

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.

VOLUME VII.
1895.

London:
NEEDED TRUTH PUBLISHING OFFICE,
27, POPPINS COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.

Oh, how unlike the complex works of man,
 Heaven's easy, artless, unencumbered plan !
 No meretricious graces to beguile,
 No clustering ornaments to clog the pile,
 From ostentation as from weakness free,
 It stands like the cerulean arch we see,
 Majestic in its own simplicity.
 Inscribed above the portal, from afar
 Conspicuous as the brightness of a star,
 Legible only by the light they give,
 Stand the soul-quickening words—Believe and live.
 Too many, shocked at what should charm them most,
 Despise the plain direction and are lost.
 Heaven on such terms ! they cry with proud disdain,
 Incredible, impossible, and vain !—
 Rebel because 'tis easy to obey,
 And scorn for its own sake the gracious way.
 These are the sober, in whose cooler brains
 Some thought of immortality remains ;
 The rest too busy or too gay to wait
 On the sad theme, their everlasting state,
 Sport for a day, and perish in a night,
 The foam upon the waters not so light.

—From Cowper's " Truth."

C O N T E N T S .

	PAGE
APOSTASY	157
BELIEVERS, A WORD TO YOUNG	89, 194
BUILDING THE WALL	96
CHOSEN TO HEAR	147
CORRESPONDENCE DEPARTMENT	235
DEMAS	101
FOOTSTEPS OF THE FLOCK, THE	216
"GIVE UP SEPARATION"	41, 73, 81
GO WORK TO-DAY	133
GRACE OF GOD, THE TRUE	
5, 29, 47, 71, 86, 118, 128, 145, 165, 181, 207, 226	
GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN, THE	230
HOUSE, THE ORDER OF THE	121
HOPEFUL'S CONVERSION	98
IN THE VALLEY	176
JONATHAN AND HIS ARMOUR-BEARER	194
KING'S FLIGHT, THE	91
LOOKING UNTO JESUS	8, 32
MIRIAM	141, 161, 188, 201
NOT ONE FEEBLE PERSON AMONG THEIR TRIBES	221
ORDER OF THE HOUSE, THE	121
OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE SECTS	107
PATH OF LIFE, THE	185
PRESENT NEED AND OPPORTUNITY, THE	1, 38
QUESTION AND ANSWER, DEPARTMENT OF	100, 156, 200, 220
SCHOOL OF GOD, THE	167, 195
SEALS, THE TWO	21
SECT, WHAT IS A?	61
SECTS, OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE	107
TRUE GRACE OF GOD, THE	
5, 29, 47, 71, 86, 118, 128, 145, 165, 181, 207, 226	
TWO SEALS, THE	21
UNTO US IN A SON	50, 78, 151, 177, 212, 233
WHAT IS A SECT?	61
WHEREFORE REMEMBER	15
WORD OF EXHORTATION, A	13
WORD TO YOUNG BELIEVERS, A	89, 194

For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God beside Thee, who worketh for him that waiteth for Him (Isaiah 64. 4).

NEEDED TRUTH.

VOL. VII. JANUARY, 1895.

THE PRESENT NEED AND OPPORTUNITY.

“THESE things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how one ought to behave oneself in House of God, which is Church of Living God, pillar and ground of the Truth. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He Who was manifested in the flesh, Who was justified in the spirit, Who was seen of angels, Who was preached among the nations, Who was believed in the world, Who was received up in glory” (1 Tim. 3. 14-16).

In the days when Cyrus, King of Persia, made the proclamation, “Whosoever there is among you of all His people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the House of Jehovah,” those whose spirits God had raised doubtless left behind them in Babylon many who might have been very excellent and sincere Jews. But did any of those who thus remained behind think that they were right in being in Babylon? Surely there is not the smallest ground for supposing that any could have continued in the place they occupied in the Babylonish capital for any conscientious reason, or could have questioned that the God-honouring thing to do was to respond to the proclamation of Cyrus and go up to Jerusalem.

Yet can any deny that, in the present day, there are in the sects of Christendom a considerable number of earnest

and sincere born-again persons who have no conscience whatever as to any wrong in being where they are? In the midst of spiritual uncleanness they live devoted and earnest lives, seeking to a very large extent to please God, and do His will, far away from the House where it would be joy to His heart to see them.

When we speak to these beloved fellow-saints of the ecclesiastical evils with which they are connected, many of them acknowledge the justice of our strictures, and few venture to defend these evils with any earnestness. But if we speak of separation therefrom and of forthcoming to Him without the camp, their ears are too often closed to our words and they believe us not.

How beautiful many of these are in their individual lives is fully and gladly acknowledged by all, as is their earnestness in that to which they put their hands. For this very reason we have been led, again and again, seriously to consider why it is that such a gulf separates between us and them.

All through Old Testament history the place where Jehovah's name was, where God's people in obedience to His will and word were expected to be, was plain and clear to know. There never could be any doubt in the mind of any of God's people as to where that place was.

That things are so different now has caused us much anxious consideration, and we are led to believe that an explanation may in part be found in what follows.

As individuals, our justification before God depends upon our treatment of God's message to us. Whether a man is or is not justified before God depends solely and entirely upon a transaction that takes place in secret between God and the man himself,—a transaction which, from the very nature of it, cannot be seen by others. A man is justified by faith, without deeds of law. But that does not entitle him to say to others,—I am a just man, I am a righteous

man. It justifies him before God, but not before men. If he would be justified before men he must bring forth fruits meet for repentance (see here James 2. verses 14-26 at length.)

There seems to be something analogous to this in the matter of the assembly. We have come forth from the religious systems we were in, and are together, at the bidding and call of God. No man heard God call me, no one heard God call you, but you and I have heard the call, and in response thereto have come forth—ay, forth we have come not knowing whither. But if we have told this to those without and expected them to believe it on our word, then have we greatly erred.

Just as the individual must show his faith by his works, if he would have men recognise in him a righteous person, so must we become in our doings what we are by our calling, if we would have ourselves known indeed to be Church of Living God. *

Failing this, if we are satisfied to know for ourselves that we have done God's will in coming forth and together, it will be in vain for us to expect that those without shall see in us anything to distinguish us from any little sect of Christendom.

Moreover, God's work in bringing us into our present position is only preliminary. He has work for us to do for which, methinks, we are as yet but little prepared. But, at least, let us not settle down satisfied as though we had already attained or were already perfect.

Precious to many of us have been those steps by which God has led us, and as we look back we see them glistening in the sunshine of His countenance:—

“ With mercy and with judgment
 My web of time He wove,
 And aye the dews of sorrow
 Were lusted with His love.

I'll bless the hand that guided,
 I'll bless the heart that planned,
 Enthroned where glory dwelleth,
 In Emmanuel's land."

But never let us forget that as "the heart knoweth its own bitterness," so is it true that a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joys. And much that has put gladness in our hearts, more than in the time when their corn and their wine are increased, will not stand us in stead to speak of to others.

It is not by telling born-again ones in the sects that they must leave those sects that we shall make them know where those who seek God ought to come, even unto God's House.

HOUSE OF GOD,

How shall it be known? The Church of Living God is pillar and ground of the Truth. Are we that? Is the voice of God heard from out the House of God? Is it a known fact that God's Word is publicly read aloud, not in verses merely, but in chapters in the buildings whereat the assemblies of God have their meetings? Are the men of God in the assemblies the most earnest and efficient heralds of the whole Word of God? or shall it be that contention for the Faith in the little measure in which it is done by them shall be left to those who are outside the Fellowship of the Son of God? If this is what lies before us, alas! alas! for the day of mis-spent opportunity. Would to God that He had never brought us into such a place of splendid opportunities if they are only to be frittered away and lost, and our lives lost individually and collectively, though we ourselves are saved, yet so as through fire.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

(To be continued.)

“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD.”

1 PETER 5. 12.

WHAT exceeding mercy it is that God has been pleased to reveal in the holy Scriptures what love is, as also what true grace is!

Than these there are few parts of His holy will more sorrowfully misunderstood or more persistently misrepresented.

The apostle Peter, ere closing his first epistle, was bidden explain that he had written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God, which he urges upon all with the injunction,—

“STAND YE FAST THEREIN.”¹

If, then, we would know and show the true grace of God, we must need cause ourselves to learn and obey the words and doctrines of this epistle, whereby we shall also be enabled to recognise whether others are or are not standing fast in that true grace; nay, more, we shall be fitted to teach others also what the true grace of God is.

The very name by which the apostle announces himself but reveals grace.²

The epistle is addressed to the elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. That foreknowledge is all-sufficient to explain what otherwise is hard to be understood in connection with the election and the elect.³ These are, moreover, characterized by “Sanctification in the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” Sanctification, we may point out, as God uses the term, never means to make holy in the sense of making good, or pious; but rather setting apart for God’s purpose.⁴

That operation of the Spirit is unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. This obedience

¹ 1 Pet. 5. 12, R.V.

² John 1. 42.

³ Comp. Rom. 8. 29, 30.

⁴ Comp. John 17. 19.

and sprinkling are an undoubtable reference to the truth written aforetime for our use in teaching in Exodus 24., and not to what Moses did in Egypt.¹ This obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ have to do with a people already redeemed and liberated—a people to whom, as not being their own, is brought the will of Him whose they are; on the hearing of which they confess, “All that the Lord hath spoken will we do.” Upon which follows the sprinkling of that blood.

All this but prepares the way of the Lord to make known how they may have still greater blessing, even that of making a Sanctuary that He will occupy unto dwelling in the midst of them. This, too, despite the fact that they were a sojourning folk—

A people at once scattered yet gathered.

No stinted measure nor manner of grace shines forth in those persons being thus blessed and privileged. Yet for them the apostle wished grace and peace to be multiplied — grace and peace that are as truly needful and blissful as any already received and enjoyed by those elect of God the Father unto such holy purpose.

Their dispersion covered a large tract of country, but not too great for the elders **among them** to be surely known and readily reached, nor yet so vast that the flock (that is, the gathered-together sheep) of God **AMONG THEM** was less certainly known or reachable.²

Little wonder that the next word is a cry to render worship.³ It should be carefully noted and remembered that God as the object of worship is never spoken to nor of as “Our Father” or “Our God”; but always as—

“The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

¹ Contrast Heb. 11. 28 with 9. 19–28.

² See in passing 5. 1, 2.

³ 1. 3.

“The Father.”

“His God and Father,” or the like.

Following that cry comes the revelation of being the born of God the Father.

There is absolutely no warrant for the teaching of certain who make a difference between “begotten” and “born.” Language fails to express our conception of the destructive mis-statements whereby some seek to find analogy and doctrine between natural generation and spiritual regeneration. The truth is there is neither. Nor are there any stages in the latter.

What this birth is unto is doubtless an allusive contrast to the manner of hope that Israel had unto and of an earthly inheritance to be theirs by obedience.

This living hope, which is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from among the dead, is to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, reserved in heaven for those who are kept (guarded) in the power of God unto a

“SALVATION READY TO BE REVEALED IN THE LAST TIME.”

In that fact these greatly rejoice, though indeed meantime, through need, they experience heaviness in manifold (varied) trials, which, after all, but prove the value of their heart-trust, which at the unveiling of Jesus Christ may be found unto praise, glory, and honour. But whose? we may well enquire! As also suggest for answer.¹

Their faith, moreover, meanwhile is a fit answer to Satan’s reproachful taunt—

“Doth Job fear God for naught?”²

Wherefore, however great the trial with its heaviness,

“Faith can sing through days of sorrow
All, *all* IS WELL.”

Ay, and in the energy of Romans 8. 32 lay hold of

¹ Comp. 1 Cor. 4. 5; 1 Thess. 2. 19, 20; 2 John 8.; 1 John 2. 28.

² Job 1. 9; Eccles. 8. 12.

1 Corinthians 3. 21-23, refuse to mistrust God. Not only so, but, strengthened by such power, arise to worship God and bless men.

Thus, though these have not as yet seen Him, they love Him. Yea, and believing Him they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving meanwhile the end, the object, the intention of their faith, even the salvation of their souls, themselves. Of which the prophets inquired and searched diligently, who also prophesied thereof in the consciousness that this Gospel was not for them—the time and manner thereof causing the very angels to desire to look thereinto. That, too, because of His sufferings and the glories that follow.

The poet hath truly said—

“For Thou, O Lord, and none beside,
That bitterness could know ;
Nor other tell Thy joys full tide
That from that cup shall flow.”

JOHN BROWN.

LOOKING IN INSTEAD OF UNTO JESUS.

“EXAMINE yourselves, whether ye be in the faith : prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor. 13. 5).

Having glanced at a few passages of Scripture each of which brought before us the importance as well as the necessity of looking unto Jesus from first to last of our Christian life, we desire now to point out the danger of looking in and as a result occupation with self, so that progress in the Divine life is hindered, and the heart becomes discouraged and perplexed by looking in upon experiences, instead of being constantly gladdened by the up-look to the Lord Jesus alone.

To this end we have set out the verse found above, a verse which by its not being understood, and because of its being separated from its context, has been made to teach the constant need of self-examination, and that for the purpose of finding out whether one is in the faith, the result of which has been to throw many Christians into doubt and perplexity.

Yet all such exhortations are completely foreign to the truth presented by Paul in the Epistle. But because of them some have set apart a certain period of time each day in which to go through this self-examination, shutting themselves out from the "joy and peace" which is the Christian's portion in believing. Ask such, "Have you peace? Are you in Christ, before God complete?" and they will most probably answer, "Well, sometimes I think I have: I search myself, and sometimes feel very happy, but, you know, it is the sunshine now, and then the clouds; sometimes I am in the valley, and then again for a moment I seem to be on the mountain-top." Thus year after year passes on, and still, in this position of self-examination as to their standing, they remain in ignorance of God's complete salvation. Thus with some pride is fostered. Self-satisfaction springs up as growth in grace is assumed from these so-called humbling processes. When it is so, the Word, that in reality humbles all, is required; and when ministered in power by the Spirit, then the heart's thoughts and pride are exposed, and when seen in their true light are turned from and abhorred, as Christ's finished work becomes all. Then it is seen that He alone can give that which has been sought after.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith," thus misused, has become Satan's weapon by which to keep untaught Christians occupied with themselves, the very worst of all occupations, resulting often in the peace they had becoming disturbed and their usefulness in the work of

Christ destroyed by the constant thought this Scripture is considered to enjoin, as a right one, in the process of self-examination, "Am I a Christian? Can I be one, seeing that such and such failures have occurred in my life?" Whereas the Word of God abounds in passages of Scripture intended to bring certainty to the heart as one has simply and fully trusted in Christ for salvation: "HATH everlasting life" (John 5. 24); "Be it KNOWN unto you" (Acts 13. 38).

Never from the outset of the Christian life should one look within for the evidence of his conversion; never should he trust to frames and feelings, but know that his security lies in nothing done by him. Self-examination never concerns sin as to its forgiveness, for that is a settled matter. But it concerns sin not yet confessed in the presence of the Lord, the sin of one who is a Christian and who therefore is fully assured of his standing in Christ. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat" (1 Cor. 11. 28). What a contrast is presented in such a verse to that which is wrongly taken from this one in the Second Epistle, where the Apostle asks them to examine not for the purpose of finding out if they are Christians by evidences found within, but in proof of his apostleship! Thus this verse "Examine," etc., is part of a sentence, and not the commencement of a new and distinct one.

A part of the third and the whole of the fourth verse is a parenthesis. Read therefore leaving it out until the proper connection and the Apostle's object in writing are seen. "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me. . . . Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith." Are you Christians? How did you become so but through my preaching among you as an apostle? Am I an apostle? You saints at Corinth are the proof that I am. Vastly different from the common thought of many. If we trust Christ we are born of God. We are sons. We have His

Word for it, and He means us to rest on that. We know by faith in Him and in His Word that peace made at the cross is possessed in our hearts (Rom. 5. 1). Lay hold of that. To enter into the "no condemnation," the "no fear," the "no separation," is to triumph over all things and to know that all things are ours. The experiences of heart passed through should ever lead us to look away and up. When the Psalmist told out his experience he had to acknowledge that "I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with my own heart: and my spirit made diligent search. Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favourable no more?" (Psalm 77. 1-7). What a result of self-occupation and of self-examination! Looking back on the past, though happy experiences brought no relief. Recalling his song in the night would not do. Some night of darkness in the past gladdened by Him until a song of praise rose up in the heart would not in itself bring back that gladness. How many Christians have found the same! When passing through deep trials, they have been almost overwhelmed; then they have tried to cheer their steps and encourage themselves by the fact that in past trials God had given songs in the night, but they have failed to bring the song again. Why? Because, instead of looking direct and at once to Him, they have looked within. What joy and gladness when they were converted, what times over the Word with the Lord Himself! How time sped, and "Hallelujahs" rose up to God! They recall that, but it will not do. The "Hallelujahs" are lacking, or, if on

the lip, only as trying to get the heart to respond. Words are nothing save as One behind them gives them life and power. The "diligent search" within leaves the heart sad and overwhelmed. It will not do. What will? That alone which at last the Psalmist did: "And I said, I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord" (vers. 10, 11). The years of the Most High, the works of the Lord, His way in the sanctuary. (ver. 13)—all this he recalls till he forgets himself; his past experiences are swallowed up in the present. The songs in past "nights" help not now, but Jehovah, ever the same, the Most High remembered, draws out a fresh song (vers. 14-20). Earth-born mists and clouds are below, and in His presence there is rest.

"I stand upon the mount of God, with sunlight in my soul;
I hear the storms in vales beneath, I hear the thunders roll:
But I am calm with Thee, my God, beneath these glorious skies,
And to the height on which I stand nor storm nor cloud can rise."

It is in the sanctuary we can thus sing, for there we can trace His ways. We forget the things behind; we press on. "They looked to Him, and were lightened." We have found the same. The "look" at the start has to be maintained. Then, with heart in heaven, our foot on earth will be kept treading the pilgrim way. Experiences we shall have, but we shall not look back on them for help in the present. Our trust will be in God, not because of the joys and songs He has given us, but because of what He ever is: the present Comforter and the abiding joy of His saints. May we be saved therefore from the miserable looking in that only produces distress and sadness of heart; may we ever be looking up, and then we shall more fully realize what Christ is and how we ought to follow Him. "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up" (Psalm 5. 3).

R. T. HOPKINS.

A WORD OF EXHORTATION.

IF it is true that we live, as science tells us, amidst colours that human eyes see not, and amidst sounds that human ears cannot detect, it is yet far more certain that the multitude around us are living blind to the work of the Cross. They see no beauty in the Man Christ Jesus that they should desire Him; they are deaf to the voice of God.

What renders the position of such the more dangerous is that they imagine that they see and hear; they believe not what God says of them, although they profess to believe His word: "Having eyes, they see not, and ears, but they hear not." When a sinner stands still and begins to listen to what God has to say, such an one is not far from salvation from the judgment of his sins; and when in like manner saints begin to listen to the voice of God, such ones are not far from the kingdom.

But yet more: sinners may hear the voice of God, may be aroused as they are pressing on to destruction, and yet, solemn thought, may count the cost, may place things eternal in one balance and things of time in the other, the pleasures of sin for a season being set over against the eternal weight of glory, the choice is made, the present is chosen, the future is lost! Such pass on through life's journey, the same men and women as seen by their fellow-men, but if we knew them as God knows them, we might write the sentence of death upon their foreheads,—rejectors of the light passing on to judgment.

But a child of God can never be damned—he has passed from death to life: for such there is no condemnation.

Is it possible for such to live, in great measure, blind to the path of obedience and deaf as to much of God's will concerning him? Yes, it is; for I may live so that "when I have preached to others, I myself should be disapproved," "Saved, yet so as by fire," a monument of the grace of God,

and yet a loser by my disobedience. Will such an one, then, rise when the Lord comes for His saints? Yes, for as grace saves, so grace will raise those that are Christ's at His coming (1 Cor. 15. 23).

Can the child of God be no loser, then, by a walk of disobedience? Yes, for we are not crowned except we strive lawfully (2 Tim. 2. 5). "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God" (Rev. 3. 12). But there will be those who will be ashamed at His appearing. Brethren, let us not be of that number. To some who have counted the cost of what the walk of faith would cost them the price has been too great—friends would have to be given up, popularity lost. The smile of the world may have lost its power, while yet the smile and approbation of fellow-saints may work our ruin. We may live before our fellow-saints as we have lived in the past, to all appearances the same, working, preaching, labouring, and saying, like Samson, "I will do as at other times," while we wist not that our strength is gone from us, that on our foreheads the solemn word might be written—disapproved.

Let us therefore, brethren, cast aside every weight, and prepare ourselves for the battle, with eyes open to see the path in which our feet should walk, and ears attentive to catch the faintest whisper of the Master's will. Let us press forward, remembering that we have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. We may think ours a heavy cross, but what is it compared to that of many who have gone before? We may learn to look at our trials and forget the glory: let us look at the glory, and by His grace forget the trials,—the light afflictions which are but for a moment, while the weight of glory is eternal.

The following extracts may help to stir us up for the battle and nerve us for the fight as we consider those who have gone before and have overcome by faith.

Brethren, may we be overcoming-ones, and if 1895 find

us still in the battle-field, may it also find us better pleasing Him who has called us to be soldiers.”

J. A. BOSWELL.

Tacitus, who wrote at the end of the first century, describes this persecution as directed against “a set of people who were held in abhorrence for their crimes, called by the common people ‘Christians.’ The founder of that name was Christ. . . . This detestable superstition, thus checked for a while, broke out again. . . . A vast multitude were apprehended, who were convicted not so much of the crime of burning Rome as of hatred to mankind. Their sufferings at their execution were aggravated by insult and mockery: for some were disguised in the skins of wild beasts and worried by dogs; some were crucified, and others were wrapped in pitched shirts, and set on fire when the day closed, that they might serve as lights to illuminate the night” (*Tacitus*, Ann. xv. 44).

Juvenal, who wrote at the same period, describes the “Christians” as standing “burning in their own flame and smoke, their head being held up by a stake fixed to their chin, till they made a long stream of blood and running sulphur on the ground” (*Juvenal*, Sat. i. 155).

Seneca also speaks of their “coats besmeared and interwoven with combustible materials, good for the flames” (*Seneca*, Ep. 14).

“WHEREFORE REMEMBER.”

“WHEREFORE remember . . . that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”

Many of the blessings into which by grace we have been brought may be learned by us through contrasting that which was true of us in our Adam standing with that which our God has revealed as being true of us in Christ Jesus,

and in the Epistle to the Ephesians the hole of the pit from which we have been dug is brought into striking contrast with the heights of dignity and glory to which grace has raised us. That the solemn possibility exists of our forgetting what we were by nature is clearly proved by the fact that God has to call on us to "remember" what our past characteristics were, so that, remembering them, we may be kept humble before Him, and be the better enabled to appreciate the grace that stooped to meet our need and the love that picked us from the dunghill to set us amongst princes.

Would it not be a wholesome exercise in these last dark days for saints of God everywhere to calmly consider in the light of the word the distance they once were from God, the bondage in which at one time they were held, the power by which they once were governed and guided, and the lake of fire to which they hurried on? for assuredly such contemplation would beget in every heart less exalted thoughts of self and more worthy thoughts of Him whom God hath made both Lord and Christ, would cause many to cease from glorying in man and lead them with subjected hearts to glory in the Cross, would cast the dark shadow of Calvary upon the world's tinsel glory and heighten in every soul the lustre of eternal realities, and would cause praise and thanksgiving from grateful, overflowing hearts to ascend to God for grace, that, salvation-bringing (having) reached and saved them, while a dark dying world as deserving as they are, is fast hastening on to eternal judgment.

As year by year the godly Israelite was found at the place where the Lord chose to put His name with his basket of first-fruits, which he set down before the altar of the Lord his God, we find him recalling to memory his condition while in Egyptian bondage under the cruel tyranny of Pharaoh; and as also he remembered how the arm of Jehovah was stretched forth to effect his deliverance it

caused him to bow in the presence of his God, to wonder, to worship, and to rejoice. And shall not we, who have known redemption from bondage worse than theirs by far, upon reviewing our past history experience a like melting of heart in the presence of our God, and awaken afresh to His glory the sweet notes of our redemption song?

"Wherefore remember that at that time ye were without Christ." Solemn words! Who can fathom their depths? Who can picture the poverty of the soul who knows Him not? Who can tell the present emptiness or future loneliness of a Christless soul? To be without Him is to be destitute of everything worth knowing and possessing for time and for eternity, for only in Him can God bless. Such then was our condition before grace reached us, poor indeed, "without Christ." In contrast to which we now are enriched with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies—in Him, we in Christ and Christ in us. And while we rejoice to learn that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," and anticipate with joy the "no separation" of the coming day, it is ours even now to know and ever to experience the holy, hallowed joy of Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith. Such was the Apostle's prayer for the saints in Ephesus: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

When writing to the "Churches of Galatia," among whom evidently the leaven of those "unawares brought in" was doing its deadly work, and the "yoke of bondage" was groaned under by the many in preference to "standing fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free," the Apostle in holy triumph displayed the secret of his victory over "the works of the law," in that he reckoned himself dead with Christ and on resurrection ground living

a life of faith, which alone is the power by which we can "live unto God." "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh in faith I live, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Thus we see that triumphant living unto God results from a due appreciation of our oneness with Christ in death and in resurrection life. Christ filling the throne in the heart enables the feet to run in the way of His commandments, and the mouth to find its one theme of "glory" in the Cross. Who among us has yet learned in their fulness "the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you the hope of glory"? We fear that to-day there are few of God's saints who thus enjoy an abiding sense of His presence and nearness, few who are reaching forth to the things which are before and pressing on toward the mark, few who are re-echoing the triumphant shout of the Apostle, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection," "Counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." With many, indeed, we fear it is otherwise; self, the world, the traditions of men, and numerous other things occupy the place in their hearts which by right is His alone. Yet in love He seeks admission; He stands and knocks, knocks in many and varied ways: He rebukes; He chastens; He deals in tenderest love, ever seeking to make the heart feel its emptiness, its need of a satisfying portion, for—

"The joys of earth can never fill

The heart that's tasted of His love."

"Being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise." How dark and how distant our condition as thus depicted by the Spirit of God, aliens from Israel, strangers to covenants and promises, with darkened understanding and blind heart, goaded on by the prince of the power of the air, of the

spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Yet to us who sat in darkness and in the region and shadow of death light has sprung up, for through the tender mercy of God the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to us who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, and has guided our feet into the way of peace, bringing us into the richest favour of Jehovah, for no longer are we strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Our enrolment as citizens is already in the heavens, wherefore are we ardently awaiting the Lord Jesus Christ, for not yet do we behold all things put under Him. Our inheritance is being kept for us, and we by grace kept for it, by power Divine, and the day is nearing when with our Lord we shall enter into those choice possessions. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

"Having no hope," in contrast to which we read, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a living hope," "Looking for that blessed hope," which hope, in days of darkness, of conflict, and of difficulty, may we increasingly prove to be a very anchor of our soul, both sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil and laying hold of the living Christ at God's right hand, remembering that every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure. May the Lord graciously revive in our souls the brightness of that living hope, until every lip and heart breathes forth into the listening ear of our waiting Lord, "Come, Lord Jesus."

"And without God in the world." Words cannot add to the solemnity of such a statement, nor describe the solemnity of such a state—"without God"—alongside of which we place the fondly cherished words of the risen Lord to the weeping Mary, "Go unto My brethren, and say to them I

ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God." We who once were "without God" can now exult in the knowledge that He who is the blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is also our God. But what do many of His saints know of their God? That He is by grace their God can never be altered, but their enjoyment of His presence and power is something altogether different. Israel knew what it was to have a living God. Did the sea bar their onward march? Then the waters must be cleft that the people of His choice may pass over. Did they hunger for bread? The windows of heaven were opened, and around them the manna lay in boundless profusion, and man did eat angels' food. Did they thirst for water? Then the flinty rock must be the medium through which that need is met, and step by step as on they trod they found their God sufficient for every emergency. And for us, upon whom the ends of the ages are come, the same God lives—the same in power, the same in love, the same in faithfulness, eternally the same. "No change Jehovah knows." May it be ours to become daily more and more acquainted with our God through being much in His company, proving His faithfulness, testing His love, until, like Enoch, who walked habitually with God and was not found, for God took him, having before his translation this testimony, that he pleased God, we also may be found so walking with Him that when presently we are called into His immediate presence we may experience no change of company, but meet to know better, even in perfect fulness, the God we have known well below, so that of us the words may be true indeed,—

"There no stranger God shall meet thee;
 Stranger thou in courts above?
 He who to His rest shall greet thee
 Greet's thee with a well-known love."

THE TWO SEALS.

IN order to enter more fully into our subject, will our readers carefully consider, if they have not already done so, the second and seventh chapters of the Prophet Daniel? In the first of these chapters we have Nebuchadnezzar's dream; in the second, that of Daniel. Although these dreams differ greatly, yet they both refer to the same period. It is not our object here to go into the details, but simply to point out that in both the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and the vision of Daniel the four great world empires are portrayed, the image giving the secular aspect, while the four beasts—but especially the fourth—give more of the religious aspect of the kingdoms.

From the time God formed man and set him over the works of His hands there has ever been a people on earth responsible to carry out His government, in the doing of which there will be blessing, and this apart from the eternal salvation that comes through faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

When God's chosen people Israel had failed and failed so deeply as to become worshippers of demons (2 Chron. 11. 15), God set aside the nation that had thus fallen into the snare of the Devil, and gave the reins of government into the hands of the first great Gentile power, placing the earth under the authority of Nebuchadnezzar, the Head of Gold (see Dan. 2. 37), he being responsible for his government, but having no direct legislation given him from God as to the carrying of it out. But if the chosen people of Israel had failed and become the tool in Satan's hands to work out his purposes, little wonder if the great world power fails and becomes also in the hands of Satan an instrument by which to accomplish his ends on earth. Thus we find the

Fourth Empire in active opposition to the saints of the Most High (see Dan. 7. 21), and seeking their destruction.

THE FIRST SEAL.

At the point we wish specially to consider we find the powers of Earth and Hell combined. What a moment! Satan, who had dogged the steps of the lonely Man of Sorrows through His life, seemingly has triumphed, his hour and the power of darkness have been owned by the blessed Master Himself (see Luke 22. 53). There lies our Lord, claimed of death and yet the Conqueror over death, for through His death He has destroyed him who had the power. But, reader, regard the scene as may be you have never done before. A garden; yes, but a garden with a grave. Not the garden of Eden, where all was fair till sin entered, but a garden that told of earthly toil and care, even down to the last sad scene of earthly sorrow—a grave to lay the gardener in. What silence reigns! The murderers, red-handed from the cross, have done their all. The great earth power has done its part, and Satan seems to triumph. He has done his best.

“It is not lawful for us to put any man to death” tells its own tale. They would have done it if they could, but the Powers ordained of God can do it, if God permit; yet what a sin! In vain may guilty Pilate seek to wash his hands. “That just person!” Yes, he knew it, and yet, willing to show the more guilty Jews a pleasure, he had delivered Jesus to them to be crucified. He had the power to release Him, for he represented the authority of Rome, the fourth beast, which was responsible to God to rule aright.

But what means this seal upon the blessed Master’s tomb? this Roman watch? Reader, it means that Earth and Hell have done their all, yet they are not at rest. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Earth and Hell are watching; they remember that He said, “I

will rise again." Reader, close your eyes a moment and try to realize the scene.

There in that new grave in which never man was laid lies the One who was put to death in weakness. Men have lived on earth and left their name for fellow-men to praise; they made their name by some great acts of power of mind or body in the strongest moments of their life history. But He who lies in yonder grave has made His name—a name that is above every name—by His obedience unto death, and in His hour of greatest weakness has triumphed over Death and Hell.

As we have already said, Earth and Hell are watching that sealed stone. What power can break the seal? To God be eternal praise! His weakness proved stronger than all the powers of Earth and Hell combined. The stone is rolled away; the watch are as dead men; the Master lives by the power of God. He has laid down His life, but He has taken it again. He comes forth from the tomb, and His blessed feet, that still carry the nail marks in them, tread for the first time, as the risen Man, the earth He has redeemed, and from which He will yet remove the curse, and of which He will yet make another Eden.

We seem almost to see the Master as He stands and gazes at the scene. No shadow of the cross now falls upon His path; it is for ever behind His back. His path is as the conqueror, right up to the right hand of God. And yet He lingers in that garden to find a ministry of mercy. A lonely, broken-hearted child of Adam's race is seeking Him among the dead. She hears His voice, and mistakes Him for the gardener. And was she so far astray in this? He was the One by whom the worlds were made, the One that spoke into being earth's fairest flowers, who planted that fair garden in Eden; and now He stands in the midst of the wreck that sin and death have made, and seeks first to bind up the broken-hearted. "Go, tell My brethren I am

risen." He fills their aching hearts with joy, that joy His own, and sends them forth to groaning earth as heralds of His resurrection. And yet a day shall come when those blessed feet, once nailed to the cross, shall stand on the Mount of Olives, and those that pierced Him shall wail because of Him. Then He shall not only bind up the broken-hearted, but the curse shall be removed, and earth shall blossom again in His presence as the rose. He first makes His creature man to reflect His image, and then restores to him a paradise on earth.

But one other lesson, reader, before we turn from this scene, on which volumes might be written. One simple incident is mentioned in the Scripture narrative which in itself seems trivial, but if our God thinks fit to record anything in the Scripture for our learning, let us never look on it as trivial. When Peter entered the sepulchre, we read that he found the linen clothes lying, and the napkin that was about His head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped in a place by itself. Satan and His enemies have schemed if possible to deny the fact of His resurrection: the lie was commonly reported that His disciples had come by night and stolen Him away whilst the watch slept. Had it been so, that those timid men who fled and left their Master alone had dared to come in the face of the Roman guard to break the seal and roll the ponderous stone away, think you, my reader, they would have lingered to have unwound the linen clothes that were around His body, to take from His face the napkin, and, folding it, lay it in a place by itself? Would they not have hastened away with their burden as they found it, eager to escape? No, dear reader, this incident recorded gives the lie to Satan's artifice. Look down the Master's life, from the cradle to the cross—a life full of toil; and yet you will never find Him in undue haste. He moved among men and demons in quiet dignity, conscious of His power and of His mission's great import.

Men oft-times set themselves to do a work for which they are not fit; they mar this work, and leave undone the work that God had given them to do. Not so the Master—"I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do." We are not told by whom the linen clothes were unwrapped and laid aside, by whom the napkin was folded and laid in a place by itself; it may have been by the hands of angels, for they loved to minister to the Master's needs, as we remember they came and ministered to Him after the Temptation, doing His bidding. They allowed Satan full time for his temptation. They watched His steps through His earthly ministry, and when the dark hour of Satan's triumph came they waited for but one word from the Master's lips and they would have done on earth His will, as it will yet be done when this, the day of grace, is ended and the day of His wrath is come (Matt. 13. 41). Be this as it may, one thing we know—there was order in that tomb. What a lesson! Let us seek to learn it. We enter the home of some of those who say they are the followers of the Lord Jesus, who profess to walk in His steps, and all is confusion, the untrained, unwashed children, the dirty home, slovenliness, meeting our eye on every side. Is this as He would have it? The Master was about to leave the tomb, and yet He thought it worth His while to leave that tomb in order. Dear fellow-saints, we are soon to leave the place of death, and if at this moment caught up to meet Him in the air, should we leave all things behind us in order, as He did? Alas! the slovenly home, the untrained children, that bring disgrace on the name of Christ, tell too plainly of hearts that have never fully yielded to His claims.

Again, the very meeting-place in which saints gather to remember His return too often preaches the same sad, silent sermon: all is disorder; the windows thick with dust, the very text upon the wall torn and defaced. Fellow-saints, these things ought not so to be. We may be poor; we need not be disorderly.

Let us not turn from these things with impatience, or try to excuse ourselves by saying they are trivial. They are weighty matters, brethren. Space forbids, or we might point out this evil in many forms. It has affected the very formation of assemblies. Things revealed of God have been passed by unheeded. We are soon to leave this scene of sorrow, say some; let us meet to remember this in the breaking of the bread. But the little details of the House of God are neglected—yet more, we fear we might say with justice, despised. Disorder has been systematised, and under the plea that the Lord is about to return, and that He will then set all things in order, disorder has been tolerated by His saints. Breaking bread on the first day of the week is a precious thing, but detach it from all the responsibilities of the House of God, and we practise that for which we have no authority in His Word. Into this same evil fell the Church of the Thessalonians; some of them were neglecting their earthly responsibilities, and the reason for this seems to have been that they thought the immediate coming again of the Lord Jesus warranted them in forsaking their daily avocations and the providing for their own households. This state of things called forth a sharp rebuke from the Apostle (2 Thess. 3. 10).

And now, dear reader, if you are conscious that in any of your responsibilities, whether it be in the family, in the Church, or in the world, you have left undone the things that you ought to have done, look again at that sepulchre, and learn of Him.

THE SECOND SEAL.

We turn now to the second part of our subject, and a very different scene is brought before us.

But, reader, how do you read your Bible? When you have finished a chapter or any portion of the Word of God, do you close the Book and try to bring before your mind

that of which you have been reading? Some seem to get in their reading little beyond the letterpress; they discuss the exact meaning of a word, but the general purpose of an epistle, or the grand panorama of truth which God wills to open up to us by His Spirit as we meditate upon that which we read, seems in great measure lost to them. In 1 Timothy 4. 15 we find the apostle saying, "Meditate on these things." May we now be helped so to do.

The nineteenth chapter of Revelation opens up to our eyes a quiet scene in the heavens, quiet, indeed, in contrast to the turmoil and strife below. It is not that there is no activity, but yet in all there is the rest—the calm repose of those who have entered into the joy of their Lord.

Eighteen hundred years and more have rolled their weary length, and yet the One to whom a thousand years is but as a day still waits upon the Father's throne. But now, at last, His hour has come, and with a shout of triumph He has first caught up to meet Him His bride, and she stands before Him radiant in His glory. But what of earth? The hour of darkness, which for a time the day of grace had dispelled, has settled down again: an Egypt darkness, that may be felt, and men gnaw their tongues for pain, and blaspheme the God of Heaven, repenting not of their sins. If at the Cross Satan triumphed, and it was his hour, so now his hour of triumph over earth has come for a brief space, and there his will is done at least in measure. For this end the Fourth great earth Power has been restored (Rev. 13.). A man has come in his own name and been received, and that man, we believe, is the Man of Sin—the son of perdition, the one who accepts the kingdoms of earth at the hands of the god of this World; and thus he reigns, and earth is made a hell. Yet some there are that resist even unto death (Rev. 13. 8, 15). Thus we seek briefly to bring the scene before the mind.

Now in a moment the heavens are opened (Rev. 19. 11),

and He comes whose right it is to reign, not with a crown of thorns and visage marred, but in His glory, and on His head are many crowns, and with Him the Armies of Heaven come to do His bidding. He comes to make a groaning earth rejoice and bring in everlasting righteousness. But watch the scene. Earth and Hell combined seek to withstand the Man of Calvary's Cross. But see the end. The armies of earth are overthrown, the Man of Sin cast into the Lake of Fire, and Satan chained and cast into the Abyss. And now, behold, a seal is set on his prison house. The Father of Lies is made a captive. Is there any power of earth or hell that can break the seal and let him free? Has Satan himself the power to come forth? No; ages roll on, yet still the unbroken seal proclaims the power of Him who set it there.

Satan is held captive and not allowed to deceive the nations any more until the thousand years are finished. Then shall he be loosed for a little space, but this by the will of God. Pause again, and look at the scene, reader. What does it mean? That Satan is vanquished, that all his claims to supremacy on earth have come to nought. Yes, greater is He that is for us than he that is against us. Through the very death of the Son of God which he planned and brought about his own death blow has come about, and through death the Son of God has destroyed him who had its power.

And now the weary earth on which the Master's feet trod on His way to the cross has entered into His rest, His triumph and His glory; the wilderness is blossoming as the rose, and earth's fair flowers bloom with the curse removed.

But yet one more struggle, one more dark moment, then the end. The last enemy is destroyed, Death and Hell are cast into the Lake of Fire, where Satan has already met his doom, and where for a thousand years the beast and the false prophet have known their righteous judgment at the

hands of Him, who has taken His great power and has reigned. And now the Son delivers up the kingdom to the Father, and God is all in all.

