

NEEDED

TRUTH.

EDITED BY

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They read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.—
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“Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord.”—1 COR. 15. 58.

ARISE and take courage, thy Lord goes before thee,
Fight thou the good fight for thy God and His glory ;
Stand fast in the fortress that cannot be taken,
And rest on the Rock that no earthquake hath shaken.

The waves of destruction shall never come nigh thee,
The danger thou fearest shall harmless pass by thee,
Because thou hast made the Lord's name thy salvation,
Thy tower of defence in the day of temptation.

Take the large shield of faith, that God's soldiers inherit,
The helm of salvation, the sword of the Spirit ;
Thy loins gird with truth, and thy breast guard from evil,
And so shalt thou stand 'gainst the wiles of the Devil.

Not alone in the combat, in which thou hast striven,
Look above, for behold there the Lamb slain, in heaven ;
Then fear not the path, dark, untrodden before thee,
Arise and be strong for thy God and His glory.

W. H. N.

NEEDED TRUTH.

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THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL A SECT.

OUR attention has been directed by a friend to an article entitled "The Latest Sect" in a contemporary periodical, which is an attack on the companies of believers who have recently separated from association with so-called "Open Brethren."

We have neither time, space, nor inclination to traverse all the errors of doctrine and mis-statements of fact contained therein, but as the writer specifies three canons which he erroneously states are set up by us as the new distinctive standard, we propose to set forth as clearly as we can what we believe to be the truth of God in regard to these three matters.

BAPTISM.

"First," says the writer of the article in question, "they are strict Baptists,¹ refusing to receive any member of Christ's body¹ who has not conformed to Christian immersion as believers."

Now it is quite plain, as the writer of "The Latest Sect" would surely be the last to deny, that the Lord Jesus was

¹ We print this exactly as it appears in our contemporary. We should have thought, however, that the capital B rather belonged to the word Body, as there is one Body only; and that the small b would have been more correct for the word baptists, which is a common noun simply signifying (rightly) one who baptizes (and, in modern language, one who believes in baptism). We have no wish to believe that the expression strict Baptists is affixed to us merely to excite prejudice.

in the habit of causing the disciples whom He made to be baptized (see, for instance, John 3. 22, 26, 4. 1).

It is equally certain that as during His sojourn here the disciples baptized for Him (John 4. 2), so when He was about to ascend He commissioned them to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them (that is, the disciples made) into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Passing on to the record of the Acts of the Apostles, we find that they, in point of fact, followed the same rule, first making disciples and then baptizing them; as see, for instance, Acts 2. 37, 42.

Now here, with that simplicity with which God is pleased to write so that babes may understand, a certain order is definitely and absolutely laid down, and we ask, Where is to be found the warrant for departing therefrom? We shall not labour to show that this and that inference drawn by one and another is the merest sophistry.¹ We stand by the plain, unassailable Rock of Holy Scripture. Thus and thus the Lord Jesus Christ did; thus and thus He bade His disciples; thus and thus, as God records, did they do in early times. And thus and thus, by God's help, we mean to do—even make disciples and baptize them.²

But this baptizing—what is it, and whereunto? Did not water baptism, as practised by the Lord Jesus, set forth first and chiefest of all the subjection of the baptized one, the disciple, to Himself? Is not this characteristic significance of it carefully maintained in Matthew 28. and throughout the Acts? It is perfectly true that, in the writings of Paul

¹ This is the less necessary as many of the subtle and wily arguments put forward in favour of infant and household baptism have been ably exposed in a pamphlet, "Review of Letters on Baptism," by Rice T. Hopkins (published at the office of this periodical).

² We use the words "baptize" and "baptism," meaning thereby what the words mean, and not something else. Everybody knows that sprinkling is not really baptism, but is only a substitute for it; even the English Prayer-Book bears witness to this.

especially, much extremely important and precious teaching touching death and resurrection is based on the fact that the believer, the disciple, has been baptized unto Christ. But this in no way sets aside the fact that subjection to Jesus as Lord is the great primary thought in water baptism.¹

Now, although our friend has in days gone by been a valiant advocate for the Scriptural practice of baptizing disciples, and has done much to expose the fallacies that underlie the arguments in favour of household baptism and similar heresies, yet he now, alas! alas! strains every point to minimize the importance of obedience to the Word of the Lord in this respect.

To do this he seeks to show that the twelve apostles,² though charged by the risen Lord to baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, were not baptized with that baptism themselves; and that as their baptism during the Lord's lifetime was not Christian baptism, and they and at least 500 other brethren who had not been baptized with Christian baptism were baptized by the Holy Spirit³ into one Body at Pentecost, *the Holy Spirit thus rejected the rule which we set up.*

No Scripture is quoted, and we know of none to show that the Lord Jesus did not baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. For be it remembered that this particular expression is never quoted in the cases where we read of the apostles carrying out the command given them here. But further, if it is thought probable, as it may be on the face of it, that this

¹ And nowhere in Scripture can we find any teaching as to water baptism being an entrance to something. It is unto a Person, not into a position.

² Meaning eleven, of course (Matt. 28. 16).

³ The words in the article are "The Holy Spirit baptized them"; but, in point of fact, God's word is clear, that it is the Lord Jesus Himself who baptizes into the Body in the Holy Spirit (see 1 Cor. 12. 13, R.V.).

was a particular formula only applicable after the resurrection, that still is far from proving that the essential character of water baptism underwent a change.

The same remark applies to the remainder of this argument. Certainly we have in connection with baptism clear differences between the teaching connected therewith at various times; for example, between its presentation on the Day of Pentecost to Jews, "Be baptized . . . unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," and its being commanded to Gentile believers whose sins had been forgiven and who had received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10.). But, on the other hand, we have that which most definitely links these together as one baptism,¹ for in each case the baptism was "in the name of Jesus Christ,"² thus linking it on with the baptizing of disciples at the command of the Lord Jesus when He was on earth. Baptism is also specially associated with the name of the Lord Jesus in the case of the Samaritans,³ and of Saul himself.⁴

We therefore maintain that water baptism at the Lord's bidding, whether during His sojourn on earth or after His resurrection, whether on the Day of Pentecost or at a later time, had this one essential feature ever connected with it; namely, subjection to Himself. That this fact links together all water baptism of His disciples and sharply marks off all such from every baptism whatsoever which is not unto Himself, is, we think, clearly shown in Acts 19. 1-7, which our readers are requested to read carefully before continuing the perusal of this article. * * *

Is it not clear that here is a distinct recognition of an essential, fundamental difference between John's baptism on

¹ See also Ephesians 4. 5.

² See the Revised Version of Acts 2. 38 and 10. 48, which is in each case a literal rendering of the reading of the best manuscripts.

³ Acts 8. 12.

⁴ Acts 22. 16.

the one hand, and on the other hand baptism into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it not equally clear that no such foundation difference is recognised between baptism before and after the Lord's resurrection? John's baptism could not take the place of baptism as a disciple of the Lord Jesus, but baptism as a disciple of the Lord Jesus is perfectly valid in every respect at whatever epoch it may have been performed.

It is unnecessary to discuss the question as to whether the 500 brethren of 1 Corinthians 15. 6 were baptized into the Body on the Day of Pentecost, because it is quite apart from the question at issue. But we cannot lightly pass over the argument that the first act of the Advocate sent from the Father was to treat as unessential and unimportant the obedience of disciples to the letter of the command of the Lord Christ. That the very opposite is the truth is clear; firstly, because the Lord's disciples, up to the Day of Pentecost, had all been baptized as His disciples; secondly, because Peter, speaking in the Holy Spirit, gave in his teaching on that memorable day definite prominence to water baptism; thirdly, because Scripture shows that baptism was never treated as unessential and unimportant by any of the apostles or prophets. On the contrary, disciples were commanded to be baptized.

Whatever differences, great or small, there may be between water baptism before and after the Lord's resurrection, to compare for one instant the water baptism which the disciples received at the Lord's bidding while on earth with the solemn mockery perpetrated over unconscious infants by so-called priests and others in professing Christendom is nothing less than profanity; and if the sentences quoted from our contemporary do not imply that because the Holy Spirit at Pentecost accepted those whose water baptism was not Christian baptism therefore we ought to

accept persons who have been sprinkled in infancy, they have no meaning bearing on the point at issue.

Our friend rightly says that baptism is essentially individual, and might be by the wayside, or in a prison, or along a river. As he also says, it is an individual confession. Moreover, Scripture demonstrates, he adds, that none ever thought of getting baptized after recognition in the assembly. Quite true, for in early times none ever came into the assembly unbaptized. And, indeed, what unity of purpose, what singleness and purity towards Christ, could be expected of an assembly if a great part of those therein had never as individuals submitted to the extremely simple requirement of being baptized in water as disciples of the Lord Christ?

Our esteemed friend says that we are retrograde innovators—which is exactly half the truth, for though we are not innovators, retrograde we certainly are. Our aim and endeavour all along the line has been to retrograde; that is, to step back into the ways that are in Christ.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

(To be continued, God permitting.)

GLEANINGS FROM SECOND LETTER BY PETER.

IN approaching the Second Letter by Peter we feel constrained to remark that we have long felt that the letters by Peter are the fulfilment under God of the obligation laid upon him by the Lord Jesus in that never-to-be-forgotten incident of Luke 22. 31, 32.

Moreover, it is not a little remarkable that the ending of the First Letter seems as the very echo of what Luke records. Through Luke we learn how Satan desired to have the apostle, that he might sift him as wheat: through Peter we know that the Devil walketh about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

The sympathetic care of the blessed Lord for Peter and for us is touchingly expressed in His own words,—

“But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;
and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.”

Alas! alas! his brethren, like him, most sadly fail. Yet, as for him so for us, with our God there is forgiveness that He may be feared. Wherefore, let the faith of none fail. But rather let us come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace for seasonable help. That we may not fall from our own stedfastness doth he write this letter (see chap. 3. 17).

The marked *collectiveness* of the First Letter is greatly enhanced by the individual character of this Second Letter. “Simon,” or perhaps “Symeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like-precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.” The double name here, in contrast with the one only in the First Letter, has in it a significance, as we read, akin to what is expressed in the unique phrase, “Abba, Father.”

For whether it be Symeon, as James spake in the circumstances of Acts 15., or Peter, as the Lord spake in John 1. 42, there is attractiveness for the Jew, and also for the Greek, in this double name of the apostle. Nay, more, there may be a most definite link found in the twofold name that lays hold at once of what is according to nature and what in connection therewith is according to grace. (Comp. also 1 Cor. 11. 14.) As bond-servant he comes before us as bound to Him Who had bought him. As apostle he is presented as sent forth by Him to those addressed. In that double relationship to Jesus Christ he writes to such as have obtained by lot a like (that is, an equally, or the same) precious faith. We suggest that what is meant by *having obtained by lot* may be gathered through comparing the four instances where the word occurs in the New Testament, viz. :—

Luke 1. 9, translated "his lot was."

John 19. 24, ,, "cast lots."

Acts 1. 17, ,, "obtained."

2 Pet. 1. 1, ,, "that have obtained."

By which the exact meaning appears to us as being the casting of the will of God both as to the possibility, the manner, the time and the object of the exercise of such faith. Wherefore every child of God may say:—

"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places;
Yea, I have a goodly heritage."¹

All that faith is alike-precious because of the divine principle that the cause and object of faith always determines the character thereof.

