to God's children. There is no warrant for asking a sinner, Is your soul saved?

How can we save our souls? "By receiving the engrafted word." "As newborn babes earnestly desire the sincere milk of the word." The sincere milk of the word is given us to the end that we may grow thereby unto salvation, unto a daily being saved from everything contrary to the will of God. Beware of mixed or adulterated milk, beware of skimmed milk, beware of milk and water. The first thing is to have a desire for the unadulterated milk of the word, to have an appetite for it. We need to cry to God daily to deepen in us a thirst for His Word, for it is

only God Himself who can give this thirst. Many a child of God has not this thirst, in which case there can be no growth, and no daily salvation. We need the desire expressed by the Psalmist in Psalm 119. 20: "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times." If that state of soul is not in a child of God there is something wrong. If we would grow in the knowledge of His will there must be soul thirst for His Word.

It is only in so far as our lives are constrained, restrained, corrected, bound, moulded and modelled by the will of God that we are saving our souls, and that God is getting joy in us. Hence the deep necessity of testing everything by His Word.

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 7. 17, R.V.*

QUESTION 57.—*Does it show a want of patience and subjection to the will of the Lord for a saint to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come" ?*

Indeed it does not. When Jesus Himself (Rev. 22. 16-20) testified the things written in the Book of Revelation, He said, "Yea, I come quickly." On hearing which, the man who was in the Spirit and in the patience in Jesus (see chap. 1. verses 9 and 10) answered, "So let it be, come, O Lord Jesus." Those in like condition will assuredly so deport themselves.

J. B.

QUESTION 58.—*Is the exhortation in 2 Thess. 3. 6 to withdraw from the disorderly brother, or from his ways ?*

Both. The word to withdraw is a command, and not an exhortation.

J. B.

QUESTION 59.—*Can I be withdrawn from the disorderly brother, yet sit down with him and break bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus ?*

Yes. The meaning of "withdraw" here is, *stand from* him who does not walk in the truth. Thus, don't make a companion of him. Don't walk in his ways or rank, yet reckon him as an erring brother, and not as an enemy. He is still within, therefore so warn and entreat him as to his misbehaviour.

J. B.