J. A. BOSWELL.

“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD.”

(Continued from page 8.)

As the conscious and continual recipients of such great salvation, it becometh us to be “Girding up the loins of our mind, being sober and perfectly hoping for the grace being borne to us in the unveiling of Jesus Christ.”

May we not stay to ask in the presence of God, Am I thus experiencing salvation? Are the loins of my mind not loose and ungirded? Am I indeed sober? Am I really hoping with ripened understanding for the grace that shall be brought to me in the appearing (unveiling) of Him who cometh delaying not? Do I thus look and labour to be found unashamed before Him? May I therefore encourage myself to be, to do, and to teach what I can consistent with His will? ¹ so that praise, honour, and glory shall be mine by that grace He bringeth with Him when for the deeds done through the body each one shall receive according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.² As well as even now so know the all-sufficiency of that grace that of me it shall be true, “I am what I am by the grace of God.” If then these things be true of me, I shall be concerned not only to rejoice in being God’s own very child, but also as to whether I am or am not His obedient child. Who can tell

¹ 2 Tim. 2. 4-6. 1 Cor. 9. 24-27.

² 2 Cor. 5. 10. The word here translated *bad* calls for special remark. We give such in the excellent words of another:—“There are words in most languages, and the word ‘bad’ here is one of them, which contemplate evil not so much either of active or passive malignity, but rather that of its good-for-nothingness—the impossibility of any true gain ever coming forth from it, selah.”

how far-reaching such exercise of conscience and heart is? Or who can fail to mark the meaning of such evidence of Christianity? This manner or kind of child is set before us both negatively and positively. Negatively as to not fashioning ourselves according to our former desires in our ignorance. Positively in that as He who hath called is holy, so should we be (but oh! are we? are we?) holy

IN ALL MANNER OF LIVING.¹

It is written, "Ye shall be holy, for I am holy." Blessed be God! Sure, indeed, He is the God of every grace that thus shall work with and for us whom He hath made His own.

Moreover, if we call on Him as Father, let us pass the time of our sojourning in fear, knowing that He judgeth (present operation) the work of each one without respect to the person, the worker. How unlike vain man!

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection (that is, obedient in His arrangement of and for us) to the Father of spirits and live? That is, live out our days upon the earth, and neither destroy ourselves nor die before our time, nor be put to sleep for positive sin;² but so respond to His parental training of us that whether in the body or out of the body we shall be well-pleasing to Him.

And all this as earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with the building we have of God, the house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens; for thus shall the mortal be swallowed up of life.

Besides which it becometh us to understand that we have been redeemed—that is, not merely bought and therefore His

¹ Compare carefully 2 Peter 3. 11.

² Compare Eccles. 7. 15-18, R.V.; 1 Cor. 11. 30; 1 John 5. 16, R.V. Marginal reading.

property;¹ but, besides that, we have been freed or liberated to do His will, like the word, “Let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

Against which comes still the devices of Satan from of old:—

(a) “Sacrifice to your God in the land”—that is, no separation.

(β) Go not very far away—that is, let the separation not be too distinct.

(γ) Go, ye that are men; let your flocks and herds remain²—that is, Well, be separated, if you will; only keep in touch with us.

The answer through God in grace to all which is—

We will go three days' journey into the wilderness with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds: for we know not with what we must serve the Lord *until* we come thither. To prevent which there probably exists no greater hindrance to-day than that expressed by the word, “vain manner of living received by tradition from our fathers,” rather than a manner of life set before us in the word of the will of God learned and obeyed in a Hezekiah's time, which was surpassed by a Josiah's day, as that again, through merciful grace, was excelled by an Ezra-Nehemiah obedience, which brought that people back to the very confines of things as at the beginning. Yet, ah me! look and learn how and what meaneth the recording by God to us that it took that very remnant-people in Jerusalem—standing relation and possibilities—yes, it took such a people over SEVENTY YEARS to reach such manner of life; and, oh! through what trials and conflicts, both from without and within, did they pass!³ Seeing then that Christ has thus been manifested for us who are believers in God through Him, and that we have purified our souls (ourselves) in our

¹ Contrast 1 Cor. 6. 20, R.V.; also Rom. 8. 23. And note not to confound with Acts 20. 28. ² Exod. 8. 25–28. ³ See Rom. 15. 4.

obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, let us from the heart love one another fervently, knowing that we have been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the Word of God, Who liveth and abideth, not forgetting that,—

“ All flesh is as grass,
And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass.
The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth,
But the saying of the Lord abideth for ever.”

And this is the saying of good tidings which was preached unto us. Hallelu Jah! JOHN BROWN.

(To be continued.)

LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

(Continued from page 12.)

LOOKING out upon the world for help or encouragement will not help us. That which alone brings blessing and saves from discouragement here is looking off unto Jesus from first to last of life, in all and for all; that gives rest and joy of heart. Looking in ever results in self-occupation, as we have seen; it will never produce holiness, for seeing the evil of our own heart will never remedy it, but seeing it as we look off unto Jesus, we become like Him. We are sanctified by the Word of God. We are never to trust in the flesh, on which God has written the sentence of death. Looking out will never help; looking out will be as likely a means by which Satan will succeed in distracting and perplexing, as much so as if he got us to look in on ourselves.

“Let thine eyes look straight on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee” (Prov. 4. 25). That is God’s way for His children. Look right on, and blessing is ours; when our hearts are simple and when we are seeking Divine guidance only as to our path and service, then we do this, for we obey His Word. If the eye is not constantly up to

Him, then the world is looked to, the eye is intercepted in its look, and the sure result is that the saint is hindered. He becomes occupied with man and with consequences. "If I do this, what will the result be?" becomes the thought; not "If this is of God, let me go on, leaving consequences to Him, fearless of results." "I shall lose my reputation; I shall narrow the circle in which I can have influence for Him," will then never be the thought, the heart will be fixed, trusting in God. As soon as we are occupied with the world and what its thoughts will be concerning us and our actions, then we have come under a snare. "The fear of man is a snare"; "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Let that possess us, then we act regardless of results and utterly careless as to the mere opinions and thoughts of men. This is man's day, but with the Christian who walks in His fear man's judgment is a small matter (1 Cor. 4.). Not how to please the saints, but how to please Him, is the anxiety; and pleasing Him, we shall help His, although the carnal and such-like among them may not accept or be pleased with faithful speaking at the time.

As for the world, that which it loves and can esteem is an abomination to Him; it loves its own. The world hated Christ, and will hate those who follow Him. The brick is substituted for stone, and slime for mortar, by a professing world. Do this, and men will accept you; turn away from it, with your eye and heart off and up unto Him, and the world will hate you.

The Scripture affords us examples of the wrong as well as the right. See how Moses acted at the outset. After his heart was stirred to sympathise with his poor down-trodden brethren, he saw an Egyptian smiting one of Israel. His indignation was stirred. "And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an

Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren. And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand" (Exod. 2. 11). He was doubtless most anxious to serve his brethren, but in so doing, if wholly occupied with the Lord and under His control, he would not have needed to look "this way and that," but straight on and up.

The result was that for forty years longer Israel had to bear their burdens and the tyranny of Pharaoh, while Moses was removed from their midst, learning as he tended the flock by Horeb's mount the patience and wisdom that alone could enable him to shepherd God's own flock in the wilderness for forty years. Egypt's palace had taught him man's wisdom and ways in subtlety, but in God's school alone could he get the *fitted* training for the service of God. Looking out gained him nothing; eyes were on him, and he had to flee. No secret, crafty action could deliver Israel. In the presence of all in God's time Moses was to lead them out. "Looking this way and that" hinders at once the servant of Christ in his ministry. He is afraid to speak boldly; the eye is occupied with earth, with men. Leave the issues of service with Him, looking up and off; work thoroughly, not with man without in view, but the judgment-seat of Christ. Thus acted Paul in serving saints at Corinth, though they became embittered against him for his faithfulness: "Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved" (2 Cor. 12. 15), "I will spend and be spent for you," said he.

When Moses came back after forty years he could then serve. All the power of Pharaoh could not prevent. He never occupied himself with it, nor did he tremble before it. He was the man of power, not Pharaoh. Looking off and up, his workings for God at last made earth's mighty one to quail in the presence of God, and to urge the departure of Israel. "Twice have I heard this, that power

belongeth unto God" (Ps. 62. 11). How absolutely dependent we are upon it. In His power alone can we preach the Gospel or minister His Word. In no way can we be the means of blessing save as that power is with us, nor can we have the power needed to endure save as we see Him. "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well-nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Ps. 73. 1-3), said the Psalmist, looking around him occupied with things on the earth. In Psalm 72. God turns our eye on the earth; all is for Him; glory fills the scene, nothing left to wish for, "the prayers of David the son of Jesse ended." But here how different—the wicked in prosperity, waters of a full cup wrung out to His own! When God bid Abram look up he was right in doing so. All should be his. But when Lot looked up as led by self and fleshly desire he was wrong and went all wrong, his steps following his heart, as his heart had followed his eye. Therefore his steps led him right into Sodom, where all that met his eye vexed and troubled. In Psalm 72., the King claims the earth. All are brought to know Him, and the wealth of earth is lavished at His feet, God's purpose accomplished. But in the next Psalm what a transition, what a contrast, save as God is seen, how hopeless! "We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5. 7). Asaph had failed in this, for he was filled with perplexity and even envy as he regarded the apparent ease and comfort in the life and ways of the world. "Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end" (Ps. 73. 17). Outside! He was looking at the world as from an outside position. Painful indeed the prospect: "no bands in their death" (ver. 4); "not in trouble as other men" (ver. 5); violence covered them as a garment (ver. 6); more than heart could wish (ver. 7); they speak against God and man (ver. 9). Amazement filled his soul. How could it be explained?

“They prosper; they increase in riches” (ver. 12). How all shows that it is never safe for a child of God to contemplate the world apart from the sanctuary of God and his own position in it. How different the exulting language of faith, “Fret not thyself because of evil-doers” (Ps. 37. 1). Let their tongues wag ever so often or much then, and it disturbs not. God is seen, and all is rolled on Him and left in perfect quiet security; faith then can say, “I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a tree that groweth in his own soil” (Ps. 37. 35) [margin]. “Yet he passed away, and was not.” How such a psalm brightens the way, encourages our hearts, and shows us the folly, nay the sin, of contemplating the world from any other standpoint than the sanctuary of God. In triumph we go on as faith lays hold upon God. Daily it is needed and must be God-given. He supplies, but we need to look to Him each day. God has no scrip or purse in man in which to place large supplies for a long time, but day by day, moment by moment, He is found all-sufficient.

Without this God's character is forgotten, His guidance is lost, and one who should always trust becomes sadly complaining and murmuring till He has to chasten in order to restore. Thus Asaph speaks again: “All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning” (Ps. 73. 14); thus in His leadings some walk through much trial till in faith they emerge into His own presence and can thank Him that they have not the world's portion. Health may have failed, and trials may be great, but God has been good, and He has upheld, and the very discipline has produced “the peaceable fruits of righteousness.” Satan then may whisper, “God is angry with you; He has hidden His face from you: you had better give it up; it is a hard thing to be a Christian”; but in the sanctuary he is judged a liar, as the world is proved a deceiver, and God's own love keeps and upholds. “Then understood I their end,” the fearful ending that awaits the world. How

Paul wept as he saw and told it: "whose end is destruction" (Phil. 3. 19).

How "looking in" or "looking out" by some Christians will lead others to do it as they speak of their experiences when doing the first, or their perplexities when doing the latter. How catching unbelief is. The ten spies soon led all Israel with them, and the two, Joshua and Caleb, who had looked up and seen God instead of *out* upon giants and chariots of iron, were powerless to stem the torrent of unbelief; and the cry arose up before God. But Asaph, though he penned his thoughts that we might learn by his experience, never told out those thoughts to others. Though he had "well-nigh slipped," he was recovered; and God's controlling and restraining kept his mouth shut. "If I say, I will speak thus; I should offend the generation of Thy children" (ver. 15). The first action of the Spirit of God was a restraining one, and He held him back from communicating the unbelieving thoughts of his heart. As he considers his brethren his heart grows tender, and he pulls himself up sharply: "If," etc. Thoughts never known to others are all known to God, and this Psalm is given to us as a warning that we may watch against the first inroads of unbelief, for if not quickly arrested it will give vent to itself in speech and thus hinder others. Ever therefore let us keep the vantage-ground from which to view the world; then shall we not envy its position, but thank God for having brought us out of it. We shall see it as He sees it. A world destitute of God! Solemn thought! How sad when one falls so low that he can envy it and cry out for its "fish and cucumbers and onions and melons" (Num. 11. 5), when he should be rejoicing in the manna God-given. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside Thee" (ver. 25). Look off and up; then how safe! He is seen and trusted and the world is estimated aright as He is ever before the eye.

THE PRESENT NEED AND OPPORTUNITY.

(Continued from page 4.)

THE Church of Living God is pillar and ground of the Truth. The Church in Scripture is represented under the figure of a woman, and in Proverbs **31**. we have a description of an excellent woman. She is in her place at home, minding the house whilst her husband goes out to do his duty in the broad gate of the city. He has no need of spoil because of her diligence at home; and if peradventure he meets with one without, whom he would befriend, he can bring such an one home with him, confidently assured of the welcome the excellent woman will extend to him, and the provision that she will have at hand to supply his wants, whether they be of food or of raiment. The excellent woman, then, seems to us to illustrate somewhat of the function of the assembly, whilst the husband in his activity without suggests the work which pertains to men of God, and especially to such as are evangelists.

In 2 Timothy **1. 12** (margin of Revised Version), 1 Timothy **6. 20**, 2 Timothy **1. 14**, and 2 Timothy **2. 2**, we read of the deposit committed unto Paul and by him entrusted to Timothy, with instructions to pass it on in the care of faithful men. That good deposit is the Faith which we have, as in the Scriptures the same is revealed to us. And wheresoever a faithful man is to be found, there is one on whom the responsibility rests to guard the good deposit and to fight the good fight of the Faith. For a faithful man is one whose life is dominated by the fact that he believes the revelation which God has been pleased to make of His Son. So that in all his ways he is what he is because the Faith is what it is.

But if the man of God would walk in the good works before prepared by God for him to walk in, he must needs be thoroughly furnished by every scripture. Has

there not been a very great tendency to altogether underestimate the amount of careful and painstaking study which a man of God ought to devote to the written revelation of God? Has not this led to a kind of preaching which has sadly lacked the demonstration of the Spirit,¹ and therefore lacked power? There is little or no agreement to be found between the divinely recorded work of the Spirit in apostolic days and the ministry, so-called, which chiefly consists in exhorting men to believe, believe, believe, and almost entirely neglects to present before them Him who is at once the object of faith and the centre of God's purpose. To how many companies of persons brought together now-a-days to hear the preaching of the Gospel could one say, "Before your eyes Jesus Christ is openly set forth crucified"?

Whilst fully recognising the utter futility of attempting to manufacture preachers by any process of human education, we are, nevertheless, perfectly certain that study and training are alike necessary for those who publicly proclaim the Word of God. Far more thoroughgoing study of the Scriptures, more earnest attention to its details, more grasp of its facts, more appreciation of its scope,—these things are necessities, if there is to be ministry in demonstration of the Spirit. Not only so, the preachers need more training, more of that disciplining for which the grace of God hath appeared.²

But if we would name one thing as above and beyond all else needful, and in a sense inclusive of all else, it should be this: The man who would minister the Word of God must

¹ Demonstration, see 1 Cor. 2. 4. The Greek word is Ἀποδείξις, Apodeixis, "a showing forth, making known, exhibiting" (Liddell & Scott, 7th edition, p. 178).

² Titus 2. 11: "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, disciplining us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present age, looking for the blessed hope."

know and understand that the Scriptures are just God's revelation of His Son; that God's heart is filled with Christ; that all Scripture centres round Him; that it is the excellence of His person, the value of the Atoning Work that He has done, and the exceeding eminence of the Place to which God has exalted Him, that should fill the mind and heart of the preacher, and be the theme of all his preaching.

Let this once be fully grasped in the energy of the indwelling Advocate, and slowly, but surely, a far more powerful ministry of the whole Word of God would be heard amongst us and out from us.

Let us also remember and well bear in mind that, equally for the born-again amongst the sons of men as for the unregenerate, it is the preaching of Christ that is needed; and there can be little doubt that a ministry in demonstration of the Spirit and in power would be used by God to deliver His children from the thralls of sectarianism, even when the evils of ecclesiastical iniquity were far enough away from the thoughts of the preacher, and he was simply in the spirit of faith proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Full little idea have we of the mighty power that there would be in a worthy ministry of the perfections of His person, of the efficacies of His work, and of the heights to which God has raised Him; nor shall we be able to appreciate the effect of such preaching on others till the Scriptures of Truth have made these sublime topics more familiar and more precious to our own hearts.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

“GIVE UP SEPARATION.”

“AND I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not” (Amos 2. 11, 12).

We have writings of twelve different prophets classed together. They are reckoned as one by the Jews in their classification of the Old Testament books, and thus they reckon twenty-two books in all, making up the number of the letters in the Hebrew alphabet. They are called generally “the Minor Prophets,” distinguishing them from the larger prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others. Again these prophecies are divided into distinct classes by the fact that some prophesied before the Captivity in Babylon, and others after that event, or during it. It is important in seeking to understand these prophecies to remember this fact.

Amos prophesied at the same time as Hosea, Joel, and Isaiah, though not over the same length of time. And his prophecies specially concerned Israel. They were given “in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah” (chap. 1. 1)—the king who died a leper (2 Chron. 26.), stricken with leprosy as a judgment from the Lord because he dared to go into the temple, as if he were an anointed priest, when only anointed as king. Azariah resisted him; he was given opportunity to repent and to retrace his steps. He would not, but in hot anger sought to maintain his position, when God smote him, the leprosy in an instant rose in his forehead, and he was thrust out to die in a leper-house. It was at his death that Isaiah had the vision of the glory (Isaiah 6.), when as earth’s king, corrupt and loathsome, died, he beheld THE KING, high and lifted up in all His holiness, filling the heavens. God’s servants had resisted sinning, rebellious Uzziah, and

His servants, the seraphim, are shown as serving and worshipping the true and rightful King. Amos also prophesied "in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, King of Israel, two years before the earthquake" (chap. 1. 1). That is the earthquake referred to also by Zechariah (chap. 14. 5). A most notable event, which gave opportunity to him to refer to another earthquake under more solemn conditions still—one that would immediately precede the coming of the Lord, and which will be as literal in its accomplishment as the one which happened in the days of Uzziah.

The Jeroboam referred to here was the grandson of Jehu, and reigned forty-one years. He is not to be confused with the first Jeroboam—the Jeroboam, son of Nebat, who "made Israel to sin"—though, alas! they walked the same path, and one equally with the other manifested his indifference to the claims of God, and walked in evil ways before Him. Joash in calling his son after the first Jeroboam seemed to have done so as a persistent follower in his evil ways. It was during the reign of this Jeroboam that Israel rose to a great height of prosperity. He reigned longer than any other king in Israel. And he lived a longer life than any of the others. His father had met with many successes, and strengthened Israel, but Jeroboam exceeded him in his enterprises and victories, and won back such important places as Hamath and Damascus (2 Kings 14. 28), which evidently he had been stirred up to do by the prophecies of Jonah (2 Kings 14. 25). "Hamath the great," as Amos calls it (chap. 6. 2), had been independent for about 150 years, since the death of Solomon. It was about 200 miles from Samaria. It was regained, and Damascus also. His prowess and successful wars are summed up in a verse (2 Kings 14. 28). But it is a verse that conveys a great deal. Damascus had almost conquered Israel not long before, under Benhadad and Hazael (2 Kings 13. 7), and now Israel had prevailed and taken captive, with the result that their prosperity soon

manifested itself in their buildings (Amos 3. 15) of "hewn stone" (5. 11), with rich display of furnishings, "ivory beds" (6. 4), soft couches (3. 12), with music cultivated, harp and viol (6. 5), and a constant round of feasting and banquets (6. 6, 7). Debauchery and excess, the usual accompaniments of riches, were indulged in on every hand, which Amos severely rebuked. And, as well, the rich were trampling on the poor and oppressing them; avarice and fraud all connected (chaps. 5. 11, 12; 8. 6). Hosea also pictures this most alarming condition of things in the plainest language, showing the inevitable judgment that would befall them unless they repented.

The house of Jeroboam was threatened with the sword (chap. 7. 9), and Israel was to be led into captivity (chap. 7. 11). And these judgments were all delivered by Amos at the very time when Israel appeared most prosperous, and, under the energetic, resolute purpose of Jeroboam, had not only recovered territory in the north-east, but also in the south. Not only so, but God selected him from the very poorest in the land to rebuke the rich of Israel, who were sensual, avaricious, and grinding the poor.

The more fully we consider the position of Israel at that time the better able we shall be to apprehend the force of the prophecies of Amos and the reason for them. From different positions and paths God called His prophets, some kingly or priestly, as David and Ezekiel; but Amos was not from either. He plainly declared his lowly origin and humble occupation. He was not connected with any school of prophets; he had no advantages to boast of. "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit," or "a dresser of sycamore trees" (R.V.) (chap. 7. 14), the fruit of which was only eaten by the very poorest of the people, and to this day is only partaken of by such, being very insipid in taste. The dressing refers to the peculiar manner in which the

fruit has to be dealt with. To this day they use in Palestine the same instrument as Amos, in all probability, used in cutting off the head of the fruit, after which, in about twenty-four hours, it was ripe enough to gather, being rendered sweeter by the operation, and insects that infest it were thus liberated. Among the hills of Tekoa, in the south, this had been his humble employ until God called him therefrom, and sent him into Israel to witness against its increasing sinfulness. A dresser of the fruit in its season, and at other times tending the flock (chap. 7. 15), his illustrations are chiefly drawn from his pursuits and surroundings, and remarkably are they brought in—things in nature, the earthquake, the stars, Pleiades and Orion, the lion roaring, the birds, and the snares laid for them, blasting, mildew, and the palmerworm,—all are used to illustrate as he delivers the solemn prophecies of judgment, and at a time when clouds seem to have passed warns them that the evil day is at hand. With plain and forcible words he revealed the condition of things prevailing among them—sure forerunner of calamity among any people.

Having acted upon the aggressive and secured themselves on their northern and southern borders, they had settled down into self-indulgence and pleasure; the spoils captured all adding to their ability thus to act: the height of luxury, avarice, false judgments, and impatient desire for the Sabbath to pass that they might resume their acts of greed, on the part of the rich; while their victims, the poor, were lying unsheltered and cold, the garment taken from them by their oppressors.

It was at that very time that God not only rebuked them by the words of His prophets, but by raising up Nazarites among them. And the more striking was the testimony rendered by raising them up from the "young men." The Nazarites abstained most scrupulously from all the fruit of the vine. How striking would their testimony be

at a time when drunkenness so largely prevailed! Most careful had they to be in connection with all ceremonial defilement. Without speaking, a number of young men thus walking in the midst of Israel would be a loud and constant rebuke to the ungodly ways of others. "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise" (Isa. 43. 21). But, alas! they were not doing it. Therefore Isaiah added, "But thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of Me, O Israel." They were prayerless, and praiseless, and, worse, "Thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thine iniquities" (Isa. 43. 24). Such was the state of Israel, fearful result of departing from God and giving up separation. He had brought them out unto and for Himself. It was their glory that they were a peculiar people separated unto Him. If they had maintained that position, then all Israel would have been a kingdom of priests unto the Lord (Exod. 19.), and there would have been no priesthood of Aaron's family alone. And if separation had been maintained the Nazarites would not have been needed. Thus, whenever God has called out unto Himself in separation, the effort of Satan, and the world under his power, has been to draw aside the separated ones into the path of self-will and disobedience. Israel was to be unlike the nations, but soon they copied them in every respect. Soon, by intermarriage and constant intercourse with the nations, Israel adopted every form of false worship, and thus came under the severe judgments of God.

Jeroboam I. and kings following him had been cut off for their iniquity. Jehu came to the throne, and promise was made to him that his house should continue to reign to the fourth generation, because he had executed the judgment of God against Ahab, and destroyed Baal and its priests (2 Kings 10. 28-30). But he retained the "calves" in Dan and Bethel, "and took no heed to walk in the law

of the God of Israel with all his heart, for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin" (2 Kings 10. 31). Thus we have a further prophecy of judgment given to Jehu himself—result of separation being set at nought. God's judgment against Ahab fell not only because of his own sin, but the sin was the greater as he had enticed once and again Judah's king, Jehoshaphat, into alliance with him. Ahab had made a feast for him, and Jehoshaphat had said, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people" (2 Chron. 18. 3). Having eaten of his feast, and thus become indebted to him, he could not refuse to go with him to the wars. So long as separation is maintained power abides, but let alliances with the world be made, the child of God renders himself helpless, and he is soon found walking in the world's ways. In Asa's days how different it had been. As he took courage and put away the idols and renewed the altar of the Lord, then "They fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him" (2 Chron. 15. 8-12). And the Lord gave them rest. Separation became a real thing, and was therefore felt. Therefore we read of Baasha, King of Israel, building Ramah, and seeking to prevent others from being separated. As decline advanced and apostacy increased, once and again God raised up a testimony to Himself in connection with a separated people. As in Judah, when separation was maintained, it told upon Israel, so especially was it felt when in Israel itself God raised up Nazarites, selecting their young men at the very age best fitted to join in sins, pleasures, and excesses. Therefore the effort to give them wing, or, in other words, to get them to give up their separation, which so long as it continued severely reproached and condemned those who were walking in the evil ways thus graphically and solemnly pictured by Amos.

(To be continued.)

“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD.”

(Continued from page 32.)

How beautiful and befitting is the moral condition brought about by obedience to the truth !

Where such has taken place and is, all malice and all guile, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil-speakings, have been and are laid aside.

He or she of the Born-again who has not so done, or who gives place to any of those evils, is quite unfit to fulfil the injunction, and therefore must lose the blessing, expressed in the words—“As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.”¹

These words intimate the maintaining of a moral condition the duration of which is not, as some have mistakenly concluded, **while we are** new-born babes, but rather all the days from our having been born again are we required to see to it that as babes just born we do earnestly long for, and drink in, the sincere milk of the word with the specific object before our hearts, that we may grow therein or thereby unto salvation.

That shows and presents salvation for the Born-again much beyond and different from what takes place at “birth from above,” when it becomes eternally and unalterably true,—“HE (God) SAVED US !”²

“What God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it; and God doeth it that men should fear before Him.”³ Thus it is that the already saved sinner is privileged and called upon to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling,⁴ as also to take heed to himself and the teaching, for in doing this he shall both save himself and them that hear

¹ Chap. 2. 2; see R.V.

² Titus 3. 3-7, R.V.

³ Eccl. 3. 14.

⁴ Phil. 2. 12.

him.¹ Indeed, this latter statement is but the presentation in practice of what these words through Peter set forth in principle.

Are we then thus standing in the true grace of God? Have all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and all evil-speaking, no countenance from, nor place in or by us who have tasted that the Lord is gracious?

It is most noteworthy that from verse 3 of this second chapter the Holy Spirit works in a great deal of what He moved David to write in connection with his experience before and with Achish, King of Gath, as may be seen by comparing Psalm 34. with 1 Samuel 21., 22., which tells us the immediate occasion of David being found at the cave Adullam, and also the slaying by Saul of the Lord's priests, etc., etc., which further led to God's ruler, priest, and prophet, being outside the camp and kingdom in which most of Israel remained, and where, moreover, God refused to answer by "Urim or by Thummim," or as He had been wont to do.

May not that fact guide us into understanding the meaning of the words of verse 4?

Was not David God's chosen and anointed ruler?

Yet was not he verily the rejected of men?

Had Israel not been made to taste and see the kindness of the Lord through David as their deliverer from enemies from whom they could not deliver themselves, and that whether viewed as individuals or collectively?

Nevertheless, when David was persecuted by Saul, did Israel not help unto David being more and more rejected and displaced?

Has not all this its sad counterpart to-day?

Is the Saviour Lord Christ not rejected and displaced by the many now? and by none so sorely as those; being His, who professedly are builders for God!

¹ 1 Tim. 4. 16.

Besides, when the kingdom was about to be taken from those to whom it was proffered, the Lord Himself, to make that known, used the very words of the verses before us.¹ And that because of their rejection of Him as to His place!

If, however, we tasted that the Lord is gracious, it is our further privilege to be found coming (present and continuous action) unto Him in the recognition of Him as being—

A LIVING STONE,

by men, indeed, disallowed, but by God chosen and precious; while we come indeed unto Him, being ourselves

AS LIVING STONES,

who at once are built, and suffer ourselves to be built a spiritual house,² for an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices well-pleasing to God through Jesus Christ.³

That is a blessed possibility. Let none mistake it for aught else. Because it is contained in Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious; and he that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame." Unto us, therefore, who believe is the preciousness, but unto those who believe not the stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner: and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to such as stumble at the word, being unpersuaded, unto which also they were appointed.⁴

In bold contrast to whom stand forth the believing,

¹ Matt. 21. 42, 43.

² "House" can only be when there is the put-together material designed to compose it. Uncollected and unbuilt stones, however fit to form a "house," never do so until actually built together. He having ears to hear, let him hear.

³ 1 Pet. 2. 5.

⁴ A careful perusal of Isaiah 28., with 2 Timothy 2. 22, 23, will greatly help in appreciating the solemn truth of these words.

assured, obedient ones, as an elect generation (race), a royal (kingly) priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar (that is, an acquired) people. On this last designation Malachi 3. 16-18 contains a most simple and helpful explanation of the doctrine in practice towards and among those who are the Lord's, showing it to be both selective and conditional. In fact, the very same word is used in both passages.

May grace be sought and given to reader and writer to so comprehend all this, that God's purpose shall be learned and heeded, even unto showing forth His virtues Who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. Thus we shall not be content to shine in the darkness, but rather to be light in separation from it; ¹ as those who have obtained mercy to be faithful, and who, though once they were not the people of God, know and show themselves to be such now.

JOHN BROWN.

UNTO US IN A SON.

NOTES ON THE LETTER TO HEBREWS.

God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in a Son (*margin*).

The contrast here set forth between the manner of God's speaking of old time and that of His utterance at the end of days is but the first of a number of contrasts contained in this letter, all intended to shew forth the varied excellencies of Him whom the Father delighteth to honour, alike in His person and His work and His place. One after another the Eternal Word is contrasted with angels, with Moses, with Aaron, with the tabernacle, with the offerings, with Old Testament worthies, all of whom and of which are mar-

¹ Gen. 1. 4; 2 Cor. 6. 14.

shalled before our eyes, with one voice confessing, as John the Immerser had confessed, "He that cometh after me is become before me, for He was before me, . . . the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose."

That God should speak in a Son is itself a testimony that He speaks fully and perfectly. The Son is the Father's likeness; the word "son" is not used merely to imply origin or generation: it bespeaks identity of character, community of nature. With it may be contrasted the word used in Acts 17. 28, "For we are also His offspring." To prove that the word "son" denotes likeness to the father, we refer to Matthew 5. 43-48, "Love your enemies . . . that ye may be (*literally*, that ye may become) sons of your Father who is in heaven, for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil," and so on.¹

whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds (*τοὺς αἰῶνας*, *tous aiōnas*);

The word translated "worlds" here is usually translated "ages" in the Revised Version. It is probably generally believed that it is used to signify the worlds metaphorically. For our part we are rather disposed to connect with Isaiah 9. 6, where Immanu El, the child born, the son given, has given as His name Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Father of Eternity, Prince of Peace.² Thus He is the Father of Eternity, and by Him the ages were made.

But the high mysteries of Thy Name
An angel's grasp transcend;
The Father only (glorious claim)
The Son can comprehend.

But because we cannot comprehend the infinite Son with our finite, puny minds, He is in this letter brought forward

¹ We quote as usual from the Revised Version, which here, as in most places, is far more true to the original than is the Authorized Version. The latter confuses the words sons and children hopelessly.

² Margin.

in contrast to many ; each and all of whom and of which in some way more or less feeble prefigure Him, whilst they are shown to be altogether and entirely inferior to Him.

who being the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance,

It is not merely that there is an outward affinity or resemblance between God and the Son. He is the very image of His substance, which Craik I think renders "the exact impress of His subsistence." What the Father is that the Son is ; not only in speaking and in doing, but in nature and in essence.

and upholding all things by the word of His power,

The word of His power, that is, the spoken word or saying (it is *ρῆμα*, *rhēma*,¹ here, not *λογος*, *lōgōs*) of His might, His ability (*δυναμις*, *dunamis*²). What a thought—the infant in Bethlehem's manger upholding the universe by the word of His power !

when He had made purification of sins sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ;

The words "by Himself" have no sufficient authority to warrant their insertion here, though that it was by Himself all Scripture testifies. How briefly here can God sum up the mighty act of Atonement in four words, literally, "Purification for sins made, He sat down." Yet how much there is in those four words ! How much ? Eternity will be well occupied to learn their meaning, and never shall we exhaust it.

Sins sent away as to their penal consequences we now know ; a conscience cleansed from defilement may be also now our enjoyed possession, but then Sin, root and fruit, will be all behind us—

¹ Pronounce ē as ei in reign.

² For *dunamis* see NEEDED TRUTH, vol. iv., page 37.

Where no shade nor stain can enter,
 Nor the gold be dim.
 In that holiness unsullied
 I shall walk with Him.
 Meet companion then for Jesus,
 From Him, for Him made ;
 Glory of God's grace for ever
 There in me displayed.

He sat down, His work is done. Into the fulness of its enjoyment we have not yet entered ; nay, nor has He. He yet waits to see the travail of His soul and be satisfied. But the work, His work is done. Having made purification for sins, He sat down—and where? On the right hand of the Majesty on high. No lower place. Far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come.

having become by so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they.

That is to say, it was His original place. It was His by inheritance, this place far above all ; but having come down, having emptied Himself and taken a servant's place to do His mighty Atonement work, He becomes as much better than the angels as by inheritance He was. So that as Sinsurger He sits down where, as the Eternal Word, He had ever sat, namely, on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

For unto which of the angels said He at any time—

“Thou art My Son :

“This day have I begotten Thee ” ?

Here, then, the references to Old Testament Scriptures begin. Here is a decree of God relating to the Son, shewing the infinitely higher position given to Him than to the angels.

This quotation is from the second Psalm :—

I will tell of the decree,
 Jehovah said unto Me, “Thou art My Son,

“This day have I begotten Thee;

“Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thy inheritance.”

In his address to the men of Antioch in Pisidia, Paul distinctly quotes this passage as referring to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.¹ And thus we learn that, as the first-begotten from the dead, God speaks to Him in terms never addressed to angels.

and again,—

“I will be to Him a Father (*literally*, for a Father),

“And He shall be to Me a Son” (*literally*, for a Son).

This appears to be a quotation from 1 Chron. 17. David desired to build a house for the ark of the covenant, and God sends him a message full of condescension and promise from which we quote a few words² :—

“I will set up thy seed after thee which shall be of thy sons, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne for ever: I will be his Father, and he shall be My son”

Evidently, then, not Solomon alone was contemplated herein. Clearly this pointed on to the Lord Christ Himself, the Son of the Father.

And when He again bringeth in the first-born into the inhabited earth, He saith, “And let all the angels of God worship Him” (*margin*).

We have in Psalm 97. 7 the words, “Worship Him, all ye gods” (*elohim*).

If the quotation is taken from here, we might perhaps wonder at the word “angels” being inserted. It must, however, be remembered that the Hebrew word *Elohim* is used in a wider sense than is its Greek equivalent, *Theos*, in the New Testament. The word *Theos* (God) is generally

¹ Acts 13. 32, 34.

² Please read the whole chapter attentively.

used in the New Testament of the one true God alone; sometimes of such as usurp His place (for instance, whose god is their belly), and only very exceptionally in the sense of John 10. 34, 35: "He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken." But Psalms 82. and 97. are by no means the only places in the Old Testament where Elohim is applied to judges and the like. And if we take the verse before us to be taken from Psalm 97., we must suppose that the word gods, in the latter, designates the angels of God. At the same time it is not impossible that there are passages in the New Testament quoted from the Old which we cannot, with our present knowledge, find in the latter, perhaps through the corruptness of a reading or the erroneousness of a rendering. One would be slow to come to this conclusion in any given case, but it is possible that such may be the explanation of the difficulties that some quotations appear to present. Certain it is that there is much, very much, in the Scriptures that calls for more earnest and continued study of the Book than it has as yet had.

And of the angels He saith,—

"Who maketh His angels spirits (*margin*),

"And His ministers a flame of fire."

We adhere to the old rendering, "spirits," as in the margin of the R.V., because it remains to be proved that the Greek word *πνευμα*, *pneuma*, ever signifies the wind in the New Testament. Of course, in secular literature, it has this meaning, as many English derivatives (pneumatic and the like) clearly show, but it is very doubtful whether it ever means wind in the New Testament. The rendering of Psalm 104. 4 by the Revisers lends a difficulty here, but whilst we speak with due deference to the critical acumen of such eminent scholars, we cannot but understand these verses both in the Old and New Testaments to be

a statement of the kind of beings that God has caused His angels to be. He makes His angels to be spirits, His ministers He makes to be a flame of fire.

They are indeed mighty ones; their powers are vast, their motions are swift as the lightning's flash. They are indeed great and mighty, as John said,—

“I saw one angel standing in the sun.”

His angels then He makes to be spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.

but of the Son,

“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;

“And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom:

“Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity (*Greek, lawlessness*);

“Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee

“With the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.”

This is taken from the song of loves of the sons of Korah (Ps. 45.). The Revisers have in this, as in one or two other places, supplied a perfectly gratuitous and unjustifiable conjectural emendation, namely their marginal note to the sixth verse. Certainly where the Hebrew text of the Old Testament will not bear as its translation that which appears as the translation of the Greek quotation thereof in the New Testament it is unquestionable that translators are bound faithfully to render the text that lies before them. But here the case is far otherwise. The translation as it stands in the text is verbally the same as the translation of the Greek of Hebrews 1. 8, and yet the translators go out of their way to insert the marginal reading, “Thy throne is *the throne of God.*” Either the words are spoken to one who could be rightly addressed as “O God,” or they are not. There is absolutely nothing in the context to suggest any difficulty. The whole Psalm is evidently Messianic. Its contents would be, to say the least, hyperbolic to the last degree if applied to any but to the Word

who became flesh—we say its contents generally, for instance verses 2, 3:—

“Thou art fairer than the children of men;
 Grace is poured into Thy lips:
 Therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever.
 Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Mighty One,
 Thy glory and Thy majesty.”

Moreover, if such a difficulty could arise, is this a case where a quotation in the New Testament is to be entirely disregarded? One would like to know why this marginal note was inserted. To whom but to the Messiah could such words have been addressed? And if to Him, what right have the Revisers to amend the words spoken to Him? The word of God here comes to Him: “O God.” We bow our hearts, and worshipping, say with Thomas, “My Lord and my God.”

Then follows a quotation from Psalm 102. which deserves very careful consideration and attention:—

And (this word introduces the new quotation)

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth,

“And the heavens are the work of Thy hands.

“They shall perish, but Thou continuest;

“And they all shall wax old as doth a garment,

“And as a mantle shalt Thou roll them up,

“As a garment, and they shall be changed:

“But Thou art the same,

“And Thy years shall not fail.”

On turning to Psalm 102. we find it entitled, “A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and poureth out his complaint before Jehovah.”

Then follow twenty-two lines of complaints. Then we have from verses 12 to 22 a very remarkable passage, to which we will presently return. Then comes verse 23, where the afflicted one says,—

“He weakened my strength in the way ;

“He shortened my days.

“I said, ‘O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days.’”

The verses 25, 26, 27 being the verses quoted in Hebrews and applied to the Eternal Word, we understand the reply to the above to be from the Father and to begin in verse 24 :—

“Thy years are throughout all generations ;

“Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth ;”

and so on.

That is to say, we regard it as certain that verses 1 to 11, verse 23, and the first line of verse 24 are the complaint and prayer of the Lord Jesus as the Afflicted One, also that from the middle of verse 24 to the end of the Psalm is the answer of God to this prayer.