Thus, if one's faith is great, that arises from the exerciser thereof being persuaded that the cause and object of his trust is a great One. (See carefully Matt. 8. 5–13.) If another's faith is strong, that is because the cause and object of his belief [is well able (as he accounts) to do all that He promises (as see Rom. 4. 19, 20, 21). This like-precious faith has as its cause and object

THE PRECIOUS PROMISES,

based on the precious blood of God's precious One, resulting in a common salvation and standing of eternal bliss. For which reason the Apostle Paul also describes that faith as "common," because it is alike in origin and issue (Titus 1. 4). But if like-precious faith has been obtained by lot, it has been so in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Please note to compare here the Revisers' alternative reading, as given in their marginal rendering, which is also what the American Committee of Revisers would read.

If any would have a fair understanding of the righteousness here expressed, a diligent and prayerful perusal of the first ten chapters of the Letter to the Romans will give

¹ Psalm 16. 6.

such, with which compare Matthew 3. 15, Luke 1. 75, John 16. 10, Galatians 2. 21, and Hebrews 1. 9.

The actual wording of verse 2 seems rather to confirm the translation of verse 1, according to the Authorized Version, which also confirms the marginal reading of the Revised Version at verse 1 as to righteousness.

Here (ver. 2) the prayer is for grace and peace to be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, thus clearly distinguishing between God the Father and God the Son. Blessed, or happy, indeed is he who cares to have grace and peace so multiplied. Who, therefore, has prepared his heart to seek full and accurate knowledge of God? Was it not to called saints, in a church of God too, that the stinging reproach was made—"For some have not knowledge of God"; and that, under the exhortation, "Awake righteously, and sin not; I speak this to move you" (1 Cor. 15. 34)? Moreover, grace and peace may still know multiplication through also getting right and full knowledge of

JESUS OUR LORD.

Yea, with so much that the apostle shows and exhorts in connection with knowing and knowledge throughout this epistle, his very last word is an appeal unto one's seeing to it that this manner of GROWTH be well attended to, as see chap. 3. 18. As to which what He hath given us is next set before us.

JOHN BROWN.

(To be continued.)

THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD.

PROVERBS 22. 6; EPHESIANS 6. 4.

THESE two Scriptures have been sent us in connection with questions concerning the management and training of children. As we consider them to be of a very important nature, we desire to reply to them more fully than we are

able to do by simply answering them as questions in ordinary course.

Firstly, then, with regard to the Scripture from the Old Testament. The condition of the people in whose midst it was written must be considered. They were a people who had for generations been under a special education; in proportion as they were moulded by this education to the will of God they would be more or less *outwardly* conformed to His mind (Deut. 6. 24, 25), thus being unlike the nations around them in their ways and manners. It was in connection with the House of God and the priesthood that this divine training was to be carried out in the nation, for it is the priest's lips that should keep knowledge (Mal. 2. 7). We are now speaking of things as they should have been in Israel, and as they would have been had the will of God been done, and thus would God's presence and power have been manifested in the midst of His people, gathered *out* and gathered *together* of Him in a special manner.

It is not our object at this time to point out the failure of Israel in those matters, and how they chose a king that they might be like the nations around them; how also, in the House of God, the very centre from which the rule of God should have gone forth, the sons of Eli made themselves vile and made the people to transgress (1 Sam. 2. 24). We simply recall these things to the memory of our readers that they may be the better able to follow us in our subject. This outward state of blessing and prosperity into which God would have brought His people must not be confounded with or considered the same as that eternal salvation in the future which was the hope of a godly Israelite. If we turn to Hebrews 11. 39, we there find that those who died in faith not having received the promise were the godly ones of the earth and of the nation.

But why, it may be asked, did the two sons of Eli turn out so badly in their later years? Scripture furnishes us

with the answer (1 Sam. 3. 13). It would appear that when they were young they were not trained in the way they should go.

Moreover, there is another matter to be taken into consideration in connection with the government of the house and training aright of children. We find that men of old had many wives (Deut. 17. 17), as had Solomon, and in his case we are expressly told his wives turned away his heart from the Lord. But we read, "In the beginning God made them male and female," and it is added, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh"—not wives. Again, we find the remarkable passage in Malachi 2. 15; this passage would seem to indicate the mind of God in the matter; and, although a plurality of wives appears to have been allowed in Israel, probably for much the same reason as Moses allowed an Israelite to put away his wife (Matt. 19. 8), yet we can easily understand that such a state of matters would tend to the destruction of all real family ties and household godliness. This too may be seen to have been the case in 1 Samuel 1. 6. We have only to examine into the condition of life to-day in an Eastern harem to see how such a state of things militates against the right training of children in the way they should go. Could there be the respect to the father, the oneness between him and the wife, the sympathy and unity of thought so important to a right training of the children in the fear of God and love of His laws under such circumstances? But, again we repeat, in all the training of an Israelite, no matter how rightly this was carried out, nor how carefully such an one was instructed in the law of God, all this outward conformity and walking in the ways of Jehovah was something quite different from the eternal salvation sought for by a devout Israelite; this latter could only be obtained by the work of the Cross and the redemption then accom-

plished for believing Israelites. It was in hope of this future salvation that a godly Israelite died (Heb. 11. 13). And to this the Passover pointed as a thing yet to be accomplished. In further proof of what we say, we would refer our readers to Ezekiel 33. 18, where we see that the righteous turning from his righteousness, that righteousness would not be remembered. This is one of the points on which Christendom has gone so sadly astray, confounding the righteousness of a righteous life with the righteousness of God accomplished by Christ. In a righteous life we could never stand before God, for one life alone has satisfied Him—the life of His spotless Son. In the righteousness accomplished by His atoning death I stand complete in Christ Jesus, He being made unto me, as a believer, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor. 1. 30). Now although the children of a God-fearing Israelite who was ordering his house aright would be partakers of a temporal salvation, and that on account, firstly, of their being born into the nation and its privileges, secondly, because trained in accordance to the will of God; yet this salvation was connected, in the first place, with earth and the land of promise. We cannot now further follow this interesting and instructive line of thought; but before turning to our other text, which brings us to the present dispensation, we would remark that those blessed in the land of promise, saved from their enemies, saved from the idolatry of the heathen and the gross forms of vice that accompanied that idolatry, associated with their worship, and even the very service of their temples; those who were worshippers of Jehovah, partakers of the blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, might yet never be partakers of eternal salvation, great as those blessings were.

Turning now our thoughts and attention to this New Testament portion of God's Word, we find ourselves in a very different economy. If eternal salvation was that to which an Israelite looked as a thing of the future, that

which was only to be attained after a longer or shorter walk with God in His precepts, we, on the contrary, commence our walk with God on earth by becoming His sons through faith (Gal. 3. 26), and eternal salvation is with us a present thing (Titus 3. 5). The Lord's Supper now points us back to the Cross, through which redemption has become an accomplished fact, that redemption to which a godly Jew looked forward and for which he hoped; yea, so fully and so completely is the salvation of the believer accomplished that the Apostle Paul could say in triumph, as he gazed at the Cross, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live" (Gal. 2. 20). So completely is the standing and relationship of the sinner changed by faith that those who were by nature children of wrath can now address God as "Abba, Father" (Rom. 8. 15). Thus it will be seen that that which was the hope of the Israelite, and, moreover, of all those who sought God (Job 19. 25; Acts 10. 35) in His appointed way, is to the true believer to-day that which he at present possesses and enjoys, in proportion as he makes his own deceitful heart the liar, and has perfect confidence in that which God has said (1 John 5. 10). Be it remembered that this Epistle of John is addressed to the family of God (chap. 2. 12).

We have said that the Breaking of the Bread points us back to the finished work of the Cross, but we would also notice that it should ever bring to our remembrance the coming again of Him who has loved us, and who has filled our hearts with love to Himself, and the consummation or completion of our salvation in that day when our bodies of humiliation shall be changed and fashioned like to His glorious body (1 Pet. 1. 5; Phil. 3. 21). But let none confound this salvation, which is yet future—the time when the believer will be delivered from the dominion of sin as completely as he is now delivered from the condemnation of sin—with that which is present, and into which he has already entered by faith.

Now, as we have noticed that into which an Israelite was born by natural birth, and the blessings therewith connected, and those apart from eternal salvation, we would next examine the position of a child born into a godly household, and the blessings connected with such a position. Firstly, we would remark that the children of Christian parents are not in the same position as the children of an unbeliever, or of a heathen, in that they have greater opportunities of hearing God's Word read and expounded and seeing it practised. It is a common practice of those who employ infant sprinkling or household baptism to speak of the children of Christians, unbaptized, as little heathen; this offensive language is founded on the assumption that baptism brings an unregenerate person either into the House of God or into the circle of Divine rule; or, again, makes such a member of the Church of Christ, as erroneously taught by the Church of England; whereas the dipping or sprinkling of an unregenerate person leaves that person just what he was and where he was before. We think it will greatly help our readers in this subject, which we cannot further follow here, to notice that, without exception, baptism is connected with a repentant condition in the one baptized. This will be found the case with the disciples of John the Baptizer, and with those of the Lord Himself. In the case of John's disciples it indicated a certain condition: they were to look for the One who was to come after him. With the believer of this dispensation it speaks of our death and burial with the One who has come, and our participation with Him in resurrection and eternal salvation.

In what then does the child of a Christian differ from that of a heathen or unbeliever? It differs in so far as, being in a God-ordered household, the child, by natural birth, is brought under the rule of God indirectly.

We have something analogous to this in the Old Testa-

ment, where we find the Gibeonites under the rule of Israel, and thus indirectly under God's rule as carried out in Israel, although not of the house of Israel any more than a child to-day in the family of a believer is in the House of God; still the Gibeonites would participate in much of the nation's blessing, and this without circumcision, the outward sign of covenant relationship with God. A child brought under the indirect rule of God is brought into a place of present blessing; that is, a place where it can be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. But our subject widens as we proceed. We have spoken of being indirectly under the rule of God, and we need to explain what is our meaning by this expression. When there has been marriage in the Lord—and this is something far beyond two Christians being united as man and wife—there can be a godly house—that is, a house in which the will of God can be done on earth as it is in heaven. In such a home the wife will be subject to the husband as the head, even as the husband is subject to Christ, and the children will be under the rule of the parents; yea, even the servants in the house will be brought in some measure under godly rule through the head of the house and his wife being ruled of God through His indwelling Spirit and the written Word.

Into this position of earthly blessing a child may be brought and here trained in the will of God, thus becoming partaker of a temporal salvation in so far as it escapes the grosser forms of sin and is outwardly conformed to the mind of God by being subject to the will of God-fearing parents. But all this is apart from eternal salvation. We have this same line of thought brought before us in 2 Peter 2. 18-22, and of this passage we would beg the careful perusal of our readers. It speaks of those, we believe, who have been made partakers, in measure, of salvation through the knowledge of the truth, and have escaped much of the corruption of sin, but who are yet not partakers of eternal life.

As with Israel in the past, with children to-day, and still more with the nations in a coming age, when righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, blessing may be enjoyed, the rule of God submitted to at least outwardly (Ps. 66. 3 and 81. 15, margin), yet there may be no divine work accomplished in the heart ; and this outward conformity may be followed by open rebellion, as with the nations after the thousand years of millennial blessing, when the kingdom is set up on earth. So with our children to-day : they may be born into a place of blessing, they may have much knowledge of the things of God, and escape in great measure the corruptions of the world ; yet if they are to become present possessors of eternal life, they will need to be themselves converted—to be born of the Spirit through their personal faith in the Lord Jesus.

We purposely here refrain from entering into the position of those children who die in infancy, or before they are, by reason of their age, brought into a position of responsibility, simply remarking that we do not believe that the position of the child of a heathen and of a believer differs in this case, both alike will be amongst the multitude of redeemed ones, yet will nevertheless form no part of the Body of Christ, as those will not who will be saved in the coming dispensation, any more than those who have been saved in the past.

But it may be asked, Of what advantage is it then to train our children aright in the things of God, if after all they may become rejectors of God's salvation and perish eternally ? Much every way ; for does not the goodness of God lead to repentance (Rom. 2. 4) ? If there is then instruction in this goodness, may not God own and bless it to the bringing of those dear to us to a right knowledge of Himself ? Although the outward training may not lead in all cases to eternal salvation, yet it is not for us to anticipate such an issue in the case of our children, but,

on the contrary, to be expecting and crying to the Lord for their conversion, pleading His promises, and remembering that according to our faith it shall be unto us.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(*To be continued.*)

LIVING GOD AND FATHER.

WHEN God is spoken of as the living God in Old Testament Scriptures, He seems to be set forth as the great and mighty source of all things,¹ which indeed He is. Creator of heaven and earth, yea, of the universe, with its millions of stars, He, the living God, is the one great source of all, apart from Whose power there is no life nor motion. This eternal, omnipotent God, unlike man, with his inventions, has all His creation works under His control. Man may invent a machine, and after he has fitted it and set it in motion, find himself powerless to restrain it, and be crushed to death beneath its iron wheels. But whether we turn our eyes to the hosts of heavenly orbs, or to the raging seas of this earth, or to the nations of men upon the earth, all are under His control. He is the one living and true God.

To this living God, with His infinite love as well as power, sinners are called upon to turn; to the living God² from the vanities of false gods, to serve Him, as the Thessalonians did.³ Such service is only possible to those who have had their consciences purged from dead works by the blood of Christ.⁴ Nothing else will do. If it be service within, then liberty for the entrance into the presence of God is by the blood of Jesus, by the way which He dedicated for us, a new and living way through the veil—that is to say, His flesh.⁵ He has been slain, but is living. Thus His death and His resurrection life are linked up together, and He is the way, or means

¹ Jer. 10. 6-16.

² Acts 14. 15.

³ 1 Thess. 1. 9.

⁴ Heb. 9. 14.

⁵ Heb. 10. 19, 20.

of access, into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies. How this should endear Him to the believer's heart when we remember that it was only by dying He could become "the way, and the truth, and the life" to sinners and to saints. Then this unspeakable privilege of serving the living God must be prefaced by a living sacrifice, as we hear His voice in Romans 12. 1, saying, "I beseech you . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice," the word for sacrifice meaning a slaughtered thing. Hence, like the way into the presence of God, death and life are seen in the words "living sacrifice"; that body which is dead indeed on account of sin, but made alive on account of His Spirit which dwells within,¹ and thus holiness is the characteristic of that body ("a living sacrifice, holy"), wherewith to serve the living God, in the serving of Whom we need fear no foe. A believer thus serving Him, within and without, as a priest and a Levite, will be able to face every difficulty and overcome every foe, whether it be the wicked spirits in the heavenlies (as told out, in figure at least, in Joshua 3. 10), keeping the believer from enjoying at present his possessions, as given unto him by the Father in the heavenlies in Christ; or the flesh, as seen in the giant of Gath, defying the armies of the living God, but falling before the smooth stone from the shepherd boy's sling, guided by the hand of the living God;² or yet again, the worldly-wise men, with lions at their command, as seen in Daniel in the den of lions, and the words of the king in the morning: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God able to deliver thee?" And from the midst of the lions, whose mouths were shut, came the answer, for God was able. Nothing too hard for the living God. Well might John say, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world."³

Entering into the infinite power of this living God, Paul

¹ Rom. 8. 10, 11.

² 1 Sam. 17.

³ 1 John 4. 4.

could say, "We labour and strive because we have our hope set on the living God."¹ Thus he incessantly laboured toward a poor doomed world in the joyful tidings of the blessed God, and for the saints that were dear to his heart, because of Him to Whom they belonged in the will of God. And thus he fought against his own body, Satan, and the wild beasts of Ephesus, knowing that the living God is over all, and that He would preserve him into His heavenly kingdom, crowning at last the overcoming warrior, successful runner, and faithful steward. May we too know Him as the living God!

From the living Father came down the living bread and living water,² partaking of which we became "sons of the living God,"³ not only as to our birth position as children, but, feeding upon that living bread, we become like Him in our nature and character. Just as He who lived by the living Father was so like Him that He could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," so by our feeding upon the living bread, and this becoming part and parcel of our very being, we become like Him, living water flowing out of the belly, the energy of the living Holy Spirit in the innermost parts of the believer causing an outflowing of the living water, so that thirsty ones may drink and live.

We can only feed upon the living bread by reading, pondering, and obeying the Scriptures. The Word of God is able to sustain the soul of the believer, and also to lay bare the intents of the heart, dividing between soul and spirit, affections and knowledge, or, in other words, actions and the motives that prompted them, in both of which it is a living Word.⁴ We need grace from our God to enable us to feed upon the living bread day by day; and may our desire be deepened for the operation of that living Word in our hearts and consciences, so that all that is not of God

¹ 1 Tim. 4. 10.² John 6. 51, 57.³ Rom. 9. 26.⁴ Jno. 6. 63, Heb. 4. 12.

may be brought to the light and put off and away from us.

But there are other relationships in which Christ is seen in connection with the believer, which fill the heart with joy and the spirit with praise. He is the Son of the living God in **Matthew 16.**, and, as such, the foundation of the Church, the Rock upon which living stones have been built up,¹ an eternal building which the counsels of Hades shall never prevail against, the vastness and beauty of which remain to be seen in that day when He shall present her to Himself in glory not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

He is also the foundation of an earthly building, in which only those are who as living stones have come to Him the Living Stone, as described in **1 Peter 2. 4**, **Hebrews 13. 13**. This building is only for earth, and in the sphere of man's responsibility, hence it may be marred and wasted.² This building is temple of this great Source of all things, the Creator of the universe, the living God.³ As we view it thus, what glory and honour are imparted to it by the presence of the living God. What a privilege for the child of God to form part of this Holy Temple, this dwelling-place of the living God! Oh, that it may be said of it, as it was said of the Temple in Jerusalem, "Every thing saith Glory."⁴ Surely the deep desire of each heart in this place of privilege, and therefore of solemn responsibility, should be, like the thought of David's heart, as expressed in **1 Chronicles 29. 1-5**, to withhold nothing, time, talent, or means, that would make this building to be befitting the Inhabitant thereof, as far as is possible to saints in time and on earth. When the beauties of the life of Jesus shine out in each living stone, He shall take pleasure in the work of His hands, encircling it with a wall of fiery protection, and satisfying each individual heart, as the Glory in the midst.⁵

FRANK VERNAL.

¹ Eph. 2. 20.

² Gal. 1. 13.

³ See also 1 Tim. 3. 15.

⁴ Ps. 29. 9.

⁵ Zech. 2. 5.

WARFARE.

“A GOOD soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2. 3) speaks to us of a phase of life belonging to the believer, as distinct as that for son, servant or priest: warfare as well as worship, the armour and hands to handle the weapons of our warfare, as well as holy hands lifted up in prayer.

“He teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight” (Ps. 144. 1), a schooling and discipline to which as yet the young convert is a stranger. When God led Israel forth from their bondage He purposely led them a long way round, lest going through the land of the Philistines they should *see war*, and repent, and return to Egypt (Exod. 13. 17). The joy, the song, the new life in its youth and vigour, is for the young convert, not the battlefield. It has been the ruin, alas! of not a few that they have seen and known the conflicts and cares of assembly difficulties, that belong only to older and more tried men.

“From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war” (Num. 1. 3). There is a fitness that needs attaining unto.

It does not follow that because war has been declared that it is one perpetual scene of fight; there may be very considerable intervals between the hand-to-hand engagements with the foe, and yet it is a time of warfare, and must be until conditions of peace have been signed. It is well that such momentary pauses be used to good purpose. Laying in ammunition and throwing up earthworks makes the seeming quiet a busy time; indeed, the foe is not dead, the hand-to-hand fight will come, and the struggle be the more deadly by reason of the pause. God has sworn that He will have war with Amalek from generation to generation (Exod. 17. 16); no conditions of peace.

Solemn indeed is the voice of God to us at such a time as the present. Two cases are given us of God—one to follow, the other to shun. In 2 Chronicles 14. Asa enters upon a peaceful time—"the land had rest" ten years; "He built fenced cities in Judah, for the land had rest" (ver. 6). He put to good purpose this opportunity. Gates and bars, strongholds and spears, places strengthened and forces multiplied, all in readiness when the day of battle did come, for come it did. Zera, the Ethiopian, with a million of men, came; and note, Asa did not rest upon his strengthened position nor added forces; his cry to God was, "We rest on Thee: let not man prevail against Thee" (2 Chron. 14. 11); and God gave the victory. Asa did not under-estimate the enemy, nor over-estimate his own position, most fatal in warfare.

The warning is in 1 Samuel 13. 1. Saul reigned two years; ease and luxury, self-pleasing and self-seeking, but the day of battle did come, and, alas! there was not found either sword or spear (ver. 22). A morning by morning military parade and fair show, but when Goliath of Gath appeared upon the scene terror and dismay. When David, the prepared-one of God, came down, he saw, not only Israel's dishonour and nakedness, but in the blasphemous boast of Goliath "the God of Israel was defied." Did he under-estimate the foe? No; he measured his height, saw his target and spear, greaves of brass and armourbearer, and on that day, the fortieth day, the last day of Israel's probation—each day added new energy, fresh and increasing boldness, to his blasphemous daring, until now never so strong, never so defiant and bold—Goliath's hand is upon the victory. Israel, never more feeble and impotent, they contributed nothing to that day's glory. It was then, at such a moment, God gave the victory. David's cry was like Asa's: "Let not man prevail against Thee."

In the taking of Ai an over-estimate of their strength,

a self-sufficiency which, with the self-seeking, the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment, was disastrous. "Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai." Jericho indeed did take all; it was a large place. Thirty and six men slain in the fight; Israel were losers, and God was dishonoured.

Two other cases, written aforetime for our learning, are given us, where men presumed to go and fight when God distinctly said, "I am not with you." But they "rebelled and went," they "returned and wept" (Deut. 1. 41-46). Chased by Amorites as by bees, before whom they fled. Self-conceit—"We are well able"; self-will—"We will go up"; and God said, "Go not up."

In Numbers 21. 1: "Arad the Canaanite fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners." Living Israelites held in an enemy's grasp! Rather had they left them dead on the field of battle; better had they died fighting. Taken prisoners! what a reproach!—a disgrace they could not bear! How they cried to God on their behalf, and ceased not until God gave them victory, and the deliverance of their brethren was accomplished. And, alas! how many once shoulder to shoulder in the fight, or side by side at the feast, are now alive in the enemy's grasp! May we feel as they did the terrible dishonour, and cry for the power to deliver such, considering ourselves, for what are we and who are we? reminded ever of this, "Without Me ye can do nothing," and "My glory will I not give to another."

G. R. GEDDES.

THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD.

(Continued from page 17.)

WE have in some measure, we trust, shown the present blessing into which a child may be brought, but we have by no means exhausted our subject. Before continuing it, however, we would here remark that the greater the blessing is the greater is the responsibility, the clearer the light the more solemn the position of those who turn from it to their eternal condemnation.