But in Hebrews 1. 10 we have the words **Thou, Lord**, which are not to be found in the last section of the Psalm. They are, however, in verse 12, and this leads us to suggest that possibly verses 12 to 22 are spoken to the Messiah, who is therein addressed by His proper name, Jehovah. It cannot be too strongly insisted on that the Son and the Spirit are not infrequently addressed by the name of Jehovah in the Old Testament Scriptures. We may quote Zechariah 10. 12,—

“I will strengthen them in Jehovah,

“And they shall walk up and down in His name,” saith Jehovah,—

to show that the name Jehovah is applied to more persons than one. Jehovah, who speaks here, refers to the name of Jehovah as “His name.” Then in Numbers 6. 24, 26, we get the three Divine persons so named :—

“Jehovah bless thee and keep thee” (Father) ;

“Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee” (Son);

“Jehovah lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace” (Spirit).

So in this Psalm **102**. it seems that the afflicted one who pours out his complaint before Jehovah (verses 1 to 11), whose days were like a shadow that declineth, who was withered like grass, is He who is addressed in verses 12 to 22 :—

“Thou, O Jehovah, shalt abide for ever,

“And Thy memorial unto all generations ;

“Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion ;”

and so on.

We do not positively say that this is the case, but the word **Lord** in Hebrews **1**. 10 looks to be taken from **Jehovah** in Psalm **102**. 12, and we see no reason whatever for hesitating to understand this as being addressed to the Messiah.

In any case we cannot but marvel when we think of Him looking down from the height of His sanctuary and coming down to be like a pelican of the wilderness, like an owl of the waste places, like a sparrow that is alone upon the housetop, and contrast this with what belonged to Him as the Eternal One :—

“Thy years are throughout all generations.”

but of which of the angels hath He said at any time,

“Sit thou on **My** right hand

“Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet” ?

Yet such words were addressed to David's Lord, as in Psalm **110**. he tells us ; whilst as to the angels it is written,—

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation ?

(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 60.—“*If a man, who one way or other actually has enough of property to meet his liabilities, but will not, goes into bankruptcy, and by process of Civil Bankruptcy law is absolved from, say one half of the just claims of his creditors, should the Assembly allow that man to remain in fellowship, if, after remonstrance from it, he still refuses to give his creditors their due?*”

As this question is put it makes the Bankruptcy a fraudulent one, and if such were known to be the case, the person so acting would be subject to the law of the land. Surely, therefore, such a one would be subject to the law of God in the Assembly, but it would be needful most fully to establish such accusations against one who had been cleared by the law of the land before he could be dealt with by the law of God in the Assembly.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 61.—“*Is there anything in the Word of God forbidding a child of God to take part in parliamentary elections, such as canvassing, voting, or being a candidate?*”

This question, to be gone into satisfactorily, would need more space than we are at liberty to assign to it. We may briefly say that Rom. 13. 1 had an application at that day that could not, we believe, be given to it in the present. It was addressed to those who lived in Rome, and Rome was the great fourth empire of earth. Into the hands of these four empires God had given the rule of the earth (see Daniel 2. 37, 38, and 2 Chron. 36. 23), having taken the reins of government out of the hands of His people Israel. Those who argue that as Daniel and his fellows took government under Gentile power in Babylon, so Christians may to-day, might be asked, Where to-day is any government into whose hands God has directly committed the rule of the earth? Moreover, even in the time of the Fourth Empire, we never read of Christians taking office. “Our citizenship is in Heaven,” here we are pilgrims and strangers. An Englishman would need to be naturalised before he could take part in the government of France, and a Christian, to-day, must lose his heavenly character before he can take part in government with those who are in rebellion against the rule of the Heavens. The Lord would not take power at Satan’s hands, and the powers of earth will shortly be under the rule of the Antichrist.

J. A. B.

WHAT IS A SECT?

IN order to the better consideration of this subject it will be well, in the first place, to briefly consider one or two points. Firstly, has God in the past or present delivered to His people any form of government? And, if so, who were and are responsible to carry it out? It would be impossible for us to enter at any length into these two questions in this article, but we may be permitted so to do on another occasion.

Suffice it now that we recall to the memory of our readers some scriptures on the subject.

In Eden God gave to Adam a headship over all created things and a simple law. For be it remembered man was in simplicity. To have given to him the Levitical law at this time would have been, we believe, the giving him the knowledge of good and evil.

To some the offence of our first parents may seem trivial, and the punishment out of proportion; but such thoughts arise from a low estimate of what disobedience to God is.

The greatness of the offence must be measured by the sacrifice needed for the re-establishment of the relationship between God and His creatures.

The entrance of sin into that fair spot in which God delighted resulted in the setting aside of His will and His order. We find the woman taking the lead, and acting under the guidance of another than her rightful head; thus was God's rule and ruler set aside, and another will enters the scene. Our first parents fell into Satan's snare, and became for the time being his tools to work his purposes upon the earth.

After the flood we again find God delivering to man simple laws, and directing him as to His will with regard to the earth (Gen. 9. 1). But man's will now as a fallen being is

found in open opposition to the will of God. Instead of spreading over the earth and subduing it, man is found congregating together near to the slime pits with which they build their tower—that monument of their rebellion. The confusion of tongues follows, and man is scattered over the earth, thus being forced to comply with the will of God.

With regard to the further history of rebellious man we are left much in the dark for a time, until we find some of the nations ripening for the judgments of Jehovah.

Then we find God preparing a people in whose midst first, and then through whom, He would manifest heavenly rule on earth. To this people He again gave laws and a government, to be carried out in their midst through their eldership; for from the very first it will be found that the elders of Israel were responsible to the carrying out of the will of God (Exod. 12. 21). But again Satan triumphs: the rule and order of God is set aside, yea, God Himself is set aside (1 Sam. 8. 7), and we find continually that those who should have led aright are those that misled the people of God.

Aaron's calf and the worship he introduced was the setting aside of the will of God and the introduction of another will, so that it was only after the earnest pleadings of Moses that God again consented to take His place in their midst (see Exod. 33.).

We can but briefly notice the reign of Jeroboam, who earned for himself that terrible title, "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin"; and this he did, not by avowedly setting aside the worship of God, but by the altering of God's order and the modelling of things according to his own will and mind. Thus Satan's will was done amongst God's people and demon-worship established (2 Chron. 11. 15). The ten tribes fell into Satan's snare, Jeroboam being the tool in his hands to accomplish the destruction and dispersion of God's people.

Following the history of Judah, we find them reduced at

last to a terrible state of degradation, the very office of high priest being bartered or bestowed by a Gentile monarch upon the man who would most implicitly carry out his will amongst the unhappy people of God. No wonder that our Lord should say of His Father's house, "Ye have made it a den of thieves."

Thus again ruin had been wrought, the will and authority of God set aside. Out from this state of things we find the Lord Jesus leading His own, gathering them together and giving to them afresh a form of government to be carried out in their midst by men fitted of Him for this purpose, and by such alone.

Although commencing at Jerusalem and thence spreading through the nations, there was not, as in the previous dispensation, an earthly centre; but this does not mean independency, for independency is a thing foreign to heavenly government. Independency, in fact, is one of the early stages of spiritual death, like the falling apart of the natural body when corruption has set in. But be it remembered that death is not always repulsive in its aspect at first: there is often much of beauty, but this beauty is only the forerunner of corruption.

The form of government delivered to the saints of this dispensation was essentially fitted for a stranger and pilgrim people awaiting the return of their Lord, till He should come to claim the kingdoms of earth and take to Him His great power and reign. If our readers have followed us so far, they will see that there has been continually a setting aside of God's order and government upon the earth, and that this has been brought about by Satan's wiles, who uses one means at one time, at another some other, but ever works for the one end—that is, to set aside the will of God and bring in his own.

What, then, is a sect but the bringing in to the present age those principles that we have seen at work all through

the ages past? A sect is based on one of two suppositions: either that God has not in this age given any direct form of government to His saints, or that although such was given to the early churches, it was not intended to be continued, and that as failure was so soon manifested amongst the saints, there is now liberty to arrange and modify the divine pattern in much the same way as Herod did the Temple of Israel.

Those who contend that no special form of government has been delivered to the saints of this age we would ask, Have you ever searched the Scriptures prayerfully and with a mind open to learn the will of God on the subject? If you are willing so to do, you will find a beautiful and perfect system guiding the collective relationships of the saints; nor is there the slightest reason for the supposition either that God in this age has acted differently from the past and left His people without any exact form of government, or that if such were given it differed in the case of each church, and eventually that liberty is given to modify things, as we have already said, by human will.

Let an honest and unprejudiced mind study carefully 1 Corinthians 1. 2, and he will see that the government for the church in Corinth was not for Corinth alone, but for all saints and for every assembly wherever gathered of God. With regard to those unhappy people who consider that every man is at liberty to do to-day what is right in his own eyes, we can only ask them to point out exactly when and where this state of things commenced, and where in His Word God has given liberty for them so to act. Alas! for such; they will search the Word in vain.

The early Christians were looked upon as a sect among the many sects that had been formed amongst the Jews (Acts 28. 22), but they differed from those in this essential point, that whilst the sects in Israel arose from making the word of God of none effect through their traditions, and

teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, so that Israel was split into parties and factions, thus giving opportunity often to their enemies to get the advantage over them, the Christians were gathered together in holy union, not only being united in one body (1 Cor. 12. 13), but also, by an outward bond of union and heavenly organization, were separated from the world, and gathered together and manifested, whilst in the world, to be the people of God.

The principles of sectarianism at work to-day amongst God's people are on the same lines and bring about the same results in this age as have the principles that we have pointed out in the ages past. In one way or another the will of God is set aside; for His order and His government man's will and man's order is substituted. This has been brought about in two ways: first, the enemy from without entering in; secondly, men from within rising up and speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. In both cases the same purpose of Satan is accomplished, and the disunion of God's people, with all its attendant evil results, is manifested before the world. Thus the desire of the Lord, as expressed in John 17. 21, is hindered from having its present accomplishment. There is a sort of fatalism among many professed Christians that practically says, "God will have all His redeemed people with Him in the glory. They are scattered here below, but what matter? all will end well; whether in the Church of Rome or any other false system, we shall meet in heaven."

How deplorable such reasoning! Why do not such reasoners go the whole length in their argument, and say, "Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound"? Those who use such unholy arguments with regard to our collective responsibilities would shrink—at least, most of them—from professedly avowing these principles in their individual life. And yet what is the difference?

Our individual responsibility towards God is unchanged to-day ; the truth which is to regulate our lives is as pure and holy to-day as when it first came through apostolic lips, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." But be it also remembered "that holiness becometh His house for ever," "whose house are we, if" (Heb. 3. 6). As there is the holiness of the individual, so there is the holiness that becomes the house of God ; and to be godly means not only to be conformed to His will individually, but also collectively. The standard given for each saint to walk by is perfect holiness, nothing lower (Matt 5. 48). A holy God can give nothing but an equally high and holy standard for us collectively. Because we fail to attain to the perfect walk to which He calls His saints are we at liberty to set aside God's commandments and formulate for ourselves a something to which we can attain in the flesh ? We would shrink from avowedly so doing. But when it comes to the holy, heavenly principles, delivered once for all to the saints to contend earnestly for (Jude 3), these are deliberately-laid aside, and, on one pretext or another, systems of men are substituted—systems in which the children of God and the world are mingled, the will and authority of the Lord Jesus set aside, and, alas ! too often the will of Satan manifestly carried out. What shall the end of these things be ?

A sect, then, is that in which the will of God is more or less set aside and the will of man substituted, Satan working behind the scene in all this to the ultimate accomplishment of his purposes upon the earth, when he shall for a short space reign, and his will be done on earth through his christ, the Anti-christ, the man who will receive power and authority at his hands.

In the numerous systems of Christendom we find every shade of difference—from the parish religion, supported by Act of Parliament and including all the parish in its embrace, to the meeting of a company of Christians who, al-

though gathered apart from other sects, have yet no "Thus saith the Lord" for their mode of coming together. To look more closely into the construction of these various denominations. First, we have the Established "Church" of the land, which, in the case of Episcopacy, derives much of its ritual from the "Church" of Rome. In it the heavenly priesthood of all believers is set aside, and man professes to make his fellow-man a priest (see Ordination Service).

But more than this: the people are put afar off, outside the rails, whilst the holy man stands inside, between them and God. We believe that, in so far and inasmuch as this place is taken, the one who occupies it comes between Christ and those professing to be His people. Such a position is a denial of the heavenly priesthood common to all the family of the redeemed, and is in measure the taking of an anti-christian position—that which will eventually develop into the false worship of the Anti-christ, when that which Satan has been in ceaseless activity to accomplish shall for a brief space be fully developed, and the man of sin be seated in the Temple of God showing himself to be God, Satan's government being substituted for the rule of the heavens, and God's authority set aside, as depicted in the book of Revelation. Be it also remembered that any priesthood to-day professing to be superior to the priesthood of all believers is a usurpation of the High Priest's position, and thus a denial of the finished work of Christ, for He, as High Priest, has sat down at the right hand of God (Heb. 10. 12), the earthly high priesthood being abolished, a shadow that pointed to that which the Lord has accomplished.

Let us examine yet more closely some of the doctrines of the Established "Church" of England; and as we so do be it remembered that we choose this sect as a typical one of very many others, for in every denomination where infant

sprinkling is practised there is more or less of baptismal regeneration held. This may not be openly avowed, as in the baptismal service of the Church of England, where the minister says, "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church"! And the child when he comes of age to learn is taught that in his baptism he "was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven"!! (see Church Catechism). Many real Christians in the Establishment would repudiate this terrible teaching, but they believe that there is a mysterious something that takes place at baptism that they cannot quite explain. As a Presbyterian Established Church minister expressed it, "They will be taking a grave responsibility upon themselves if they do not have the infant baptized." Why so? unless there was believed to be some efficacy in baptism. And why, if it be true that infants are made children of God in their baptism, should they be told in later years that they need to be born again? With the mass we know that this is never done, for ritualism does not need a divine conversion, all power is in the hands of fallen humanity, and in many cases those that profess to possess it are most ungodly and sinful men.

Sacramentalism comes in to complete the terrible delusion. The spiritual life supposed to be received at baptism is kept alive by the sacrament until the last office for the dead is performed, and the sinner is buried "in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection"!

What blasphemy! what iniquity! Little wonder that the saying amongst the ungodly is, "If I am baptized and buried by the Church I shall be all right." And yet in such systems you will find God's children oftentimes arguing for the sect that they are in. And because they may have a converted minister whom *they like* there seems to be not a thought for the tens of thousands of poor, dark sinners who

have never heard the Gospel in their lives. But Hell is not a myth, and the eternity of punishment is not a fable: how then can Christians tolerate that which is leading multitudes to destruction? Why send missionaries to convert the heathen abroad and support systems that keep men in heathenism at home?

Where the minister is a Christian and conscientious, he is oftentimes troubled as to his position, for, on the one hand, he has to regenerate infants by a ritualistic process, and, on the other, he has to tell them that what he has done is of no avail, but that they need to be born again. But the argument is, "We are not to judge." To such a length is this carried, that, in the writer's own experience, a man who had lived a most ungodly life, and ended it by committing suicide, was buried by the ritualistic curate, apparently without compunction, as a brother "in sure and certain hope"!

Another clergyman and his curate, both Christians, arranged between themselves that if either of them knew the dead had died in their sins, they were to say nothing about it, so that the one of them who was in ignorance might conform to the law and carry out the prescribed ritual. Little wonder that one of these men had to leave the Establishment and sacrifice his living sooner than continue to sacrifice a good conscience before God.

Space would fail us to point out the endless errors of this and other systems. The Established "Church" of England is but a modification of the "Church" of Rome (let any one who does not believe this compare its Prayer-Book with a Roman Catholic one, and judge for himself). Other sects are, many of them, but modifications of the Church of England.

We have not so much dealt with Presbyterianism in its varied forms, but on a close examination of their ritual the same principles will be found to underlie the system. This

must be, as we have already said; wherever infant sprinkling is practised.

Wherever we find an order of ministry of man's arrangement which hinders the ministry as ordained of God (1 Cor. 14.), or a government that sets aside those whom God has appointed to rule, we may rest assured that we have found a sect, and that which is in solemn opposition to the will of God being carried out amongst His saints. That such, in fact, is the continuance in this age of what we have traced out through the past.

This is no day for indifference; the powers of darkness are marshalling their forces for a mighty struggle. Thank God, we know the end; but till that end let us brace ourselves afresh for the conflict, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprovng them. This is no time for rest. Heaven is in earnest, Hell is in earnest, the world is in earnest. Surely it is high time for saints to awake out of sleep. Our salvation is nearing, and the victor's crown awaits the overcoming one. Yet let us see that we strive lawfully, for our God is not one to accept service done for Him after our own fashion. There will yet be shame for those who have to see their life work burnt up whilst they themselves are saved, yet so as by fire (1 Cor. 3. 15). There may be a dangerous tendency to be occupied with the failings of others, while the language of our own deceitful hearts is well expressed by the words of the prophet, "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts?" (Mal. 3. 14.) Let us see that, whilst rejecting error and being apart from the systems of men, our own hearts are right with God, that we are judging the sectarianism within; for God who knoweth our hearts is not mocked: "What a man soweth that shall he also reap."

J. A. BOSWELL.

“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD.”

(Continued from page 50.)

REVIVING to the spirit is the life-maintaining word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Of that character, we apprehend, is the endearing word “Beloved,” as spoken in the Scriptures to us who are His.

How the teaching or exhortation introduced by that term reaches one’s heart!

In learning the “true grace of God,” it becometh us to note well the frequent occurrence of the word “AS.” In its meaning and scope it resembles the word “so” in the ever-memorable saying, “God *so* loved the world.”¹

Here, *as* strangers and pilgrims, we are exhorted to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

We cannot seek space in these pages to specify in detail the variety of such lusts. Though, after all, we are well-persuaded that the true place to know, as well as to gain real power over, those evils lies in betaking ourselves alone unto God and the word of His grace in the spirit of the prayer,—

“Search me, O God, and know my heart :
 Try me, and know my thoughts :
 And see if there be any way of wickedness in me,
 And lead me in the way everlasting.”²

Then and thus indeed shall our personal and family and social and ecclesiastical manner of life be affected after a godly sort.

Oh! what sorrow, what shame, and even very shipwreck of “The Faith” had been avoided, and shall be averted, if this injunction were, or had been, heeded!

Oh! how deceitful sin is! How delusive and destructive

¹ John 3. 16.

² Psalm 139. 23, 24.

are its pleasures! Well may the child of God cry and look up for the answer, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." As fittingly may the servant of God cry,—

"Keep Thou me back from presumptuous errors,
Let them not have dominion over me:
Then shall I be perfect,
And I shall be free from great transgression."

It cannot be too seriously impressed on our conscience that fleshly desires do war against our soul. For that reason it becometh us to imperatively be on our guard as to what we wish or desire. The moment we have a wish that lessens our delight and practice to draw near alone to God, or that weakens our desire for the sincere milk of the word, that moment we should judge and confess and flee from the sin. For sin it is, whatever its fascination be, or by whomsoever it may be indulged or practised.

Where fleshly lusts that war against the soul are disallowed, there is every likelihood of the manner of life among the Gentiles being seemly or beautiful. And though, through gossip or hatred or the like, there may be a readiness to speak against such as being evil-doers, nevertheless in the day of observation, when these behold the beautiful (seemly) works of those, they shall be made to glorify God.

This immediately raises the query, What about every human ordinance or creation? The answer to which is, Submit to all such **through the Lord**. The understanding of which is made easy and definite by Acts 4., especially verses 16 to 21, which please read. So is the will of God, and so also is well-doing in God's account. Thus too may be put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. At the same time the servant (slave) of God must be honestly careful not to use his freedom for a cloak of malice. Exercising himself, rather, to honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God and honour the king.

Household servants are exhorted to manifest grace, as grace is with God. The words "thankworthy" and "acceptable" in verses 19 and 20 are simply the ordinary word "grace."

Masters, too, may learn to profit from these verses how to manifest true grace. Hereunto those have been called. Besides, for them Christ also suffered, leaving an example that they should follow His steps, and this as recognising Him as the One who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who, when He was reviled (railed upon), reviled not again. When He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously. Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, being dead to sins,

should live unto righteousness,¹

by whose bruise we were healed. We who also *as* sheep were going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop (overseer) of our souls.

JOHN BROWN.

"GIVE UP SEPARATION."

II.

"AMOS" means "burden," and it was the burden of the Lord as to judgment that He had to deliver. "I am pressed under" (chap. 2. 13) agrees with this. Because of sin judgment is to fall; not only on Israel, but on those nations whom God had used in chastising His people; for their pitiless ways, delighting in intense cruelty, as He says, "they threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron" (chap. 1. 3), judgment would fall upon all the bordering nations—on Damascus (chap. 1. 3), on Gaza, Ashdod, Ekron,

¹ Compare Rom. 6., noting verses 15, 16, 17, 18.

and the remnant of the Philistines (chap. 1. 6-8), on Tyrus (chap. 1. 9), on Edom (chap. 1. 11), Ammon (chap. 1. 13), and on Moab (chap. 2. 1). All had used the extreme of severity and walked in their own ways, therefore judgment would not be withheld. Then Amos takes up his burden against Judah (chap. 2. 4) and Israel (chap. 2. 6). "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (chap. 3. 2). He had separated them unto Himself as His peculiar treasure; they had parted from Him and His ways. Then, by one illustration after another—six in all—He declares that wherever evil comes it is to be traced to its source. "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (chap. 3. 6). Evil referring to that by which He punished. No reference to moral evil, but to God's judgments—as plagues, earthquakes, famines, or capture. His first illustration is a verse constantly taken out of its connection and then misapplied—"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Usually applied as "Be ye not unequally yoked together," etc. (2 Cor. 6. 14). Whereas Amos had no thought of teaching as to fellowship, his object only being to show that two persons found walking together were together as the result of previous agreement, therefore, in R.M., "made an appointment." Young translates it, "Do two walk together if they have not met?" And the LXX., "Do two walk together if they do not know themselves?" Amos, accustomed to hear the roar of the lion, knew that it was caused by his having met with his prey. Also that if birds fell it was because a snare had been laid for them. He adds, "Would a snare be lifted if empty?" Also, "If a trumpet were blown in the city, would it not alarm and cause the people to run together?" A cause is thus shown in connection with each illustration. So if evil were in a city the Lord was to be seen as the One who caused it. That evil does not in any way refer to the acts of sinful

men, in this connection, may be seen from a similar passage, "If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house," etc. (2 Chron. 20. 9). If such came upon Israel, they were never to conclude that they came by chance, or as the result of a superior power being arrayed against them, but they were ever to see the Lord in it. Amos would have them to see Him as the One who would bring these judgments upon them because of their sin—upon Judah because they had despised His laws, and had not kept His commandments (chap. 2. 4). Thus taking them back to their first departure from Him after the law had been given. As Malachi similarly referred to the law as given at Horeb as that which was to be observed, no matter how small the remnant of those who sought to obey (Mal. 4. 4). There could be no lower standard. Nothing can be more important than that fact for all God's children. No matter how scattered and divided, they are bound to go back to the Word of God alone—that which was "from the beginning" (1 John 1. 1).

But, seeing that Amos had been sent to Israel, and his mission was directly to address them in the place where they were and in the immediate presence of that which witnessed to the intensity of evil among them—"the calves,"—he enlarges upon their sinful doings. The rich in their luxury filled with the pride of life, in revellings and banquetings, manifesting their utter disregard for the poor and down-trodden in their midst. They would give them away under false judgment for a bribe (chap. 5. 12), or buy them for silver, and even a pair of shoes (chap. 8. 6), treading upon them and taking from them burdens of wheat (chap. 5. 11). All to add to their pleasure, and to enable them to enjoy increased luxury, and to support them in their constant extravagance and wastefulness. They were even taking the garment left in pledge by the poor, and lying upon it at their altar, when God's strict injunction was that it was to

be given up as the sun went down, being needed as a covering during the hours of night (Exod. 22. 26, 27). But Amos not only charges them thus with transgression as to the "judgments" of God,—that is, those things between men and men,—but he also shows that the statutes of God were also set aside. "Come to Bethel, and transgress" (Amos 4. 4).

This was one of the places in which Jeroboam I. set up one of the golden calves in order that he might complete the separation between Israel and Judah. The name of it was Luz at the first, which means "departure"; but it became to Jacob "Bethel," the House of God (Gen. 28. 19). Yet this was the place that under the power of evil had ceased to tell of "House of God" and "separation," and witnessed loudly that Israel had departed from the Lord. Bethel had become a place where transgression abounded, the offering of leaven with sacrifice, that which God had sternly prohibited, being a common thing. They care not; separation had been given up and evil plunged into, and therefore all care was gone for His statutes and judgments. They defied Him, and did as they pleased (chap. 4. 5, 6), and they seemed to delight in mingling the things of God with the golden calf worship—"this liketh you" (margin, "so ye love"). All this shows to us that however much seeming service for God was carried on, they were completely away from Him, and therefore, instead of their service being acceptable, it was an abomination to Him. Therefore He prophesied that "cleanness of teeth and want of bread" (chap. 4. 6), one of the evils before referred to, should befall them; famine, with all its attendant horrors. The solemn indictment was made, "Yet ye have not returned unto Me" (4. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11). Thus five times Amos reiterated it, though judgments had befallen them they had not returned unto Him. Famine (4. 6), no rain (4. 7), blasting and mildew (4. 9), pestilence (4. 10), all sent. The Lord should have been seen and heard, departing from Him deplored, and once again the place of separation

occupied. But, alas! they had not hearkened. Then, in pathetic tones, showing His willingness still to welcome back, He says, "Seek ye Me, and ye shall live" (5. 4). "But seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba" (5. 5). These places, that had proved places of abundant blessing to Jacob (Bethel), to Israel (Gilgal), to Isaac (Beersheba), would yield no blessing to them, for they had departed from Him. "Seek ye ME" was their only resource. These places witnessed to His power to bless when sought, but in themselves they could not supply anything. Have we not to learn in like manner that place is nothing? Places may witness to us of much blessing in the past, but it was only as the Lord Himself was all. Let the heart turn away from Him, then separation is given up and blessing is lost.

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be continued.)

UNTO US IN A SON.

NOTES ON THE LETTER TO HEBREWS.

(Continued from page 59.)

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them.

Far, far away, did Israel of old get from God's word as it came to them, and it behoves God's children to see to it that they do not get as far from God and the word of His grace as ever Israel did in their sad and bitter history. Therefore let us give earnest heed to the things heard. What heed are we giving to these things? What attention are we paying to them? What heed, what earnestness of heed, is called for on the part of all the saints of God! But what of teachers and preachers, of those who assay to lead fellow-saints? They may give heed to all else, but what if they give not earnest heed to the things heard? What can happen but that they will drift away from them, and taking heed, perchance, to the saints, only lead them wrong, as an Aaron had done in days long gone by, as a Jehoshaphat did, as a Luther has done in more recent times, as hundreds of earnest and well-meaning men are doing to-day, whilst they dishonour God, forfeit their rewards at the judgment-seat of Christ, and bring immeasurable disaster on their followers, all because that, with their earnestness in all else, in the heed they give to hearing what God has spoken in the Son there is, alas! but little earnestness? May we not all sadly confess how little attention we pay to what God has thus, at the end of these days, spoken in a Son? Mark we well the solemnity of neglecting these things:—

For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of

reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which, having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard, God also bearing witness with them both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will?

Never have men more grievously misrepresented God's present dealings than when they have taught that because God is now dealing in grace He is not so particular as He was in previous dispensations. True, that God gives the forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who are of the faith of Jesus, and that this is pure grace and utterly unconnected with any kind of deserving on the part of recipients. But this does not alter the fact that God's purpose concerning those on whom, in pure grace, He has bestowed every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ is that they should be made subject to the authority of His Son. And He has as clearly laid down His will for them as ever He did for Israel of old, and it is true now, as it was then, that the ways of man are before the eyes of Jehovah, and He carefully weigheth all his paths.¹

Yea, the scripture before us carries it further, for it tells us, concerning the word spoken through angels, that every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, and in contrast to the word spoken through angels we have that which was spoken through the Lord. Therefore the intense solemnity of the question, How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? To this question what answer can we find? We can find none. If we neglect so great salvation assuredly we shall not escape the just recompense of reward, concerning which we refer to 1 Corinthians 3. 10-15 as to service, and to 1 Corinthians 11. 31, 32, as to sin, to which many other passages might be added; for all Scripture concurs in warning us of the solemnity of neglecting so great salvation. The greatness

¹ Proverbs 5. 21, R. M.

of this salvation might well occupy our attention ; let us be content to note that it is a great salvation, because of who He is and what He is who has become cause thereof, even of eternal salvation to them that obey Him.

Son of God, with joy we praise Thee,
 On the Father's throne above ;
 All Thy wondrous works display Thee,
 Full of grace and full of love.
 Lord, accept our adoration,
 For our sins Thou once wast slain ;
 In Thy blood we have salvation,
 And with Thee we soon shall reign :
 God in Thee His love unfolding,
 Shows how vast has been His grace ;
 We are blest with joy beholding
 All His glory in Thy face.

* * * *

When it seemed that sin must sever
 All the chosen heirs from God,
 Thou, with love that faileth never,
 Didst redeem us by Thy blood ;
 Oh ! the mercy which hath blessed us,
 Purposed thus ere time began,
 Mercy which in Thee hath kept us,
 And for ever made us one !

“GIVE UP SEPARATION.”

III.

HOSEA, Joel and Isaiah all witnessed to the evil present, and showed how the Lord alone could restore and bless. How gracious of Him, in the midst of abounding evil, not only to raise up one prophet, but to give several at one and the same time to warn of judgment and to call to repentance! And He also set in their midst, as we have seen, young men for Nazarites, as a special testimony to them of the separation He required. Thus, in the midst of all the luxury, drunkenness, and such-like prevailing, the Lord raised up Nazarites, who walked apart from and in condemnation upon it all as a testimony for Him; and these Nazarites, being young men, became a more striking testimony in the midst of the people.

How vividly Amos depicts the condition of things in Israel can be seen in chapter 6. 4: “That lie upon beds of ivory,” etc., “that chant to the sound of the viol,” or, as R.V., “that sing idle songs.” But they should go into captivity, and their banquet be removed (ver 7). “And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day” (chap. 8. 3). Thus the poor herdman, raised up from the very class that was down-trodden, is brought in direct contact with the rich, as he tells out to them the hollowness and wickedness of all their doings. “Hear this,” he exclaims, “O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn?” (8. 4, 5). Thus showing that, while there was an outward appearance of keeping the Sabbath and the new moon, they were longing for them to be passed, that they might be able to make “the ephah small, and the shekel great” (8. 5). God’s righteous ways, as displayed in “judgments” given by Moses long since, given

up; violence, oppression, and setting aside of judgment, with cruelty, characterized them in all their business dealings with others. God's word thus set aside, Amos was sent to tell them that the time was at hand when no prophets would be sent to remind them of God's law or to call them back to obedience. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord" (8. 11, 12). And he represents them then as in their distress running to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and yet not finding it. How solemn as we think then of their condition in the days of Amos if they disregarded the word of the Lord! Prophet upon prophet sent, and all about the same time. Not only so, but young men in their midst with long, flowing locks and intense separation from all the fruit of the vine. What a powerful testimony! How could any resist it? Surely their steps should have been arrested by their conscience being aroused and their heart turning once again to a God of such grace and forbearance. Was it so? Alas! no. But these rich and evil ones, corrupt and corrupting, did not like the presence of the Nazarites, who walked so differently from them in all things, any more than they liked the words of the prophets ringing out in boldest language the judgment about to fall upon them. Therefore they sought to rid themselves of the presence of the prophets, and to silence them, as well as to destroy the living testimony of the young men—the Nazarites. Therefore they sought to give the young men wine, and they commanded the prophets, saying, "Prophecy not" (chap. 2. 12). To the God-raised-up Nazarites they practically said, "Give up your separation," and to the God-sent prophets, "Keep back the truth." And when Amos had prophesied of the sword being raised up against Jeroboam (7. 9), "Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, King of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in

the midst of the house of Israel : the land is not able to bear all his words " (7. 10).

Also he said to Amos, " O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there : but prophesy not again any more at Bethel : for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court " (vers. 12, 13). Amaziah measured Amos by himself. His principle as the courtier, the priest of Bethel, for he was no priest of Jehovah, was to get a good living. He put that first. So he said, " Go, eat bread " and " prophesy." The eating was first with him. It was the king's house. A religious-political arrangement, and the religious part was to aid the king, and to establish him in his kingdom. Then it had served its purpose ; but there was no room in it for God's law or prophet. In the religious world to-day, is not the same principle of action largely to be found? Men holding back the word of God, prophesying smooth things, speaking to please the people, and not the Lord. Men who can eat the bread of the congregation, and, therefore, suit their message, at least to some extent, to their condition ; so that there may be no disturbing of their position as the official paid minister. We have to see in the assemblies that we speak out His word uncorrupted, and that nothing is allowed to interfere. There must be the same fearless exposition of His word as there was with Amos and other men who would not brook any interference with their mission or allow any one to pare down the word which God had given them to speak. There are men to-day who would use their influence to lower the standard, and who would give wine to the Nazarites to drink. How many so-called ministers advocate in the denominations the pleasures of the world, the concert, the bazaar, the theatre and the racecourse even, and can be found themselves in the ball-room ! And thus the extreme

of worldliness pervades the scene, and those who refrain from such pleasures, remembering that word, "Even Christ pleased not Himself" (Rom. 15. 3), or that plain yet strong injunction in the same epistle, "Be not conformed to this world" (12. 2), will have the opposition of mere religious persons, whose endeavour will be to lead them into it, so that their position and ways may not be condemned by contrary actions. Thus, as to politics, let one in an assembly take up with them and vote, and at once he is anxious to get others to do the same. Worldly honours are sought for, "J.P.," and such-like, and step by step separation is given up, and when God raises up separated ones, then the effort is made to draw them across the dividing line. If one becomes careless as to the truth, under plea of showing grace and love, he goes in with Christians belonging to the sects. He begins by going to so-called Evangelistic Meetings held on neutral ground! Then he joins what are called Undenominational Associations,—the Y.M.C.A. and such-like,—with the result that he more than ever gives up separation. Such an one then becomes anxious that others should do as he has done. By talking constantly against the "Young Men Nazarites," and calling them narrow-minded, proud, etc., the object would be to get them to act contrary to their position. So now Christians who are mixed up with worldly associations are used by Satan to draw separated ones into the snare. In many cases such have soon found the position occupied too narrow, and they have given it up, and become a member of some "Church" where pleasures to an extent were allowed and politics were entered into with zest. Or, if remaining nominally in an assembly, they have proved a trap and a snare for others. In the endeavour to lead others astray and to act as he does, such an one manifests himself as a giver of "wine to the Nazarites."

When a number are thus found acting, they become emboldened, and loudly declaim against any real teaching of separation. Soon their names are found on bills, with "Revs.," and others of the sects, as speakers at "Prophetic" and "Holiness" Conferences. Then the door is flung wide open. The Lord's Table is called the Father's Table for all the children. Distinct and clear teaching is silenced by them. To those who would teach separation fully they say, "Go to Judah, and prophesy there"; or, in their modern phraseology, "You are an 'Exclusive'; that is where you ought to be." Let Christians look back and see all this sadly in the history of some. And the result has been to increase in numbers at the expense of truth. Separation has been given up, and those who could not be roused to real individual work for Christ as Lord have been roused into activity to promote a condition of things that will allow Christians to join the party cries at an election time, to join missions, and to generally become liberal and gracious, as they love to call it. Thus the wine is given, and the Word of God toned down. Let it be ours to "Hold fast the form of sound words," and to "Depart from iniquity," unmoved by the reproach that such would heap upon us, remembering that we are called to serve not them, but the Lord Christ.

R. T. HOPKINS.

Fragment.

To hold the truth in our heads is comparatively easy. We may be able also to teach it and write it without its producing any change in our own lives.

In order to live in the power of the truth we hold we must be ourselves walking in fellowship with Him who is the Truth. Thus, and only thus, will our lives be conformed to His will, and the truth will hold us walking in the light. The fruit of the light will be seen in our lives, as it was seen in the life of Him who was the Light of the World.

J. A. B.

"THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD."

(Continued from page 73.)

GREAT and numerous are the possibilities to godly living in its effects upon others. No less are such as accompany ungodly living. Of a truth, no one liveth to himself, nor yet dieth to himself. Perhaps in no relationship of life can this be demonstrated so attractively or otherwise as in that of husband and wife. Certain it is that here, in chapter 3. of the epistle, that teaches what the true grace of God is, to the Christian wife is enjoined a manner of conducting herself with and to her husband that, even apart from the Word of God, any who obey it not may be gained to believe and obey the Word. Interesting and searching is the word "*chaste*," used to designate the manner of life the wife, obedient to God, should live. Speaking of that rare word, a master of philology has said that "It intimates purity in the highest sense!" Compare the occurrence of the same word in 1 John 3. 3: "PURE, as He is PURE." Passing from the manner of life, the Spirit next causes the Apostle to draw the Christian wife's attention to what should be found adorning her. This is presented both negatively and positively. Negatively, in that her adorning should not be with plaiting of the hair, or wearing of gold, or putting on apparel (outer garments, evidently for show). Positively, but with the hidden man of the heart in that which is incorruptible; even a

MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT,

which is in God's sight of great price. But, ah me! who pays to buy, or who even is willing to pay the price thereof, or there-for?

May we not entreat Christian wives to seriously bestir themselves in the light of these words unto knowing indeed what manner of persons they are? While, despite conscious

failure, let the women who hope in God be encouraged to reach unto this manner of well-doing by the fact that wives of like passions (having husbands of like passions as theirs of these days) aforetime thus adorned themselves. As witness Sarah, who obeyed (that is, listened, learned, and did), calling Abram lord; whose children these are now if they do well and are not afraid, and thus actuated with or by terror, so that through fear of the husband, rather than the fear of God, they conduct themselves. As instructeth the words, "Wives submit (that is, be under order or arrangement) to your own husbands as to the Lord." And this again explained to be,

"AS IS FITTING IN THE LORD."

In the same manner as the wives are entreated and commanded, Christian husbands are called and taught to dwell with their wives according to knowledge—that is, knowledge of God's will, and knowledge of them. How commonly, alas, are these things divorced! leading at once to very bitterness against the wife because of evident shortcoming as regards the clear will of God; or, on the other hand, leading to a pandering to the wife's weaknesses, through knowledge of what will please her, rather than seeking to dwell with her in love, as Christ loved the Church (His Body). For her He gave Himself. That is the measure of husband love in God's account.

But Christ's measure must be practised, or shown, within the compass of Christ's manner or object; even that He might sanctify, having cleansed her by the laver of water in the Word, that He might present her to Himself a Church glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.¹ Besides all which the Christian husband is called and privileged to give honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and (the

¹ Eph. 5.

following words are seldom quoted, nay, we fear they are too commonly forgotten) as being heirs-together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. Who may essay to tell the breadth, or length, or depth, or height of these unique words,

“HEIRS-TOGETHER,”

“GRACE OF LIFE,”

“UNHINDERED PRAYERS”?

The Prophet Daniel was kept three full weeks ere receiving the God-sent answer to his prayer; but that was because of a principality of the Evil One, against whom the Christian is called to wage constant war; as see Ephesians 6. 10–18, R. V., with Daniel 10. 10–14.

How sad and saddening when the Christian husband and wife so misbehave that their own very heart-cries to God are by themselves hindered. Thus, in veriest sorrow, is fulfilled the far-reaching saying,—

“Folly is wrought for want of thought,
As well as want of heart.”

Whereas obedience to God's will would save from all such, as also yield incalculable blessing,¹ and manifest to the poor, bewildered world that

MARRIAGE IS NOT A FAILURE,

excepting as God and His will thereanent are forsaken.

JOHN BROWN.

HOW TO READ THE SCRIPTURES.

A SAYING OF MILES COVERDALE, 1532.

It shall greatly helpe thee to understande Scripture, if thou marke not only what is spoken, or wrytten, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstance, consyderinge what goeth before, and what followeth after!

¹ Ps. 19. 7–11.