With regard to the blessings brought to man in this world by an outward conformity to the will of God we might say very much, for God's laws are good for man as man, and bring their blessing when obeyed. This opens up to us a fresh and wonderful field of thought. Look at the professing Christian nations of the earth, and compare their condition with the heathen world. Turn to our own favoured land, and let us ask ourselves how much of the national blessing we enjoy is to be attributed to that measure of outward conformity that there is to the will of God. But we may follow this line of thought further. When we examine the heathen world as at present, but more so in the past, we find there has been a continual degeneration going on in the knowledge of God. The subject would lead us too far from that which is directly before us, so we would only remark that heathendom seems to us to represent a degenerate knowledge of God. As the ages passed, each successive development seemed to lose more of the knowledge of the one true God and to sink into greater darkness. The God of Heaven becomes the "Unknown God," ignorantly worshipped; so Hinduism, in which we can trace the remains of sacrificial offerings and blood-shedding, derived originally, we doubt not, from a knowledge of the one true God, however imperfect that knowledge and however corrupt

it may have become, gives place to the teaching of Gautama and Buddhism, in which we find all traces of these things well-nigh, if not quite, obliterated. Mahomedanism stands in rather a different position, being a combination of Judaism with degenerate idolatry. Let those who boast themselves on the dignity of man and his natural virtues tell us where we can find inhabitants of the earth that have not, more or less, been influenced by one of those great periods of revelation—namely, that to the ancient fathers of our race, with its simple ritual of sacrifice, as seen in connection with Abel, also Job 42. 8, influencing mankind down to the days of Pagan Rome; or in the revelation of God to the chosen nation of Israel, with its more complicated ritual of sacrificial offerings; or again in the full revelation of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, which revelation has influenced countless multitudes of the human race, directly or indirectly. Let the man who can so do point out that there is anything good or noble in man's character that has not been produced by the effects of one of these three periods of revelation of God to man, by which He has moulded, in more or less measure, the lives of men to His own will; although there has ever been, and will be to the end of the ages of earth, a continual degeneration and departure from God, from the very character and nature of man, and on account of his being continually subject to the influence of evil. Our readers may think that we have wandered from our original subject, but it is not so: one thought leads us to another, and it is often well to look into the surroundings of a subject, the better to understand that with which we are more immediately occupied. We turn again, then, to the subject of the godly education of a child.

In what does it advantage such when converted to God that they have been prior to this brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?

Roman Catholics, we have heard, say, "Give us a child to educate till it is seven, and you may do as you will with it afterwards." Hence their anxiety to instruct the young, moulding their minds in youth in lines of thought that will produce fruit in after life. Take, for example, again the training of the British Army. Very many of the individuals of which it is composed are taken from the lowest grades of society, yet see what discipline and training can effect in the ranks of our regular troops. We might cite even the Salvation Army—so-called—as an illustration of what may be accomplished by a mere human organization. And do we suppose that God has no organization, no school of training by which to fit men and women for lives of usefulness? But some will reply, "Oh! when a child is converted, all that is needed will be accomplished in it; will it not then become all that we can desire?" We fear that here has arisen one of the most serious mistakes, and one that has in no small measure hindered the work of God among His saints, more especially among those professedly gathered to His name. What are the facts? Why so few who seem fitted to guide and go before the saints? so few that can walk together with their brethren? keeping rank and rightly guiding the flock. Why are these things so, we ask? Is it not from the lack of an early and right education in a godly home? The spoilt child, who has never had his will controlled, who has only been petted into doing its parents' wishes, will in all probability grow up the wilful man—the man who will be unable to walk in step with his brethren, whose temper will be manifested when they cross his purposes. Such a man may do well as an independent, or the leader of a meeting in which he has his own way and where his will is law, but let him be placed in a scriptural position which necessitates his working and acting with others, and he speedily manifests his inability so to do, even although he may be clear as to principles and a strong

protester against what he sees wrong around him and in others. It is such men who have wrecked the work of God, and still will do so, for such seem to have little power to patiently and quietly carry out the Lord's mind. Almost the first trial of their principles that arises you may find them acting in a manner exactly opposite to what they professed to believe is the mind of God; nor is it that they are not in many cases sound in principle, but the want of a right early training has spoiled good material—lessons learned in a divided house, where the husband says one thing and the wife another before the children, so that the little ones early learn that they have but to appeal from the command of the one parent to the other in order to get that command set aside, so getting their own way. Such lessons have had their lasting effect, and the evil fruits of early training thus show in later life.

But some may say, Do not facts seem to disprove some of your statements? do we not see some directly converted from the world doing a mighty work for God, and leading companies of Christians in paths of righteousness? This is true, yet in many cases these very men, placed in a scriptural position, would soon manifest their inability to work with their brethren, and prove thus the truth of what we are saying. Besides, it must also be remembered, to our shame, there is often far better training given to children of mere professors, care being taken to bring them up in outward conformity to the things of God, while the children of real Christians are too often lamentably neglected in these matters, under the supposition, it may be, as we have before said, that all this will be set right at conversion. We do not question that there may be exceptions to what we have written with regard to early training, but the fact remains, where are the men to go before the saints—men who can rule themselves, men who can rule for God in their

own houses, making the wife and children feel that in yielding to their will they are not simply bowing to the caprice of a man or to the will of a despot, but to the will of one in whom the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven? Such men are needed to rule and guide in the Churches of God, being ensamples to the flock.

It was once remarked in a conference, if we recollect rightly by the late Henry Groves, "All elder men ought to be overseers, but they are not." How many we see disqualified when compared with the Divine pattern (1 Tim. 3. and Titus 1.).

Again, we must remind our readers that we cannot argue from anything that we see around us in the present day. We are in weakness, and if ever the work of God is to be done as He, we believe, would have it, men will need to be trained aright to do it.

While we rejoice at what is and has been accomplished, we look forward to greater things. It is not our intention here to enter into the training of young Christians in the House of God by those who have themselves been trained of God—a subject of the utmost importance, for we can little conceive what the results would have been on earth had the Churches of God continued to walk in the ways that be in Christ Jesus. It is not for us to lament the past, nor to be discouraged by the present, but it is for us to seek with all earnestness to attain to the Divine standard, both in our individual and collective capacities, and thus will the will of God be accomplished, first in, then by and amongst us, in this our day and generation.

The bringing up of a child in the nurture and admonition of the Lord is, as we have sought to point out, of the utmost importance in order to its future usefulness, when, in the goodness and mercy of God, that child is brought under His direct rule in His own House upon being born of the Spirit and being baptized in Holy Spirit into one Body. For be it

remembered that, as we have already said, we believe that being born by natural birth into the house of Christian parents, themselves walking godly, brings such under the rule of God through the parents, their wills being subject to God, and the child's will being subject to theirs. At conversion the child becomes directly responsible to God to yield to Him obedience in all things; and how greatly will the early training help such an one in his walk, that he may with subject will know how to behave himself in the House of God.

Let none suppose that in writing as we have done in this article we in the smallest measure make light of or set aside the need of the new birth in those treasures given us to train for God. Far, far from this. Let us labour for it in prayer, let us expect it, and never rest till we see them, not only outwardly conformed to the will of God by being trained aright, but inwardly owning Him as their Lord, and being made temples of Holy Spirit. Yet, whilst earnestly desiring the conversion of our children, let us by no means fall into the grievous error of thinking that their conversion will accomplish necessarily all that is required in them to fill the place in the assemblies of the saints that God would have them. It will undoubtedly ensure their eternal salvation; but be it remembered that we are not our own, but are bought with a price to serve the Lord, who has loved us unto death, to serve Him not only in this age, but in that which is to come, and that our place in the coming kingdom, and our reward then, will be as we have striven for the mastery now. Therefore may we have wisdom so to strive that we may not lose our crown, and so to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord that they may when converted not only be Christians and saints before God, but Christlike in their character and saintly in their walk. It has been said by one of earth's great men that "our greatest mission is to rescue admitted truths from

the neglect caused by their universal admission." Unquestionably there is too much truth in these words. If some of the thoughts brought before our readers are admitted truths, needing afresh to be brought to our remembrance (2 Pet. 3. 1), and others again seem to be new or strange to some, we ask our readers to give them their prayerful and earnest consideration, to see whether these things be so.

Some of us, after years of sorrow because we could not do the will of God as we saw from His Word it should be done, are now in the place where we find liberty to practise what we have learned. Let us be in earnest, brethren; let us gird our loins, for the battle is the Lord's; let us be in earnest that our own individual lives should be what God would have them be, for here should the work of God begin; that our households should please Him well in all things; that the assemblies of the saints should be accomplishing His purposes on earth during the little while that we are left to witness, till He come whose right it is to reign, and we with Him enter into the kingdom, and, as overcoming ones, rule with Him over earth's subject nations (Rev. 2. 26, 27).

J. A. BOSWELL.

Fragment.

SAY not, my soul, "From whence
 Can God relieve my care?"
 Remember that Omnipotence
 Hath servants everywhere.
 His methods are sublime,
 His ways extremely kind;
 God never is before His time,
 God never is behind.

THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL A SECT.

(Continued from page 6.)

SEPARATION.

THE second canon which we are said to have set up is, "They require that every one allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper shall have previously broken off all ecclesiastical association in order to stand in their ranks."

It is well known that a very different practice from this obtains generally in the ranks of so-called Open Brethren, and also amongst many of those usually, but very improperly, styled Exclusive Brethren, including in particular that section of the latter with which our friend is identified; it being the custom amongst such to allow any to break bread with them who are supposed, with more or less certainty, to be "godly-walking saints, notwithstanding their inability to judge denominationalism."

For ourselves, we have not been content to follow this practice because of its having been taught by those who first came out from various denominations in the early part of this century, but have asked for the old paths, where is the good way to walk therein. Seeing plainly in Acts 2, that at the beginning they who continued stedfastly in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers were such as had not only received the word and been baptized, but had also been *added together*, and were continuing stedfastly in the Apostle's teaching and in the fellowship, we have asked again and again where is the Scriptural warrant for departing from this. No Scriptural reason has ever been given for the practice of allowing persons to break bread occasionally, or when they think proper; and this for the simple reason that none such exists. We make bold to say that occasional fellowship was unknown in apostolic times, and

is a mere human device of the estimable, but erring brethren already alluded to.

We have sought in the pages of this periodical and elsewhere to set forth, at first somewhat tentatively, afterwards, as God's Word became plainer to us, with more definiteness, the Divine principles of Scripture as to the fellowship of God's people in general, and also especially the provision made for difficulties of later times. We have always maintained most uncompromisingly that every believer of this dispensation is baptized by the Christ in the Spirit into the Body, that this act of the Lord Christ is altogether apart from any kind of deserving on the part of the baptized one, it is absolutely unconditional. Each member of His Body is as such the object of His tenderest love and care, and continues so to be eternally because and only because of His good pleasure. We have never so much as dreamt of assuming to be (as our friend scandalously affirms) "the" church either in fact or in name. Too highly do we prize the precious truth that, the Christ Himself as Son of the Living God builds the Church, to bring that down to the level of that in which human builders have a share. Far from us be it to aid and abet those who would confuse the Heavenly Thing, His Body, the Church which He Himself builds, with that which concerns human responsibility, and which gives to us blessed, and at the same time solemn opportunity to build gold, silver, precious stones, and not wood, hay, stubble.

Our friend speaks indeed of "contemplating in faith and love all members of Christ's Body, save such as are, or justly ought to be, under discipline," and says that "the self-same principle demands our receiving all godly-walking saints," etc. Now, this connection of membership of the Body with discipline is perfectly incongruous and utterly unscriptural. It is our privilege and duty to love every fellow-member of the Body without any exception. As He hath loved us, so

ought we to love one another. It is the old mistake that the ground of the One Body is the true basis of fellowship. Which it is not, and never was. A simple proof of this may be found in the fact that disciples were together and pleasing God previous even to the conversion of Saul, and therefore when the mystery concerning the Body was still hid in God.

As we have gone into these matters previously in considerable detail, and shown clearly from the Scriptures that separation from that which is contrary to God's Word is ever a needful preliminary for those who have been entangled therein ere they can be gathered together to do His will collectively, we need not enlarge on the matter now. There is no attempt whatever made in the article we are reviewing to examine our teaching, and show wherein the writer judges us to have erred in our interpretation of Scripture; though, if we had been wrong, there is no man living perhaps who could more successfully expose our mistakes. But instead of examining the use we have made of God's Word, and seeking to show us our error from this infallible source, our friend goes back to how "those acted who first and most deeply learnt from the Scriptures," etc. This is not far enough back for us at all. If they did what they thought right, what we want to know is the Scriptural basis on which they acted.

Our friend speaks of welcoming "all saints walking with God according to their measure unless they are tolerating plain heterodoxy preached in the place they frequented." It is known that this welcome is usually accorded to Christians from what are called Evangelical denominations, but hitherto we had understood that an invidious exception was made in the case of "Open Brethren," though the latter certainly do not tolerate the preaching of what is called plain heterodoxy. Indeed, it is within our knowledge that such doctrines are not tolerated by them at all, and persons holding

such views are excommunicated. Yea, we believe that so-called Open Brethren are quite as free from false teaching on what are called fundamentals as our friend's own party.

As the invidious distinction made in the case of these particular Christians has been already discontinued by some companies of so-called Exclusives, are we to understand from what is before us that it will now cease altogether as far as our friend and those with him are concerned? We have long felt that there is very little difference of principle between the latter and the so-called Open Brethren.

We especially notice and heartily endorse the remark, "What can one think of Christians whose bond of union or test is the acceptance of discipline in a local case at best dubious, if not mistaken and unjust!"

For ourselves, we can never be sufficiently thankful that we have been graciously preserved from the danger of such a bond of union as this—local circumstances having differed so widely that we have found our one bond in our common purpose of heart to follow the Lord and keep His commandments.

It is necessary for us before leaving this subject to say a few words on the introductory paragraphs of our friend's article. We shall not concern ourselves about his statement that our "portentous effort emanates from those professing Christians who fell back on compromise when the question of a true or false Christ was raised not quite fifty years ago," because, while we regard these words as far from conveying an impartial account of what took place, we could not for a moment defend the conduct of so-called Open Brethren at that time any more than we could approve of the action of the Exclusive Brethren. In so far as some of us are responsible for the former, and some, perhaps, for the latter (as having been since associated with those or with

these)¹, we sadly accept our share of guilt for the wrong, which, by God's grace, we have confessed and forsaken. What we are concerned more particularly to take cognizance of is, that our friend has seized at an opportunity of, as he thinks, putting us forward as "credible witnesses" that "these easy-going assemblies," as he calls the Open Brethren, "are lawless." Now, in the sense in which he is here speaking, we altogether and entirely repudiate this. We have left behind us, amongst the so-called Open Brethren, some of the most worthy and conscientious Christians we have ever known, some of the most godly men and women as to their individual lives that have ever lived on the earth. We have had to separate in many cases from companies which we should never dream of calling lawless, because of their association with other companies very different from themselves. Of these latter this is neither the time nor place to speak.

The same Word of God that has separated us from Open Brethren, so-called, is exactly what separates us from every section of so-called Exclusive Brethren. We do not remember to have met with any teaching amongst the former more contrary to the Truth of God as touching matters of assembly fellowship than is to be found in the compass of the article we are now reviewing.

(To be continued if God permit.)

C. M. LUXMOORE.

¹ Still, it is right that the present writer, who has been more closely linked with Open Brethren than most of his fellows, should point out that there are few amongst us who took any part whatever in the events that then occurred. Many, like himself, were unborn; many more were still unregenerate; probably there is not a single soul amongst us who took any active or intelligent part in the matter.

MARY OF BETHANY.

“AND she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at the Lord’s feet and heard His Word ” (Luke 10. 39).

In this verse there are five leading thoughts:—

1. The posture—“ sitting.”
2. The Teacher—“ the Lord.”
3. The place of learning—“ the feet.”
4. The attitude—“ learning.”
5. The subject—“ His Word.”

In the first we see that much-to-be desired calmness, in contrast to the restless will that hurries to and fro, as seen in Martha. But Martha was cumbered (“distracted,” R.M., verse 41; or, according to Newberry, “drawn” different ways) about much serving. The second suggests subjection to the one and only Master: “Ye call Me Master (Teacher, R.M.) and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am” (John 13. 13). “Sitting at the feet” suggests the thought of learning. Saul of Tarsus sat at the feet of Gamaliel, (Acts 22. 3), but eventually he had to pass through another school and under another Teacher, even, Mary-like, to sit at the Lord’s feet. Years after we hear him say, “In all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want; I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4. 12). This was not learnt at the feet of Gamaliel, but at the Lord’s feet, and not indeed in one day. The attitude of hearing would serve to remind us that “hearing” should always precede “doing.” “Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors” (Prov. 8. 34). The results of such hearing will be considered subsequently.

Mary listened to “His Word.” To us God has given

the Scriptures of Truth, to which we should listen even as Mary. Thus, in brief, we have one Book, one Teacher, and one school. The wise man says, "Of making many books there is no end" (Eccles. 12. 12). How encouraging to simple ones, who have little spare time at their disposal, is the thought that *one* Book alone, as unfolded by the Spirit of God, is necessary to make them wise unto salvation (2 Tim. 3. 14-17). At the same time, the books that men have compiled need not be despised, but they should never be allowed to usurp in our hearts the authority that God has given to His Word. Note especially Galatians 3. 8, 22, where the Scriptures are spoken of as possessing and executing the peculiar prerogative of God. Christians should take heed what they read, in these days of so much poisonous literature, in view of the exhortation, "Take heed what ye hear."

We will now consider some of the great issues resulting from Mary's position and occupation.

Of Mary the Lord said, and such is written for our learning, "Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10. 42).

Let us look at John 11. and 12.

I. Calmness in times of trial: "Mary still sat in the house" (John 11. 20).

II. Prompt obedience to the Word of the Lord: "The Master (Teacher, R.M.) is here, and calleth thee. And she, when she heard it, arose quickly and went unto Him" (vers. 28, 29).

III. Adoration and worship in the bestowal of her all on her blessed Lord (John 12. 1-8).

IV. A foresight of future events and apprehension of the Lord's purposes in redemption and resurrection are shown in her anointing the Lord beforehand to His burying.

As regards the first. Only those who have taken in spirit the place of Mary, "sitting at the Lord's feet," can

possibly stand the difficulties and trials of a world which lieth in the Evil One. Trials and difficulties there must and will be. "Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14. 22). Let us take heed, however, that it is not through our own folly—as, alas! too often is the case—that we suffer. God alone knows what suffering we may be yet called upon to endure for His Name. There are increasing around us dark and ever-darkening clouds ; but beyond all is the bright and happy morning, without a cloud to mar.

" Without a cloud between,
 Lord Jesus, haste the day.
 The morning bright without a cloud,
 And chase our tears away."

How well rewarded in such times of trial is the one who, like Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, for that good part shall by no means be taken away. This will be true in the private and individual life, with its trials, to which all are alike subject, but they yield peaceable fruit to the one who is exercised thereby (Heb. 12. 11). Nor shall reward be wanting to such as have endured those testings of a more public and collective character, which all who contend for the Faith are called upon to endure.

The second result likewise sprang from listening to His Word. Those only who hear will obey. At the moment Mary heard that the Master had come and called for her she arose with alacrity and went to Him. With her there was no hesitation, no delay.

The opening verses of chapter 12. present to us a truly lovely picture, and among that little group is seen the same Mary, again at the same place, here anointing the feet of Jesus. Perhaps the name "Jesus" is used in this place, rather than Lord, because Mary saw in Him the One about to suffer, as also the Saviour of Jehovah. Thrice we

find her at His feet—Luke 10., John 11. 32, and here. She loved that place.

“Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus” (John 12. 3). This ointment might have been sold for three hundred pence, an enormous sum (see ver. 5), a penny a day being the wage of a working man (Matt. 20. 2). Accordingly three hundred pence would be a working man’s wages for a whole year. It will be seen by a reference to R.M. Matthew 18. 28 that a penny was about $8\frac{1}{2}d.$ of English money. Nothing was of too much value to bestow on her adorable Lord. Furthermore “she wiped His feet with her hair.” His love demands our all. Whilst systematically laying by a portion—a tenth at least (Gen. 28. 22), a custom we believe to be godly—let us never forget that we are not our own, we are bought with a price; and He having ourselves should have all we possess besides. If this were apprehended it would cause us to be more careful than we sometimes are in the way we spend our time and money. Many a shilling spent in indulgence might then be saved to use for His glory and furtherance of the truth.

But all this is distasteful to the natural man. Judas Iscariot found fault. “Waste,” said Judas. So much time, talents, and money spent for the Lord will at all times bring down censure from those who are strangers to His grace and truth. “They be idle,” were the words Pharaoh uttered in reply to Israel’s request, “Let us go and sacrifice to our God”—an instance of Divine unity of thought connecting the Old Testament with the New. (See Rom. 15. 4.)

“Waste,” said Judas. “They be idle,” said Pharaoh.

Out of His abundance Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and this after death, but Mary anointed His body aforehand for the burying (Mark 14. 8). “She did it to prepare Me for burial” (Matt. 26. 12, R.V.). One was good, the other was better.

These last quotations bring us to the fourth result, suggesting the words of the Psalmist, "The secret (friendship) of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant (Ps. 25. 14). Exemplified again in Abraham: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do" (Gen. 18. 17), he being thrice called the *friend* of God. At the Lord's feet Mary learnt lessons very quickly which indeed the disciples were very slow to learn, if ever they did at all until after His resurrection (see Luke 24. 11, 13-27), notwithstanding their continual day-to-day intercourse with the Lord Jesus. This would appear to be further emphasized if it is a fact that this Mary (in as far as one can discriminate between the women named Mary in the New Testament) is never found at the tomb of the Lord, she having prepared the body already for the burial. This is suggestive of the thought that the life-long lesson, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection," can only be learnt as we are daily occupying the Mary-like place—"sitting at the *Lord's* feet."

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

THE RULE OF GOD.

IN the consideration of this subject it is important for us to keep before our minds the following points: Firstly, that whilst God has in the past ages ruled amongst the nations of earth, and is so doing to-day, this is something entirely different from His government and rule as delivered to, and carried out first in the midst of the nation of Israel and then in the churches of God in the present dispensation. With reference to the rule first referred to, will our readers examine Daniel 4. 25? They will there see that God's dealings with Nebuchadnezzar were in order that he might learn that the heavens do rule. When we read in the New Testament that "the powers that be are ordained of God," we do not understand that the special form of government was or is of God's appointment, but simply that, the authority taken from the hands of His people Israel, upon their failing to carry out the will of God, was vested in the hands of the Gentiles, as see Daniel 2. 37. Secondly, we shall have to carefully consider the divine principles of government as delivered, first to Israel as the chosen and separated people of Jehovah, then to the churches of God of the present dispensation. Thirdly, the means by which these heavenly principles are to be carried out. As we proceed with our subject we would ask our readers to carefully bear in mind these points. It must be evident to all of us that if God has given a revelation concerning the individual and collective responsibilities of His people, and yet has not given us the knowledge or the means of carrying out these responsibilities, our position will be one of continual perplexity and doubt—the question will ever arise, Who is to act for God? and how are we to act amidst the circumstances of perplexity in which the people of God are continually placed, through the failures of the

flesh and the carnality that still attaches itself to our humanity?