A WORD TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

IN the light of Romans 15. verse 4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope," let us consider Leviticus 11. 1-3. We find God pointing out some of the characteristics of the animals His ancient people Israel were to eat. The animals that parted the hoof and that chewed the cud they might eat (see verse 3). The parting of the hoof in the clean animal would remind us that God would have His people in some measure to be able, according to 1 Thessalonians 5. 21, to "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good." We also find the same principle in the servants of Boaz, Ruth 2. verse 17: "So she" (that is, Ruth) "gleaned in the field until even, and *beat out* that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley." She held fast the barley, and allowed the chaff to blow away. In chapter 3. 14-18 we find her at the feet of Boaz—not now following the servants, but getting supplies direct from Boaz. He said: "Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it." He measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her, and she went into the city. There was no beating out of that which she got from Boaz. In Luke 10. 38-42 we find Mary occupying a similar place: she sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word. We also find the same principle in Genesis 21. 14-21: Abraham sends Hagar away with a bottle of water. The water soon dried up, and she needed to get supplies from a higher source. So we read that God opened her eyes and she saw a "well." This, I apprehend, is God's way. He permits His servants to give that which is but temporary. But what God Himself gives is permanent. In the light of these thoughts, read Hebrews 5. 11-14, where we find the Apostle reminding them of unnatural

babyhood. In verses 13, 14 he says: "For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the Word of Righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

We would look at the other part of verse 3 of Leviticus 11.—that is, the chewing of the cud, which teaches us that God would have His Word used according to Colossians 3. 16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another; in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Also in Psalm 51. 6 we get the same thought: "Behold Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom." Also in Psalm 119. 11 we read: "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee."

Young believers in Christ, in order that you in some measure be able to answer to the clean animal, you will have to read the Word of God for yourself, as well as listen to those whom God hath set in the Church as teachers, who can be spoken of as "faithful in the Lord" (1 Cor. 4. 17; Heb. 13. 7).

Before I close this paper I would have you think of one more Scripture—namely, Proverbs 12. 27: "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man is precious." "Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of thy life shall be many" (Prov. 4. 10). "For wisdom is better than rubies; and all things that may be desired are not to be compared to it" (Prov. 8. 11).

" Oh that I may for ever sit,
Like Mary, at the Master's feet;
Be this my happy choice!"

ALEXANDER LIVINGSTONE.

THE KING'S FLIGHT.

2 SAMUEL 15.—19.

THE day that forced David from the royal city and ushered Absalom in was perhaps one that brought David the bitterest trial of his life. His favourite son was at the head of a revolt that aimed at the king's life and the throne of the kingdom, and had so far succeeded that the mass of the people had espoused the cause of the usurper, and Absalom had been proclaimed king. But trying and difficult as it was for the king, it was by no means easy for Israel. It was a crisis in their national history. It was a time for decision on their part that called for cool judgment, true devotion, and loyalty. The question of the hour was—David or Absalom, whom shall we have? Underlying that question was another—viz., God's rule or man's? truth or falsehood? An old question with a new set of circumstances. Once it was—Saul or David? now it is—David or Absalom? Then it was man's rule striving to keep God's rule from coming in; now it is man's rule in its effort to force out the rule of God. The same principles are at work, though the scene and actors may change, and different methods are adopted to secure success. The old, old struggle comes up again and again, and has done since, and will till the time when the "man of sin," Absalom-like, shall come in with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, and, after a brief period of power, be hurled into the lake of fire, and leave the scene undisturbed in the possession of the rightful King of kings and Lord of lords.

In the case of Saul, man's rule came in as the result of the people's wish. Saul was the response to the people's cry, "Make us a king." The people gave him his place. In Absalom it is *the would-be ruler* grasping the reins of power, and seeking for himself a place and authority, to

attain which cunning strategy and unscrupulous behaviour are in turn practised, any and every means adopted to put self and error in the place of God and truth. In the former case the people take the initiative, in the latter the usurper; but in both self-will is arrayed against God's will, man against God.

Christendom exhibits in completeness this twofold character of human rule, on the one hand the people heaping to themselves teachers (2 Tim. 4.), on the other men drawing away disciples after them (Acts 20.). Saul and Absalom have their antitypes still, and never more numerous. But as with Absalom it was more difficult to discern the workings of the adversary than in the people's choice of Saul, so is it easier to see this false principle in the one man chosen as "the pastor" and to denounce it than to discern it in the self-assertive disposition, the pushing of oneself to the front, and the desire for place and importance, that substitute the bold spirit and glib tongue for age, experience, and moral weight.

Absalom succeeded, First, by parading himself before the people. "Absalom prepared him chariots and horses and fifty men to run before him." Secondly, by damaging the king's character and creating a spirit of discontent. "There is no man deputed of the king to hear thee." Thirdly, by posing himself as the man for the people. "Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto ME, and I would do him justice." Fourthly, by ingratiating himself into their good opinions. "When any man came nigh to do him obeisance he put forth his hand and took him and kissed him." "So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

The pleasing manner, the honeyed words, the apparent kindly interest, were the bait which hid the hook of treason and blinded to the real issues; and, seeing dimly, if at all,

the deep designs of the traitor, the people follow till too late they are committed to the cause of Absalom, and are led astray. "There came a messenger to David saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom."

Are there not lessons underlying all this for ourselves—lessons to put us on our guard against the workings of the flesh, and to aid us in the detection of false principles, and to preserve us from being led by men into rebellion against God?

Amid all this rebellion under Absalom, how strikingly and beautifully the loyalty of David's followers appears. How cheering it must have been to his heart in the day of such reverse to hear from his servants the words of purpose and devotion, "Thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint"! What complete surrender of self was this, what unreserved yielding of themselves to the rightful king! "Whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint," his will theirs, his wishes, his commands, their concern! "Ready to do;" obedient in all things. What a contrast, rebellion waxing greater and greater under Absalom, David's servants characterized by conspicuous submission to his authority, a submission which sprang not only from a deep sense of right, but from attachment to David's person! David was everything to them, and for his sake they were willing and ready for anything at his bidding.

How this is seen in Ittai, he but a stranger and exile, only but a little time in Jerusalem, and yet so attached to David, he is ready to accompany the rejected king, cost what it may. David would have spared him the trial and danger involved therein, but Ittai will not be turned from his purpose. "Ittai answered the king and said, As the Lord liveth and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be." Ittai is outside with

David. It was truly a going forth without the camp, attracted there by the claims of love for the person of David. Is the king rejected? Ittai will be at his side. Does the king tread the path of sorrow? Ittai will share it with him. Whatever it be, life or death, he will participate therein, satisfied to have anything in company with David, and refusing all that cannot be had with him whose rule he owns.

Hushai, too, in another situation, but as loyal: in the city, but not of its revolt; in the midst of rebellion, but true at heart; in the city FOR David as truly as Ittai was outside WITH him. He was where the king had put him to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. "Then mayest thou *for me* defeat the counsel," etc. He was there as David's friend, animated in all his doings by David's interests, in the world, but not of it.

Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai also get honourable mention. These, Onesiphorus-like, had refreshment for the wearied king, and attendants, and therein served the king. Hushai had his counsel, Ittai his presence, these, food, beds, etc., everything told their estimate of David and the esteem in which they held him. And then Mephibosheth, lame as he was, would have gone forth had it not been for the deceit of Ziba. But if he is left behind in person, it is evident his heart is with the king. Absalom's advent is no pleasure to him; he takes no part in it. His untrimmed beard, his undressed feet, his unwashed clothes, told out the distress the king's absence gave him. Jerusalem is no scene of pleasure for Mephibosheth while the king is not there.

How truly David had the hearts of these men, and how rich the comfort the knowledge of it must have given, yet how much richer the comfort David found in God Psalm 3 gives us a glimpse: "Many are they that rise up against me; many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God." Calm in the presence of his God,

he was able to lie down and sleep and afterward in confidence to sing, "I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me." This was his song in the day of the east wind. After all, how much greater was the One who was for him than all who were against him!

And does not all this picture to us that which the Holy Spirit is bringing about in our own day and that which will be in a later period still? The saints of this dispensation, if heavenly eyesalve anoint their eyes, may see how truly Jesus as Lord is now denied His rightful place. His authority is refused. Man's creeds, man's order, man's assumption, have shut Him out, and yet He is called Lord by those who refuse to do His bidding. Another gospel than His is preached, other commandments than His are promulgated, another spirit is substituted for the Holy Spirit, and how many, alas! subscribe to the rebellion.

It is in such circumstances loyalty finds occasion to manifest itself. The Ittais and Hushais and such-like come to be manifested, and the attractions of David's Lord felt in drawing out to Him disciples who learn of Him to follow Him, "for Christ's sake," "for whom I have suffered the loss of all things," said Paul, and the Spirit of God is with us to produce similar devotion from the same inducements. "His love deserves our all."

CHARLES MORTON.

BUILDING THE WALL.

NEHEMIAH 3. 20, R.V.

ONLY once does Baruch, the son of Zabbai, come before us in the Scriptures, but there he stands out from all the rest as the one who "earnestly" repaired his portion. He does his little, he does it well, and then passes from our sight. May God give us grace to go and do likewise.

With his eye, not on his fellow-workmen, nor seeking their approval, but on Jehovah Himself, he learned that Jehovah's eye was also on him and his work, and the consciousness of this made him earnest; and thus, unmoved by fears of the present, or forebodings as to the future, he was upon the wall, with loins girded and sword by his side, building with all his might. Rumours of Sanballat's conspiracy or Samaria's invading army, so far from causing his work to cease, only served to nerve him for greater toil; and as a result God records "Baruch, the son of Zabbai, earnestly repaired ANOTHER portion."

Some of us may understand but little of what building the wall means; we may be neither quick nor skilful, but rather slow and dull: but, praise God! bless God! He looks not at the intellectual powers, but at the heart; and if that be right, it is really wonderful what God can make of such. "The race is not to the swift," and many a time in the experience of God's people has the slow, tortoise-like one—plodding over the ground most faithfully, persevering in "ways which be in Christ," never getting discouraged, always going on—won the race, while the swift, clever hare was taking a quiet rest.

Whatever portion of the wall our God may give us to build or repair, let our work be thorough. Better a little done, and that little all for God, rather than much done—all our petty aims and purposes accomplished—which will not stand the fire. It is easy to run up a wall quickly,

pleasant to see the immediate results of our labour, but crumbling mortar and tottering masonry will soon prove how unreal and untrue the work has been.

Let us build firmly and strongly, that those who may come after us shall have no cause to grieve that we were careless or half-hearted, or left them a legacy of neglect. Like Baruch, the son of Zabbai, let us earnestly repair our portion.

Some repaired over against their own houses (Neh. 3. 10, 28, and 29), and one over against his chamber (ver. 30). "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do (*i.e.*, that nearest to hand), do it with thy might."

Therefore, having first seen what God requires of us, let every man take heed how he builds. Let us build that of which He can approve, that in which He can take pleasure. Let us build according to the plumb-line of God's word, that there be no bulging walls, that what we do be not a cause of weakness, but of strength.

Some, like Sanballat the Horonite,¹ may wax indignant and wrathful, and mock at the feebleness of the workmen (chap. 4.), and speak about the "heaps of rubbish," and ask in derision, "Will they make an end in a day?" (vers. 1 and 2). Others, like Tobiah the Ammonite, may speak with no less scorn of the work itself (ver. 3); but Moabite and Ammonite were ever opposers of God's people and God's work.

Judah herself, dejected and dispirited, seeing what opposition there is, may even take up Sanballat's words as a lame excuse: "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall" (ver. 10). The Jews who dwell by our adversaries may say unto us ten times from all places, "Ye must return unto us" (ver. 12, R.V.).

¹ Horonaim was a considerable town of Moab; so Sanballat was probably a Moabite.

But let none of these things move us. If God be for us, who can be against us? With a faith strong enough to go on without man's approval, sturdy enough to do without man's encouragements, let us lay hold of the living God, with Jacob's words in our hearts and on our lips: "I will not let Thee go unless Thou bless me."

So shall the arms of our hands be made strong by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob; so shall we become strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might; so shall it be manifest, even in these remnant days, that "Jehovah doth build up Jerusalem, He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel"; and so shall it be said by others, "What hath God wrought?"

EDWIN MATTHEW.

HOPEFUL'S CONVERSION.

I DID not see Him with my bodily eyes, but with the eyes of my understanding. And thus it was: one day I was very sad; I think sadder than at any one time in my life; and this sadness was through a fresh sight of the greatness and vileness of my sins. And as I was then looking for nothing but hell and the everlasting damnation of my soul, suddenly, as I thought, I saw the Lord Jesus looking down from heaven upon me and saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

"But," I replied, "Lord, I am a great, a very great sinner"; and He answered, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Then I said, "But, Lord, what is believing?" And then I saw from that saying, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst," that believing and coming was all one, and that he that came—that is, ran out in his heart and affections after salvation by Christ—he indeed believed in Christ. Then the water stood

in mine eyes, and I asked further, "But, Lord, may such a great sinner as I am be indeed accepted of Thee and be saved by Thee?" and I heard Him say, "And him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Then I said, "But how, Lord, must I consider of Thee in my coming to Thee that my faith may be placed aright upon Thee?" Then He said, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification." . . .

And now was my heart full of joy, mine eyes full of tears, and mine affections running over with love to the name, people, and ways of Jesus Christ. It made me see that all the world, notwithstanding all the righteousness thereof, is in a state of condemnation; it made me see that God the Father, though He be just, can justly justify the coming sinner; it made me greatly ashamed of the vileness of my former life, and confounded me with the sense of my own ignorance, for there never came thought into mine heart before now that showed me so the beauty of Jesus Christ; it made me love a holy life, and long to do something for the honour and glory of the name of the Lord Jesus. Yea, I thought that had I now a thousand gallons of blood in my body I could spill it all for the sake of the Lord Jesus.

FROM BUNYAN'S "PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

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 62.—*Is there any Scripture that would warrant a man and his wife (who are prevented by distance from attending an assembly in the fellowship) breaking bread in remembrance of the Lord in their own house, and could they be regarded as a Church? or could there be a "Church" apart from the observance of the "Feast"? And further, is there any proof that there was a breaking of bread in the houses of 1 Cor. 16. 19, Col. 4. 15, and Phil. 2.?*

We do not believe that a man and his wife uniting for the breaking of bread, or any other purpose, could be regarded as a Church of God, and for this reason:—We understand a Church of God to be the one and only place in a given town, during the present dispensation, where the will of God can be carried out. Let us not be misunderstood here. God is over-ruling in the world and guiding all things according to His will, but it is for a Church of God (not as a separate atom, but as a part of a whole) that there is divine legislation, and for such alone in this age. Therefore, if the assembly in a town is not a Church of God, it is nothing, and as an assembly is not gathered of God. Man's will having brought together, man's will may as well be done in it as in any other organization, although the breaking of the bread may be observed in some sort therewith, and may to a devout soul be a time of spiritual refreshment, just as, we question not, it often is in the Sacrament of the Mass in the Church of Rome. Yet it is not the due order, we believe, and we do not see in Scripture a breaking of the bread apart from the order and discipline of the House of God.

If these things be so, we think the above question is in great measure answered.

A wife could not exercise discipline on her husband were he to go astray. But it goes further. A God-gathered assembly is not two or three Christians coming together by mutual consent or arrangement, but is, as we have already said, the one and only circle where the rule and order of the heavens can be carried out. The two or three God-gathered ones will be those who are capable of doing the will of God, and doing it in fellowship with all those gathered of Himself.

With regard to the latter part of our question, we are not so much concerned as to whether there was or was not the breaking of bread in the three cases cited, as we are to ascertain if these were divinely gathered assemblies of saints, for if they were such as we have sought to show, the breaking of bread, as well as all that appertains to the rule of the House of God, would be found associated with them.

J. A. B.

DEMAS.

“FOR Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica” (2 Tim. 4. 10).

How sad it makes one feel, a verse like this! What questions come rushing into the mind in regard to him as we read the sad, sad record, “hath forsaken me.” There had been a time when it was different with him. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, refers to him. He was then in Rome with the Apostle and a few others. “Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you” (Col. 4. 14). And at the same time, in the Epistle to Philemon, “There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers” (Phil. 23, 24.) What a place of honour Demas occupied, a “fellow-labourer” with such men—one able to join with them in no common greeting, but in the warm greeting of hearts that knew the love of Christ and were prepared to suffer for Him. Though he did not occupy the high place of Epaphras, who was a “fellow-prisoner,” yet he was equally with Lucas and others named a fellow-worker. But two short years passed, and how they tested Demas! The Apostle still in Rome, still the prisoner, still passing through deep trial, yet kept, and how earnestly working and writing out of a full heart occupied with and for others. But Demas was no longer with him. Where was he, then? In Thessalonica. Not for work, alas! Not for the help of saints. He who had ceased to be a worker in Rome on reaching Thessalonica would not be one there. Sad, disastrous change! Rome and its work left! For what? The present world loved! Poor Demas! Was he as happy? Impossible. And he knew, at one time, that he could not be. What a contrast! Bright and happy in fellow-work for God in A.D. 64, in 66 away, gone. “The

present world," like a loadstone, had attracted him, or, like a whirlpool, treacherous in its smoothness, had drawn him into its vortex. The present world, loved, had drawn away the heart from Christ, and, therefore, even such an one as the Apostle could not hold him. In daily service with one who from the start had "pressed on," fought on, and wrought on, yet the heart declining. All the intense devotedness and service of Paul before his eyes failed to hinder; but when trial was at its height, and his companionship would have been most grateful, he departed. Had Paul seen declension and warned him, prayed for and watched? We are not told. It would appear as if suddenly, unexpectedly, the breakdown had come. In secret the world gaining power till it overcame. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5. 4). But this was wanting when most needed by Demas. By it he had overcome, and for more than two years had been a leader in the work of God, so that his name was twice associated with those in the front ranks of service with Paul; but now he had been overcome, failed and departed. The world set in his heart, Christ displaced.

Many have written of Demas as an apostate. They have thought it needful to hold him up as a counterfeit, and, therefore, as a solemn warning to a mere professor. Such warnings are more than ever needed. But Scripture does not thus present him. True that the curtain falls upon his history as a world-loving, departed one. Intensely sad and solemn. Not so with Peter, Barnabas and Mark, each of whom failed, yet were not only restored, but restored to serving and usefulness for Christ, and gladly associated with in that service by Paul and others. But Demas is never once mentioned again. "If peradventure God will give repentance" (2 Tim. 2. 25). We are never told that he got it, so that he was again privileged to serve. All the blessed, holy influences he was surrounded with, all the

mighty workers for God and their intense zeal, availed not : the world had gained the ascendancy, and when Christ no longer was enthroned within, the world prevailed. We are never told that he was restored or privileged to serve again.

Few as the words are that concern Demas in the Scriptures, how they present him as one of the most solemn warnings, especially for servants of God. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10. 12). "Let not him that girdeth on *his harness* boast himself as he that putteth it off" (1 Kings 20. 11), it seems to say to us. And as we contemplate him forsaking the Apostle and departing, do we not exclaim, "How are the mighty fallen!" (2 Sam. 1. 19). "How is the gold become dim! *how* is the most fine gold changed!" (Lam. 4. 1). We know nothing of that by which he was turned aside. The silence concerning it speaks. Doubtless it was by some special aspect of the world in its lusts or pleasures, but what we are not told. He loved. He forsook. He departed. In thus departing does he not present himself to us as one at unrest? Evidently he could not remain in Rome. He could not bear to be there, where he might meet those who had once been fellow-workers. He fled. He put sea and land between; and yet he went where saints were, to the very place where, through Paul, the Gospel had, twelve years before, wrought some of its mightiest triumphs; where in less than three weeks scenes of transformation had been accomplished that alone could have been as the result of the power of God. To Thessalonica, where idolaters had heard the Word, and received it, not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Spirit. They turned their backs on the world. They turned to God, and their hearts went out and up to the One upon the throne as they said, with hearts beating with expectation, "Come, Lord Jesus." "They waited for the Son from heaven."

What would Demas do in Thessalonica as he reached it?

Had he been there before? Tradition assigns it as his birthplace. If so he would be known, would know, doubtless, many. But whether it was or no, on reaching it we can be sure he would avoid the saints! Then only the world remained. Paul still in Rome, notwithstanding his loneliness and the bitter defection of Demas, striving still—love to Christ impelling. Demas away, joyless, miserable surely, yet love to the world urging him on in its course and ways. The world had him in its toils. A departed man. Its friendship enmity with God. Its enjoyments fleeting. Its riches uncertain. Its works evil. No matter what of the world had captivated him, he could not be satisfied. It can never satisfy the cravings of the heart. He had stood side by side with Paul as men were pointed to the Crucified One, the power of God in conversion manifested before him, yet he forsook and departed. How it tells of the power of the world. How it should make us fear with godly fear, and pray with increased fervour, “Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe,” (Ps. 119. 117), and how we should as “fellow-workers” pray constantly one for another. Christ’s love sustains, constantly cheers, and in the hour of deepest trial gives boldness; but the world may be loved, yet when help is most needed it can give nothing. “The things of the world, like Absalom’s mule, run away and leave us when we have most need of them,” said one; and how true it is. Or, as another fitly said, “The pleasures of the world are not like the waters of the Nile, which leave, when they are gone, the germs of beauty and fertility to bud and blossom, and cheer the heart of man; on the contrary, they are like those streams polluted by the washings of poisonous minerals, depositing the seeds of disease and death to all who drink them.” It was a world like this Demas loved. The Christian in fellowship lives in the future. With Moses, he will not allow the present to weigh with him, “choosing rather

to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11. 25). How in the power of faith he could step out of a palace and away from earth's highest honours! The love that expelled the world and its power was the love of God and His Christ. So let it be with us. A palace refused by Moses, whereas Esau came under the power of a mess of pottage! He could sacrifice his father's blessing and all that birthright meant in his day, because it was *future*, for a poor present mess of pottage. Remember, Christian, rest and abiding peace is from Him and with Him. No earthly trial can disturb or lessen it. Peace, perfect peace. But there is no resource, no rest in the world; it is alone in Him.

" Who sought it else
Sought mellow grapes beneath the icy pole,
Sought blooming roses on the cheek of death,
Sought substance in a world of fleeting shade."

But Demas knew all this, owned it, doubtless taught it himself, as Paul's fellow-worker; if not, how often would he have heard Paul urging home by his voice that which he had written to saints in Rome before: "Be ye not conformed to this world" (Rom. 12. 1).

I would repeat that there is an evident purpose in keeping from us that aspect of the world which presented itself to Demas, which he loved, and by which he was so influenced that his heart became absorbed with it to such an extent that he could forsake the Apostle and depart. Service of years broken in upon and ceasing, under the power of Satan, who thus presented the world to him!

Have we not to learn by these things to see to it that love of the world does not creep in? How many forms it has, and in how many ways it can seize upon us! Is any one of us beyond its power? Demas might have said, "I am in the Church of God." Nevertheless, he fell. "I am in the company of one of the most earnest servants of God

that ever laboured for Him, and I am working with him and such ones as Luke and others." Yet he fell. "I am in Rome, where the world is opposed, Paul and Epaphras are in prison, the pressure of outward persecution will help me." But it did not: he fell. Was this true of him, and is it not of us? The best company will not avail, the most correct position will not avail to keep; only as Christ Himself is loved and owned shall we have the overcoming power. I again repeat, we are not told any more than the bare fact that he loved the world: the nature of his fall and its extent are hidden from us. Therefore, it is for us to watch unto prayer; it may not be in some aspect of gross sin that the world comes, and that we love, but it may be in the more undefined, concealed, insidious way by which it creeps into the heart; love of ease; love of approbation from our brethren. How small a thing can entwine itself, until it has got such a hold that love of Christ and for Him is wellnigh gone, and love of the world has taken its place!

May we keep Demas before us as one of the solemn warnings given us in the Word, and may we tremble lest with him we "forsake" and "depart." May we cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart—a heart that has Him enshrined in it, and in which there is no room for the love of the world.

R. T. HOPKINS.

OUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE SECTS,

OR, perhaps, more rightly speaking, our relationship towards the Christians therein, must be regulated and guided by what God has revealed in His written Word to be acceptable to Him, and in order to the obtaining of His "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Now, we cannot suppose that in a matter of such importance we have been left without any revelation, although it may take some searching of the Scriptures in order to ascertain what the mind of our God is in this matter.

It is our desire to lead the Lord's people to study His Word for themselves, that thus, being fully persuaded in their own minds, they may be established in the truth and enabled to teach others also.

The importance of this matter cannot be judged by our appreciation of it, but will be understood as we enter into the mind of God and His thoughts concerning it. In order to be learners we must come to the Word, not with minds already made up to put that construction on what we read which best suits us, that will perhaps enable us to escape some dreaded cross, but in the spirit of those who desire to be "doers of the word."

With 1 Corinthians 1. 10 before us we cannot but regard the divisions amongst God's children and diversity of thought as a solemn testimony to the little real "walk in the Spirit" there is amongst us. God does not call us to an easy pathway, and the being together in accordance with His will is not what we shall choose if we are guided by our own wills; on the contrary, it is a way that becomes intolerable to the flesh if this be not crucified in our daily walk; from this cause—namely, our uncrucified flesh—arises diversity of thought and action in the assemblies, as in the Church of God in Corinth. And as this proceeds the

breaking up and separation of the Lord's people take place, and saints gather, not in accordance with the will of God, but in accordance with the will of their flesh acted upon by Satan.

This is a solemn view of matters, and one that will be strongly opposed by the many, but this by no means proves that it is an incorrect one; nay, it may help to prove its truthfulness.

Neither can we judge of the importance of this matter by apparent present results; these are oftentimes most deceptive, and we need to bear in mind that that which is highly esteemed amongst men is abomination with God. The outward prosperity of the many sects of Christendom, in which the children of God and the world are more or less mingled, is no proof of the favour of God. One is sometimes astonished at the ignorance displayed by Christians in such matters; they seem not to see that where God is there will be trial, there He will execute judgment, as with Israel when He walked in their midst. See also His dealings with the remnant in Ezra and Nehemiah's days, and yet it was with that feeble, sinning people that God was carrying out His purposes upon earth, and in their midst was the royal line preserved through which the Redeemer came.

There is one thing of which we must be often painfully conscious, and this is that we have sadly failed in the past to make the children of God in that from which we have separated understand the nature of our separation. There has often been an unsparing pulling down of things as they existed, pointing out of what was wrong, at the same time a sad lack of knowledge how to build up according to the will of God. There has often been a self-righteous satisfaction in a so-called outside place that has produced a pride of heart, repelling from us those who should have been won to the truth.

It is easy to tell others they are wrong and we are right,

but it is quite another thing, in the meekness and gentleness of Christ, to be able to point out from the Word of God *how* they are wrong and *why* we are right.

As we have said, there has been lamentable failure. We have not made Christians understand that it is not from them we desire to be separate, but from that with which they are associated which we see to be opposed to the mind of God; that it is not them that we hate, but that which divides us as His saints on earth and hinders the fulfilment of His desire as expressed in John 17. 21: the manifested oneness of His saints in this present age. We are not seeking to lay all the blame on one side in this matter, as we are perfectly aware that with many Christians there is a deep-rooted prejudice against the truth; they see what it would cost them, and set to work by misrepresentation of the right way and exaggeration of the failures of those who have sought in measure to walk in the truth to silence their own conscience and remain in an association they more or less see to be unscriptural. Let such Christians but try the pathway of obedience, and they will soon learn its difficulties, and perhaps how little grace they themselves have or power to walk in a relationship that requires the continual grace of God to preserve in accordance with His will.

Another cause of prejudice against the truth which concerns our collective walk has in great measure arisen through failure on the part of those who profess to be separate. Men and women have continually been received from the sects without due care and consideration, oftentimes without an opportunity for God to act in the matter through those whom He has fitted by giving to them the discernment of spirits (1 Cor. 12. 10). The temptation to increase the number has been too strong, and those desiring to join themselves have been hurried in. No repentance of heart in many cases had been wrought by the Spirit of

God; on the contrary, many of those thus received have been restless, turbulent persons, dissatisfied with what they were in because their wills were in some measure controlled. Such have taken their place in assemblies, and soon everybody and everything is made to conform to their thoughts and purposes. If they cannot accomplish this, they sooner or later leave, returning to the sects from which they professed to have separated. Such will be found pouring into the ears of all that are willing to listen to them exaggerated accounts of the failure of those with whom they have been associated, that by this means they may justify their own fickle conduct and give a plausible reason for the building again of the things they professed to have destroyed, thus furnishing to those who are more or less fighting against the conviction that they are where they should not be a good excuse for remaining in a wrong association.

Let none misunderstand us in what we have written. We are not arguing in favour of sectarianism; on the contrary, we feel that no language of ours can depict this terrible evil in its true light. Nor are we seeking to establish, as many dear Christians are, a platform on which all minor differences, as they are called, may be lost sight of—God forbid—a platform on which Christians can meet and sink these differences. This ungodly union is progressing fast enough without our aid, and to this ungodly alliance the very fundamental truths of the Word of God are being sacrificed. But what we do desire is to awaken our readers to a sense of their responsibility towards the Christians ensnared in the many systems of man around them.

What, then, are we to do? Are we to ignore these systems, to act as if they did not exist? This is impossible, for if we look at them in their true light we shall see them to be part of the machinery by which Satan is

leading on multitudes of souls to their destruction. How, then, are we to seek the deliverance and salvation of God's children from that in which they are ensnared? We cannot go back into the association from which we have been delivered for this purpose, for the same Scriptures that separated us at the first will suffice to keep us as a separated people in the present. If we had no Scripture which guided us in leaving our former association, it is a pity we ever professed so to do, for we could not have been separated of God and to the word of His grace, which is able to make us wise unto salvation. What we can do, and what we shall desire ever to do if living in the enjoyment of the truth ourselves, is to seek the deliverance of those with whom we come in contact, that they may be brought to enjoy that which we have found precious for ourselves.

At this point we would specially press upon our readers that which is most important; it is this: God never brings into a closer relationship or fellowship with Himself without first working in repentance by His Spirit and Word. Let our readers carefully search the Word of God, and we think they will be convinced that what we say is true. Let them take their concordance and look up every place where repentance is spoken of, and they will be surprised at the flood of light that will be thrown upon the subject. Whether it be the restoration of Israel, the salvation of a sinner, or the deliverance of a saint, it will ever be found that where this is the true work of God He will have given repentance. How utterly this puts the whole matter of the deliverance both of saint and sinner beyond the power and will of man. No wonder that it has been rebelled against, and Arminianism has sought to place the whole power of salvation in the hands of the sinner! In like manner, gathering on the ground of the one body, or on the ground of Christianity, sets aside this essential truth—namely, that

God must give deliverance out of that which is wrong before there can be a right reception into that which He is building.

We can no more make a Church of God with unrepentant saints that have never known a Divine deliverance, and had repentance given to them to the acknowledgment of the truth (2 Tim. 2. 25), than we can make a sinner a saint without the Spirit of God working in such an one His will. It is true that both these things are professedly done; thousands of unregenerate souls are Christianized by a ritualistic process, as we pointed out in a previous article. Christians, too, are gathered on the ground of the one body, on the ground of life, or, as others say, the blood of Christ; but all this is insufficient unless God give deliverance through repentance.

It is easy to make a counterfeit Christian, nor is it difficult to gather a company of Christians and call them an assembly. If, reader, by the grace of God, you are a delivered one, rejoice with trembling; fear lest you are again entangled, and become a transgressor, building again the things you destroyed. Let us be clearly understood here. We do not mean seeking after God's children, putting the truth before them prayerfully and earnestly, as we would put the Gospel before a sinner, leaving the result with God. Would that there were far more of such work, as there would be if we were less sectarian ourselves, for if we had a clearer understanding of God's mind in this matter we should never feel that we were proselytising when seeking the deliverance of God's people! It is when we admit such a thought as was once expressed by a professedly separated one—"To break bread in a sect is good, but to break bread simply as Christians is better"—that we begin to feel, and little wonder, that to lead Christians away from what is good savours much of proselytising. But what we mean is the

going in and out amongst the sects by those who take the position of being gathered out, this, not for the purpose of their deliverance, but to have fellowship with them in the false position that they occupy. There are two reasons given, amongst others, for this course of action. One of these is, that all Christians are in the body; therefore wherever such are to be found it is the duty of those who are gifted to go and edify them by their gifts. We do not deny that there is a measure of truth in this argument, but this only makes the error more deceptive. If the ministry of those who are gifted of God is directed to the deliverance of those who are ensnared, this is one thing; but if it is the going in to edify Christians in this position with any truth but the truth that will lead them out, this is altogether another thing, and we fear we may say without want of charity that this in many cases is the last thing thought of.

Wide as the path is of the Open Brethren, it is too narrow for many; there is even too much of the offence of the Cross in it. The result of this is that Mr. — is spoken of as “such a nice man; he never troubles us with these things you always speak of.” This addressed to one seeking to lay the truth of separation before them. What a testimony! and yet this was given of one professedly separated to the Lord. Well may such things make us blush and hide our heads if we have any sense of shame. We know something of the popularity of such a position. Cross! Little cross indeed is there in it, flattered and patronized on all sides and made much of if he has any gift. “He is not one of those narrow-minded men who think everybody wrong but themselves,” say Christians. While those who, for conscience' sake towards God, cannot so act are pointed at as narrow-minded and bigoted, “so unlike dear Mr. —.” And thus saints are kept in bondage.

But, again, this argument is an unsound one, for if we are

to go and minister to the members of the body wherever they are found *in association* with their system, we should go into the Church of Rome, where undoubtedly there are many true Christians; this would be only consistent. Others, again, justify their going into the sects upon a somewhat similar ground: they argue that as the gifts are for the body, and many of these gifts are to be found in the sects, therefore they are to go and be edified wherever these gifts are, so that the teachers go into the sects to minister to the members of the body, and the members of the body, professedly separated to the Lord, go into the sects to be ministered to by the gifts therein ensnared! And where is the assembly? Where is it to be found? Only on the Lord's Day morning, when they meet to break bread? A Christian was asked not long since, "Why have you no meetings amongst yourselves?" "Oh," the reply was, "they prefer going to the Free Church." They *prefer!* how lamentable! Here we have a lower condition, if possible, than that we have already spoken of. There is no attempt to justify their action from Scripture, it is a matter of preference, and this is enough, the question of God's will in the matter never seems thought of. Why such dear Christians ever professed to leave the sects is a mystery; of one thing we are sure, that they would be the greatest hindrance to any true work of God in the town or village where they live, for the Christians could reason with justice that if the so-called gathered-out ones could be with them most of the Lord's Day and all the week, they might as well be with them altogether. How this would hinder really intelligent Christians from taking a decided stand for the truth! Little wonder that so few of such have been found in the assemblies!

But what is there wrong in this, some will ask? Is a sect a right thing? if so, why leave it? but if it is that which we have sought to depict in a previous article, then

to be in association with it is sin. There are two Scriptures, one in the Old, the other in the New Testament, which seem in a special way to point out our present responsibilities. In the day when Jeroboam was counterfeiting the things that were of God at Jerusalem, creating a false priesthood, false worship, and festal days, devised out of his own heart, God sent a solemn message of warning to the king (1 Kings 13. 9); but, as it will be seen, the messenger was warned neither to eat bread nor drink water in that unhallowed spot. He had his message to deliver which might have delivered some of God's people, but this was no reason that he should have fellowship with them in Bethel. His disobedience brought upon him a swift judgment: he fell under the paw of the lion.

But some will say, "Can you compare a sect to Bethel?" In some things we cannot. Bethel means house of God; it was the place of many hallowed associations, the place of communion, where Jacob slept, but, in spite of all this, it becomes a centre of apostacy, from which the godly are called to separate. But a sect never was the house of God, and therefore cannot have the claim for our respect that Bethel would have with an Israelite, yet upon Bethel there must needs be judgment; man's altar must be rent, and God's people scattered, for here God's order, His rule, and the Aaronic priesthood had been set aside. All this we find in a sect, and in some the whole machinery seems to be arranged with the object of lulling sinners to sleep and hurrying them on (with a name to live) to their eternal destruction.

The other Scripture that we refer to is in 2 Timothy 2., especially verse 25. This is a most important one, and in order to enter into the force of it we must ask our readers to consider it carefully in all its connections and surroundings. It is not addressed to the world, but to saints under peculiar circumstances; it points out the duty of those

whose feet are free, how they are to seek the deliverance of those whose feet are yet entangled; it is the restoration of such that is to be sought for, and their deliverance out of that in which they are ensnared. If this be our object, our first thought and care in our relationship with our fellow-believers will be, not the pleasing of ourselves or them, but the pleasing of the One who has sent us to do His will, and if we are ourselves enjoying the place of liberty, we shall earnestly long that all the Lord's people may be brought into the same place of blessing. Brethren, let us not be content to occupy a position as of cold Pharisaical isolation, but let us so seek to walk in fellowship with our Lord and Master that with power and authority we may warn sinners of their sins, and seek the deliverance of saints to the doing of His will. "He that overcometh and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev. 2. 26). Let us be in earnest; let us contend with all the powers that God has given us for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints. Let us seek by every means in our power to make fellow-saints feel that we love them, and desire that they should be brought into the place of blessing that we ourselves enjoy; and if our conscience tells us that we lack the enjoyment that we once had or the power that we once possessed for God, let us not be content to go on a sham and a deception, but let us examine ourselves and see what is wrong, making a clean breast before God, that He in grace may restore our souls.

Let us be imitators of others only so far as they are seen to be walking in the truth. If we see those who have drawn back from what they once professed, those who have to confess that they have misled the saints of God in the past, let us see that their influence does not lead us into a pathway of disobedience, for no better instrument has Satan to do his will than the one who has been laid aside by God, the one who may once have fearlessly delivered

His message as did the prophet sent to Bethel. "Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them" (Jer. 15. 19). Let us seek for wisdom to take forth the precious from the vile.

Before closing this article there is one other point that we would briefly dwell upon, as space would fail us to enter into it as closely as the importance of the subject would merit. The history of the Church in Ephesus is an interesting one. It had a small beginning; how often this is the way with the things of God, which are too small to satisfy the worldly mind.

Further on false doctrine enters, and two are delivered by the Apostle to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Tim. 1. 20). It would appear from 2 Timothy 2. that this judgment of the Apostle had not been fully carried out in the assembly; this calls for further directions through the Apostle's lips (chap. 2. 21): "If a man, therefore, outpurge himself from these," etc. The "these" does not refer to the vessels spoken of in the previous verse, but to the holders and teachers of false doctrine. See also Revelation 2. 15. Some who wish to have free intercourse with the sects argue that the purging from these does not mean that the Christians were called to meet in separation from the holders of these evil doctrines, but simply to repudiate these doctrines whilst they remained in association with the men holding them; this we believe to be entirely contrary to the whole teaching of the Word of God, especially so as we learn it in 1 Corinth 5. Those who have Volume 2 of *Needed Truth* will find an article (p. 104), entitled "Within and Without," in which we have sought to take up Scripture on this subject at length.

We do not deny that there is sin which is to be dealt with within the assembly; but where false doctrine is fundamental, affecting the character of the Lord Jesus,

we are called to put away such from our midst. If there is not power to put out, we are then called to "come out and be separate." This is what, we believe, a faithful remnant did in Ephesus, and it is this remnant that is addressed in Revelation 2. 1; they are there reminded of their works, called to repentance and to do the first works, and if they do not they are threatened with judgment: their candlestick is to be removed out of its place.

What were they to repent of? What were the first works that they were now neglecting? "Thou *didst* judge them, thou *didst* try them, that said they were apostles" (see Revised Version), but they had ceased; surely this points back to the time when they separated from the apostles of false doctrine, as narrated in 2 Timothy 2.

J. A. BOSWELL.

"THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD."

(Continued from page 88.)

TRANSCENDENTLY good must the grace be that can effect the virtuous excellencies which are set forth in the eighth and ninth verses of chapter 3. of this epistle.

What riches of grace teem in the hallowed prospect of such saintly attainments!

Surely blessed are the persons of a community who have these things as their desire, their endeavour, their goal. How comforting in one sense the word "finally" is. For, after all the many shortcomings that obtain among these who fain would know and show the goodness of the true grace of God, this certainty abides and awaits all who are in Christ: that, at the great, grand "finally" or end, all these graces shall be ours.

Then, if not now, it shall be true,—

"I am what I am by the grace of God."

Then we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Then, then shall we be what we should be, as also where we would be. And oh! grace of grace, then, then shall we grieve Him never, nor others ever, while "Praise the Lamb!" shall sound for ever inside the veil.