Again, if God has clearly indicated to us the means by which His governmental purposes are to be carried out amongst His saints, and yet has not revealed the nature and purpose of His government, we shall find ourselves in equal perplexity. Under such circumstances men may claim authority—but to do what? It cannot be to do the will of God if that will is not revealed; therefore it is evident first that we must have a distinct revelation of the principles of God's government for His saints, and, secondly, that it is absolutely necessary for us to understand the means by which God intends His government to be carried out, in order that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Before pursuing our subject further, we would remind our readers that what is true individually is true collectively: nothing less than perfect holiness is the standard held up for our individual walk, nothing lower must be set up. Our failing to attain to it will by no means allow us to alter the word of our God, and as in our individual life so in our collective life, whether it be our relationship in the family, our relationship in the assembly, or the relationship of the assemblies one to another, perfect holiness and heavenly perfection are to characterize all this. It is a standard unattainable in the flesh, a standard ever to be pressing on to, not to be laid aside on account of its difficulty and some human device or modification introduced, but prayerfully and carefully to be worked out in fellowship with Him who is able to do for us far more abundantly than we ask or think. Sectarianism is the outcome of carnality and death (1 Cor. 3. 3), and whenever this condition of carnality occurs there will be the leaving of divine principles, and the building again of that which we have destroyed.

Our God, the God of the whole earth, is a God of order; that which is contrary to His will is disorder and the result of sin. When the Lord Jesus came to this rebel world, He came to fulfil the purposes of God. In the volume of the Book it is written of Him, He came to do the will of His Father. But how came to pass the rebellion of man? Turning to Genesis 1. 28 we find him placed as ruler and head over creation, all things being subjected to him. We know not how long this condition of things lasted, how soon the fair picture was blighted, and the dark shadow of death cast its gloom over creation. Incomprehensible it is to us why God thus allowed His work to be marred and His purposes apparently for the time being to be set aside. But these things we shall yet understand when we know as we are known. It is important for us however to notice that we continually find the same thing occurring, although upon careful consideration we shall also observe that, when God does for the time being allow His purposes to be set aside, it is that eventually He will so work all things according to the counsel of His own will that something better, grander, and more glorious may be brought in. As our present purpose is more outline than detail we must pass on. Previous to the Flood we find man corrupting himself, and filling the earth with violence (Gen. 6. 5, 13). Doubtless the leaders in this rebellion against the will of God were the descendants of Cain—the first Unitarian, the man who brought beauty and nature as his offering, but rejected the blood which speaks of death and substitution. In the sudden destruction that overtook this rebellious race we may see prefigured the judgment that will overtake those who seek to approach God by other than His appointed way. As the waters of the Flood subsided and the occupants of the Ark stepped out once more upon the earth, we again find that the creation is placed under man's rule (Gen. 9. 1, 2), with the same injunction as

given in Genesis 1. 28, but with the addition of these words—"The fear and the dread"—sad indication of that change which had passed on the face of creation. We soon find the rebellion of man again manifested at the Tower of Babel, and instead of obeying God's injunction, "Replenish the earth," we find men congregated into one place, so that God has forcibly to scatter them over the face of the earth that they may fulfil His purpose in subduing and replenishing it. In connection with this spreading abroad we would ask our readers to carefully compare Deuteronomy 32. 8 with Genesis 11. 8. From these passages we are inclined to believe that the earth was divided to the sons of Adam by the number twelve, this being the number of the sons of Israel; the number twelve seems to us connected with rule and government. If we are right in thus understanding this portion of scripture it would probably indicate that after the confusion of tongues twelve different languages would be spoken, these being the root languages from which all other dialects would have their origin, although some of these languages may have early been lost. Be this as it may, we shall find as we proceed with our subject that the number twelve is associated with rule. We would say to those who may differ from us in the interpretation of Deuteronomy 32. 8, that however this passage of scripture may be understood, it in no way materially affects the subject before us, and we would ask their careful consideration of Genesis 10., specially verse 25, before coming to any conclusion on this matter.

Turning now to Genesis 11. we find Abraham called to separate himself from the nations amidst which he dwelt; his genealogy is given us in this chapter up to Shem. It will be remembered by our readers that the family of Cain must have all perished at the Flood; and not only so, there is also a setting aside of all the nations of the

earth at this point, and the selection of one individual with whom and through whom the purposes of God on earth are to be carried out. But we must here specially guard against being misunderstood. When we say the nations are set aside we refer to them as such, and not to the individuals of those nations, nor do we speak here of individual salvation, for this is not what we are occupied with.

It would be interesting to note the entanglements that beset the pathway of this man of faith who is called of God to go forth not knowing whither he goeth. Family ties have to be severed, old associations broken off before he can stand alone with God, and learn in that close intimacy into which the walk of faith has brought him God's purposes in all their fulness, first with regard to himself, and then through him with the nations of earth.

We have not time to pursue this subject here further, but we would ask our readers to carefully consider it for themselves; it is here that faith so often breaks down, for it is no easy thing for blood and flesh to stand alone with God, nothing but His power perfected in our weakness can enable us so to do. How many dear children of God, if they would quietly sit down and consider the pathway they are treading, would find that their surroundings are gradually and imperceptibly leading them aside from the pathway of faith! Family cares, earthly prosperity, the influence of those we love, may all be tending to hinder our fulfilling in its fulness the purposes for which God has called and separated us to Himself. Abraham was willing to go forth for Lot's deliverance, but he was not willing to walk with Lot in the pathway he had chosen for himself; but, as we have already said, we must leave this solemn and instructive history, and turn again to the subject with which we are more immediately occupied.

It will be noticed by our readers that the greater thing is set aside, the nations of the earth have again corrupted

themselves and become vile, and it is with the lesser thing, first the individual then with his family, that God is occupied. It is well for us specially to notice this point for it is a principle we shall find throughout Scripture, and should greatly cheer those who are true-hearted for God in their oftentimes lonely pathway.

With Abraham God makes two covenants, one in uncircumcision (Gen. 15. 18), the other in circumcision (chap. 17. 2, 10, and Rom. 4. 11.) In our study of the Word of God it is absolutely necessary, if we would have a right understanding of His ways, to carefully notice what are the unconditional promises and what are the conditional: the former must and will be fulfilled in spite of man's failure, the latter may never be fulfilled, as they depend upon man's complying with certain requirements, or in other words, doing something in obedience to the will of God. We shall frequently find that when the larger thing fails and is set aside the lesser becomes that in which the purposes of God are worked out, and the blessing of God reaches afresh to that which has departed from Him; therefore the smallness of a thing is never in itself sufficient proof that God is not in it, but rather the contrary.

Abraham, then, the called-one of God, separated first from the nations and then from his own family, becomes the possessor of the promises for himself, and for his seed after him for ever, that all nations should be blessed through him, and receives circumcision, a sign of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

GLEANINGS FROM SECOND LETTER BY PETER.

(Continued from page 9.)

“SEEING that His divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us by His own glory and virtue; whereby He hath granted unto us His exceeding great and precious promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”

The twice-occurring word “divine” here calls for especial attention. The meaning thereof expresses an attribute of God, rather than what is immediately personal. Thus *Godhead* in Romans 1. 20, as contrasted with *Godhead* in Colossians 2. 9, affords much help unto understanding precisely what is meant. The former being an attribute of God, while the latter is His own actual personality. For which reason a great philologist has written:—

“Paul in Colossians 2. 9 declares that in the Son there dwells all the fulness of absolute Godhead. They were no mere rays of divine glory which gilded Him, lighting up His person for a season and with a splendour not His own; but He was, and is, absolute and perfect God; and the Apostle uses *θεοτης* (*Theotēs*) to express this essential and personal Godhead of the Son.”

We entreat earnest consideration of these weighty words of sober truth.

This “divine power” of His is *eternal*, in the sense of being always the same. What it can effect may be gleaned from what it made out of the wrecked creation of Genesis 1. 1, etc.¹ Let none, however, forget that what is seen hath *not* been made out of things which do appear!² Who can by searching find out God?

¹ Note verses 1 and 2, then compare Isaiah 45. 18, which tells us that He created it *not* in vain—that is, NOT “without form!” (See Revised Version.)

² Heb. 11. 3.

In that energy, then, He hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness. But, ah, me! let each one duly note the *manner* in which He hath done this, even “*through* the knowledge of Him!”

Here indeed “knowledge is power.”

That knowledge is for the sustainment and increase of life already possessed.¹ A *measure* or extent of life that evidences itself in this conjoined godliness, which is not a mere holy manner of life,² which is for the most part negative, and causes the exhibitor thereof to contentedly move on amid or despite the clamant need and opportunities of one’s day; ensconced in the shelter of knowing that no finger of scorn and shame can be pointed at him. Whereas the godliness that is before us is at once affirmative and aggressive in the recognition of the due claims of God and men, where reverence is becoming, as being well and rightly directed. He called us by His own glory and virtue, by which He hath also granted us His exceeding great and precious promises, in order that, through these, we may become sharers in common of divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world by lust. Probably no simpler example thereof can be found than that given us in 2 Corinthians 6. 11 to 7. 1. There

POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS

are proffered by the Lord Almighty. Why this unique title? Do not confound it with Lord God Almighty. Let none of the Born-again imagine that the relationships thus presented are his or hers, unless indeed he or she has done the necessary cleansing by obedience to the words He hath spoken—even—

Come out;

Be separate;

Touch not.

¹ Compare John 10. 10.

² Compare chap. 3. 11.

For not till then does He say: "And I will receive you in, and will be for a Father unto you, and ye shall be to Me for sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Have you, child of God, been thus received?

Yea, and for this very cause

ADDING ON YOUR PART ALL DILIGENCE.

The seven things enumerated to be added by us are expressed according to the manner of true life-growth, which is in (*not to*), as contrasted with the increase of lifeless things which takes place by accretion—that is, an addition from without, rather than by growth-development from within!

Moreover, if those things are to be borne by us, we must with all diligence add them in for ourselves.

In our faith adding virtue. Fascinating and instructively far-reaching is this word Virtue. We submit that the meaning thereof is that, in everything and at all times, everywhere we be, and do, what is to us a virtue. Thus virtue in a good soldier is courage; in a friend, faithfulness; in a disciple, attentive devotedness to learn, and then to do what he has been taught; and so on. Let the Christian ask himself at all times, Is this, is that, a virtue in me? Great was the virtue in her of whom the Lord said, "Let her alone; she hath done what she could."

On the other hand, it is anything but virtue in such as withhold more than is meet, which tendeth to poverty; who might and ought rather with readiness to stretch forth their hands to the needy—yet do it not.

Having then added in our faith virtue, let us go on to add in our virtue knowledge, lest our zeal be great but disastrous for ourselves, and all affectable by us. (Compare here Rom. 10. 2.) Note, too, that it is no virtue in us when we ought and might add therein knowledge, and from any cause whatever do not so.