We are exhorted as a finish to be like-minded, compassionate (in the sense of sympathetic), loving as brethren, tender-hearted, humble-minded, not rendering evil for evil, nor reviling (railing) for reviling, but contrariwise blessing. For hereunto were we called, that we should inherit blessing. All which is enforced by words that call for closest attention unto being learned and practised. Therein lies the way of the words, "Walk thou before Me and be a blessing." How many there are who love life and desire to see good days who, nevertheless, forget, or do not understand, that if such are to be had, there must be a taking heed to one's own tongue and lips, as also a turning away from evil, made effectual by the doing of good, the seeking of peace; ay, pursuing it in the consciousness that the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears unto their supplications—those eyes that run to and fro throughout all the earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards Him—but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. It is well to know and to count the cost of the truth that living such a manner of life does not exempt from trials of various kinds.

Still the challenge is pithy, instructive, and energizing. "Who is he that will harm you if ye be *zealous* of that which is good?" All that *will* live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But suffering even unto being cast into a furnace seven times increased in heat does not mean harm. Those of old lost nothing therein but what had bound them, while they gained the companionship of one like unto the Son of God, who walked about with them in the furnace unhurt.

So is it still with him or them who zealously pursue and do good. Wherefore, if we suffer for righteousness' sake, let us know that we are blessed, and learn to count such all joy. Of their terror let us not be afraid, neither let us be afraid.¹ Rather let us sanctify in our hearts

CHRIST AS LORD,²

so that whatsoever He saith unto us we may do, being ready always to give answer to every one that asketh a reason concerning the hope that is in us, yet with meekness and fear, having a good conscience, that wherein we are spoken against they may be put to shame who revile our good manner of life in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God should so will, and thus it be given to us not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer on His behalf, that we suffer for well-doing rather than for evil-doing, either of which is possible to us as God's beloved saints. Wherefore let every man prove his own work.³

JOHN BROWN.

¹ Compare also Phil. 1. 28, R.V.

² See Luke 6. 46, with Eph. 2. 10, R.V.

³ Gal. 6. 4, 5.

THE ORDER OF THE HOUSE.

ON a careful study of the Scriptures it will be found that various figures are used therein, such as House, Body, Bride and Temple, in association with each of which we shall find various truths connected. The Body speaks of ministry, the Temple of worship, the Bride of union, the House of order, the place in which we are to behave ourselves according to the will of God as revealed in His Word (1 Tim. 3. 15). In this age we have no House of God on earth save the House as expressed in Hebrews 3. 6, and it will be seen that the House is a conditional thing, our being House of God depending on our walk with Him. The House describes the people of God in their collective capacity, while Church or Churches of God refers to the saints in their local responsibilities.

There are three things to keep before us---our individual responsibilities to God, our assembly responsibilities, and our responsibilities in House of God, which we would understand to be our relationship to one another in all the Churches of God. This third relationship is sadly lost sight of. The question is sometimes asked, On what ground do you gather? Our reply is, On no ground at all, but according to the principles first delivered to the Churches of God. Such expressions as, Gathered on the ground of the One Body, or on the ground of the blood, or the ground of life, are misleading and dangerous, as they do not express the whole truth. No sooner is the statement made, We gather on one of these three grounds, than those who make it have to commence and modify their statement by adding, We receive all godly Christians, or all that are sound in the faith, or those who hold no fundamental false doctrine. Thus it will be seen that the first statement is overturned by the second, and the position, as stated and expressed by body,

blood, or life, has to be abandoned, for all the born-again ones in the present dispensation are in the Body, being baptized into it in the Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 13); all are redeemed by blood (1 Peter 1. 19), and all have life eternal (John 10. 28). One holding false doctrine may be a backsliding saint, or one put away from moral evil, as in 1 Corinthians 5., may yet be in the Body. Of this we have not to judge, for "the Lord knoweth them that are His." We know those with whom we may have fellowship by their departure from iniquity (2 Tim. 2. 19). If we consider 1 John 1. we shall there see that something more than life is needed for a Divine fellowship, and this is to walk in the light.

With reference to the statement, We receive all Christians who are "walking godly," such and similar expressions are, after all, very unsatisfactory, for any amount of room is left for diversity of opinion as to what a godly walk is. We would ask, Is a sect a godly thing? If so, why hate it? If not, are those who uphold and support such walking godly, or according to the will of God? If not, we could not receive such into a godly fellowship until they had *first* been delivered out of the evil with which they are associated, God having given to them that repentance which He alone is able to grant. To bring any but such into an assembly in hope that they will be won to the truth is to act on the same lines as those sects which bring in the unconverted to a Church position in hope that they will one day be brought to the knowledge of the truth. We would say, Let us see them converted first, and so likewise let us see saints delivered of God before they are brought into the assemblies (Jer. 15. 19).

Nor is this repentance a mere theory, a "shibboleth," or form of words. As the melted wax takes upon itself and retains the impression of the seal, so the condition implied by repentance is that which enables the repentant one to be moulded by the Word of God in accordance with His will.

“But it is the Father’s table; what right have you to refuse to admit any of God’s children to it?” And so the argument goes on, and yet those who thus reason have to admit that some who have been known as God’s children in the past, and whom we have no right to say are not His, may yet have to be excluded; not because they are not the Father’s children, for this we are not called to judge, but because they are not walking godly. Thus, again, we see the inconsistent position of those dear Christians who profess to act on those principles. While not receiving on the ground of the one Body, of the Blood, or of Life, let us not be misunderstood. We do not for a moment deny that life in Christ, being redeemed by His blood, and having been baptized into the one Body in one Spirit, are all essentials to a Divine fellowship; but this is quite another thing from making one or all of those a ground of fellowship. Nor do we deny that there is a responsibility towards all the members of the Body (although be it remembered that this responsibility devolves upon those who in a special sense guide—James 5. 14), whether they be scattered or gathered; but, we repeat, this is quite another thing from what we have been considering, this responsibility we spoke of in a previous article. We would simply add here that two things should ever be before us whilst seeking the welfare of saints in the denominations: that we neither lead them to think lightly of the evils they are associated with by our conduct, nor yet stumble those with whom we are in fellowship by appearing to associate ourselves with what is evil. If those two points be kept before our minds, there is little fear of our ever being found mixed up with the God-dishonouring systems of men; and if faithful to the truth, we shall find those systems have little room for us, for their very existence depends upon their shutting out some part or parts of the Word of God.

But to refer again to these very common expressions,

Receiving to the Father's or Lord's table, etc., they are both unscriptural and misleading. We are never told to receive to the table or to put away from the table. "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Rom. 15. 7), and "Put away from among yourselves" (1 Cor. 5. 13). This is something altogether different from receiving to the table, and putting away from it. Were this a mere expression, we might let it pass as a harmless one, but it is far from this: it expresses an important principle in a system that has been established, in which the table is placed outside the apostle's doctrine and the fellowship, to meet the requirements of those Christians who intend to remain in disobedience, denying both the apostle's doctrine where it is opposed to their own will and *the* fellowship, so that they can come into the assembly as unbaptized ones at their own pleasure, and set aside the fellowship whenever they find it is too narrow for their feet. Where, we would ask, does the Word of God warrant us having these two classes of Christians—the one in fellowship, who if they act wrongly can be dealt with in discipline or even excluded, the other those who are received to the breaking of bread, who then return to the sects, it may be for six months? They cannot be dealt with in discipline, as they are not in the assembly, but at any time they may again present themselves at the breaking of bread, no one knowing of their history or conduct during their absence. May be they are spoken to for two or three minutes at the door by some brother little fitted to judge of their true condition before God; they are then introduced by him, without an opportunity for other overseers (if there be any) or the assembly to have any voice in the matter.

We feel it difficult to understand how any Christian with an intelligent knowledge of the Word can contend for such a condition of things, yet such is continually

practised by some. Where, we would ask again, is the authority in the Word of God for such a practice?

Let us remember the Lord's table is not only an expression of fellowship, but of a fellowship we are in continually, and not only when we are together for the Lord's day. Let those who would detach the table from the Apostle's doctrine and the fellowship show us their authority for so doing.

There was but one way to the keeping of the Passover feast for a Jew or a Gentile (Exod. 12. 48, 49); he was not allowed to be a participator in it on his own terms, but had to comply with the will of God (see also Num. 9. 14, 15. 15, 16). We have already said that we seek to gather according to the principles given for the churches of God; in so doing, we shall need continual guidance by the Spirit of God to the right understanding of His will. We are not to be guided by the traditions of the past; the moment we begin to appeal to a practice, no matter how venerable it may be, we are in danger of falling into the error of Israel in the past and the Church of Rome in the present. Tradition first claims a share of authority, but soon asserts an authority superior even to the Word of God. The appealing of brethren to precedent, and not to the Word, is a dangerous departure from the way of truth; for soon the practice of the past will become the rule for the present, and no room will be left for the carrying out of the will of God, as we become increasingly acquainted with it. This is exactly what has been done by many brethren where no room has been left for advance in the things of God as concerns the rule of His House. When we say this we do not mean that there is no diversity of thought or action amongst them; on the contrary, the condition of things seems to us to resemble that of Israel as expressed in the words, "Every man doing what is right in his own eyes" (Judg. 17. 6). But this is a state of matters quite compatible with tradition.

In our behaviour in House of God or in the Churches of God provision is made for the exercise of the gifts in a godly way towards *all* the members of the body; but this does not mean a mere unintelligent mingling with all sects and denominations at our own will. Far from this. If we can recognise a "minister" in his official capacity at a funeral or a marriage, why not do so at the sacramental table where he presides? If we can recognise him in his position as paid agent, preaching, teaching, and controlling even the prayer-meeting, why not fully identify ourselves with his denomination, and become one of his "members," or a member of his "church"? Surely this would only be consistent and the more honest way of acting. To recognise a man as a Christian is one thing, to recognise his sect is quite another. In his own house or at his own table I may recognise him as such, without in any way identifying myself with that which I know to be opposed to the truth. Be this also remembered, that a child of God in the sects is not in the same position as one put away from a church of God. Very, very far from this; such a one may be living up to the light he has, never having gone back from any truth that he has learned, and willing honestly to look into that which may be brought before him. There was another point in Israel's history previous to the one we have already cited, where every man did what was right in his own eyes; but this describes an utterly different state of matters (Deut. 12. 8). At this point it describes a people learning the will of God, as revealed, and seeking to carry it out. Much mischief has arisen from a want of due understanding in this matter. One rightly put away from a church of God—we say rightly, for the capricious putting out of one assembly to be received in another is a most ungodly thing, but one who has been put out as a last resource when all internal discipline has failed, can only be treated as described in Matthew 18. 17, and

is outside the churches of God, although there be still a responsibility toward such.

If our individual walk should be a holy one, and in all points conformed to the will of God as He has revealed it, so our collective walk should be the same ; we cannot attain to the one or to the other by an effort of the flesh, but only as we walk in the Spirit.

Christians who are in a backsliding state, or those who are carnal, as described in 1 Corinthians 3. 1, will find, not only the individual walk of faith irksome to the flesh, but also the collective, for here they will meet with the flesh in fellow-saints who, like themselves, have not practically carried out Galatians 5. 24. They will also meet with restraint if there be godly rule in the assembly, and the discipline that they should have carried out on themselves may need to be carried out upon them by others. This often leads to the setting aside of the order of the House of God and the bringing in that of which the flesh approves ; for a godly fellowship is substituted a human one, in which, more or less, the wills of the flesh and of the mind can be indulged in (Eph. 2. 3), and either clerisy or democracy be introduced, both of which are equally opposed to the will of God.

When we read, "All that believed were together" (Acts 2. 44), it expresses much more than the being together for the breaking of bread, and one put away from the together-as expressed here would of necessity be put away from the table also, for if such an one were allowed at the table he would no longer be put away from among the gathered out and the gathered-together companies. Now in order to be able to carry out the government of the House of God there must be a House of God, and in order to carry out the rule of the Churches of God there must be Churches of God.

There could be no such thing as the putting outside the camp in Babylon, so there can be no such thing

as a right putting away from church and churches of God to-day if there be no church or churches of God to put out of. Those who to-day deny that there are churches of God practically confess they are still in Babylon. But some may say, Although we are not a Church of God, we can act as such; but we would ask, Where is your authority? Here is an epistle addressed, not to an individual, but to a company (1 Cor. 1. 2). If a letter comes addressed to the father of a household, would the children be at liberty to open it, and act on the directions therein, unless they had had special instructions so to do? Where, we would ask, is the Scripture authorizing Christians to act upon principles given for the guidance of assemblies of God when they themselves deny that they are such?

We are thankful that saints are awaking in some measure to the dangers that arise from such a line of teaching, which we believe really aims a blow at all collective rule and order of the Lord's people in this age. May this awakening go on ever increasing till saints see clearly the claims of Him who is not only Saviour, but Lord. Nothing could better serve the purposes of Satan than the overthrowing of the Lord's rule and authority amongst His saints; and let it be remembered that there is no rule and authority on earth to-day apart from the Lord Himself: it is to Him as Lord over God's House that we are to be in subjection, submitting ourselves one to the other in accordance with His will.

J. A. BOSWELL.

“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD.”

(Continued from page 120.)

THERE are few parts of Holy Scripture over which more controversy has been than has obtained in connection with what the verses before us reveal and teach—viz., 1 Peter 3. 18-22.

That fact is sufficient to certain minds to put them so at ease that they are quite indifferent thereto. We fain hope, however, that none of our readers is so minded, but that rather, Berean-like, all are prepared and purposed to search the Scriptures daily unto gathering with assurance the very mind of the Lord. The more so that unto us who have been born again the Spirit has been given in order that we may know the things which are freely (graciously) given to us by God.

We might with much profit tackle and expose in refutation the leading errors and heresies which have been made and promulgated from and by the unlawful use of these verses.

Knowing that such manner of dealing with truth too often publishes what should not be made known, at least by any servant of the Lord Christ, we abstain therefrom under the offer to answer by question asked any legitimate and honest difficulty that may be put before us; and thus set ourselves to explain "How we read" what here is written in order that we may know and stand in the true grace of God as those who are made wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Varied and blissful are the presentations in the Holy Scriptures of

CHRIST

in His sufferings and death on behalf of us, as also concerning sins—none of which should be confounded with or mistaken for the presentation of Him as

JESUS.

Here, as Christ, He is put before us as having once for all suffered¹ (died) concerning sins and that as the Righteous One for us, the unrighteous ones, in order that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but

¹ Weighty authorities read "*died*" instead of "*suffered*"; "*died*" is probably the true reading; compare the Revisers' Margin.

quicken (made alive) in or by the Spirit; in or by which also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you (even) baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.

The beginning of these words surely sets forth the kindness of the true grace of God, inasmuch as there is none righteous, no not one. Nay, all by nature are children of wrath and afar off from God, yet even for those did Christ suffer or die concerning sins that He might reach and bring us to God. Solemn and sorrowful is the reflection that notwithstanding that grace and truth the unrighteous are slow, slow as, alas! not a few are stolidly indifferent, to such mercy and love; while is not the appreciation and response of us who have tasted the Lord's goodness but meagre at best? Indeed, almost ungrateful, since we are so sluggish to deny ourselves and as much as in us speak and preach the Gospel to all within our reach and ken. Oh, that each one may seek to watch and see what He will say to him, until his prayer shall burst forth,—“O Jehovah, I have heard the report of Thee and am afraid: O Jehovah, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make it known.” “I work a work in your days.”¹

Christ then was put to death in the flesh, and made alive by the Spirit.

In or by that same Spirit He went and preached to the spirits in prison.

We judge and submit that for the following reasons this preaching could not have been between His death on

¹ See Hab. 2. 1, 3. 1, 2, 1. 5, with Acts 13. 37-41.

Calvary and his resurrection on the third day according to the Scriptures:—

(a) The spirit of man as such does not go down.

(β) Although many have written and some yet speak of Hades being the abode of departed *spirits*, the Scriptures nowhere so reveal nor teach.

(γ) God sent His Son in the likeness of *SINFUL* flesh.

At His death in the flesh, His *spirit* went to God, His *soul* went to Hades, and His *body* was laid in Joseph's tomb. Let it be well noted that in the likeness of sinful flesh, at death, that threefold apportionment of the one person took place. Previous to Calvary, or wherever *soul* is used of man out of the mortal body, he is always connected with his soul as to his personality, and never with his spirit; though, indeed, sometimes man in the mortal body is designated by the word "spirit," as he is commonly by the word "soul."

Wherefore, when Jesus said to the dying, repentant thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise," they, as personified in their souls, met in upper Hades. Whence the word that is written of Him, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades" (*Hebrew, Sheol*).

(δ) Even if the Revisers' text be demanded to the rejection of their marginal reading in Ecclesiastes 3. 21, yet Ecclesiastes 12. 7 is absolute, and has exemplification in Matthew 27. 50, Luke 23. 46, also Acts 7. 59, all R.V. Compare, too, Job 34. 14, 15, and Psalm 31. 5. Therefore, since Christ at death went down (for Hades is beneath), and the spirit of man goeth not down, but up, even to God who gave it, there were no spirits beneath to which Christ could have gone, or preached then.

Still, in or by the Spirit He went and preached to spirits. He thus went and preached representatively. Genesis 6. 3 reveals much on that point. Please observe the title under which these words were uttered, and contrast that of verse 13.

It must be most clearly understood that Christ did not go

and preach *in spirit*, as Paul, for example, went *in spirit* to the Colossian assembly of God, joying and beholding their order and the steadfastness of their faith, etc.¹ Nay, verily, but in or by the Spirit (who, as apart from Him, yet came unto or upon Him, who in the flesh had been put to death, and quickened Him into life) did Christ go and preach to the spirits in prison, which spirits were persons in mortal bodies designated so for reasons similar to what causes or requires the same word of description in 1 Corinthians 5. 5, 1 John 4. 1-6, to be used of persons. Those spirits were in prison as shut up under limits of surveillance, and it is not a little remarkable that the verb form of this word "prison" is the very word used in 2 Peter 2. 5 to describe *the manner* of Noah's deliverance; while a different word is used in the verses before us to describe *the means* thereof. For the further help of English readers the words 2 Peter 2. 5 might be paraphrased: "God spared not the old world, but out from prison delivered Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness; bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."

The use here made of that Ark with its eight souls passing safely through the judgment that took all the others away is intensely apt and searching. As they in it, so we in Christ. Whereof our baptism evidences salvation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and not as putting away therein the filth of the flesh, but rather manifesting the demand of a good conscience toward God who hath set Him at His right hand in heaven, and made Angels, and Authorities, and Powers all subject unto Him. How much more us, in this His commandment, which involves the renunciation of self-will, and generates the continuous cry of the contrite, captivated spirit, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Alas, for us, though His, if we know not salvation thus!

JOHN BROWN.

¹ See Col. 2. 5.

•

“GO WORK TO-DAY.”

“REDEEMING the time, because the days are evil.” Such were the words of Paul to the saints in Ephesus; and are not these words equally addressed to us, who, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have been saved from the wrath to come? Yes, to us the Word says, “Ye are not your own, for ye were bought with a price; glorify God therefore in your body” (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20, R.V.). We who are purchased with the precious blood of Christ are become servants of the living and true God. He says, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might” (Eccles. 9. 10); “Work while it is called to-day.” Sleep not, as some do. Let it be real, from our hearts, when we sing, “Yes, we will go and tell of Jesus,” for “to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (Jas. 4. 17). Let us not be content to sing it, but do it. “Son, go work to-day in my vineyard” (Matt. 21. 28). God says, “To-day, if ye will”; to-morrow may be too late. Jesus says, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments”; and “Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you” (John 15. 14). Let us show our love to our Master by obeying His word. He said, “Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.” Let it be service unto Him; “Be not ye the servants of men” for praise or filthy lucre, but with a single eye to His glory. Peter could say, “Silver and gold have I none”; and Paul said, “I count all things loss . . . for Christ Jesus my Lord.” And they proved it was true, both Peter and Paul, by all that they suffered for Christ. May this encourage us to go on; and forget not this, that whatever our work is, we should always start at home. Jesus said, “Go home to thy friends and tell them.” Depend upon it, if our testimony cannot stand the test at home it is of little use going out. God’s servant must have a good report, and especially

among those that are without ; and let our service be ever so small, we should be able to start among those who know us best : then we can be a testimony for our Lord.

You may say, "I cannot preach before a crowd." Perhaps not ; but can you speak to one or two ? If so, do it, and lose not the opportunity He gives. Lost opportunities we shall give an account of, to our shame. How can He say, "*Well done, thou faithful servant*" ? Therefore, let us watch, and grasp every chance He gives, no matter where, at home, at work, in the streets, on the trams, trains, or boats, etc. If our heart is full of love for the Lord, He will give us opportunities.

Another may say, "I cannot speak to any one." Well, your work may be giving away tracts. Begin at home, then to your neighbours, and from house to house. Then there are the hospital, asylum, and the shipping ; you have no end of scope. Then, again, we must not forget that some can give tracts who cannot afford to buy. What a privilege for any who can afford to supply them, and to give liberally to the Lord, as He has given unto them. We read, "To every man his work," and so it is: one can preach, another exhort, another has the care of the flock, but remember, if done for the Lord, the least shall not be forgotten or lose its reward, even if the work be only to give out hymn-books at a gospel meeting. Let us not, however, forget to ask our blessed Lord to show us what our work is, and when we are fully persuaded in our own mind, let us not neglect it, but "be an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4. 12, R.V.). "Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15. 58). "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they

both shall be alike good." "He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap." Let us go on, with our eyes on the judgment-seat, serving Him only, not seeking the smile nor fearing the frown or scoffings of men, but pursuing zealously for our Lord and Master. He said, "Lo, I am with you." "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

We know that while God hates sin He loves the sinner, and is not willing that any should perish. Have we not friends and relations hurrying on to a lost eternity? Think of it, beloved. "Ye are the light of the world." Let us ask ourselves in the presence of God, "Am I a light in this world? Is my light shining before men, that they can see my good works, and so glorify my Father in heaven?" This is a searching question. May it stir us up more and more to holy service for our God, and cause us to go forth taking nothing of the Gentiles; and should they offer us service or assistance, shall we not say, as they said in Ezra's day (4. 3), "Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God, but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord"? "Ye have no portion or right" (Neh. 2. 20), which clearly shows that one must be born again before he can do anything acceptable for our God.

We must not forget that going out in the service of the Lord may mean taking up a cross; but He said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me" (Luke 9. 23). It is a hard battle for some of God's servants, for the heart is so apt to sink and be discouraged, because of the obstacles of the Devil, and some cannot go on because of opposition; but look up, beloved, and "think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of His sufferings" (1 Pet. 4. 12, 13), "for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us,

leaving us an example that ye should follow in His steps." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." James says, "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience: behold, we count them happy which endure." If we suffer we shall reign. He is faithful that promised. Fret not thyself because of evildoers. Think of Daniel's companions, who could say, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us." They were faithful to God, and God honoured them for it. We also see the greatest monarch upon his face before Daniel, who was a captive and exile; beautiful fruit of faithfulness (Dan. 2. 46).

Let us be faithful to His word: "Go work." It may be in weakness, but He said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." "Though he goeth on his way weeping, bearing forth the seed, he shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him" (R.V.). Therefore commit thy work unto the Lord, and be patient, looking unto Jesus, and He will bless your labour, for He said, "Without Me ye can do nothing." As we have received of Him, let us hear Him only, saying, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, and the halt and the blind. . . . Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled" (Luke 14. 21-23). Go after that which is lost. Now, that is our privilege to invite blind and lost sinners to hear the love of Jesus, of one that makes the poor rich, the lame to walk straight, the blind to see, and restoreth the lost sheep to the fold. Yes, tell of the sinner's Friend, the one that sticketh closer than a brother, the altogether lovely one, the chief among ten thousand. Yes, to His honour and glory let us do service, and may He show us our real responsibility, and may our united prayers be that our God and Father will make bare His arm, and

save souls in these last and evil days, and that we may quit ourselves as men that wait for their Lord, working and serving, seeking only His "Well done."

"Finally, brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6. 10). We must be endowed with the power from above: it is not going in our own might that we can do anything, for our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places; *i.e.*, a man sneers and scoffs at a gospel meeting: it is not the man, but the evil spirit in the man (see Mark 5. 8-10), and it is these we fight. Therefore we need to put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.

God fits for the fight with an outfit of seven things—the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit, and prayer (Eph. 6. 14). God said to Jeremiah (1. 17, 18), "Gird up thy loins, and arise and speak: behold, I have made thee a defenced city." And the girdle is for strength, and the heart being ready and willing, the strength is there. As the psalmist says, "It is God that girdeth me with strength" (18. 32), and the girdle binds together for strength, the more strength the tighter; so we cannot fight God's battle unless we hold fast, and be obedient to His word; and to use the sword of the Spirit we must first be girded with the truth. We must not forget we are servants, and must obey; we cannot fight for the truth unless we obey it ourselves; but having the girdle on, we can begin aright. May we be of those who put on the girdle of truth as the first piece of armour.

The breastplate of righteousness we require, for it means practical righteousness. We read, "He put on righteousness as a breastplate." And this is what we want to do if

our words are to have any weight. We must be right in our daily life and walk before God and man. If our conduct is bad before the world it will be much more so before God. If I am in debt and cannot pay, through my own folly, it is better that I should say nothing than dishonour my God by speaking, for I should not have a clear conscience to speak. Paul could say, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men" (Acts 24. 16). Depend upon it, if the world can point its finger at us, it will cause us to turn our back to the foe when we should face him; and forget not that we are armed to face the foe.

We do not read of a backplate, and if we have to turn our back on the enemy, then we are giving up truth, and when will we stop giving up? But let us walk so that the fiery darts of the Devil cannot affect our breastplate. Let our light prove itself by shining, and let our life prove itself by living. "Therefore present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Then, again, the man who possesses the peace of God for himself, he it is who can go and tell of the joy of his soul; having his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace, he is able to stand; though rough and stormy the road may be, still, wherever he goes, he is able to present to others the Gospel of Peace. Oh, that we all who possess peace might present peace and goodwill unto men from God, for "God willeth not the death of a sinner." Jesus said, "Peace be unto you. As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." The God of peace make you perfect in every work to do His will.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked." "Have faith in God." A shield is to guard against all blows, and so is he guarded who has faith in God and His word. Yes,

he is fully defended, for the Word of God is powerful. But if we go out doubting it is lack of faith and departing from truth; let us, therefore, go out nothing doubting, but with full confidence in Him, for we are ambassadors for Christ, and God has committed unto us the word of reconciliation: "now, therefore, perform the doing of it" (2 Cor. 8. 11). "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" heartily. By so doing the darts of the wicked will fail to pierce the shield of faith; they will be like peas against a steel plate.

Then we are told to take the helmet of salvation. In former days a worthy man would have his helmet put on his head, and a sword in his hand, by a king, or some one representing him; so also salvation is given to us who believe. It is a gift, and therefore we have the word which says, "Be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation." "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, . . . for He hath clothed me with garments of salvation."

Then again, "The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." We could not do anything without it. We would be poor warriors without a sword, or the Word of God, for the Word of God is quick and powerful; and if we as soldiers of Christ go out to war, we must go with His sword. Let us use it at all times: "He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully," "but only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak." We must not go to make a show in the flesh, or to let others know how much we know; let us know Christ only, and Him crucified; let us lift up Christ to a perishing world, condemned as it is, with the wrath of God abiding upon it. May God help us to use the sword like the men of old: they could use both the right hand and the left hand. Use the sword always, for although it cuts, it heals also. But are

there not many of God's children who cannot or will not use the sword? They never practise sword exercise, or they have been stopped by Satan, and the sword, maybe, is hanging loosely at their side, and rusty. As I said before, if our walk is not with God, we cannot use the sword for Him; one out of communion with the Lord cannot use the sword.

There must be subjection to the word before one can preach or teach it with effect. He that would use the sword successfully on others must know the power of it to his own soul before he can handle it with efficacy. Therefore, watch.

Satan puts a bait here and a bait there, to draw us away, and to make us useless, or as Paul said, "Lest I should be a castaway," or be unfit for the work. If we will not take one bait, Satan tries another; the more zealous we are for God the more he will try to hinder us. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

But the mainstay to the whole is "All prayer." We should not do anything without asking his blessing on it. I believe that he who is too busy to pray is busier than God would have him to be. Our greatest battle should be on our knees. We read of our Lord the whole night praying; and what did He do in the garden? He prayed. And to his disciples he said, "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer" (Mark 9. 29). We are exhorted, "Praying always in the Spirit." Let us be a praying and a praising people. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same, with thanksgiving."

And withal may we be real out-and-out Christians, that we can be read and known of all men that we have been with Jesus, and let us practise what we preach, and remember His words, "Occupy till I come."

MIRIAM.

I.

How much instruction often lies in a few verses of God's Word. And although most of the events of a long life may be passed over, and only two or three be recorded, how instructive they become as the Holy Spirit leads us to see that they were written aforetime for our blessing and admonition.

Israel's sufferings in Egypt were approaching their close. Their groanings were not unheard. Deliverance was at hand. The deliverer was about to be given, and therefore the hate and opposition of Satan are specially seen. As in another and a later day a cruel decree went forth against the children of Bethlehem, because the Deliverer had been born there, and the world power led on by Satan sought to destroy Him, so at the very time Moses was about to appear on the scene the Pharaoh was seeking to keep the children of Israel from becoming too numerous by the murder of their infants. Faith can triumph over it. No intimation whatever is given that the parents knew what a signal deliverance should be accomplished by their babe. Nevertheless, in faith they resolved to secure his life, if that were possible. What anxious days and months they passed! Afraid almost to let their affections be drawn out to him, knowing that ruthlessly he might be snatched from them at any moment, and yet faith looked up to Him who could in spite of the adversary deliver. "They were not afraid of the king's commandment" (Heb. 11. 23), though it was such an imperative and far-reaching one, for he had charged all his people saying, "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river" (Exod. 1. 22). How remarkably the place designed for destruction became in the case of Moses the place of deliverance. The river into which the child was to be cast by the cruel one became through a mother's faith

and love his place of safety, when none other could be found. For three months she hid him, and then, when that was no longer possible, she took him herself to the river. From the hands of the cruel, how soon he would have disappeared engulfed in the stream, his faint cries scarce heard, as in a moment he would perish. But Moses was in the hands of love, such love as only a mother's heart knows. And that tender, deep love, mingled with faith in God, upheld her, even though agonizing fears sought to fill her heart. She lays him down in his ark (Exod. 2. 3; same word as for Noah's ark), and then, almost hidden, yet kept from moving by the flags of the river, she leaves it. The mother's love might have said, "I will stay by it; they shall only slay him when they slay me." And how natural that would have been. But her faith rose higher than nature, and in confidence entrusting him to God entirely and alone, she left him there. Her presence might have endangered. She had left nothing undone that she could do in those three months, and then in faith she commits him to Him who can do all. How wise her retiring, and how equally so as she left the young sister standing by to watch. Thus Miriam comes first before us, for when we read only of Aaron and Moses and Miriam as their children (Num. 26. 59) surely we are not left in doubt as to who the sister was, though not then mentioned. The love of a sister was engaged; no servant work dictated by the mother, to be carelessly carried out in her absence, but a heart loving and anxious for him engaged in watching over the child. The scene is well known as shortly yet graphically it is told. How in picture and descriptive narrative everywhere it has been enlarged upon. Anxious love watching as the sister stands by; how intense the feeling in her as the daughter of Pharaoh draws near. Yet how insupportable to the mother, unable to observe and now severed from her child, but for the faith that counted upon God to deliver from the place of death, into which she her-

self had put him in his ark. And He who gave that faith, who nourished it, who rewarded it, and who finally recorded it (Heb. 11.), how He would rejoice in that simple confidence in Himself.

The princess draws near, but Miriam's work is not done. It is only just beginning. Slave-girl though she is, and looked down upon by the Egyptians, her masters, she is not to be frightened away. In the presence of danger what is so bold as love? Has it not ever been so? Never has knowledge sustained or natural boldness carried a martyr triumphant to the end, but love ever conquered. Intense, real love to a personal Saviour upheld and carried through fire or water. When in England on one occasion two appeared before the judge, who sought to frighten and coerce, it availed nothing. "Know you not," said he, "that I have power to order you to be bound and cast into the river?" "My lord," said one, "we are going to the kingdom of heaven, and it matters not whether we go by land or water." Another approaching the place of burning, as he looked across the fields over which he was being led, exclaimed, "But two more stiles, and I shall be at my Father's house."

So Miriam, sustained by love, manifested her courage not only by not running away as the princess and her maids approached, but by going boldly up at the right moment. As the ark revealed itself and, at the order of the princess, it was taken out from among the bulrushes, and as she looked upon the babe and by its countenance and colour discerned it was one of the Hebrews' children, before she could resolve what was to be done Miriam was by her side, not losing time in seeking to interest one of her maids, but boldly addressing herself as she asked, "Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" (Exod. 2. 7). How ready are the resources of love. No mention made of "mother," but a

“nurse.” All seemed adverse. The poor mother, after three months of constant watching, determined to save him, a time during which her love had expanded and strengthened towards the babe, had now been compelled to “cast out” (Acts 7. 21). Now He into whose arms she had cast him upholds and sustains. How simple His ways. How in the history of nations and individuals His guiding and controlling are visible. No sooner is the babe cast out and Miriam set to watch than His guidance appears. The princess comes along. Accident, says the worldling—chance, nothing else. God in all, says the Christian. Unnamed in book of Esther, yet plainly to be seen by faith in every movement and action of each. So in this scene He is present, guiding each and evolving His own purposes. The deliverer lies in that ark, the one who will, years hence, unflinchingly withstand the Pharaoh to his face as he delivers God’s commands and carries out His judgments, then leads forth the Israel of Jehovah. And because it is so he must be spared, and, marvel of marvels, Pharaoh’s house shall be his home, and Pharaoh’s daughter shall be reckoned his mother. Thus it is that in reply to Miriam the princess can only utter one word, “Go.” It is easy to imagine how swiftly Miriam would run. Love understands love, and when gladness filled her heart and the strain of anxious watching was over how eager she would be to rush into the mother’s presence! No need for words: the mother reads in the face so bright and unclouded with fear. With what alacrity the mother would run forth! Her heart satisfied; faith realized. And as the babe was handed to her to keep now for the princess, she could scarce conceal the great joy overflowing in her heart. Once again the child is at home, but what a contrast! No hiding, no agonising fear, no setting of Miriam to watch. The child is hers and with her, and all her love can go out to him, and Miriam’s too; for as entrusted to her by the princess no Egyptian dare touch the

child, though they know him to be a Hebrew. We can well understand how there would be a peculiar relation between Moses and Miriam in after-years, as she remembered his danger and deliverance, and he thought of her love and care, and how she had forgotten herself in her love for him, and had thus been the means of his being placed back in his mother's arms, henceforth to be known as Moses the "drawn-out" one from death.

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be continued.)

"THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD."

(Continued from page 132.)

"FORASMUCH then as Christ suffered in the flesh" is here (chap. 4. 1) offered to the Christian as a weapon to stand on his part mighty and effective against sin. We say offered, inasmuch as, while it is an abiding fact that Christ so suffered, yet, for that to be of real account or service to the child of God against sin, he must arm himself with that same mind.

It is to be feared that the want, or neglect, or even the refusal to be so armed, makes the Christian but the too ready prey of the prowling Adversary, who, through the deceitfulness and pleasures of sin, entices, seduces, and blinds, alas! until, through the rude awakening of some sorrowful outbreak in open failure, that way is found to be but the hard way of the transgressor, while deliverance comes only through such manner and measure of discipline as brings about the destruction of the flesh and the salvation of the spirit (the person) in this day of the Lord Jesus. He is Lord of all, hence such mercy and succour in the day of sore calamity and plight.

THE TEST

as to whether one is, or is not, so armed is at once searching and simple, even "For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased" (rested) "from sin."

Thus is experienced to-day the prefiguring of the razor brought over one's own flesh by one's own self unto a cleansing that is impossible, and impossibly complete, if one's clothes (habits) are unwashed, and one's self unbathed.¹

THE OBJECT,

too, is most inspiring, namely, "that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

What memories are awakened and convictions are wrought by such words! What possibilities loom forth! What wishes, hopes, and prayers are begotten by those far, far-reaching words, "that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh"! How casually God reveals most momentous matters. He, the person, *in* the flesh living. He living the rest of his time in the flesh, not now, as once, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

Surely such manner of living is accentuated by contemplation on the

REST OF HIS TIME.

Fittingly, fittingly, did Moses, the man of God, cry out,

"So teach us to number our days
That we may apply our hearts to wisdom."

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

"The beginning of wisdom is to depart from evil."

All that is corroborated and enforced by the appeal that "the time past may" (but oh! fellow-saint, does it really?)

¹ Compare Lev. 14. in the light of Rom. 15. 4.

“ suffice to have wrought the desire of the Gentiles and to have walked in lasciviousness, lusts, winebibblings, revelings, carousings, and abominable idolatries, wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the living and the dead. For unto this end was the Gospel preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in,” or by “ the Spirit.”

That preaching is past, but the judgment is future. Those who were the subjects of that preaching shall know a judgment akin to, or identical with, that of men in the flesh (the Judge is ready to judge the living and the dead).

JOHN BROWN.

CHOSEN TO HEAR.

MAN'S response to God's glad tidings, “ Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord,” was, “ Crucify Him, crucify Him.” God's costly gift was flung back in His face with bitterest hate. But did Calvary's cross annihilate God's love, or bring down flood or flame upon man's guilty head? No; that cross, so far from extinguishing His love, is the measure and proof of it, and the very pivot upon which mercy's door is opened to a doomed world, as, indeed, the Holy Spirit's word on Peter's lip witnesseth, “ Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to *bless* you in turning every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3. 26); and in accord thereto we sing:—

“ But the bright glories of Thy *grace*
Beyond Thine other wonders shine.”

Thus God's sovereign grace takes up man's worst and direst deed, or even the guiltiest of men, and makes it or him a medium of rich and lasting blessing.

Such a man, indeed, was Saul of Tarsus, proud, hateful and hating, the ravager and scatterer of God's sheep. Struck down on Damascus' dusty highway, delivered from the authority of Satan, he, by the grace of God, becomes a pattern of those about to believe, in which God displays the marvellous capabilities and resource of His grace. Oh, the wonderful modelling, moulding, disciplining power of grace (Tit. 2. 11-15)! Much, indeed, was there to boast of after the flesh as to birth, training, and attainment; but he was dead and dark as to God's way for and with men, and withal backed up by the religious leaders of his day, who not only served to make his hatred still more deep, but authorized him to extend its sphere of operation; yet, under the marvellous grace of God, he becomes the upbuilder and caretaker of those whose spoliation he had sought and the debtor to those upon whom he had formerly looked with cold disdain. His own words declare, "By the grace of God I am what I am," and the Holy Spirit's record of them is a pledge of their veracity.

Of God's purposes accomplished in him and by him, one is recorded in 1 Tim. 1. 16, namely, that he was to be "for an ensample," or outline figure, "of those about to believe," and every stroke in this figure God is able and willing to reproduce in us His children. Albeit some may only reach in small degree what he so largely had, yet as the raindrop reflects the colours of the rainbow, so God desires to mark in each characteristics seen in him, which found their true contour in his Lord and Master. What, then, were some of the marks which characterised this ensample and those unto which God desires to bring us? In Acts 22. we are informed that God chose him—

- (1) To know His will;
- (2) To see that Just One;
- (3) To hear the voice of His mouth,
- (4) And this with the distinct and definite purpose of

becoming His witness. Though differing in mode, yet unto nothing less has God chosen both reader and writer, and unto nothing less does God in unwearying patience seek to bring us. Think, beloved reader, as these words of wondrous meaning fall on your startled ear: "Chosen to know His will"! He has a *will*, then, yes, a most definite and distinct will, and more, He chose us to know it. What a pledge and proof this is that, by His mercy, He will teach us! What grace shines out here, grace to deliver from hell, still greater grace to teach and train, for to neither had we title, right, or claim! What debtors, everlasting debtors, God has made us, yes, indeed, debtors to Himself!

But mark still a further outline seen in this figure: "Chosen to hear." Then God does speak? He does, for He is a living God, and what is more, He speaks to us to-day. How God values a listening servant! for it was unto this God chose Saul of Tarsus and ourselves too. "Chosen to hear"—may God make these words ring in our ears and re-echo through our very being, until we bow our heads in His presence and say, "What saith my Lord unto His servant?" (Josh. 5. 14). Never will there be a time in our career as His children that we shall be able to do without hearing Him. Babes need to hear Him, in order to grow in grace and in the knowledge of His will; young men need to hear Him, so that in them may be His word abiding, and they become strong and overcome the wicked one; fathers too need to hear Him, else they will sink down into spiritual decrepitude and dotage; *all* require to hear Him, that they may be as scribes who bring from their treasury things new and old, the new to give freshness to the old, the old to give weight and worth to the new.

How much Israel lost that God would have given them, and how much disaster and defeat they brought upon themselves, through failure to hearken to God's word as delivered to them by Moses! How often do these words, "hear,"

“hearken,” “heed,” occur in the book of Deuteronomy! For Moses labours to save the children from the snare into which and under which their fathers fell. Had the fathers heard and heeded, the bones of thousands of their numbers would never have lain whitening under an Eastern sun on the desert’s burning sands, and they would have entered the land well-nigh forty years before they did; and, as one has well said, “the carcasses of the fallen ones in the wilderness, the thirty years of wandering, the solemn cutting off of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and the very shutting out of Moses from the land, seem with terrible emphasis to re-echo, ‘Hearken, O Israel.’” It is written for our learning that those holy cherubim, having returned into Jehovah’s presence, stood and let down their wings, and when they had let down their wings they heard a voice, a voice from above the firmament, a voice from the throne above the firmament, yea, more, a voice from the man upon the throne above the firmament. Surely, if these ministers of His, so accurate, so untiring in their service, and so straight in their way, needed to enter His presence and hear His voice, much more do we. Ezekiel adds, “When I saw this I fell at His feet, and I heard a voice.” Thus indeed would God teach us that the mode and matter of His administration by us as assemblies or as individuals can only and alone be carried out by abiding communion and intercourse with God and the hearing and heeding of His will as revealed in the Scriptures of truth.

Our folly is in being satisfied with the measure of our attainment, service, and testimony, and so settling down short of the mark unto which God would lead, as did Manasseh and certain ones of old.

May God grant that this characteristic, even “hearing Him,” may be more truly effected in us, and so we shall be not merely followers of the servant, but even of the Master Himself, who said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His that

sent Me" (John 7. 16); "For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment what I should say and what I should speak. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (John 12. 49, 50).

JOSHUA HAWKINS.

UNTO US IN A SON.

NOTES ON THE LETTER TO HEBREWS.

(Continued from page 80.)

For not unto angels did He subject the world to come, whereof we speak, but one hath somewhere testified saying,—

What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?
 Or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?
 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels;
 Thou crownedst him with glory and honour,
 And didst set him over the work of Thy hands;
 Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet.

The one who thus testified was David, as reference to the eighth Psalm will show. Such psalms as this and the nineteenth and twenty-third indicate how much the shepherd lad learnt of creation's story¹ ere God took him from following the sheep to be prince over His people Israel. In the psalm itself, of the things put under the feet of the son of man we have specially named—

All sheep and oxen,
 Yea, and the beasts of the field,
 The fowl of the air and the fish of the sea,
 Whatsoever passeth through the path of the seas.

Doubtless this scripture in the Psalms had a primary application to man in general; the subjection of the beasts of the field to a son of Adam was experimentally proved by

¹ Psalm 19. 1-6.

David on more than one occasion.¹ But since the Fall the dominion of man over the lower creation has been very imperfect, and is in general only evident as the result of more or less exercise of skill and strength (compare James 3. 7). As originally created, however, man was set in complete authority over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.² This dominion over the lower creation was much diminished as a direct consequence of man's rebellion against God, yet on more than one occasion it has been to some extent re-established by God in connection with His special dealings with man at one time or another. For instance, as to the eight survivors from the watery flood, God said: "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth; . . . your blood, the blood of your lives, will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it."

How much more then might we expect that He who, though coming in the likeness of sinful flesh, was in perfect subjection to God, should thus be crowned with glory and honour as the perfect Man, the true Son of man, set over the works of God's hands, with all things put under His feet.

And in His life on earth, from the manger at Bethlehem to the cross at Golgotha, this glory and honour ever was His. All the works of God, man only excepted, bowed to His authority and owned His lordship. Whilst the star that led the Magi to worship at His feet was God's witness to His kingly dignity,³ the subjection of the beasts of the field to Him⁴ manifested that He was the Son of man set over the works of God's hands. Doubtless the same truth may be learnt from the ride into Jerusalem on the colt of the ass.

But though it is clear that in His life before the cross

¹ 1 Sam. 17. 34-37.

² Gen. 1. 26-28; 2. 19, 20.

³ Matt. 2. 1-11.

⁴ Mark 1. 13.

this crown of glory and honour was upon His head, yet in the story of—

His sojourn in this vale of tears,
The tale of love unfolded in those years,
Of sinless suffering and patient grace,

it is overshadowed by the clouds of human depravity and base ingratitude which darkened His path and made Him to be the Man of sorrows. They to whom and for whom He came would not have Him to reign over them; they hated the light because they loved their evil deeds. How deeply He felt the treatment His own people accorded Him may be known from the agonizing cry, "O My Father, if it be possible let this cup pass away from Me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt."¹

This rebellion of man against the Man of God's right hand, against the Son of man whom He has made strong for Himself, is inconsistent with the perfect fulfilment of the words of the prophet David.

For in that He subjected all things unto him, He left nothing that is not subject to him,

that is, to a son of man. Here the Holy Spirit, through the writer of the letter to Hebrews, shows how fully the words of the eighth Psalm may be pressed to their uttermost meaning.

But now we see not yet all things subjected to Him,

that is, to the Lord Jesus. So that a further and a future fulfilment has yet to take place, when He shall come again, to whom the Father has given authority to execute judgment because He is Son of man.

¹ It seems impossible to suppose that this could refer to the work itself, the atoning work which He had come to do, whereas the contrast between Matt. 27. 25 and Jonah 1. 14 may enlighten us as to what made the Lord Jesus so exceeding sorrowful.

We see not yet all things subjected to Him. But we behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of¹ the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour,

He became lower than the angels, and was crowned with glory and honour as Son of man, not to enjoy it in life, but to fit Him for death.

that, by the grace of God, He should taste death for every one.

Grace it was, 'twas grace abounding,
Brought Him down to save the lost.

There is a depth of meaning here beyond our present power to fathom; but we direct especial attention to the care taken by the Holy Spirit to make us know something of that which qualified the Lord Jesus for His redemption work. As the atonement Victim He was without blemish, but as the Redeemer He was our Kinsman, near enough in kin to be able to redeem, and undeterred by any fear that He would mar His own inheritance.²

For it became Him for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

How truly perfect He ever was we can neither conceive nor utter; yet, as a part of the unfathomable redemption grace of God, He needed to suffer (that is, to suffer in His life) in order to be perfected as to His fitness for bringing us to God, in order that He might be what Job longed for, a—

Daysman betwixt us,
That might lay His hand upon us both.

Of such a daysman Elihu was a feeble type.

Behold, I am toward God even as thou art;
I also am formed out of the clay.
Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid,
Neither shall my pressure be heavy upon thee.

¹ Because of, that is, for, for the sake of.

² Contrast Ruth 4. 6.

For both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one, for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

that is, inasmuch as all are of God, though, as we sing,—

We the young children of His love,
And He the firstborn Son.

Notice here how His goodness in coming down so low for our sakes makes Him in truth to be a sanctifying One. That for us He has thus wrought sets us apart, separates us from all those interests and claims which aforetime belonged to us. Compare 2 Corinthians 5. 14–19. One died for all, therefore all died, and He died for all that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again. If any one is in Christ, it is a new creation: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new. But all things are of God.

He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren.”

How solemn and how blessed to hear Him who knows that name so well in all its fulness tell it out to us in all our weakness! He who knows the name of Jehovah as none other does or can, He tells it out to us in plainness and in simplicity, as we are able to hear and to bear—tells it out not by words only, but by actions. As once in the flesh He came down to us in our need, so by His Spirit He comes down to us in our need now, showing us Himself, and thus showing us the Father. Compare John 1. 18; 14. 8–11.

(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 63.—*Is it not a fact that the pronoun "that" in Eph. 2. 8 is in a different gender from the word "faith," and if so, does that not preclude its referring to "faith"?*

Yes, the pronoun *ταυτο, touto*, is the neuter, but that does not in any way settle the question. The grammatical rules and usages of one language must not be brought into another, and therefore the need of care in pronouncing an opinion when it concerns a language whose rules we may be but imperfectly acquainted with. It is wise, therefore, to consult authorities before we give a reply, or if we have done so before, to be ready to refer to them. Winer in his "Grammar of the New Testament Diction," in the chapter on pronouns, puts it most clearly, and shows that in this matter the genius and grammatical construction of the Greek language differs from the English. He says, "Pronouns, whether personal, demonstrative, or relative, not unfrequently take a *different gender* from the nouns to which they refer." This is called *constructio ad sensum*, the *meaning* and not the grammatical gender of the word being mainly considered. It is used particularly when some animate object is denoted by a neuter or an abstract feminine noun. The pronoun is then made to agree grammatically with the object in question, as *Matt. 28. 19, μαθητευσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς, mathēteusate panta ta ethnē baptizontes autous*. "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing *them*," "nations" being in the neuter, "them" in the masculine. For want of knowing this, one criticised my reference to this verse in "Papers on Baptism," and said that if correct in applying "them" to individuals out of nations who were discipled, then it "would *exclude* all the feminine portion—the women—and include all the *male* children." Knowledge of rules connected with pronouns in Greek would have saved from the application of English rules to this passage.

Winer gives a number of references clearly establishing his point: *Exod. 23. 27; Deut. 4. 27, 18. 14*, etc., also a number from the New Testament. I set out two or three in English, that their force may be seen: *Rom. 2. 14*, "when *the Gentiles*" (neuter), "*these*" (masculine); *Gal. 4. 19*, "my little children" (neuter), "of whom" (masculine). *Acts 26. 17* and *Col. 2. 15* he also cites.

This is enough to show that although one may have gained a sufficient knowledge of Greek to be able to point out tenses, genders, and such-like, yet if not acquainted with governing rules, he may by pointing out such differences to one who is only a reader in English

utterly mislead that one, as he at once applies his English rules, which he should not. Thus "faith" in Greek is a feminine noun, and "that" is in the neuter; but it does not in any way prevent "that" referring to "faith." If, leaving the question of "rules," in closing I allude to teaching of passage, I would only add that it is an old and simple saying, "The less is included in the greater." If "salvation" be taken to mean ALL in connection with it, even to the including of "faith," then faith is the gift of God, even though "that" in this verse did not teach it. "To them that have obtained like precious faith" (2 Pet. 1. 1) clearly shows that it is "obtained," in other words is a gift equally with "repentance" (Acts 5. 31; 11. 18).

R. T. H.

QUESTION 64.—*Would it be wresting the Scriptures in any way to render the last clause of Psalm 22., "It is finished," instead of "that He hath done this," or is the mind of the Spirit more clearly brought before us by thus rendering it?*

While it might hardly be called wresting the Scriptures to render the last clause of Psalm 22. by "It is finished," yet no reason would quite warrant such an interpretation. And most certainly those three blissful words could not be given as a translation of the original words in Psalm 22., which, as Robert Young gives and the LXX. confirms, mean "He hath made." Let the hallowed phrase, "IT IS FINISHED," abide where God hath left it, even as to the glory of and around Him who died triumphant in obedience unto God on behalf of sinners.

J. B.

QUESTION 65.—*What is the meaning of ordinances or traditions in 1 Cor. 11. 2?*

The ordinances or traditions include and describe the things communicated by the Apostle from the Lord to His Churches for their obedience in active practice. Compare 2 Thess. 2. 15, also chap. 3. 6, while 1 Cor. 11. 23, etc., is an example thereof.

J. B.

APOSTASY;¹

OR, THE OLD PROPHET WHO DWELT IN BETHEL.

It is often most difficult to detect evil at its commencement. "Rome (in the truest sense) was not built in a day." That great masterpiece of Satanic ingenuity, beneath whose

¹ Extracts from J. A. Boswell's "Old Prophets," just reprinted.

filthy rags thousands of guilty sinners are vainly trying to hide their sins, did not arrive at its present position by one mighty bound. No; and in the first workings of those principles of error which we now see so fully systematised, we would not have detected much of evil, unless, in the power of the Spirit, we had seen that into which they would develop; so subtly does the enemy work his ends.

Satan seeks to veil his real designs from the eyes of his victim. Remembering this, let us mark his subtle workings with God's ancient people, Israel, and their counterpart in this dispensation.

There are three characters in which the Lord Jesus is presented to us in Scripture—those of

PROPHET, PRIEST, AND KING,

and it is the fixed purpose of Satan to counterfeit these three characters.

In the 1st book of Kings (chap. 12.), we have brought before us evil in an advanced stage. There is no difficulty in detecting it. Manifest wickedness meets us on every hand.

In verse 29, we find

BETHEL,

which means the "House of God," the place of communion (Gen. 28. 19), in association with the grossest idolatry. Was, then, this development of evil arrived at at once? Let us trace out the origin of those deceptions which we here find in association.

We have specially in these verses the prophet, the priest, and the king. First, then, as to the

PROPHET AND PRIEST.

Turning to Judges 17., we read that it was then a day when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (verse 6), and acted as though God had never revealed His will. How sad a state of things!

The 2nd verse of this chapter brings before us a blasphemous woman. At one moment she is cursing; the next, we find her saying, "Blessed be thou of Jehovah, my son!" She can talk about the Lord, while at the same time she is about to set up the wicked imagination of her heart—a graven image—and thus break His commandments.

In verse 5, we read, "The man Micah had an house of gods, . . . and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest:" so the house of the blasphemous woman is the place also of a man-made priesthood. Are not our thoughts thus led on to the blasphemous woman of Revelation 17. 5—Rome—the very centre from which a man-made priesthood has gone out?

Verse 7 tells us, "There was a young man out of Bethlehem-judah, . . . who was a Levite"; verse 8, "The (young) man departed out of the city from Bethlehem-judah to sojourn where he could find a place"—in other words, where he could get a living. "And he came to Mount Ephraim to the house of Micah." Let us remember that this young man had no right to the priesthood, being but a Levite (Num. 16. 9, 10, shows us this). The priesthood was *by birth*, and for the sons of Aaron alone.

The young man, as we have seen, comes to the house of Micah; and Micah bargains with him to become his priest for so much a year, a suit of apparel, and his victuals (verse 10). If we were to say, "so much a year, his gown, and his manse," would it not bring to our mind the every-day bargaining of men with their fellow-men—the livings, tithes, etc.? This young man was content to dwell with Micah, at least till, as we shall see, he got a call to something better. Thus men make their fellow-men priests, and then expect God's blessing. Then said Micah (verse 13), "Now I know that

THE LORD WILL DO ME GOOD,

seeing I have a Levite to my priest.' What deception! One is led to ask which of the two was the more deluded—the priest-maker or the man-made priest in the house of idols?

But what follows? In the next chapter (verse 3), we find part of the tribe of Dan, on their way to seek a dwelling-place, come to the house of Micah; and, recognising the voice of the young man his priest, saying, "What makest thou in this place? and what hast thou here?" And he said unto them (verse 4), "Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath HIRED me, and I am *his* priest." And now mark a solemn point. The man who is not afraid to be hired as a priest is not afraid to speak professedly as

A PROPHET.

Part of the tribe of Dan come again to the house of Micah (verse 13). They take "the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image" (verse 17). "Then said the priest unto them (verse 18), 'What do ye?' And they said unto him (verse 19), 'Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a priest. Is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?' And the priest's heart was glad (verse 20), and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midst of the people." Thus this young man showed how much he had Micah's welfare at heart, and how lightly he could turn his back on his benefactor and accept a call to a better living. Perhaps he thought that this was a providential circumstance, even as Micah had thought when he hired him as his priest; and so he went with the Danites to set up his idolatrous worship (verse 31) at Dan, where it continued all the time that the house of God was at Shiloh.

MIRIAM.

II.

MOTHER'S work watching the baby brother does not seem a great one to many. Nay, more, how some at least are apt to think such work beneath them, and that it would be a waste of time for them to be so employed. In a day of haste and outward activity such as we live in there is a danger to be avoided here by Christian girls and young women. This is a day of out-door life and work, and therefore the home is apt to be neglected by parents, and as a result home work disregarded by their children. Yet when that work is fully taken up as unto the Lord, calling for the exercise of much self-denial and patience, how often we find that in the unobserved secret place God is preparing for higher work for Himself. When home work is looked upon as drudgery, how trying it becomes; but when He is seen as having given it, how it can be lovingly taken up and fulfilled as serving the Lord Christ.

Young Christian women as they read of Miriam, the Leader of the Song (Exod. 15.), can easily desire to render the same service, how they would rejoice to have her opportunity; yet perhaps they fail to see that Miriam watching in eager, loving anxiety over her baby brother by the side of the river was equally serving and pleasing the Lord. May we not say that if she had not served Him then in watching over the chosen Deliverer she would never have had the opportunity more publicly to serve Him in celebrating the deliverance wrought through him over whom eighty years before she had watched so sedulously?

If we did not see her by the Nile, we should never see her thus by the Red Sea. How constantly we should remember, therefore, to impress upon the young Christians

that they are not losing time, any more than they are neglecting His service, when thus occupied in home work. The Nile in Miriam's case preceded the Red Sea; and so it must be with us—service in the family lovingly carried out, and then the wider service in public. God ever prepares His servants in secret: Miriam in quiet watching over her brother, Moses with the sheep in the desert, and David in like manner, Gideon first serving in the most difficult sphere, yet in private at home. Illustrations abound. He prepares and fits by slow process seemingly, but effectually, that the service when rendered may be well pleasing to Him. How much that passes current as service for Christ is not such. Let work in the home circle be neglected and how can any other, however imposing or self-sacrificing it may appear, be accepted of Him? The world may approve it and applaud, but His "Well done" is another matter. And this, while true and important for all Christians, is, in connection with Miriam and her work, specially so to Christian sisters. In a day when on every hand, in the world and among professing Christians, women are rushing into public work on an equality with men, it becomes all, especially such, to see from God's Word their place that they may fill it, and their work that they may do it.

Miriam's first work, then, was for mother, in loving obedience and subjection to her, and God blessedly owned her in it. Her next was among the women: "I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam" (Micah 6. 4). And Miriam is thus shown as prominent, yet how differently to her brothers! Though Micah thus writes, he in no way puts them on a level as to their service. When it is a question of going before Pharaoh, of coming in public contact with the Egyptians, Moses and Aaron alone are named: Miriam is not joined with them in such work. Work she has, and can do it, but the public place was not given, neither was it occupied by her in a single instance. And even as to the

Song, Moses and the Children of Israel took it up first (Exod. 15. 1). When their triumph had expressed itself in exultant words, then "Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea" (Exod. 15. 20, 21).

Thus in the right moment she is again waiting and ready. As at the Nile subject to her mother she waited and acted, so now by the Red Sea she takes no lead or independent action. Moses is THE LEADER, and when the Song closed, then only did she lead out the women in answering strains. In accordance with this we get it described in Psalm 68., which has been called "The Magnificent March": "The Lord gave the word; great was the company of those that published it" (ver. 11.) "Female company," as the Hebrew word expresses,¹ thus bringing in Miriam's response. How eagerly caught at and wrested from its connection that "Female company." Who could have thought that so much concerning women's public ministry and preaching could have been built upon it, as if the Lord had given the "Word" and the women preached from it as a text! Its reference must be to Miriam and her women in their song. The Lord gave the word, He who at one moment said to Moses, "Stand still," at another said, "Go forward," "Lift up thy rod." The Lord gave the word, the sea opened, Israel was saved, they passed through. The enemy assaying it were drowned. Why? The Lord gave the word. He who had opened the passage for Israel closed it against the enemy. The sea rolled back. Deliverance was complete.

¹ It is right to say that this rendering of Ps. 68. 11, though adopted by the Revisers (see R.V.), is not universally accepted. Some prefer the translation, "Great was the company that published the word in weakness."—ED.

Moses led the song, all Israel joined, then apart in company of the women Miriam also joined. The modern day woman's preaching and public work has to be put into the Psalm ere it can be brought out from it. It has not the slightest reference to anything of the kind. A lady evangelist, wrongly so called, as evangelist is masculine (Eph. 4. 11), can find no more warrant in Psalm 68. for her preaching in public than she can in Ephesians 4. find title to call herself "an Evangelist," seeing that by God men only are so termed.

Miriam led the song of praise to Jehovah, surrounded by the women. It was to Him. There was no ministry to man in it at all. It is sad work when any Scripture is taken entirely from its connection and is made to appear to uphold that which other Scripture clearly shows is not according to God's will. Service, and much of it, can be rendered by our sisters in Christ. "Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord" (Rom. 16. 12). A verse like that shows how abundant in work a sister could be, yet maintaining the private sphere. The fact that growingly women are found on public platforms on an equality with men, and speaking with them, does not in any way make it right. Christians are in danger of becoming familiarized with it because of its oft recurrence; and the constant notices that appear showing that women are seeking election on School Boards and other public Boards are all helping those unacquainted with their Bibles to regard it as quite a proper thing. Though many professing Christians thus go beyond the circle of God's Word, may it be ours to seek to carry it out as saints did of old. Miriam was by the banks of the Nile subject to the Lord, and pleasing to Him, as she obeyed her mother and carried out her will. And when by the banks of the Red Sea she was still found in the place of subjection, and whilst praising

Him in triumphant song not in the slightest leaving the woman's place or encroaching upon the public service of her brothers, Moses and Aaron.

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be continued.)

"THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD."

(Continued from page 147.)

WHOLESOME as the reflection may be that one's time in the flesh is at the longest but limited, much more so must be the recognition of the fact that "The end of ALL things hath drawn near." For that reason it becometh every saint to be of sound mind, and also sober unto prayers.

Oh! that in the energy of wishing to do His will we may be given to know the doctrine of such words.

Yet above, in the sense of before, all things God wishes that those who are together of Him should have among themselves not only love, but FERVENT love. That, too, for the captivating end that "Love covers a multitude of sins."

Surely here is exemplified what Colossians 3. 12 to 14 enjoins: "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above (over) all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness."

If the foregoing were indeed done, how different the dwelling-together of many would be from what it is. The absence thereof is but clear evidence to the conscience and heart of any that, whatever else is present, fervent love is wanting.

Now, "fervent love" is so vitally important that in the forefront, even before all things, God would that we should

have this INTENSE love among ourselves ; adding, moreover, the demonstration of such : " For love covers a multitude of sins." Then what will fervent love do ?

Is it not thus that we may avoid the error and escape the sore chastening of Matthew 18. 21-35, which is a part of the Holy Scriptures that is evidently unlearned and unheeded by not a few ? Compare, too, Ephesians 4. 17 to chapter 5. 21, R. V.

" Using hospitality one to another without murmuring." Here again is a duteous privilege that the saints most imperfectly cultivate. Still, it is plainly part of God's will concerning His own, and because of this should be valued and practised. Is not the manner of such obedience tenderly gracious and pleasantly good—" without murmuring" ? It seems as if God expected such a response in this holy entertaining of one another that anticipating the selfish narrowness of our hearts too often affected by mere nature, whence cometh murmuring ; and hence the injunction " Use hospitality WITHOUT MURMURING." The entertained may neither hear nor perceive the murmuring, but shall not He who accepteth according to that a man hath, and not according to what he hath not ? What then ? Besides, He loveth a cheerful giver.¹

" According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves as good (beautiful) stewards of the MANIFOLD grace of God." If any one speaks (let him speak) as the oracles of God. What these are Romans 3. 2 tells, even the words of God ! If any one ministers (*i.e.*, publicly serves), let him do it as out of the strength that God supplies, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion (power) for ever and ever. Amen.

How suitably the words of Cowper as to God's Gospel may

¹ See Rom. 12. 13 ; Heb. 13. 2 ; and Acts 16. 15.

be used to all the foregoing, which is so opposite to what is common—

“Oh! how unlike the complex works of man,¹
Heaven’s easy, artless, unencumbered plan,” and so on.

But, alas! alas! the spirit yet is that nevertheless mayhap be reached when even servants get near enough to respectfully remonstrate, “If the prophet (who here typically expresses what God’s word commands) had bidden thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it?” As witness what unbidden by the Lord those who are His do and will do. Ay, too often, Naaman-like, making comparisons and demanding reasons as did he to show if their thoughts are indeed not justified; as if God had not spoken what is right, or had not revealed the sin of bringing to Him what He has not commanded, as see Leviticus 10. and Ephesians 2. 10. How much rather then ought all who love the Lord to heed the simplicity that is in Christ, and so escape and deliver from, and stand against all the evils of the Evil One, albeit his devices are as varied as 2 Corinthians 11. reveals, which chapter let us plead, that our readers shall prayerfully peruse and note. Since those who are His should so comport themselves, how much more ought those who are in the churches of God, and of the house of God, thus do and only do.

JOHN BROWN.

THE SCHOOL OF GOD.

It is a solemn and instructive lesson for us to consider the history of those who have been used of God for the deliverance of His people and the executing of judgment upon His enemies—solemn, because we shall find that in many cases the time of service was of short duration, and that the tool, once taken up in the hand of God to accomplish His purposes, when laid aside by Him has been taken up by

¹ See page ii. of cover.

Satan to mar God's work, and mar the testimony also that might have been a bright one for God. Often in the closing period of the lives of those thus used they are found leading back His people into that from which they had been instrumental in their deliverance.

As an illustration of what we refer to, we would ask our readers to look at the history of Gideon (Judges 8. 27), also that of Jehu (2 Kings 10. 29, 31). Instructive indeed are the lessons we may gather from the histories of those two men if we have ears to hear and eyes to see, for what has been in the past will be at the present and will be yet repeated in the future even as long as God condescends to use imperfect and human instruments to accomplish His purposes upon the earth. Let not then those solemn lessons be lost upon us upon whom the ends of the world are come, and let us seek that, by the grace of God, the warning so needed, and yet, alas! so often unheeded, may not be neglected by us. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." This fall may not be an outward one recognised as such by all, nor need it cost the one who has fallen the loss of that esteem among his fellow-saints which he has formerly merited. On the contrary, such a fallen one may drag down with himself very many others.

In the economy of God's house provision is made for the guidance of His people in the pathway of obedience (Heb. 13. 7). The supposition is that those who guide will lead or go before aright; but they may fail, and no mere blind following of man is permitted amongst the saints. The natural indolence of human nature is only too apt implicitly to lean on an arm of flesh, or, on the other hand, to reject the guidance that is of God on the plea that the instrument He uses is so imperfect. Both the one course and the other are equally unscriptural. Whilst accepting those gifts that are given to us for the edifying of the body and the building up of the saints on their most holy Faith, we are to be ever

exercised before God concerning what we hear, testing it by the written Word; but this implies an amount of careful study that the indolence of human nature seeks to avoid, throwing all responsibility upon the teacher, who, alas! is more or less willing to accept this responsibility, until in the Church of Rome the climax is reached in apostate Christianity, and misguided men and women are educated from their infancy to place implicit confidence in their priest, oftentimes an openly ungodly and sinful man.

Dear fellow-saint, if you are seeking an easy pathway for your feet we can tell you of no such path, if yours is to be a walk of faith with God. The way in which He leads us will make us feel our weakness and ever throw us on Himself for guidance and direction; this is the real secret why we see men and women so frequently turning back from the pathway of faith. If they knew their own history, and if we knew it, they and we should see that it was only in very small measure that they had learned to walk with God; they leant upon their surroundings, the men or the system with which they were associated; the force of circumstances carried them outside of these things for the moment, but, like Lot's wife, their hearts were never separated from that which they professed to leave: there was no real exercise before God in the matter. Orpah could weep; she went a certain length with her mother-in-law, but she could return to her own people and her gods, while Ruth went forth in faith to own the God of Israel alone and to become the one through whom the Redeemer of Israel was to come in the flesh. What a contrast, reader! The one goes back from whence she came to walk by sight; the other goes on to a walk of faith, to have her faith tested, and to be a worshipper of the one true God.

We hear to-day of some who are turning back, building again the things that they professedly destroyed. A few weeks or months is sufficient to test their faith and for that

faith to break down, and they are found again in professedly happy fellowship with that from which they never, we fear, had a God-given deliverance. There may be some qualms of conscience, some uneasiness for a time, but these may soon be silenced. Orpah may have had her thoughts, she may have had her misgivings, but she lost her opportunity, and we never hear of her having another.

But yet another lesson. The Lord when speaking of the scribes and Pharisees said, "Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works" (Matt. 23. 2-4). They sat in Moses' seat, and honour was due to them on this account. This is most instructive. The very men who were to be leaders of the people in the betrayal and murder of the Lord Jesus (Acts 7. 52) are yet not set aside by Him; a distinction is made between what they teach and what they practise: the one was binding if according to the law of Moses, whilst the other was to be rejected, judged as evil, because originating with themselves. What a solemn testimony against the lawlessness of this day in which we live, in which the world seems preparing for the coming of the Lawless One, and when even amongst Christians, because men have failed, as they have ever done, the effort is to do away with God-appointed rule and bring about a state of things in which every man does that which is right in his own eyes! (Judges 17. 6).

But some will reply, "What then? Would you have us follow those who would lead us astray?" We have already answered such an objection, and again we would reply emphatically, No! Yet, let not the lesson be lost sight of that He who hated and still hates lawlessness, and was thus exalted above His fellows, and who came to earth to do the will of Him who sent Him, is the One from whom the instructive lesson should be learned that what God has ordained cannot be set aside by the hand of man until He

Himself has set it aside and appointed some other agency to fulfil His purposes. At the present day saints are responsible to see where those who guide are leading, but this points to a condition of things most earnestly to be desired, but difficult of attainment, as is every Divine standard, whether it be for our individual or collective walk. The condition we speak of is an intelligent apprehension on the part of the flock of what is and what is not of God. 1 John 4. 1 distinctly indicates that this condition is what God expects of His people; it is not to be attained by human effort, but only as there is the walk in the light; then will the light manifest that which is evil. We cannot now longer dwell on these thoughts, but would earnestly press them on the attention of our readers, so that, on the one hand, they may be delivered from lawlessness and the democracy of the age; and, on the other, from being blind followers of men, however worthy these may be, but only to follow such in so far as they are followers of the Chief Shepherd. We cannot here enter into the qualifications of those whom God would have go before His people. This subject is a broad one, and needs earnest study. We cannot make those men, we cannot appoint them, but we can recognise them when God gives them, and accord them the place in our esteem and in the assembly that God would have them occupy; and such, if they lead aright with true shepherd care, will one day receive a special reward from the Chief Shepherd's hand (1 Peter 5. 4).

Let us now consider the characters of these two men to whom we have referred.

GIDEON was a man who seems to have had some dealings with God, he does not seem to have rushed into His service in the mere energy of the natural man: there was some training, some mistrust of self and confidence in God, some willingness to learn in the school of God, and thereby to become a fitting instrument for the accomplishment of His purposes.

Turning to his history in Judges 6. 13, we may perceive an exercise of heart and an inquiry into the cause of Israel's sad humiliation; whilst, as we have said, there is mistrust of self (see verse 15), there has yet to be learned greater confidence and faith in God. The battle is the Lord's; this Gideon has to learn, and that it is with weak and ofttimes inadequate tools in themselves that God does His mightiest work. It was thus, we believe, with the Apostle Paul; in his weakness he clung to the God of power, and it was then that that power was manifested in the earthen vessel in all its fulness (2 Cor. 12. 9), and the apostle learned to glory in his infirmities. Gideon's faith has been strengthened, he offers the bullock as a sacrifice upon the rock in an orderly way (see margin of verse 26); he does it at night, he has not confidence to do it by daylight, for he fears the men of the city; his faith needs yet to be strengthened, and God graciously condescends to answer his request in connection with the fleece. Although there may be a want of faith in Gideon, as doubtless there was with the disciples when they cried, "Lord, increase our faith," yet, after all, it is a beautiful touch of human nature. If only he be sure that God is leading, and that he is making no mistake as to the pathway, he will go forward. He who knows the heart, and doubtless saw true sincerity in the man, complies with his request. Twice Gideon proves God, then comes a further testing of Gideon, and his followers are reduced to a mere handful. This was more on account of Israel, lest they should claim the glory of their deliverance, for while they had deliverance given them at this time, yet their condition of heart was sad in the extreme. This only illustrates that the grace of God is beyond all that which we deserve. It will be noticed, first of all in chapter 7. 3, that faint-hearted ones and those that are afraid are sent away from the company, they are told to return from whence they came. This diminished Gideon's army greatly, and yet, after all, it only

diminished it as seen by man. Such half-hearted ones would have been no strength on the battlefield; on the contrary, they would have but weakened the hands of the chosen ones through whom God was to work the victory. It may be a cause of sadness to us to-day to see some who have no heart for the battle returning from whence they came; they seemed so in earnest we might have imagined they were as bold for the conflict as any others, but the first opportunity given they have departed, and better far that it should be so. Thirty-two thousand gathered at the blast of Gideon's trumpet, but when the opportunity came ten thousand went back and followed no more with him. What a lesson! Let it not be lost on us. But even of the ten thousand who were left with Gideon there was a further diminution, a lessening of human power, a further trial of faith for Gideon and those with him in the school of God. To see twenty-two thousand depart of those who had professed to come out to fight the battle of the Lord must have been trying enough. What must Gideon and the three hundred men that lapped have felt as they saw seven hundred more of their brethren departing? Easy for us to read this history, easy for us to think that it is all right and proper that the three hundred should go on to victory, that God was with them. But what if we bring the lesson down to ourselves? Would our faith remain unshaken? Until placed in circumstances of trial we often little know how weak that faith is. The turning back of one or two will make us tremble, showing that we are more occupied with numbers than with Him who fights for us.

Gideon and the three hundred men only lost strength in appearance; the battle was the Lord's, and He was still with them, and they with Him. And so to-day, not by might, nor by power, not by human intellect, nor the wisdom of men, which is foolishness with God; but He "has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and

weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence" (1 Cor. 1. 27). Men may forsake us, but let us take heed that we forsake not God and the right way, lest He leave us in pitiable weakness to learn that to Him alone belongeth power.

After this further time of trial and testing God graciously again strengthens the deliverer of His people. He is sent to listen to the dream of the barley cake in the camp of Midian, and now with increased faith he and his little band go forth to victory. But even yet a further lesson. The battle must be won in God's way; God's man must be obeyed, and the people must do as they see him do (chap. 7. 17). Their eye was to be on their leader; his eye was to be upon his God. Follow me, as I have followed Christ, says the apostle, conscious that he himself was walking in the pathway of obedience.

There were doubtless those who were watching all this amongst the Israelites who came not to the help of God against the mighty. Some such may have looked on with contempt when they saw Gideon's host diminishing in numbers, for numbers is that which occupies those who look on things according to the outward appearance. They may have said or thought, "How different if we had been with Gideon; all Israel would have followed with us then." Yes, and God outside of the whole movement, a movement that might have appeared outwardly a success. Human nature repeats itself; it is to-day what it was then. Many are occupied with man. "If this one or that one had come out, how different would it have been. How unfit the instruments that are being used." And so men are excusing themselves from doing anything. They can point out the right thing to be done; they can protest against things as they are; they can show to their own satisfaction, and, it may be, to that of others,

what has been done wrong, but they themselves do nothing. When victory had declared itself on the side of Gideon's little company, there were plenty to rush in and join in the battle (verse 23). Gideon sends messengers also to Ephraim, calling them to share in his triumph. But alas! for those men, offended because they had not received the attention they considered was due to them, and evidently thinking that Gideon should have waited upon them instead of waiting upon God, should have taken their time to do the work instead of God's time and His way; they chode with Gideon (chap. 8. 1), saying, "Why hast thou served us thus?" All the deliverance, all that God had done and was doing, seemed little in their eyes, because they had not got the place that they expected. Dear fellow-saints, it is easy to sing,

"Oh, to be nothing, nothing,"

but it is quite another thing to be nothing, to rejoice to see the work of God done by others, by others, it may be, who, we feel, are not half so fitted for it as ourselves. Our proud hearts rebel, and sooner than take a lower place we are found among the despisers and hinderers of the work of God. But notice Gideon's grace with these men. He does not meet them in the same spirit. He is willing to share his glory and honour with them, and by his soft answer he turns away their wrath. May we too be learners and imitators of him. Further on in Ephraim's history they act in the same manner towards Jephthah; but on this occasion a terrible retribution falls upon them for their sin, and forty and two thousand Ephraimites perish.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued, if the Lord permit.)

IN THE VALLEY.

STILL my feet are in the valley,
 Still the shades of death surround ;
 Yet it is the place of sowing,
 Work for Jesus may be found.

But I'm weary in my service,
 And I long to see His face,
 He, who through the lonely pathway,
 Has upheld me by His grace.

Not that I would doubt the wisdom
 Of the One who leadeth me,
 For He guideth all my goings,
 Thorny though the path may be.

But my service seems so feeble,
 And the best that I can do
 Is not worthy of the Master
 Who in grace has brought me through.

Now the lonesome night is waning
 And the star-lights fading fast,
 Soon the weary pilgrim journey
 Will be something of the past.

Soon my feet shall stand in glory,
 Soon my hands the harp shall sound ;
 I, the lost one, loved and sought for ;
 I, the loved one, sought and found.

Oh, the joyfulness of seeing
 Him, who loves me, face to face,
 Just to hear His voice and listen
 To His words of love and grace.

All the things that now perplex me,
 All the shadows here below,—
 He will tell me why He sent them ;
 This is what I want to know.

UNTO US IN A SON.

NOTES ON THE LETTER TO HEBREWS.

(Continued from page 155.)

He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying,—
“I will declare Thy name unto my brethren,
“In the midst of *the* church will I sing Thy praise.”

IN quoting this passage we have adopted the marginal reading of the revised version, so as to use the word church uniformly for the Greek word *ἐκκλησία*, *ekklēsia*. At the same time we are not sorry that the word congregation has been given by the revisers here and also in Matthew 18. 17, margin, 1 Corinthians 11. 18, 22, margin, as a rendering of the Greek word *ἐκκλησία*, *ekklēsia*; as it shows that in the opinion of these competent Greek scholars the scriptures quoted clearly imply that they who form the church are actually congregated together. By many, alas! the word church is used in the loosest possible manner to designate scattered individuals, whereas in Scripture the word never has such a meaning.

In the passage before us the Lord's condescension is the subject—He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Therefore the emphasis is in the second line of the couplet on the place in which He is found praising God. Namely, in the midst of church or assembly. In the beginning He was with God, and rejoicing always before Him. But as author of our salvation, raised from among the dead, He delights to sing God's praise in midst of assembly. Linking Himself the sanctifier with the sanctified ones. This scripture appears to me to have at the very least a twofold fulfilment, namely, a present conditional fulfilment in connection with assemblies of saints, and a future fulfilment, absolutely unconditional, in connection with our gathering together unto

Him. As to the latter, when the long-looked-for glad morning shall come, He shall arise from His Father's throne, He shall descend from heaven with a shout. He shall speak with archangel voice, that is, with the voice of one accustomed to be obeyed by the angelic hosts,

“Swiftly they fly at His command.”

And none of those in Christ shall fail to hear that shout. As the last note¹ of that great trumpet-sound shall reach our ears, we shall all be changed, and not as slothful laggards shall we go, but promptly, caught up to meet Him in the air; then He shall declare to us God's name, and shall sing God's praise in the midst of that assembly whereof He said to Peter,—

“I WILL BUILD MY ASSEMBLY.”

Then all who have been baptized in one Spirit into the One Body shall be together, called out indeed to meet Him in the air. Together in His presence, His Church—His Church, which to His eternal foreknowledge is now known, but which to us is still in large part a mystery, for whether this or that one is of it we know not. Not only so, they who shall yet form it are sundered far; some are with the Lord, others at home in mortal body; the former, in many cases, never saw one another with bodily eyes; the latter, alas! are divided by a thousand devices of the Evil One. But then all together with Him we shall in deed and in truth be

HIS ASSEMBLY.

Meantime, while He is absent God gathers into His name those whose spirits He has raised. Where there are two or three gathered into His name He is in the midst. Now we submit that the Lord Jesus is not in the midst of the

¹ This is probably the significance of the last trump in 1 Corinthians 15. 52.

gathered ones to teach them, for He has sent the other Advocate on purpose to do that in His absence. Nor is He in the midst to be the object of our adoration, for it is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the special object of our worship when thus together.