In our knowledge let us take heed to add temperance (that is, self-restraint), lest conceit of self possess us, or we become impatient with those who learn more slowly, or who may even "oppose themselves" by indifference, or the like, towards the knowledge of God.

Then in our self-restraint we must add patience. This not so much in order to bear long, but to bear up alone as one carrying a burden on the shoulder. In this again we must diligently add godliness—that is, well-directed reverence as recognising the claims of God and men. In such godliness we must add brotherly kindness, which lays hold of the manner of showing or living out godliness. Then last, but not least, add in our brotherly kindness love—yea, such love as God defines for us in Scriptures like 1 John 5. 3, 2 John 6—with the true test and assurance therefore, as see 1 John 5. 2, comparing also the importance of love with what love does and what it does not, as see 1 Cor. 13.

For if these things are ours *and abound*. Would we be diligent to have these things ours? Let us not neglect to have them as abounding in us. Then shall we be neither idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But stay! Are we either idle or unfruitful in the matter of such knowledge? If not, what is our doing? and where is our fruit? (Compare Rom. 6. 21.)

For he that lacketh these things is blind, seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins, and thus become unmindful of what a debt of love he owes. And that though once a day, in the consciousness of how much he had been forgiven, he loved much, and gladly went after the Lord whole-heartedly and fully—not following afar off.

Wherefore, brethren, let us give the more diligence to make our calling and choice sure, even to establish the same. For if these things we do, we shall never stumble, and thus never fall. (Compare Rom. 11. 11.)

For thus shall be richly supplied unto us an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us, therefore, be always ready to remind one another of these things, though they be well-known, and we ourselves established in the present truth, buying up the opportunity in our life as did Peter himself. Though to us what the Lord hath signified is so different to what He signified to the Apostle. Unto us His word is "Behold! I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every man as his work shall be." "Every man that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

Yea, thus shall Peter's desire and effort be fulfilled in and by us, worthy of those who accept the blessed fact that he and his co-workers under God, "Our Apostles," did not follow cunningly devised fables when they made known unto us the coming (that is, the presence) of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were indeed eye-witnesses of His majesty. Even His, who received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory,—

"This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And this voice they heard come out of Heaven who were with Him in the holy mount. Besides, we have the word of prophecy made more sure. Whereunto we do well when we take heed, *as* unto a lamp shining in a dark (squalid) place *until* the day dawn and the day star arise, in our hearts. *Knowing this first* that no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation. No, indeed! For men may discern the face of the sky, and foretell the weather (see Matt. 16. 2, 3; Luke 12. 54-56), but no prophecy ever came by the will of men, but men spake FROM GOD, being moved, or borne along, by the Holy Spirit, Whom also God hath given to us who are His, in order that we may know the things that are freely given to us by Him.

And of a truth "the secret things belong unto Jehovah our God, but those things that are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

JOHN BROWN.

THE WAY WHICH THEY CALL A SECT.

(Concluded from page 35.)

SUBJECTION.

"THIRDLY," it was stated in the original article "they claim to appoint elders over their associates as the expression of rule in the flock of God on earth." This curious statement being absolutely devoid of any shadow of foundation, the editor of the magazine was written to, and it was pointed out to him that no such claim had ever been made by us, and there was sent to him as complete as possible a set of *Needed Truth*, a copy of Mr. John Brown's nine addresses and other of our principal booklets, in order that he might see for himself how utterly contrary our teaching has been to that with which he had charged us. It is a source of thankfulness to us that in response to this, in a later number of the periodical, the writer says that he "feels bound to accept and repeat the disavowal."

We are therefore absolved from the necessity of examining the third part of the charge as originally formulated, and pointing out how utterly groundless it was, as the writer virtually admits that he was mistaken. Indeed, he has explained that the "various papers emanating from the new company of O.B.,"¹ as he is pleased to call us, "passed under"

¹ We desire it to be understood that we are not Open Brethren nor yet Close nor Exclusive Brethren. We neither claim nor admit the title of Brethren in any special or corporate sense whatsoever. Each of us is individually a brother or a sister as the case may be, just as much as, and no more than, every born again man or woman is a

his "eye." He "never possessed copies, read them over and returned them without taking note or even their titles." It was on this, though after a considerable interval, that "he based the impression given" . . . !

We should therefore have said nothing about the subject at all if our friend had been content with making the *amende honorable*. We feel, however, compelled to examine briefly the subject of the altered charge brought against us in the "Note," in which he retracts the previous accusation.

He now asserts that we claim to have elders, and insist strongly on their authority as one of our cherished and distinctive tenets. This statement is really as unfounded as the charge he has withdrawn. For, firstly, we have never laid any stress on the use of the word "elders" to describe those who are guiding amongst the flock; and, secondly, we have always insisted that all authority has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ. None of us would dream of denying that we believe in the necessity for overseers being amongst us. Moreover, we have explained previously how we believe that their being united themselves forms a very important link between the assemblies.

It is not at all clear whether our esteemed friend considers that men could only be bishops (overseers) as a result of ordination by apostles, nor does he make it plain whether he thinks that God never intended there should be bishops in the churches after the decease of those appointed in apostolic times. We find God's Word, however, perfectly plain in its teaching, on this point. We are therefore content, as we find overseers in some degree answering to the description of 1 Tim. 3., to thank God for them and esteem them very highly for their work's sake. Moreover, in such a day as this, when the Ancient Serpent has so largely succeeded in his efforts to make even God's children believe that brother or a sister respectively. We utterly repudiate all sectarian names and all sectarian application of scriptural names.

“every man is as good as his neighbour,” it would ill become us to neglect the many good words of our God which speak of the way in which He would have the younger ones submit to the elder ones, and so on. As surely as in the family circle, the children are bidden submit to the parents, and as definitely as the wife is exhorted to submit to her husband, so surely so definitely are we in the assembly circle taught to obey them that have the rule over us and to submit to them.

And be it well noted that we do not submit to them because they have authority, but because they are under the authority of the Lord Christ. The reason why I do what an elder brother tells me is exactly the same as led the soldiers of the centurion to obey him. “I,” said this man of faith, “am a man under authority”; and because he was under the authority of the Roman Emperor the soldiers went and came at his bidding in the service of Cæsar, and his servant also yielded him ready obedience. So because I see that elder brother of mine himself under the rule of God, himself owning the authority of the Lord Christ, I can do his bidding within the circle of the will of God.

We shall not enlarge on this subject now. We believe that God’s Word contains ample provision for order and rule amongst those whom He is now gathering together to the Name, and it is the firm conviction of the present writer that if we continue to go on with God, we yet shall find in the Scriptures far more definiteness of teaching as to overseers and their work than we have hitherto learned.¹

We have not attempted to follow our esteemed friend, line by line, through his “Note to the Latest Sect,” because it commences, as we have pointed out, with a thorough perversion of our position. His last sentence, “To dispense with

¹ We desire to bespeak our reader’s careful attention for the articles on this most important subject, which commence in the current number of this periodical—“The Rule of God,” by J. A. Boswell, p. 41.

due appointment is as wrong as to unduly appoint," seems almost as if he were determined to condemn us anyhow (*see* Matt. 11. 16-19). We might ask, What is due appointment? Do our friend, and his party duly appoint? If not, they dispense with due appointment.

In conclusion, we desire to offer a few words of explanation, especially for the information of friends who may have read little or nothing of our early numbers, and may be inclined to say, "As concerning this sect it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against." We confess that after the way which they call a sect, we serve God, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets; yea, all God has caused to be written in the Scriptures.

We wish then, firstly, to reiterate that it is to us a matter of blessed certainty, that through God's free grace to undeserving sinners, every born-again man, woman, and child not only has the forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, but is also a member of the Body of Christ, was sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise on believing, and will certainly be caught up to meet the Lord in the air in the glad, soon-coming morning of His presence.

None the less for this, but rather the more, do we esteem it a matter of deep import for each child of God—

Firstly, that as a disciple of the Lord Jesu she or she be baptized in water, and in all else seek truly to sanctify Christ as Lord in his heart or in hers.

Secondly, that his or her association with other Christians be in accordance with the revealed will of God. That if found in a religious association, where believer and unbeliever are yoked together, or in an ecclesiastical organisation, where the whole will of God cannot be done, he should come out therefrom seeking from God both help in that coming forth and help for what is to follow.

We ask none to join us, we ask none to believe us; but

we do ask every child of God to bring as well his individual life as his ecclesiastical position to the test of God's Word. We must each give an account of himself to God.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

THE HUSBANDMAN.

IN Psalm 80. we read that God brought a vine out of Egypt and prepared room for it by casting out the heathen. He caused it to take deep root so that it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the cedars of God. We learn from Isaiah 5. 7 that the vineyard of Jehovah of Hosts was the House of Israel, and the men of Judah the plant of His delight. The figure of the vineyard applied to Israel suggests the thought of fruit-bearing. Israel alone of all the nations of the earth was the one which God chose and set apart for Himself as His peculiar people. His constant and unwearied care over that nation as His vineyard is beautifully told out in the words of Isaiah 27. 3: "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." In return for all the labour and care which God expended on that vineyard He looked for and expected fruit which would not only cheer His heart (Judges 9. 13), but would likewise make glad the heart of man (Ps. 104. 15). The disappointment which God suffered through the unfruitfulness of His vineyard is seen in the touching manner in which He addresses Himself to His people in Isaiah 5. 1-7, when He calls the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the men of Judah to judge between Him and His vineyard: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Israel's rebellious and barren condition is further graphically portrayed in the parable which the Lord Jesus

speaks in Matthew 21. 33. It was God who having planted the vineyard with a noble vine, wholly a right seed (Jer. 2. 21), hedged it round about and built the winepress therein, and when the time of fruit drew near sent His servants to receive of the fruits. The reception which His servants, the prophets, and His messages through them received at the hands of Israel is seen in the solemn treatment to which the fruit-seeking servants are subjected by the vineyard keepers in this parable. The climax of Israel's guilt however is reached when God sends His beloved Son that they might pay reverence to Him, but instead, when they saw Him they said among themselves, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him and take His inheritance." "What," asks the Lord Jesus, "will the lord of the vineyard do unto those husbandmen?" and ready to condemn others while they sought to justify themselves they answer, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto others who shall render him the fruits in their seasons." The Lord Jesus accepts this judgment and immediately answers, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected the same is become the head of the corner. . . . Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Long and patiently had God borne with His rebellious people, lovingly had He appealed to their hearts by various means in order that they might turn from their evil ways and render unto Him the fruits which His heart desired, but all in vain. They "hold fast deceit;" "they refuse to return" (Jer. 8. 5). They loved strangers, and after them they were determined to go (Jer. 2. 25), and brought their apostasy to a climax in the rejection of the Righteous One of whom they became the betrayers and murderers (Acts 7. 52). So that God looks no longer for fruit from that nation, but turns to find it from a different source.