The Lord Jesus Christ's presence in the midst of His gathered saints is to Godward—He identifies Himself with whatsoever of our praise and worship is according to His mind, and presents to the Father as His own—so that in midst of assembly God sees one Person, and hears one voice, "I will sing Thy praise."

"I will declare Thy name unto my brethren."

"In the midst of *the* church will I sing Thy praise."
and again,—

"I will put my trust in Him."

and again,—

"Behold I and the children whom God hath given me."

Of the three Old Testament Scriptures quoted in verses 12, 13, it seems plain that the first and third have a very special reference to the time of His presence, when not by means of a mirror nor yet in a riddle shall we see, when not in part shall we know, the mystery of the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. Face to face shall we see Him in the midst of that Assembly. Then we shall know even as we are known.

There may seem at first a difficulty in applying the middle quotation—

"I will put my trust in Him,"

to the same future time. Doubtless His trust in Jehovah was one of the most beautiful graces that adorned His life from the manger to the cross; but we need not suppose that His faith in God ceased when He had been raised from the dead. The lines sometimes sung—

"When faith and hope shall cease,
And love abide alone,"

are without scriptural warrant. Faith and hope will never cease ("Now abideth faith, hope, love"). Moreover, we find that it was in the day that Jehovah delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul, that David, Jehovah's servant, spake unto Jehovah the words of this song, and he said—

"I love Thee, O Jehovah, my strength ;
 "Jehovah is my rock,
 "My fortress, and my deliverer ;
 "My God, my strong rock,
 "In Him will I trust."

So that in the grand and glorious day of His presence He will fully teach us what it means to say—

"In Him will I trust."

And thus He will be able to say—

"I will put My trust in Him,
 I and the children whom Thou hast given Me."

Happy for us if we knew something more now of this perfect trust in God; and His Spirit abideth with us to teach us now the priceless blessing of confidence in Him.

“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD.”

(Continued from page 167.)

“**BELOVED**, think it not strange concerning the fiery (burning) trial **among you**, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but insomuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of His glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy” (1 Peter 4. 12, 13, R.V.). The condition and position with the times, the cause and behaviour of the remnant of God’s beloved people of former days, as set forth in the third chapter of the book of Daniel the prophet, afford much real help unto comprehending the will of God as expressed in the above words.

This proving must not be confused with that of chapter 1. of our epistle. It is thus that the great virtue of patience is wrought in us as the beloved of God. But, because we are so apt to stay short thereof, we need ever to remember and heed the word through James—“Let patience have her perfect work.” Then indeed shall we be perfect and entire (whole), in nothing deficient. The sufferings of Christ as here presented we understand to be quite different from those of chapter 3., which are for righteousness’ sake, while those of Philippians 3. were for sin and the sinner.

Different, too, from the afflictions of Christ which Colossians 1. 24 records, which were troubles resulting from His person being loved and proclaimed. These again should be carefully distinguished from the marks of Jesus which the Apostle bore in his body (Gal. 6. 17).

The sufferings of Christ which those having fellowship with are here called to rejoice in are sufferings entailed on account of subjection in active obedience to Him in His

PERSON AND PLACE,¹

¹ Compare for thought Acts 2. 36.

with which may be compared *Philippians 1.*, and very specially verses 28, 29. "To you (*CHURCH of Philippians*) it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer in His behalf." Hence the words, "If ye be reproached in the name of Christ, happy are ye." Let every reader pause to consider "reproached in" (not for) "the name," and that "OF CHRIST"! Here is illustrated what *Isaiah 66.* describes. Please compare and note well verses 1 to 9 of that chapter.

Nevertheless, where such fellowship with Christ's sufferings really is as entails that manner of reproach, the reproached ones (mark the plurality) may well be happy and rejoice, having "the Spirit of glory and of God up-resting upon them." "For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters." The glaring wickedness of the three first warned against are commonly well avoided by those who name the name of the Lord, but the last of the list, "busybody" or "meddler," is by far too common. That unique word (it only occurs here) means "oversight contrary to God," or a taking to do with what belongs to another's place, person, and work. Since all the four are terribly possible, let all take due heed unto themselves.

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God

IN THIS NAME.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the House of God, and if it first begin **at us**, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God? And if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear? "Wherefore let them also that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls (themselves)

IN WELL-DOING

unto a faithful Creator."

It has been said by some that the name Christian was given as a nickname by the world in early days of the present dispensation. That, however, is a serious misstatement. Besides which the Scriptures themselves make plain and incontrovertible that none other than God Himself gave this name to early disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The writer a few years ago had occasion to be staying at the Seamill Sanatorium, Ayrshire, Scotland, where he made the acquaintance of Dr. James Morrison, the founder of the sect known as "The Evangelical Union" (vulgarly styled Morrisonians). The Doctor and myself were very feeble in health, consequently we often found ourselves alone resting, while the others were having an outing. One day I ventured to ask Dr. M. whether in all his reading and research he had found any historian who said that "Believers" of early days were nicknamed "Christians." The old man's enthusiasm was roused at once, and with such vigour as he could express himself he replied, "Oh! dear, no; my good friend Robert Young, of Edinburgh, has given the true version of that name in his translation of the Bible." Mr. Young in Acts 11. 26 translates "and the disciples were

DIVINELY CALLED CHRISTIANS

first in Antioch." Those witnesses are true.

The fact is that Christian is the only name to man- or world- ward whereby God would have His children as individuals be known.¹

The word "judgment" (verse 17) does not convey the thought of the process of judging, but rather the execution of judgment completed—that is, "of sentence pronounced." By that is manifested "what Heaven has bound, and what Heaven has loosed," which also saves from "judging anything before the time."

¹ For more hereon see also "Something or Nothing! Which?" Published by *Needed Truth* Publishing Office, London.

But this proceeds from the House of God, even from us who compose the House of God. In regard to the word "House" it cannot be too clearly understood that however valuable stones (living stones) may be, until collected and builded together they do not form a house, much less "House of God."¹

"The Gospel of God" contains far more in it than the mere saving of a sinner in the forgiving of his sins and making him a new creation in Christ, a child of God. As see Romans 1. 1-6, and 1 Thessalonians 2. 1-12.

The words "scarcely saved" involve no doubt or question as to the issue—saved. They only intimate the difficulties that the righteous one knows and passes, or is brought, through; which enhances the pitilessness of the difficulties which shall overwhelm the ungodly one and the sinner in the time when a "where to appear" shall be sought but not found. The individuality of these words is startlingly searching, while the "wherefore" of verse 19 with the "therefore" of verse 1 of chapter 5. is as searchingly comforting.

There is suffering according to the will of God, as there *is* suffering that is far otherwise. The former is the fruit of "well-doing," as God accounts such, and of which again and again He speaks in this very epistle, so that none need err. The latter is illustrated by 2 Peter 2. 7-9.

The committing of one's self IN WELL-DOING, amid and despite such suffering, is made very touching by the call to know Him in this commitment under the unique title of "Faithful Creator." Is it not as such He doeth what Matthew 6. 26, 28, and 30 tell?

JOHN BROWN.

¹ The reader will do well in comparing Ezekiel chapter 8. to 9. 6 with these verses.

THE PATH OF LIFE.

“THOU wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”¹

The path of life is that in which God would have His saints walk to-day, but many are the devices of Satan to ensnare the feet of the people, and hinder them from pursuing that path which brings glory to God and present and eternal blessing to all who in fellowship with Him walk therein.

In keeping with the words of the Lord Jesus, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me,”² we note that God can reveal the path of life to those only who by living faith are united to Christ, and in Him have everlasting life. The path of life is hidden from the worldling, dead in trespasses and sins, since through his rejection of Christ God has denied him even the possibility of knowing or treading it. The believer in the Lord Jesus Christ in the thoughts and purposes of God died with Christ, and in Him was raised from among the dead, and is in possession of eternal life—a life which can never be lost, a life which is hid with Christ in God.³

We deplore the increasing tendency amongst God’s people to-day to rest satisfied with the knowledge that their sins are forgiven, and that in Christ they have eternal life. Such seem to forget that this is only the beginning of God’s work in and through them, and that only now are they in a position in which they can be shown the path of life. This deadly evil of resting satisfied with salvation in its first aspect—viz., deliverance from hell—is, we doubt not, the direct work of Satan, for it has ever been his aim to hinder

¹ Ps. 16. 11.² Jno. 14. 6.³ Col. 3. 3.

God's saints from apprehending that for which they have been apprehended of Christ Jesus, and through the slothfulness of the human mind this is often very easily accomplished. "Thou *wilt show* me the path of life" speaks of diligent and prayerful study of God's precious Word, so that His Spirit may reveal to us the path in which He would have us walk. To such as are thus found subject to, as well as studying, the Scriptures of truth, and desirous of learning God's purposes in their having been apprehended of Christ Jesus, He can and will show the path of life.

In order that the characteristics and conduct of the strange woman may be readily detected, Solomon says, "Lest thou shouldst ponder the path of life, her ways are movable, that thou canst not know them."¹ Under the title of the strange woman we believe may be found depicted religious communities which are not of God's ordering, but in which many of the saints seduced and led astray from the path of truth are found. "Her ways," God declares, "are movable"; and as we gaze upon Christendom to-day, how the echo comes rolling back—"her ways are movable"! Some of her ways are openly ungodly, and far removed from the Word of God; others are more polished and respectable, yet none the less opposed to God; others yet are so close an imitation of God's way that the spirit-enlightened eye alone can detect the counterfeit. Oh, how movable are her ways, and all for one deadly purpose—"Lest one should ponder the path of life." None are outside her bewitching influence, none have stepped from off her territory, save those to whom God has shown "the path of life," and who are walking therein.

"Narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it,"² was doubtless spoken to Israel, and had reference to the kingdom as presented by God to that nation; nevertheless, *we* do well to

¹ Prov. 5. 6.

² Matt. 7. 14, R.V.

hear God's voice speaking to us in these words. For if it can be said of us that we are treading the path of life, we must needs experience the truth of the words, that the gate is narrow and the way is straitened. In order to tread it all must be prepared to suffer for the Master's sake, and to receive from the world the portion which was His while walking here below. We must be prepared to sacrifice the approval of man for His smile; and although misunderstood well-nigh by all, yet dare to do what His own heart will prize. We must be prepared to sacrifice ease, self-interests, and worldly glory for the things which are eternal, and by taking up our cross daily and following Him become conformable unto His death, if by any means we may attain unto the extra-resurrection from among the dead. The path in which is known the fellowship of His sufferings is indeed the only one of real blessing and prosperity. The path in which we are dead to self and a present ungodly world is "the path of life," and the path in which we can enter into and daily enjoy that "life" more abundantly which the Lord has promised.¹ Oh, the blessed possibilities which lie within the reach of God's saints to-day! Oh, the glorious vista which unfolds itself before the wondering gaze of those who in fellowship with God scan that path which the vulture's eye hath not seen.²

Shall we then rest satisfied with our attainments? Shall we settle down into the Laodicean spirit of the age in which we live? With such glorious prospects within our reach, shall we allow the moments of golden opportunity to slip past, and hurry us on in a state of indifference and spiritual death to meet and account for a wasted life at the judgment-seat of Christ? Nay, rather let us gird up the loins of our mind, and with quickened pace and renewed energy press on, if that we may apprehend that for which all have been apprehended of Christ Jesus. And walking in

¹ Jno. 10. 10.

² Job 28. 7.

the power of faith and resurrection life, may we experience increasingly, as the darkness around us thickens, that the path of faith "is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."¹ For yet a very little while and He that cometh shall come,² and mortality shall be swallowed up of life, but the path of life shall still be known in all its abiding, unchanging, and eternal fulness.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

MIRIAM.

III.

ONCE more Miriam comes before us in the Scripture, but not, alas! to her credit. We have seen her serving and praising; but self came in, and the time came when instead of a happy, praising spirit, she manifested a discontented and murmuring one: "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us?" (Num. 12. 1, 2). Only a year since they had acted so blessedly together, each in their place, in praising the Lord, Moses fully recognised then by all as the leader. But let self come in and all is forgotten. It seeks its own, not the things of others. It compares, and such comparisons only manifest the lack of wisdom. "They understand not their true place" is the meaning (2 Cor. 10. 12). Self mars everything, destroys harmony between brethren, produces discord, frets the spirit of the one who indulges it, and turns aside from the path that becomes one who professedly serves the Lord Christ. That which made it worse in the case of Miriam was that her brother Aaron joined her in it. By her being

¹ Prov. 4. 18.

² Heb. 10. 37.

named first it is evident that she was the principal offender. Satan always has occasions ready for murmuring and strife. He can suggest in the heart reasons why one should. Ever watching to cause the halting of one of the Lord's own, he raises self up, and with it pride and envy, for these ever go together. "Because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married" (R.V. and margin of A.V. both give "Cushite.") Thus, though we have no particulars given, it was a woman's quarrel. Remember that for long years Moses and Miriam were separated, entirely so during the forty years spent by him in the desert, and therefore when he returned after that lapse of time it would be almost as a stranger. And while this was the case, Miriam and Aaron would be the more thrown together; and Miriam, with her resolute character and ready action, as witnessed when a child, would easily obtain a very strong influence over Aaron, who was younger. Besides which, we have to note that it was not the first time that Aaron had been led, and that wrongly, by others. In the matter of the golden calf he had sadly fallen and erred. The multitude came clamouring around him, and he yielded, to his own dishonour. Now Miriam has accomplished it. The pretext was there: Moses' wife, and their feeling toward her; but when it came to a point it was not to find fault with her, nor was it to help her, but, leaving her out of it, they showed what was really at the bottom of it. That which made them sore and caused the murmuring was the position Moses occupied. Yet he was no self-seeker. Only by the direct call and power of Jehovah did he occupy it. At one time they would have owned and rejoiced in this fact; but when Jehovah was lost sight of, then the question became one between Moses and themselves, Who was he? Why was he in any way above them? Had not the Lord spoken by them as well as by him? How when self gets uppermost of necessity the Lord is lost sight of! And the self-

seeker then thinks the one he opposes and speaks against is actuated by the same spirit as himself. When the old prophet in haste rode after the Man of God from Judah and came up to him as he sat under the oak, it was just the same. "Come home with me, and eat bread." And he said, "I may not return with thee nor go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place," etc. (1 Kings 13. 15, 16). At once it brought out self as the uppermost thing and guiding principle with the old prophet. "I am a prophet, also as thou art" (verse 18). God was left out, and then it became a personal question. The self-seeker can only see self-exaltation in one who only seeks to closely follow the Lord. The Lord had set him aside. He could not use him, for he *dwelt* in the defiled place. Stirred by this, instead of getting before the Lord as to it, he rushes into the presence of man. The inevitable result—he measures himself as the elder with the sent and used one of God. "I—thou"—so will it ever be save as the flesh, self, is kept in the place of death. Miriam became impatient at the place God had given Moses. She was the elder, she had nursed him, watched over him when in utter helplessness he lay in the river. Why should he now occupy a superior place to her and to Aaron? Did all this occur to Moses as to her loving care of him in the past and strengthen him in his resolve to maintain silence? He had sought no place. God had given it to him. The burden of it he felt more fully every day. Those who regarded him outwardly as in the foremost place might envy him as to the place, but he occupied it with the work it involved; instead of being lifted up by it, he sought help from God to occupy it for Him. Thus will it be with every God-given Ruler and Guide. "Now the man Moses was very meek" (ver. 3) shows how willing he was to pass over their murmuring and gainsaying. Coveting no place for the mere sake of occupying it, he had no heart for strife. And

this was the one who, looking "this way and that way," some forty years before, had slain the Egyptian, acting on the impulse of a quickly roused temper. Now the meek one, pre-eminently, he was fitted for the work. But "the Lord heard" (ver. 2) how entirely Miriam and Aaron had forgotten Him. "And the Lord spake suddenly unto Moses and unto Aaron and unto Miriam, Come out, ye three, into the tabernacle of the congregation" (ver. 4). Now the Lord speaks; as He does it, Miriam and Aaron are left without a word. They had been in Moses' presence before, and could speak against him. They had shut the Lord out of the matter. How different now—Moses "meek," as it was his to be. But what a contrast now Miriam felt it: "And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and He departed" (ver. 9). "And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and behold Miriam leprous as snow" (ver. 10).

The whole congregation shall know the sin of Miriam and her punishment, as they know that the Lord stands by His leader to whom He has entrusted Israel as a flock.

"And Aaron looked upon Miriam, and behold she was leprous" (ver. 10). What an awakening! What a laying bare of self and wrong thoughts and hard speeches! As he looked upon Miriam, leprous, what thoughts would arise in his heart! He, the High Priest, who should have guided and helped Miriam to curb self and restrain her tongue, had, on the other hand, helped in her sin: his influence, instead of being for God, thrown into the wrong scale. Yet, further, as he looked, how bitter the thought that he, as High Priest, would have to see that the law concerning the leper was sternly carried out. And he would have to order that beloved sister to the lepers' place outside the camp. Surely this and more lies under the piteous exclamation, "Alas, my lord, I beseech thee lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly and wherein we have sinned" (ver. 11). The

very first sign of recovery manifested itself in the way he addressed Moses—"My lord." Respect had been forced back into his soul. The quick action of Jehovah had revealed to him in its real light all the murmuring and evil-speaking that he had fostered and abetted. We have done foolishly and sinned. How beautiful the readiness of Moses to take the part of the mediator. The sin owned, at once he cried to the Lord, "Heal her now." "Now"! What force in that word. He had been spoken against by his own sister and brother. They who should have helped to make his work lighter had done their best to make it far more difficult, if not impossible, as far as man could do so. Yet he waited on the Lord.

No lording it in his disposition; therefore God appeared for him. Miriam had given up the place of subjection to Moses as the leader, and so far as in her lay had overthrown his rule and influenced Aaron to act with her. But Moses was ready in a moment to take the place of intercessor. He did so, and the Lord heard and answered; yet, in His government, Miriam must suffer, and all the congregation must know that He would not overlook such murmurings against His chosen leader. And therefore Miriam had to go outside the camp for seven days. What shame is expressed in the words applied to it! If her father had but spit in her face, how ashamed she would have been! What rebellion it would have told of! Her rebellion must needs put her without. And Aaron has to put her out. Bitter the lesson, burning its way down into the heart surely. And all Israel had to wait in that place during the time Miriam was without. The allotted time for cleansing (see chap. 6, 9, 31, 19) had to be spent without. Then Miriam could be restored, and was. Truly Numbers is the book of experience in the wilderness. How prolonged life brought Miriam into positions she never thought of in early days of life. As the girl of twelve, though in measure sharing her mother's

care and rendered older by the trials pressing upon them, yet how happy in her cheerful obedience to her mother! The rejoicing over the deliverance of her brother, then but a foreshadowing of the greater joy when at ninety-two she stood among her women and led the song to the Lord. But ere life closes what changes, alas! alas! in the experience of many! Self never quits us, but is ever ready to rise up. And thus it is that the life's history of Miriam closes with the manifestation of it. How all-important as we read that we cry to the Lord that we may learn these lessons recorded for that very purpose. Let us praise Him for all whom He raises up in love to rule and guide, and as we find them carrying out the work for Him in His ways, instead of murmuring and speaking against, may we be found strengthening their hands and praying for them in His work. The evil example set by Miriam and Aaron (chap. 12.) was quickly copied by the whole congregation (chap. 14.), yet one bright spot among others appeared. Aaron was then firmly linked with Moses, and, standing with him for the right, had with Moses to bear the reproaches and murmurings of Israel. As he felt them then, how he would have been reminded of his own failure in the past, and have realized then what it was Miriam and he had made Moses feel so keenly in the day when, stirred up by the flesh, they had spoken against him. At that time failure abounded. The two leaders of Israel, the spies, how doubtless one failure helped to produce the other. Sin goes not alone; it is easily learned and copied. Our safety alone lies in keeping in the presence of the Lord, watching against the first uprisings of the flesh and inroads of Satan. Then shall we walk in subjection to Him, praising as we go along our way.

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be concluded.)

JONATHAN AND HIS ARMOUR-BEARER.

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOUNG BELIEVERS.

1 SAMUEL 14.

AGAIN Israel is in distress and bitter need, for again the Philistines have invaded the land, this time with a mighty army, numerous as the sand of the sea-shore. The people hide in caves and thickets, in rocks, holes and pits, with the result that with Saul and Jonathan there are only six hundred men, without swords or spears. At this point Jonathan is stirred by God to go forth towards the Philistines' garrison. Before the war he had a thousand men at his back, but now he has only his armour-bearer. However, this troubles him little, for moved by God to go forth, go forth he must. Nor is he sure as yet that it was God's purpose to give deliverance through him; but with a heart filled with a mighty desire to do and dare for Jehovah he goes down the pass.

As he gets nearer to the Philistines his courage seems to rise, his purpose grows. He turns to his armour-bearer: "Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that Jehovah will work for us: for there is no restraint to Jehovah to save by many or by few." How stoutly that armour-bearer backs him up! how ready he is to follow! He says, "Do all that is in thine heart: *turn thee*, behold I am with thee according to thy heart"—words of cheer and encouragement that warm Jonathan's heart. And soon brave words are followed by braver deeds. Step by step they advance, and as they go on God gives them the sign they look for, for out of the mouth of the Philistines comes the challenge, "Come up," and Jonathan knows that "Jehovah hath delivered them into the hand of Israel."

Now for climbing up the rocks, and then the encounter.

Only two of them, but who can stand the onset of God's men? Only two of them, but soon Philistia's myriads melt away; soon God's people are delivered; soon Israel's trembling ones are in hot pursuit; only Jonathan and his armour-bearer at the beginning, but soon hundreds are following hard after the enemy. Let us not despise the day of small things. May we learn that it is "not by an army (R.V., margin), nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Zech. 4. 6). May God enable us who are young in the faith to grow into sturdy men-at-arms for Him, and "through faith" emulate those who "from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens." We know not how greatly God may use earnest, willing ones, if in fellowship with Him we will but make a beginning. Those small beginnings may result in mighty, far-reaching blessing.

E. MATTHEW.

THE SCHOOL OF GOD.

(Continued from page 175.)

WE have noticed Gideon's humility and grace. When it is ourselves and our own glory at stake, we may well afford to be anything or nothing; but, alas! alas! how little we can bear to be set aside—it may be to see others getting the credit that we know is really due to ourselves. When it is the Lord's honour at stake, then it becomes us to take a gracious but a firm stand. But this too often is reversed; so long as it is our good name that is discredited we can fight with all boldness; but when it is His Name, who has loved us unto death, we too often lose heart and courage in the conflict.

Gideon flushed with victory might easily have been betrayed into hastiness; but no, we find him dealing in wisdom with his brethren. Yet, as we have already pointed

out, there comes the failure—the breakdown, the blot in the life history of the man who was in so many ways much to be admired; and in his sin he involved others. Whilst keeping back the people from grosser idolatry, he yet involved them in his own failure. Was it covetousness that made him ask the earrings of the Ishmaelites? or had he from the first the thought in his mind of making the ephod? We cannot say. Whichever way, it is a sad and solemn warning for us. How it shows us the men we have highly esteemed for their works' sake, and rightly esteemed and followed too, may go astray! and if we continue to follow them, we shall go astray also. Gideon did not wish to be a king; he had no great ambition for rule and power—that which is often so fatal to the leaders of the flock to-day—but there was a going back, instead of a going forward. There may be a little giving up of the truth, a little leading of the Lord's people aside from the right way, and thus will saints be ensnared in the same snare as their leaders. It was Satan's plan this; he is ever scheming; and Gideon falls into a snare of the Devil from which he and his people would have to be delivered. Philetus may never have gone as far as Hymenæus (2 Tim. 2.), and others again may not have gone as far as these two men. They may have even protested that they had no fellowship with their doctrines. These men may have been Gideon-like in their character, but still they remained in the evil association, as did Gideon, and deliverance from the snare of the Devil and that with which they were associated, is what we find the end of this chapter occupied with. How all this throws us on God continually! We can neither reject teachers because they fail nor yet implicitly follow such; nor are we to set up some new order of things on the plea that the old has failed, an order in which all are to be equal, either by all being leaders, with none to be led, or the flock to lead themselves.

JEHU.

If there is much to be admired in the character of Gideon, we find little in that of Jehu: self-confidence seems to stamp the man all through. He drove furiously, carried out the judgment of God on the house of Ahab, and had his reward—"Come, see my zeal for the Lord." Yes, Jehu, but what of your heart's condition? It is not hard to be more taken up with what we are doing for God than with what God has done for us. Martha was cumbered with her much service, and ready to sit in judgment on her sister because she did not come up to her standard of activity. Yet Mary had chosen that good part. It is not that Martha was not needed. And so it was with Jehu. They each did their work, but in the case of Jehu we have a lamentable breakdown, and one that seems to indicate that in the midst of his activity he had not known his own heart, or he would have found that it was not right with God (2 Kings 10. 29, 31). This impetuous man, who seemed to delight in the work of destruction, and who mercilessly slew all the worshippers of Baal, appears never to have turned the sword of judgment upon the idols of his own heart. And thus we find these solemn words written for our learning, "He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin; he took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart" (2 Kings 10. 29). It was in his days that God "began to cut Israel short" (ver. 32), for both leader and people were far from God. Solemn lessons these, such as may well make us go softly, judging ourselves so that we need not be judged of the Lord.

Men have not been lacking who could with unsparing zeal pull down and destroy. They could point out what was wrong in assemblies and in others, and we can neither doubt their zeal for God nor question that they have done a work for Him that met with His approbation. The Lord

commended Jehu for having carried out His judgment upon Ahab (ver. 30).

We question this no more than we question it in Gideon's case, but what we see is, alas! only too manifest: the man who can deal with evil may not be the man who can patiently and quietly lead in what is right—an example to the flock. We may be able to point out error, the evils of one-man ministry, and of one-man rule, we may be protesters against what is wrong, and yet, when we are in a position to carry out what is right there may be little heart and little power to patiently continue in well-doing; in fact, the habit may have become so strong in us of judging what is evil around, with little judgment of ourselves, that no sooner is a position arrived at where unity of action is called for than we are found at variance with our brethren, seeking to set up some unjudged idol of our own hearts amidst the saints. These things are humbling, beloved brethren, but they are not new; they should not so much cast us down as cast us on the Lord. They have been in the past, they will be till the end. And we must not, as we have already said, on this account reject the imperfect tools with which God is accomplishing His perfect work; or try to bring in some new order of things by which we hope to escape our difficulties. The walk with God is a difficult one, the pathway is narrow, so that we are ever being tempted to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

Jehu did his work—he did it in much the same furious way that he drove—then came a time when this work was done, and it would have been well had Jehu passed from the scene, but alas! no, he goes on. He destroys Baal out of Israel, but he takes no heed to *walk* with God with all his heart. He could drive furiously, but he cannot walk with God quietly. We need men who can walk with God to-day, for men who can walk with God can walk with one another.

The Apostle Paul followed his Master's steps, he is found patiently leading others in the way they should go: helping on the younger ones, training them in the things of God; patient, forbearing and loving. And all this is quite compatible with a stern rebuke when needed, as in Peter's case, and a separation from a fellow-worker, as in the case of Mark. With Jehu no sooner is the heat of excitement of the conflict passed than he settles down to practise the unjudged idolatry of his own heart. He had not begun with judging himself; he had no schooling in the things of God; he appears suddenly upon the scene of conflict. Gideon in fear and trembling began to act for God at home, but there is no fear or trembling about Jehu: he was brought up in a bad school, probably amidst subtle imitations of God's truth, and whilst he could attack one form of evil, the other still held him in its power. These were degenerate days in Israel's history; they had sunk to well-nigh their lowest, calling down upon them the wrath of an angry God.

We have said Jehu's early training was a bad one. The importance of a right training in the things of God cannot be over-estimated. If we have been under bad influences in our early Christian life, we may easily practise these things later on, even without being aware of it. To be plain, if we have been in a meeting where the brethren or, still more likely, the brother who has ruled was hasty of temper, seeking to carry things by the power of his own will, with little ability to help on the younger ones in the things of God, all this may have been seen to be wrong, yet one brought up in such a school is in more danger than he is aware of—in danger of reproducing in his own life the very failures he has judged in others, but now fails to judge in himself. Beloved, let us be patient learners in the school of God; let us not seek to cut our schooldays short by an impatient desire to be something or do something before the

time that God would have us; and, when we see the work that God has given us to do, let us do it heartily, as unto Him, not easily cast down because of difficulties nor exalted because of success. The battle is the Lord's, and if we are striving lawfully the victory is ours.

J. A. BOSWELL.

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 66.—*Where are the infant dead? Is their present state one of joy?*

Rom. 15. 4, with 2 Sam. 12. 23, as also Gen. 37. 35 (R.V. margin), warrant us in saying that all the infant dead are with Christ the Lord (compare Phil. 1. 23 and 2 Cor. 5. 8), and therefore in a state of joy.

J. B.

QUESTION 67.—*If a brother or sister makes a common practice of stopping away from the Assembly without any real cause, are they to be recognised as in fellowship? What is the Scriptural way to deal with such?*

Until putting away or going away (1 Cor. 5. 13; Gal. 5. 12, R.V.) has taken place, one having been received into an Assembly of God is within. Behaviour as above calls for discipline in the order of 1 Thess. 5. 14, 2 Thess. 3. 6-15, and Titus 3. 10, 11.

J. B.

QUESTION 68.—*John Brown, of Haddington, in his Bible Dictionary, explains Neh. 8. 8 thus:—*

"When the Jews, in their captivity, learned the language of Chaldea, and had forgotten part of their own, the reader of the law behoved to stop at the end of a sentence and give the sense. This is the meaning of the words, 'gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.'"

1. *Is this explanation of the language of Neh. 8. 8 correct?*
2. *If the explanation is correct, is Neh. 8. 8 a fitting text to have each month on the title-page of NEEDED TRUTH?*

The answer to both questions is simply Yes.

J. B.

MIRIAM.

IV.

NEARLY forty years elapse after this dark scene of rebellion, which, however, only manifested the grace of God, ere Miriam is mentioned again, and then only a verse recording her death. In those years there was evidently the full resumption of her proper place. Never again did she seek a place or oppose Moses. Quietly the years passed finding her in subjection to the Lord. "Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there" (Num. 20. 1).

Thus a long and eventful life quietly came to its close when as yet, through Israel's sin, the Promised Land had not been entered upon. In their journeyings they were at Kadesh, close to it, but still were without. And the lengthening out of their wanderings brought out the murmuring that was within, whenever trial befell them. Miriam, however, was spared the bitterest scene in her brothers' lives. Deeply tried as Moses had often been by the murmurings of Israel, intensely so by her own rebellion, he had never suffered as he was about to do at Kadesh. Though the men of Israel over twenty years were not to enter the land, Moses was not included in the number. He still looked forward to it with eye undimmed and strength unabated, for it was that when he died. But in the very place where Miriam died he failed. The people murmured for want of water. Moses and Aaron took the right course, their only safe one. "And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the Assembly unto the door of the Tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces: and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them" (ver. 6).

Thus in humility and worship they sought the Lord,

they left it with Him, and waited His command. Who could imagine that even then Moses was about to fail as he had never done before? One moment prostrate before the Lord, seeking Him; yet the next moment before the Assembly, in anger addressing them as "Rebels," losing sight of the Lord as he said, "Must we?" (ver. 10), and then smiting the rock twice (ver. 11), instead of speaking to it (ver. 8).

Moses and Aaron were both shut out of the land because of their sin. How deeply felt it was by Moses we read in his own words in Deuteronomy: "Earnestly he besought the Lord" (Deut. 3. 26), but He would not hearken. Moses had trespassed against Him and not sanctified Him, and also Aaron, and Mount Nebo as Mount Hor witness to us of the Lord's judgment against their trespass (Deut. 32. 50, 51). Ideal men and women may be found in the books of men, heroes without a blemish, whose doings are always marvellous; not so in the Word of God. There we read of men and women in their real actings before God in the world, and how He judged as to their actions. No lives recorded there are written with indiscriminate praise, nor for the purpose of magnifying them. No; in the stern battle of life, where sin is ever present and Satan active in stirring it up, God's saints are seen battling, seeking for victories, yet often overcome, and no one able to look upon another and say, "I have not failed." If Moses had to witness Miriam's failing, the day came when he yielded to impatience and anger in the presence of Israel.

Yet once more after her death is Miriam named by Moses. When in connection with a solemn exhortation to Israel to observe the Law of Leprosy, he added: "Remember . . . Miriam." "Take heed in the plague of leprosy, that thou observe diligently, and do according to all that the priests the Levites shall teach you: as I commanded them, so ye shall observe to do. Remember what the Lord

thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt" (Deut. 24. 8, 9.). "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17. 32), said the Lord to His disciples, enforcing home the exhortation not to "return back." So Moses, in referring to the Law of Leprosy and the absolute need to observe it, brings Miriam in as pointing the solemn lesson.

The two verses given above are distinct to themselves, given in a chapter replete with instruction on various subjects. Careful reading of them brings out the reason why Miriam is referred to. It is evident that the purpose was not to point out simply the fact that the Lord judged her and caused the leprosy to rise up; but that it is to show how responsible they were without partiality to carry the law out in its strict letter. "Take heed." Let nothing prevent your doing it. Let no relationship, however close, prevent. Moses did not dare to do so. His one beloved sister, the one to whom he owed so much in his infant days, must be put outside the camp. Leprosy is there, result of the direct interference and action of the Lord, and Moses has no alternative. He must act, and Aaron, though involved in her sin, must also act. Moses might have pleaded his close relationship, Aaron also, and as well his own failure in the matter, yet it could not be. As leaders of Israel they must lead in putting away their own sister, thus practically showing that they were prepared to act on God's command towards her as much as in the case of any leper in Israel.

We only read of another instance of the Lord dealing directly in smiting with leprosy. Gehazi was smitten, at the word of Elisha, because of the covetousness displayed, and sin in acting the lie and misrepresenting to Naaman the true grace of God. But the only one dealt with like Miriam was Uzziah, King of Judah (2 Chron. 26. 19), and for the same sin as Miriam's—seeking a place God had not given

him, and by so doing attempting to displace another; the root of the sin with both being pride and self-exaltation. Want of subjection to God and His Word leads to this. "Marvellously helped till he was strong" (2 Chron. 26. 15), for he had done that which was right before the Lord, "and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper" (ver. 5). But then "his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense" (ver. 16). The anointed king was blessed exceedingly when he kept his kingly place. But Uzziah was not satisfied. He would act as if an anointed priest. Why should he require one to act for him in anything? He will act. He takes the incense censer and rushes in before the altar. But there are men of God there, those who, as Levites, know the injunction of the Lord, and who will not allow such action to go unchecked. "And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, *that were* valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king" (vers. 17, 18). Bold, resolute men, not prepared to mince matters or, courtier-like, to fawn upon the king. Straight to the point: "Not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron." "Go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed" (ver. 18). Once when the right men had stood with false fire before the Lord at the altar instant death was the result, separating from the true incense that which alone could give it acceptance, judgment fell (Lev. 10.). Now it is in the wrong hands, and true men for God urge the king to go out. But he can brook no interference. "Then Uzziah was wroth" (ver. 19). Opportunity to repent and to retrace his steps was given, but he availed not himself of it. In a moment, as with Miriam, God took the matter into His own hands: "While he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead" (ver. 19).

“ And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him ” (ver. 20). With quick resolution diligently observing the law of leprosy, remembering Miriam, one of Israel’s leaders, and the way in which Moses, her brother, carried out the Lord’s command, now that God has manifestly judged they thrust him out. Leprosy in the holy place tolerated? God forbid! A leper unto the day of his death! In the year that he died Isaiah had that wondrous vision given him (Isa. 6.). When, as he looked, holiness pervaded the scene, earth’s king, foul and corrupt, lay in death, Heaven’s King ever living in unsullied holiness, surrounded with servants maintaining their place, waiting His command, “ Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts ” (ver. 3); and seraphim covering face and feet with wings, with twain did fly. Instant readiness to serve, yet covering the service when performed in the presence of that Holiness.

Whether Miriam or Uzziah, the Lord would not tolerate insubjection, pride, and envy. Both were lifted up, as both had alike been signally blessed and used of God over a long space of years, and both were stricken with leprosy. But there the comparison ends. Miriam by the voice of Aaron owned in a moment her sin: “ We have done foolishly,” “ we have sinned ” (Num. 12. 11), and therefore the leprosy was instantly removed, although she had, as unclean, to spend seven days outside the camp. But Uzziah was wroth. Anger filled his heart, resistance to authority was persisted in, and therefore the leprosy smote him without remedy; he never recovered, he died in a “ leper house.” • These exhortations and prompt actings for God will have brought to mind that other exhortation and solemn charge given by Paul to Timothy, “ Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the

Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (1 Tim. 5. 20, 21).

There must be no screening of sin. There must in the discipline of God's House be the most faithful, determined, impartial action. "I withstood him to the face" (Gal. 2. 11). Heartrending work, but imperative. Paul was compelled by the truth of God to do it. No relationship, no long acquaintance, no personal love and respect must cause one to waver in this. Among the sorrows—may I not say the deeper sorrows?—of Christians are those caused by being compelled to faithful action toward one who has sinned. Yet, remember Miriam; and pray that any towards whom one may have to act faithfully in rebuking or judging their sin may be as she was, and not as Uzziah. Pray that, instead of persisting in the wrong action, they may by the restraining and constraining power of the Spirit be brought into the Lord's own presence, where alone the flesh can be judged, and by being kept in the place of death be hindered from activity. Then we will be subject to Him and to all to whom He has given rule in the church, and the more so because those who have it sought not for it. Lord it not over the saints, but seek to be an example of the flock, bearing burdens that only such know, and that can only be borne as they are cast upon Him" (1 Peter 5. 7). God's work must be done without murmuring and without envying. When thus taken up it is in a joyful spirit, owning Him in all, and at the same time with a heart that rejoices in another's work: Let each one seek heartily and constantly to work for Him, and rejoice in all the work that is of and for Him, as accomplished through others. Then together in the coming day we shall rejoice as we ascribe to Him the praise, and give Him all the glory.

R. T. HOPKINS.

“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD.”

(Continued from page 184.)

“ELDERS therefore among you I exhort, who am also a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker (sharer in common) of the glory that shall be revealed, tend (shepherd) the flock of God which is among you.” Those words are a very treasury of grace and truth. Each word calls for closest consideration. The setting thereof is surely as “apples of gold in baskets of silver.”

The term “elder” always carries in it the thought of age, of experience, of maturity, and the like. That should never be forgotten. The work these should do is well-named “oversight.” “Oversight” never scripturally describes the workers of that beautiful work. Elders as among certain others is always God’s way of presenting or reaching them. If, for example, Paul would speak to overseeing men of Ephesus as to their duties, he sends and calls for the elders of the Church there. He reminds them that the Holy Spirit set or placed¹ them among the flock, even the gathered-together, those whom the Lord had acquired through His own blood, and that for the specific purpose to shepherd, to tend, to rule the same as those who must give account.

So, too, in the epistle to the Philippians, which is addressed to the saints, together with the bishops (overseers) and deacons (serving ones). Wherefore the elderhood that is according to God is to be found as to its normal position among the brought-together by Him.

“ELDERS AMONG YOU.”

In order to quite appreciate such words it is absolutely

¹ For such is the meaning of the words in Acts 20. 28, “hath made.”

necessary that the reader be acquainted in some familiar manner with the range or scope thereof, even Pontus, Galatia (compare Gal. 1. 2), Cappadocia, Asia (see Rev. 1. 4), and Bithynia. Otherwise the place, the meaning, and value of this important expression of the "True Grace of God" will be lost to him.

The character in which Peter addresses or speaks those words must also be duly noted. Hitherto he has spoken as "apostle of Jesus Christ"; now, besides that, he exhorts elders as being himself a fellow-elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as also a common participator with them in the glory that shall be revealed.

Just as those "elders" were defined and reachable by the phrase,

"AMONG YOU,"

so in turn the range of their work was defined to them by the words,

"FLOCK OF GOD AMONG YOU."

How instructive is the view—those elders among certain specified ones, these latter as specifically known through, or as being among them. The brought-together around the elders, then the elders round about such brought-together ones. "Elders then I exhort, . . . tend the flock of God which is among you." Saints sometimes sing,—

"We'll sing of the Shepherd that died,
That died for the sake of the flock";

but in vain shall the Scriptures be searched for warrant thereof. The Scriptures do speak of the Good Shepherd who died on behalf of the sheep, but nowhere as for the sake of the flock, the reason being that "sheep" bespeaks intensest individuality, while "flock" describes brought-together congregated ones. Therefore sheep that have not been collected or gathered together do not make, neither

should nor may they rightly be spoken of as if they were, a flock.

The exhortation, "Hold fast the form of sound words," was never more needed by God's saints and servants than now. The utmost confusion is wrought and perpetuated by simple inattention to that most powerfully saving injunction.

Of old God, the Holy One of Israel, made His own people to go forth **like sheep** (*ὡς προβατα, hōs probata*) and guided them in the wilderness **like a flock** (*ὡσει ποιμνιον, hōsei poimnion*). Who then will say that those double comparisons are but two ways of saying the same thing? Certainly not he who stands in awe of God's word, neither he who tries things excellent that yet are different.

The word here translated "tend" appears to us as to its meaning to be expressed in the following words: "exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly: according unto God, nor yet for filthy lucre (base gain), but of a ready mind, neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to (of) the flock." Each phrase of the foregoing demands unceasing attention at the heart and hands (Psalm 78. 70-72) of such as earnestly stretch forward to do the beautiful work of oversight. Nevertheless, it cannot be too well understood that, however special the work of oversight may be to certain and without controversy, it is all that; yet in another most needful and God-enjoined sense it is the clear and bounden duty, as also privilege, of each and all who are together of God, as to one another so compacted. Indeed, the phrase, "**taking the oversight,**" is the translation of a word that in Hebrews 12. 15 is translated "**looking carefully,**" and is there used to lay the work of oversight in the general sense upon one and all.

These two spheres of oversight work—the general and the special—are quite distinct; both are of Divine ordi-

nance, and equally necessary for the well-being of the flock. This general bearing of "taking care" has beautiful illustration in Deuteronomy 22. 1-4, on reading which one may well ask, "Doth God take care of beasts, or saith He it altogether for our sakes?" the answer to which is, "For our sakes, no doubt." Wherefore, as we are of much more value than such animals, let all in the Churches of God know how far removed from us the spirit of Cain should be, which ever excuses the possessor thereof in self-justification by saying, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Pursuing the words written before for our learning in Deuteronomy 22. 8, 9, we have the very counterpart of what Hebrews 12. 14-17 sets forth as constituting "taking the oversight" in the general, as distinguished from the specific, sense in which that work is laid upon chief (that is, leading, guiding) men **among** the brethren. Compare Acts 15. 22, also Hebrews 13. 7, 17, 22. The Reviser's phrase, "your allotted portions," raises a most vital point in this matter of "oversight" or "bishopric." We ask, Allotted by whom? and answer that, if God in the Scriptures be heard, such was never done by the Churches of God in any sense electing, or the like, such to be "over them in the Lord."

So far from that, in the first epistle which Paul wrote he distinctly calls upon the saints in the assembly at Thessalonica to be awake and careful to know those labouring among them, who stood before them in the Lord, and admonished them, bidding them to also esteem such highly in love for

THEIR WORK'S SAKE

and to be at peace.

Then, whatever of argument can be based on what the Apostles did, as Acts 14. 23 describes, or on what Titus did, as deputed by the Apostle to do, in Crete (Titus 1.), this much is certain, that no such doings are perpetuated by

the Scriptures, and far less are they passed on to others, all which is proved beyond argument by what the epistle that teaches how to behave in God's house says on this question; see 1 Timothy 3. 1, etc.¹

The elders making themselves ensamples to (that is, of) the flock is most educative for such as essay to do the work of oversight. The togetherness, the subjection, etc., all find most captivating definition in the manner expressed, namely, "of the flock," for all that it should be and do; such, indeed, as very types, should elders among them be and do. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, these shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away, blest token of His approving reward for work done, work so dear to Him that the remembrance thereof shall for ever and ever be maintained in His own presence by that ever-green crown of amaranthine beauty. Who that may would not care and work to gain it? "Likewise, ye younger (ones), be subject unto the elders; yea, all of you, gird yourselves with humility to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

The force of the word "likewise" is doubtless the linking on of the character in which Peter communicates the will of God—that is, as verse 1 here—rather than what he describes himself as being in chapter 1. verse 1.

JOHN BROWN.

(To be concluded.)

¹ See also "Bishops and Deacons: the Persons and their Work," published by NEEDED TRUTH Publishing Office.

UNTO US IN A SON.

NOTES ON THE LETTER TO HEBREWS.

(Continued from page 180.)

“Since then the children are sharers in blood and flesh (margin), He also Himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

It may be well, in the first place, to point out the difference between two words used here by the Holy Spirit. The word translated “are sharers” is *κεκοινωνήκεν* (*kekoinōnēken*), from *κοινωνέω* (*koinōneō*). This verb is derived from the adjective *κοινός* (*koinos*), common, and means to have something in common with others, to have fellowship in, to share equally. The word translated “partook” is *μετέσχε* (*metesche*), from *μετέχω* (*metechō*), which verb is compounded of the particle *μετά* (*meta*), with, and the verb *ἔχω* (*echō*), I have. It means to have with, to share in measure, to partake. It is not then asserted that the Sanctifier had blood and flesh in common with the children, but that He partook of blood and flesh which the children had altogether in common.¹

Into the details of this difference we do not propose now to enter, as our object in these notes is simply introductory. We only wish to point out sufficient of the force of the opening paragraphs of the epistle to direct the more earnest heed to so important a portion of the Scriptures.

Suffice it, then, to observe that had it been possible for Him to become just exactly like to the children, He would thereby have become powerless to deliver them. As all Scripture testifies, the atonement work needed a spotless

¹ A list of the occurrences of these words in the Greek Scriptures will be found in NEEDED TRUTH, vol. v., pages 252 to 257; footnote 2, pages 254, 255.

Victim ; redemption demanded a mighty Kinsman ; deliverance could only be effected by a great Saviour.

Very special testimony to this is borne in that link of the Old Testament chain which is one of the smallest and at the same time of the strongest.¹ When Ruth sought redemption at the hand of Boaz, she went, indeed, unto one who was able and willing to do a kinsman's part. There was a rich man who was nearer of kin than he, but who could not redeem, reminding us of those—

. . . that trust in their wealth,
And boast themselves in the multitude of their riches ;
None can by any means redeem his brother,²

and so forth.

Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ's perfect fitness To do a kinsman's part The Holy Spirit witnesseth To each believer's heart.

We further note that the Lord Jesus not only partook of blood and flesh, but did so "in like manner." So in Romans 8. 3 we read that He was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh. How like we may know as we read of His hunger, His weariness and the like. And yet how unlike, as God's fourfold life of Christ abundantly testifies. Let that Gospel which is especially that of the Son of Man speak to us in the words used by Gabriel to the Virgin Mary touching the woman's Seed: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore also that which is to be born shall be called Holy, the Son of God."

In the consideration of this holy and mysterious subject we must ever seek with prostrate reverence to bear in mind that the Incarnate Word never ceased to be Himself. We gladly acknowledge the healthful words hereanent contained in the so-called Athanasian Creed :—

¹ Ruth 3. and 4.

² Psalm 49. 6, 7.

. . . our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; . . . Who, although He be God and Man: yet He is not two, but one Christ; . . .

One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person.

Neither in the day when He was born of the Blessed Virgin nor when He hungered in the wilderness was there a moment when all things were not upheld by the word of His power.

Not in the hour of Gethsemane's garden and not in the deeper darkness of Golgotha's tree did He cease to be the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity, the Prince of Peace.

We next observe His object in thus partaking of blood and flesh was to be accomplished through death. Thus He lived a man that He might die.

His death was not merely the culmination of the sufferings of His life, though it was that: these sufferings were not for atonement, and effected neither salvation nor redemption. His death was indeed the death of a martyr (that is, a witness), but it was not a mere martyr's death. Nor was it simply an evidence of the depravity of man who murdered Him, though it did prove that.

His death is here presented as the object of His incarnation, in order that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, namely, the Devil. For by bearing the penalty of the world's sin He made the work of the Devil void and of none effect.

The subtle, ancient one, with all his study of Scripture, had little counted on what Proverbs 21. 30 tells, and in his counsel against Jehovah had effected that

The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together,
Against Jehovah and against His Anointed.

Did they succeed? Apparently they did. The Lord of Life and Glory was hanged upon the tree and slain at the

instance of him who had the power of death. Yes, verily; and there the Devil was brought to nought, for by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge had the great Atonement and Redemption work been accomplished.

By weakness and defeat
 He won the mead and crown,
 Trod all His foes beneath His feet
 By being trodden down.

He hell in hell laid low,
 Made sin, He sin o'erthrew,
 Bow'd to the grave, destroyed it so,
 And death by dying slew.

Bless, bless the Conqueror slain,
 Slain by divine decree,
 Who lived, who died, who lives again
 For thee, my soul, for thee.

Whatever congratulations may have been exchanged between Satan and the infernal host as the Redeemer was nailed to the cross, they full soon must have learnt something of the crushing disaster which the Devil had brought on himself and them as

Up from the grave He arose,
 With a mighty triumph o'er His foes.

And having first entered into Heaven Himself as

“Jehovah strong and mighty,
 “Jehovah mighty in battle,”

presently returns thither again with the multitude of captives set free from Upper Sheol; and as there reverberates a second time through the celestial regions—

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
 “Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors,
 “And the King of Glory shall come in,”

the reply to the question—

“Who is this King of Glory?”

tells of the children for whose sake He had died. For it is not alone that He enters now, but as

“Jehovah of Hosts,
“He is the King of Glory.”

What a change for them from their lifetime of bondage!

(To be concluded, if God permit, next month.)

THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE FLOCK.

To sincere and earnest children of God in sectarian associations these words are addressed. Notwithstanding the many voices to be heard to-day, and the many parties claiming to be right, we trust that those unto whom these words come may learn from God what He would have them be and do.

Interesting and instructive is the way of God with His people Israel of old, when “He made them to *go forth* like sheep, and *guided* them in the wilderness like a flock.” Such activities of His being but first links in the chain of God’s dealings, by which they became the objects of the watchful care of His eye, the tender sympathies of His heart, and the righteous rule of His hand, even as expressed in Psalm 78. 52-54, as compared with Exodus 19. 5, 6.

From this unfolding of the purpose and will of Jehovah concerning Israel we may turn to consider the *condition* He seeks in His own, during the present age, out of which a hearty response to His will may be given. In the Song of Songs 1. 2, in the words, “Let Him *kiss me* with the kisses of His mouth,” we have not only the thought of *union*, which is the portion of each one who is in Christ, but, further, the desire for a close and intimate acquaintance with Him in unhindered fellowship, which is the outcome and expression of fondness for and devotedness to the object loved.

Such a picture of devotedness to the person of God's anointed we find in Jonathan, whose soul was knit to the soul of David, and who loved him as his own soul (1 Sam. 18. 1). His was love too that found expression in delighting much in David, and, further still, in speaking good of David (19. 2-4). Yet true devotedness finds expression not in word only, but in deed also; and so we read Jonathan said, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee" (20. 4). But here Jonathan broke down, and he who was truly *for* David as God's anointed shirked the place of reproach *with* David in rejection. Very pleasant indeed was Jonathan to David in his life. His love passing the love of women, yet was he slain in his high places. Love to the person ever finds expression in love for the things of the person, even for *all* that belongs to the person. Beautifully unfolded is the devotedness of one of David's mighty men, who guarded and fought for that which probably seemed of little value to most (a piece of ground full of lentils), but which was of great value to him, on account of the love he bore to the one who owned it. He loved the person, and so he loved, guarded and fought for the things of the person.

"*Draw me, we will run after Thee*" (Song of Songs 1. 4) speaks not only of devotedness of heart, but also subjection of will. God spoke approvingly of the subjection of Israel to His claims, and of their loving response to His call in the words of Jeremiah 2. 2: "I remember the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after *me* in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." They had heard Jehovah's call. He Himself was the attraction of their heart and feet. They went out, not knowing whither they went, and their going out was pleasing to Him. He instructed them further as they were in a position to hear His voice. "*Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth,*" is the language of a devoted heart (Song of Songs

1. 7). The ear being opened to hear Jehovah speak is turned away from every other voice but His own. "Speak, Lord! for Thy servant heareth," is the earnest cry of such an one. "Mine ear hast Thou opened" is the expressed experience of another. Dear child of God, has your ear been opened thus? Is it thy earnest desire to know and do thy Lord's will? Is thy language, "Tell me, O *Thou* whom my soul loveth, where *Thou* feedest, where *Thou* makest *Thy flock* to rest at noon"? Then He has a *flock*; and there is a place where *He* feeds, and where *He* makes His flock to rest. Dost thou acknowledge this, or hast thou yet to learn that it is one thing to be one of Christ's sheep and another and a different thing to be one of His flock? If so then listen. Hear and heed what *He* saith: "I am the Good Shepherd, . . . and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring (or lead), and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become (and *thus* there *shall be*) *one flock, one Shepherd*" (John 10. 14-16).

Dost thou know that He who as the Good Shepherd "died for the sake of the sheep" has been brought again from among the dead, and as the Lord Jesus, the Great Shepherd, lives, in order that the sheep which were scattered might be gathered? (See Matt. 26. 31, 32, 28. 7, 10, and 16). Unto whom, do you enquire? Loving, devoted and subject hearts guide willing and obedient feet unto the place of His own appointment, where they see and worship Him. Further, still, as the Great Shepherd He guides their footsteps by His commandment; and as a result they are found *together*, and together as gathered by His Spirit to His name. Gathered with whom, do you ask? With other sheep, who having heard His voice and followed Him (John 10. 27) have been brought together, and, as under the rule of His hand, and watchful care of His eye, and tender sympathies of His heart, are where they are because of

having been gathered together into His name (Matt. 18. 20), in the midst of whom He is, feeding and making His flock to rest (Acts 9. 31). Mark well the *footsteps* of this flock: They gladly received the word, were baptized, were added, continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching, in the fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers (Acts 2. 41, 42).

Is the language of thy heart and lips, "Lord, what wilt *Thou* have me to do"? Is the anxious, earnest desire of thy heart to know thy Lord's will and please Him in doing it? Then His word is, "If any willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching"; and in answer He would say, "Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock" (Song of Songs 1. 8). Fear not that which is involved in so doing. In the path of His own leading, by His Spirit and Word, He will prove Himself sufficient for thy every need. If difficulties and enemies arise, as doubtless they will, and possibly even friends oppose, He will prove His grace sufficient for thee. Let not difficulties turn thee aside nor circumstances affect thee. Walk by faith, as seeing Him who is invisible, and listen intently for His voice in His Word. Keep close to His side, and if called upon to suffer for Him in the doing of His will, count it a privilege and an honour, knowing that "Hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet 2. 21). Know also that "It is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil 1. 29).

Such individual ones are found together in many companies, under the rule and care of under shepherds, who are "among the flock," and "amongst whom the flock is" (1 Pet. 5. 1, 2). All, again, are under and around the Great Shepherd, in His character and place as the *One Lord*, subject and obedient to His will as revealed in the *One Faith*, which finds its response in the *One Baptism*. All

again find a fitting expression in and a beautiful comparison to "a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots" (Song of Songs 1. 9), where no unbroken will or disorderly way was seen, but all moved and worked to the beck or bidding of the hand of him who held the reins.

"Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Heb. 13. 21, 22).

DAVID SMITH.

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 69.—*What constitutes a railer, or a drunkard, or a covetous one, mentioned in 1 Cor. 5. 11? Does one offence constitute them such?*

If the above Scripture be read carefully, it will be clearly perceived we judge that habit which forms character is what convicts a person of being a railer, or a drunkard, or a covetous one, and therefore a person needing to be put out from among saints who are within, being together as a church of God. Therefore it is that the word says, "If any be." Nevertheless it must be borne in mind that the character may show itself very differently in different cases, and especially in connection with different sins. It seems a great mistake to suppose that the Spirit through Paul meant to put the different classes of wicked persons enumerated in verses 10, 11 on the same footing.

J. B.

QUESTION 70.—*"If one called a brother be guilty of any one of the sins in 1 Cor. 5. 11, and confesses his sin, and professes to have forsaken such practices, is he not to be put away?"*

The passage in question clearly calls for putting out such persons as are indicated therein. Fruits meet for repentance should be borne in the outside place. See 2 Cor. 2. and Lev. 14. (The entire chapters should be read.)

J. B.

“NOT ONE FEEBLE PERSON AMONG THEIR
TRIBES.”

REDEMPTION is the theme in Psalm 103., as Creation is in Psalm 104. Following these we have two Psalms of the most decided contrast—the 105th recounts the Lord’s doings with Israel, and His faithfulness and unchanging love toward the people, while the 106th unfolds the failure of Israel as their doings are related, the result of their want of faith in God. How varied the teaching in these Psalms, and what lessons are contained in them for us! Take one verse, a part of which heads this paper: “He brought them forth also with silver and gold, and there was not one feeble person among their tribes” (Ps. 105. 37).

What a contrast between Israel and Egypt here! Israel, on the one hand, with not one feeble person among them, as they stood girded and ready to depart, having partaken of the lamb roast with fire inside their blood-marked dwellings—Egypt with not a single house in it without its dead: the first-born of every family in palace and hovel alike stretched in death, and at the same moment, by the judgment of God. The next day Israel was brought forth “with a high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians. For the Egyptians buried all their first-born which the Lord had smitten among them” (Num. 33. 3, 4). What a scene is thus presented—the Egyptians, every family in sorrow and in dread (for how could they be certain that death had ceased to do its work?), going forth to bury their dead, crushed beneath the awful and swift judgment which had befallen them; whereas Israel, in the triumph of Jehovah, at the same moment, were leaving their slave-dwellings for ever behind them, exultant and filled with hope as, under the leadership of Moses, they streamed forth, a host of wellnigh two millions of persons. Nay,

more, they not only had not a single dead one to bring out, but not a single sick or feeble one was found among them. Not one had to be carried out and helped painfully along. Death everywhere in Egypt—life and health in Israel. How all this speaks to us! Is the Egypt world around us, men lying in death and sorrow, yet we have been brought out from it as living ones, the joy of the Lord, our strength. Ought there to be a feeble person among the saints? Ought we not to be strong in the Lord? Yet some are always feeble. Why is it so? With many because they never made a good start. Mephibosheth as a babe was strong and healthy, perfect in all his limbs, yet the most of his life was spent in dependence upon the help of others. His nurse dropped him, and as a consequence he was “lame on both his feet” (2 Sam. 4. 4). The very anxiety and haste shown by her in love resulting in his fall. Calmer, yet quick, determined action might have saved this. How many a saint has been enfeebled by the very ones who loved, but who, instead of acting for God by the Spirit, have acted in the haste of mere natural love. From early days a young Christian needs to have it pressed home: “Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price.” “Your time is not your own. Redeem it, use it for Him who bought you at an infinite cost—His precious blood.”

The true nursing fathers and mothers (1 Thess. 2. 7, 11) will thus exhort and charge, that a “walk worthy of God” may result. From the first we are to learn to become good soldiers of Jesus Christ: He “teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight” (Ps. 144. 1). Who? “Jehovah, my Strength.” Victory awaits us. With the ability of the workman, God-given, ever strong and active in service for Him, His work should be entered upon. In no feeble way, but as equipped and filled with His Spirit. Let two or three young men in a town not only profess faith in

Him, but in energy and aggressive work go forth, and at once it draws out the devilment from the world. First, like the Egyptians, fear falls upon them, and they urge the young convert to go away. "Do not talk to me like that about hell. It disturbs me. Let me alone." But soon the world can be heard saying, like the Egyptians, "What! have we allowed these slaves to go? We must pursue after and bring them back again." And every effort is made to get such back again. Traps and snares are set, and where strength is lacking the poor feeble one is drawn back or tripped up. "Not one feeble person." Praise God when it is so. Room for thankfulness, and plenty of it, but none for boasting. Boasting in our strength quickly results in careless confidence. God allows some to fall, as with Peter. It is the only way by which they can learn at first. He alone can keep. "Have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3. 3). The one who learns thus to distrust the flesh and self in every form is the one who can then enter into the language of the Apostle and make it his own: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4. 13). Real strength is perfect weakness hanging upon Christ. Jacob was weakness itself all through the night of wrestling. He was never so strong as when "he halted upon his thigh" (Gen. 32. 31), and in helplessness he was compelled to yield, and receive the blessing from the Angel, Jehovah Jesus, whom he had resisted. It was then we read that "the sun rose upon him." David could not only rejoice in Jehovah as his light and salvation, but he could add, "The Lord is the Strength of my life" (Ps. 27. 1). At such times how strong! Fear banished, the world had lost its hold; but how often in his experience he was feebleness itself, as the world came in, and his heart no longer rested in the Lord. In the midst of all the trials, oppositions, and vanities of the world, and everything

that is calculated to weaken and dismay, the Lord is our Strength. Who so helpless, and yet who so powerful and well provided for?

“Sing aloud for joy, my soul!
 Songs of victory!
 Shout for gladness, though the foe
 Still encompass thee.
 It's not long :—my soul be strong!
 Triumph in thy Saviour's Name!
 Bear thy cross, despise the shame!”

“Not one feeble person.” “All went out with an high hand” (Exod. 14. 8). But how soon they manifested themselves. “They were sore afraid” (ver. 10) as Pharaoh's host drew near. For so long under the tyrant hand had they been cowed that in the hour of deliverance, through not trusting Jehovah, all that slavish fear came back upon them. “The Lord shall fight for you” was the word of Moses, in whose heart there was no dread. Strong in the word of the Lord, he could act. If in our own life and walk we are to glorify Him, it must be by looking to Him, the only source of strength—in faith asking Him for it.

Natural boldness may carry through in worldly things, but not in spiritual. Successfully to overcome we must be found keeping the flesh in the place of death. If not, Satan gets hold of it, and feeds it. The True Bread is food for the new man; the old cannot enjoy it. It loathes it, and seeks for flesh from a poor world. Just as with Israel, when hunger came upon them in the wilderness they desired the very thing that was not good for them—they lusted. They asked, but they asked amiss. And though the Lord gave, He gave in judgment. “The people asked, and He brought quails” (Ps. 105. 40). “And He gave them their request; but He sent leanness into their soul” (Ps. 106. 15). He “satisfied them with the bread from heaven. He opened the rock, and the waters gushed out; they ran in the dry places like a river” (Ps. 105. 40, 41). If we ask thus and get, are we

satisfied? Impossible. What satisfies is Christ ministered by the Spirit through the Word: "I am that Bread of Life" (John 6. 48). All this is grace. It was grace alone that supplied all the need of Israel as the Lord brought them out, "not one feeble person among their tribes." And grace alone can avail for us. How strong we become then! With what confidence we can act! How brightly the weakest can then act for Him! Romans 16., with its record of many names of serving ones, tells this out. How many weak ones naturally. The list is headed with a Sister Phœbe, and Tryphena and Tryphosa, Mary and the sister of Nereus, are samples of the weak made strong. As well as Priscilla, honourably named, and that before her husband, they had "laid down their own necks" (Rom. 16. 4) as helpers with the Apostle in the blessed service of God. Passing through a world of trial and disappointment, with all against them, it is easy for the children of God to be enfeebled and discouraged. "Quit you like men: be strong" (1 Cor. 16. 13). "The well-beloved Gaius" was saluted by John as one to whom he could write "as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2). Let us seek to be as Gaius, to be in health and increasingly so. To be growing stronger is what we should desire for all saints. "The Lord will give strength unto His people" (Ps. 29. 11). Therefore we say, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, . . . and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all" (1 Chron. 29. 11, 12). Strength for the day, for the journey, for the battle He gives, let us constantly look to Him alone for it. Feebleness can alone manifest itself here. The wilderness will soon be overpast, the warfare accomplished. Still we wait and look for the Son from heaven. He is coming. He will receive unto Himself all His saints, who shall then be in their everlasting home. Satan's power shall have been broken for ever—his

presence shall be unknown. What joy as we anticipate the moment, and remember, not only that heaven is our home, but that—

“None shall be feeble there,
Grief cannot cloud the air,
Joy reigneth ever.”

R. T. HOPKINS.

“THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD.”

(Concluded from page 211.)

“HUMBLE yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that (even in order that) He may exalt you in due time: casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you.” How forcible the word “therefore” is in the above passage! What exaltations have been where humbling under God’s mighty hand have taken place! What humblings by Him are recorded in the Holy Scriptures for our warning, “not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think”!

Let us remember and learn from God’s way with Moses, Miriam, Korah, Samson, Gideon, Saul, Solomon, and Uzziah the blessed and yet sore possibilities that are ours who are God’s in connection with humility and pride. As for God, His way is perfect; His way is one; He maketh my way perfect. How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word. Twice have I heard this. “God resisteth (ranges Himself against) the proud”. “Those that walk in pride He is able to abase” (Dan. 4. 37). The Devil seeks to ruin and destroy through or by pride (1 Tim. 3. 6). God’s hand is powerful to put down and also to lift up (1 Sam. 2. 6–10); none can stay Him. The proud He will oppose and humble; the lowly He will give grace unto, and in *due* time He will also exalt them. Wherefore let such learn and seek to cast upon Him all their anxiety, in the consciousness of veriest gratitude and trustfulness, since He Himself careth for them.

The word "**careth**" here should be well pondered. It intimates oversight, or bishopric, on the part of God that is surely heart reaching and comforting. When the Spirit, through the Apostle, charges home the faithful saying of 1 Timothy 3. as to the worker of the beautiful work of oversight he bursts forth with, "But if a man know not (how) to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the (a) church of God?" Probably no anxiety equals that which comes from caring for those who are within, and who, therefore, are together in intercommuning churches of God (2 Cor. 11. 28). An anxiety only to be measured by what one is able to oversee, and thus to regard, in godly, jealous, zealous care. Differing in extent and character according, indeed, to the different abilities, but still more differing according to the varied extent of the opportunities which men of God have. The Apostle Paul had anxiety for all the churches. How self-evident that such cannot be "Body" position, condition and relationship. Christ Himself is at once the Builder, the Preserver, and Head of the Body.

"There no sin nor stain can enter,
Nor the life nor love grow less:
There once placed preserved for ever,
Trophy of redeeming grace."

Would any be indeed anxious for nothing? Here, then, is the way,—casting upon Him all your anxiety. Lo, what incentive is given unto this being done, even—

"BECAUSE HE CARETH FOR YOU."

Although God thus constantly cares for us, we may not allow ourselves to be presumptuous in carelessness as to His will concerning us. Hence the words Be sober, Be watchful; for though we have such a Friend, we also have a relentless Foe, who is our adversary—even the Devil, who walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. What a mercy it is not to devour whom he may!

His roaring is probably to fill with fear. Amos asks, "Who will not fear when the lion hath roared?" And again, "Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey?"

Thus the Devil simulates, and walketh about

"AS A ROARING LION."

Shall God's humble and needy ones therefore fear and be afraid? Surely not. Hearken: "The eyes of the Lord (that is, Jehovah, who is God in covenant) run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. 16. 9). Contrast and consider: The **walking** about of the Devil, the **running** of Jehovah's eyes. Observe their scope, even the whole earth; He overlooketh none. Note, too, the object of Jehovah. Forget not the Devil's object. Oh, love the Lord, ye His saints; ay, cleave to Him with purpose of heart; yea,—

"O ye that love the Lord, hate evil:

He preserveth the souls of His saints.¹

He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked" (Ps. 97. 10).

Thus, in fellowship with the living God, let the Devil be resisted. Through James we know that when resisted he will flee away from us. But in standing against the Devil let us remember our armour (Eph. 6. 10-18), and therewith the condition here enjoined: "Whom resist, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH, knowing that the same sufferings are being accomplished in your brotherhood in the world."

"And the God of all grace, who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after that ye have suffered a little while, shall Himself perfect, stablish, strengthen you."

What grace and what promise are here presented to our enraptured spirit! Surely in the words of Addison we may cry into the ears of our God, as recognising and knowing that He is indeed the God of every grace—

¹ "Saints" here are His gracious ones.

"Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.
Through all eternity to Thee
A joyful song I'll raise,
For, oh! eternity's too short
To utter all Thy praise."

To Him, then, the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.
Yes, Amen! even so let it be,

"HERE AND IN HEAVEN."

Thus, then, by Silvanus, a faithful brother in the Apostles accounting, has he written briefly exhorting and testifying that this is the

TRUE GRACE OF GOD. STAND YE FAST THEREIN.

Let such as would, once again sigh and say, O God! Amen! Amen! She that is in Babylon, elect together with you saluteth you, and so doth Mark, my son.

The "she" here is somewhat obscure to us who now read. It may signify either an assembly (that is, a church) or it may only mean an individual sister. The salutation, however, shows that Peter was then in Babylonia, —that is, the country, and not the capital city Babylon that Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopolassar, made great for himself. That city long ere Peter wrote had been reduced to a very desert. Yet in its surroundings the manifestation of the God of every grace abounded.

The presence, too, of John Mark with the Apostle at such a time and in such a place is but further evidence of the allness of God's undeserved favour.

"Salute ye one another with a kiss of love."

The expression of affection may differ in its outward form. But this kiss of love is of the heart rather than otherwise, and may be, and is, practised according to standing in the true grace of God.

"Peace be unto you all that are in Christ." These last

words are a most fitting top-stone to such building as this epistle would bring about and maintain. Yea, are the very essence of ALL GRACE. For as for those who are "in Christ," to them there are neither conditions, nor change, nor the like. But all is bliss, and rest, and glory, for ever and for ever.

JOHN BROWN.

"THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN."

"AND working together with Him, we intreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain (for He saith, At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, And in a day of salvation did I succour thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation)."¹

Many are the solemn entreaties contained in God's Word to which His people would do well to take heed, but few there are, if any, the neglecting of which involve such far-reaching issues as the one to which we now direct attention. How intensely real and solemn our lives as Christians become when we learn from the mouth of God that the possibility exists of our receiving His grace in vain. Bitter, indeed, are the feelings of mingled sorrow and shame with which some of His people look back over mis-spent years of their experience as Christians, during which there was little response in their hearts to the claims of God, and less effort on their part to learn the purposes for which the grace of God had reached them.

Among other things, the objects for which God in grace saves men and women to-day are beautifully set forth in Titus 2. 11-14, R. V.: "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of

¹ 2 Cor. 6. 1, 2, R. V.

our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works." The grace of God we thus see is calculated to transform those upon whom it is bestowed from heartless worldlings to men and women who may be known by all with whom they come in contact for their sobriety and righteousness and godliness, whilst they cherish in their hearts the blessed hope, and are indeed separated unto God, a people for His own possession. How marvellously beautiful are the transformations which are effected by the disciplinary effect of God's grace!

Remembering that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,"¹ we find in the history of Israel a very solemn illustration of what it means to receive the grace of God in vain. When on the wilderness side of Jordan they realized the mighty triumphs which Jehovah had wrought on their behalf, from lip and heart their praises burst forth and found expression in these words: "By the greatness of Thine arm they (the inhabitants of the land) are as still as a stone; till Thy people pass over, O Lord, till the people pass over, which Thou hast purchased. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, the place, O Lord, . . . which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever."² At that moment they seem to have grasped, at least in measure, the purposes for which God in grace had delivered them from Egypt's bondage; but, alas! alas! how few of those who so loudly joined in the singing of these words ever set foot on Canaan's fair shore, how few ever beheld the mountain of His inheritance, or the sanctuary built there for Jehovah to dwell in. For they turned back and tempted God—yea, they limited the Holy One of Israel,³ so that He swore in

¹ Rom. 15. 4.

² Exod. 15. 16-18.

³ Ps. 78. 41.

His wrath that they should not enter into His rest,¹ and their carcasses fell in the wilderness. Yet God's purposes in their deliverance undoubtedly were to bring them into the land, and to subdue their every enemy before them, that there in the land among them Jehovah might dwell, and that the nations looking on might behold what never before was seen by them—namely, the will of God carried out amongst men on earth. But they provoked and tempted Him, through disobedience and unbelief.

It is indeed humbling to learn how easily at all times God's people have been discouraged, and have therefore refused to go on at the bidding of God; how readily the exaggerated report of difficulties in the way, from the lips of men out of fellowship with the thoughts of God, is accepted, with all the consequent disasters to the saints. Beautifully do Caleb and Joshua seek to encourage the hearts of the people in their God when the ten spies bring back an evil report of the land: "Let us go up at once and possess it, for we be well able to overcome it."² "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into the land and give us it."³ The ten men saw nothing but the difficulties in the way—the giants, and the cities walled up to heaven; and through listening to them the hearts of the people were discouraged, instead of being directed to the living God, whose power was all-sufficient to deliver them from every enemy.

"Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come."⁴ Remembering that in us is an evil heart of unbelief, ever prone to depart from the Living God, it is no marvel that He should cause these words to be written, "We intreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." The purposes for which God in grace saves us to-day are equally as real and definite

¹ Ps. 95. 11.² Num. 13. 30.³ Num. 14. 8.⁴ 1 Cor. 10. 11.

as were His purposes in the deliverance of Israel. "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into His rest, any one of you should seem to come short of it."¹ We do not believe that it is possible for children of God to enter into and to enjoy the rest of God except as His present purposes in their salvation are by them learned and expression given thereto. For just as God's purpose could only be carried out by Israel, when by them the land was subdued and possessed, and the rule of God carried out amongst them collectively, when God in their midst was the glory, and when He and the Ark of His strength entered into the place of His rest,² so to-day the rest of God can only be known and enjoyed by those who, in heart obedience to His call, go forth to Him without the camp, having learned from Him the place in which He has chosen to cause His name to dwell, and are found together of God, around the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Son over God's House.³ "Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."⁴

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

UNTO US IN A SON.

(Concluded from page 216).

For verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham.

WE may see the Lord Jesus taking hold in Matthew 14. 31. Peter was beginning to sink and cried, "Lord, save me." "And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and took hold of him." So that taking hold here was unto immediate deliverance from imminent danger.

Again, we read in Mark 8. 23 of a blind man being

¹ Heb. 4. 1. ² 2 Chron. 6. 41. ³ Heb. 3. 6. ⁴ 2 Cor. 6. 17, 18.

brought to Him. "He took hold of the blind man by the hand and brought him out of the village." The taking hold here was for separation, separation unto blessing, for outside the village the Lord twice laid hands on him and sent him away a seeing man, saying, "Do not even enter into the village."

In Luke 9. 47 the same word occurs, "He took a little child, and set him by His side, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this little child in My name receiveth Me," thus identifying the reception of the little child with the reception of Himself. But He adds further, and directly links therewith, the statement, "Whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me," and in Psalm 80. 17 we read of God's hand being put upon Him: "Let Thine hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand."

It seems that the thought of laying hold of one is akin to that of laying hands upon, but is not altogether the same. It may be thrown out as a suggestion that in the laying on of hands one has a symbol of identification or fellowship, as the case may be, that subsists between him who lays hands and him upon whom they are laid, and that the laying on of hands does not necessarily impart anything or make the one on whom the hands are laid different from what he was before; whereas taking hold of another definitely carries with it the thought of placing a person in a different position, whether it be of deliverance, or of separation, or of privilege.

In the Authorised Version text we read, "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham." We accept the judgment of the Revisers here as to the correct rendering, and merely point out that the whole context shows that the share He took in blood and flesh was an essential part of the taking hold of the seed of Abraham. The American Committee translate somewhat more freely: "He giveth help to the seed of Abraham," which is a beautiful thought in the light of Matthew 14. 31.

Wherefore—in order to give this help—

Wherefore it behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in

things pertaining to God to make propitiation for the sins of the People.

To make propitiation, that is atonement. The corrections which the Revisers have made in the many places where atonement (or propitiation) and reconciliation are hopelessly confused in the Authorised Version are in themselves sufficient to demand the gratitude of all true Christians.

We note here that the special aspect of the atonement is that for the People, and it must be noted that the word People is a singular noun with a singular meaning. It is not a noun of multitude, and it does not mean folks; the People rather means the Nation.

For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.

Perhaps no sentence in God's Word is easier to understand than this. At the same time there is none so difficult to comprehend. It is easy to understand that, because He became man, He can enter into the depths of human woe, and can pity, with His heart of overflowing love, the sorrows of mankind. But we cannot fathom the depths of that mysterious union of God and man: to know how the Eternal Word could become flesh transcends the utmost efforts of our finite minds.

Happy are we if taught to believe what we cannot understand, and echo the apostolic word, "Without controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness, Who was manifest in the flesh."

C. M. LUXMOORE.

Correspondence.

Our esteemed brother, Rice T. Hopkins, writes to us from Melbourne, in reference to Question 62 in the May number of NEEDED TRUTH (this vol., page 100) and J. A. Boswell's reply thereto.

He in the first place points out that as the companies meeting at the houses named are definitely called churches, there can be no question as to their observance of the feast. "To suppose a Church, and yet no breaking of bread, is to separate what is the spiritual result."

Passing on then to that which concerns a husband and wife, and referring to such as are in the fellowship, who have been subject to the Will of God, and have been gathered out and have broken the bread, and afterwards left for a distant place, not for a week or so, but to reside, Mr. Hopkins expresses it as his judgment that such can be in the place of the two referred to in Matthew 18. He continues, "Suppose that an evangelist goes to a place where none are gathered. God blesses a husband and wife. He sets before them truth, baptism, the Church, the gathered-out position in an evil day, the

true, simple observance of the Supper. He does so looking to the Lord, praying that they may be led on by Him. They are baptized; they profess to see the truth. He is there for how long? He knows not. He is cast on the Lord. What should he do? Break the bread if able. There are three; they do so. Surely no one will dare say that man's will leads to it in such a case; if so, one would ask for proof.

"He leaves. Must the two then cease? Are they no longer an assembly? no longer privileged to break the bread? Serious question, not to be settled offhand by a general reference to rule of God."

He points out that larger assemblies than the one here contemplated have been broken up by the entrance of evil which Christians true to the Lord have been unable to cope with, which has therefore compelled them to leave, and maintains that this fact answers Mr. Boswell's argument that a man and wife could not be an assembly because the latter could not exercise discipline on the former.

"Residing in a distant place, not cold of heart, easy then to give it up, but spiritual, godly, earnest, serving together in gathering a few children, with tracts, letting their light shine, enjoying the Lord's presence. Of these I write; the question only concerns such. They read Matthew 18. 'Two'; they are two. But one may fail: yes, may. What then? Is God to be counted upon? can He be trusted to keep? Shall evil so occupy the thoughts with its needed discipline as to lead us to lay down rules, and thus stumble? God forbid. It would be taking low ground to say that two or three simple ones could not break the bread together in assembly because evil might come in. When government bulks too largely, difficulties may be created, and of that we have to beware. More than one assembly has begun with two faithful to Him.

"Consider the fact that the assembly exists first, overseeing brethren next. Acts 13. 'Let us go again.' On second visit to assemblies Paul and Barnabas appointed Elders. No doubt selecting those pointed out by the Lord, who had raised them up and already used them in simple ways for help of others. We never find in Scripture, and with that alone we have to do, either in the example of apostles or precept through them, any teaching that would make an assembly's existence dependent upon the presence of an overseeing brother. 'Not a novice' or 'one newly come to the faith' (1 Tim. 3). But when Paul, after three weeks, left Thessalonica, he left a Church of God there, simple, hearty, real Christians, with one desire and much love, all newly come to the faith. When he wrote his first Epistle to them he exhorted them, 'Know them that labour among you and are over you in the Lord.' Spiritual recognitions of those who gradually had been constrained to care for others. Thus the Spirit of God assuredly works where spiritual ones are. They have commenced the two or three, and He has owned."

The above extracts will suffice to show the reasons which lead our beloved correspondent to differ from the judgment expressed by J. A. Boswell in these pages, and we trust that our insertion thereof will help all our readers to understand that we do not wish anything advanced in these pages to be accepted as infallible or authoritative. For this reason we are minded not to add anything further on the subject at present, but gladly adopt our esteemed brother's closing words.

"Let the Word guide. Inductive theories are dangerous and misleading, and therefore it must be plain, simple Scripture itself that binds the consciences of the Lord's people."

ERRATA

Page 173, line 11, *for ten read twenty-two.*

" " " 20, *for seven hundred read nine thousand seven hundred.*

Page 220, line 12, *for 21, 22 read 20, 21.*