In John 15. we find the Lord Jesus Christ surrounded by the little company of His own faithful followers, so soon to be left as His witnesses in the scene where He was rejected, and addressing them He said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." No longer Israel as God's vineyard from which He expected fruit, but He Himself the true vine, His Father the husbandman, and every believer in Him a branch in the vine. Each individual branch is carefully scrutinized by the Husbandman's eye in order to determine whether or not it is bearing fruit. The earnest desire of God for fruit from these branches is seen in the care and labour which He expends on each fruit-bearing branch. "He cleanseth it that it may bear more fruit." Already clean because of the spoken word He exhorts His own to abide in Him. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye except ye abide in Me." . . . "For apart from Me ye can do nothing." We would indeed do well to ask ourselves in the presence of God, and seek unto Him for an answer thereto according to His perfect knowledge of our hearts; whether we are individually fruit-bearing branches in living union and fellowship with Christ the vine, or merely withered, sapless boughs severed from the stem from which alone our sustenance and power for fruit-bearing comes, cast forth as worthless branches fit only to be gathered for the burning. A profusion of leaves may truly satisfy the world and carnal Christians to-day, as indeed it did God's chosen people in the past, whose arrogant boast was, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these" (Jer. 7. 3); when amongst them there was neither room for God nor His truth, nor any real effort to carry out His will. So to-day we fear that many of God's redeemed people are satisfied with mere appearances, having a name to live while they are dead, and that which we see so clearly to be the snare into which others have

fallen may secretly creep into our own hearts, unless there is the constant and increasing watchfulness in His presence, so that we may indeed abide in Him and He in us. Appearances may be accepted as genuine by whomsoever they will, but nothing will meet with the approval of God nor satisfy His heart but that each individual believer shall be a fruit-bearing branch in the vine, yielding unto Him "much fruit," "fruit that will remain," that will stand the test of the judgment-seat of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 3. 9 we get another line of truth, and now not an individual believer, but a company, is presented as a fruit-bearer as the Spirit of God, through the Apostle, addresses the assembly of God in Corinth and says, "Ye are God's Husbandry" (God's tilled land or cultivated field) The Apostle, as a fellow-worker with God, came to Corinth (Acts 18.) and preached Christ, and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized, and for eighteen months he remained among them teaching the Word of God. When the Apostle left Corinth he left behind him there, as elsewhere, an assembly of God, for he ever made it his aim not only to preach the Gospel, but also to gather the saved ones together into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, a company which answered to the description of God's tilled land. The individual as a fruit-bearing branch, however beautiful to behold, is surpassed in beauty and grandeur as we gaze upon such planted together, forming God's present tilled field from which we believe He desires fruit which it is impossible as individuals to render unto Him. But the question may fittingly be asked: Are we to-day as assemblies of God yielding unto Him the fruits which He desires from us? For among the fruits of the Kingdom of God are to be found "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14. 17). Do these things obtain amongst us? Is the word of the Lord sounding forth from us so that in every place our faith to Godward is

spreading abroad? Is the Gospel testimony in power and demonstration of the Spirit so that sinners are being saved and we used of God in gathering in the precious fruit for which the Husbandman waits? (Jas. 5. 7.) Do the un-gathered Saints of God feel the power of our lives and words so that they too are being delivered from the traditions of men and gathered with us according to the will of God? If these things are lacking, in spite of all which in the mercy of God we have been enabled to attain unto and rejoice in, there is still much needed and much for which He alone is sufficient, for many fruits, precious to Him which He desires to receive of us, we still fail in rendering unto Him.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

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 71.—"*What is the teaching of Rev. 22. 19? Is "part" the same as "life" in John 10. 28, 29?*"

The word "part" of Rev. 22. 19 is not the same in any sense as the word "life" of John 10. 28, 29. This latter shall never by any means be taken away. One's share in the tree of life, the holy city, and the things written concerning such in this book, belong especially to the time commonly known as "The Millennium"—a very different time from the present. See Rev. 22. 1, 2, comparing Isaiah 65. 19 20, and Ezekiel 44. 25, etc.

J. B.

LIFE AND GLORY :

BEING NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY G. R. GEDDES.

THREE expressions occur in John 17, about oneness, and in connection with each a gift is spoken of. In verse 2 we read, "That He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." Eternal life is the free gift God has for the sinner, for he gets eternal life as a gift, and not on the basis of merit. How long many are deluded in trying to get that life by merit, which is only obtainable as a gift, and that apart from claim, right, or title. Man can claim nothing from God, not even daily bread, on the ground of right or title, for he is a sinner, one in rebellion against God. "Life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment," hence God having granted man the natural life, He gives also the supplies for that life. Man gets the meat because he has the life, and the raiment because he has the body, both meat and raiment reaching him on the ground of gift. The death-sentence on a condemned man is not executed at once. The law gives him permission to live for ten or more days. During this time he lives, not by right, but by permission, and the law which grants the life gives also the accessories of that life. To us as sinners, deserving nothing but judgment, which would consign us to the lake of fire, God gave eternal life upon faith in Christ, a life which is in no way dependent upon our keeping or holding. The babe in Christ can see that there is no holding and maintaining with eternal life, for the words of Christ are, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand." All believers are one in life, but not of necessity one in the Fellowship, to which God has attached condition and responsibility.

Turn now to the third mention of oneness (ver. 22): "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." All who are one in the life are also one in the glory. The life and the glory embrace the whole family of born-again ones; the same life and the same glory are given to each, not one will get more than another. This life is ours through the Cross: as sinners we were saved out of eternal fire unto eternal glory—a glory given to Christ as the one who has been highly exalted after deep humiliation—a glory given to Him as the outcome of His sufferings. Thus the Cross secures us the same life, the same glory. Taught by books, pictures, and tradition, our notion of glory is very hazy. God associates glory with a person, even Him who was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. Glory was once seen in the face of Moses. Israel could not behold that glory by reason of its dazzling brightness. But had they continued to behold they would have seen that glory pass away, for it was only transient. But now God has put an eternal glory in the face once marred. There was a time when He had not the glory of verse 22; not so that of verse 5: this latter He had from eternity. This is not and never will be ours; it is incommunicable, being His own Divine glory as God's fellow—God's equal. But He had to come down to get the glory of verse 22. He who was the Babe in the manger ever was the Ancient of Days. He who holds the water in His hands said, "I thirst." He, the very Bread of God, became hungry. He, the Eternal Word, became dumb. He was alone in His downward path, alone in the finding of His sheep, alone in His weariness, but not alone in His joys, for these He shares with those who never shared His suffering. Glory is usually consigned to heaven alone, and the one thousand years of millennium splendour of heaven and earth are overlooked. The cherubim of glory, beaten out of the ends of the blood-sprinkled mercy seat, the place of death, meet in their wings above; so the

earthly and heavenly glories meet in Him who was once slain. Israel will share the earthly and the Church the heavenly glory, with Him and through Him.

Thus we see gift and oneness of glory, gift and oneness of life, both so costly that God will take care that we shall never lose the life or miss the glory. Between these two, the life and the glory, lies the middle gift. "I have given them Thy Word." "Sanctify them through Thy Word." One morning, years ago, I woke up under the world's doom, under the world's penalty. If God had cut me off then that doom, that penalty, would have been mine. In the evening of the same day that doom and penalty could not reach me, for the Cross had come between me and the world's penalty and the world's doom, even as on the night of the Passover Egypt's doom could not reach Israel, because the blood-stained lintel came between them and that doom. Thus, as the Cross comes between the sinner and the world's judgment, so the Word comes between the saint and the world's politics, world's religion, world's pleasure, and severs him from the evil in which he is, but of which he is not. But more, that Word which separates the saint from the world will, when received into the heart and fully responded to in the life, gather him under the authority and into the name of the Lord Jesus, and thus a unity of and in the truth is the effect. Hence all are one in the life, all one in the glory, but not all one in the truth. Where there is a oneness in the truth the Lord sees that for which He prayed, in kind at least, would it were in measure. "Thy Word is truth;" and as we learn the Father's thoughts about the Son we shall be led to give Him the place that God has given Him, even as Lord and Christ.

There is a glory that saints can never lose, there is also a glory that may be lost (Luke 9. 24). The Scripture speaks of an individual glory, which another cannot share, an additional over and above that which all share, a glory to be

merited, and hence also to be perfected, and only to be gained or lost during this present life. Child of God, that which you have lost you have lost for ever—lost time, lost influence, lost opportunity. Let me so lose my life here that I may find it as a thing laid up, which the judgment-seat of Christ shall reveal. My sinner's life I shall never again see, thank God! my life as a saint I shall and must see. How much of that life as a saint shall be saved the judgment-seat shall declare. Think, fellow saint! a lost life and a lost glory, or a saved life and an acquired glory. As I have got a glory through the Cross, let me take up my cross and follow Him. To do that means distinction and honour *then*, but may be extinction and dishonour *now*. Fellow-believer, count the cost of doing His will, count the bigger cost of not doing it.

“INTO ONE PLACE.”

DIFFICULTIES that arise from a misapprehension of the truth, or from a meaning given to certain words, can easily be removed when there is no determination of the will to hold certain views. But we are often not aware of the deep hold that arises from a meaning being invariably given to any sentence or verse of Scripture. Misapplied Scriptures pass current almost unchallenged at last, as the result of a constant use of them. And one is greatly amazed when it is pointed out to them how they could have read or re-read passages, always taking a wrong meaning out of them. But when it results from a defective or faulty translation, then it is more difficult to get clear. “When ye come together therefore into one place” (1 Cor. 11. 20) is a passage that at once affords an illustration of this. “One place” is supposed to refer to a special locality where persons have come together. And in the case referred to the usual

thought is, that the Christians in Corinth all came together on the first day of the week, in the same house or room—that they were all within the same "four walls," as we should say. And "one place" is considered to teach that beyond all contradiction. When once one has become imbued with this idea it is easily seen that he would be prepared to combat the teaching that although Christians in Corinth were all in one Church of God (1 Cor. 1. 1), yet they did not of necessity all break bread within the same "four walls."

No sooner would such a statement be made than it would be met with the objection, But we read, "When ye come together therefore into one place." And the objector would go on to urge that "one place" of necessity shut out such teaching until he was informed that "into one place" did not convey the true meaning of the words used in the original. Simple reference to a few passages where they are found puts it beyond dispute. They are used of those who were together as to locality; the context would show that, but the words themselves do not. If they did, then they would invariably be used only of those who were thus actually together as to "place." But the word for "place" is not found in 1 Corinthians 11. 20. *Τοπος* (topos) is the common Greek word for place; it occurs about ninety-two times in the New Testament. Our English word "Topography" contains it. As "geography" refers to writing about the earth, this word means writing about place.

Ἐπι Το Ἄυτο (Epi to auto)

are the words used in 1 Corinthians 11. 20, and there translated "into one place." Justin Martyr, in his "Second Apology," uses the words in a sentence bearing upon the act of the Christians in coming together. He wrote, "That on the day called Sunday, all that dwell in the cities or countries about meet together (epi to auto)." Surely any one

can at once see that when he wrote of cities and countries, he could not mean to say that out of all these Christians found their way to "one place." "One place" does not represent the meaning at all. Strictly speaking, there is no word for "one" or "place." But the words convey a fuller and far more important meaning. "For the same object," or "upon the same," would represent the real force of the words, and would not add to them as the translation "one place" does.

There are passages where these words occur that refer to persons or animals together in the same place. But it is the context that would prove it. These words themselves would not in any case require such a thought. And they are used where the context distinctly shows that the persons referred to were not "together" as to locality, though they were and fully so as to object. Christians might be, and often are, together as regards place, but not at all together as to object. Together as to place and yet not united! On the other hand, united because they have a common object and a consent in the same worship, although scattered over the city, and remembering the Lord in several houses or other places. I have turned up forty passages in the LXX., or Greek version of the Old Testament, where these words occur; and while in some it is evident the ones referred to were together as to locality, in others it could not by any possibility be so. Take, for instance, a passage from the Psalms: "My soul shall boast herself in the Lord, the humble shall hear *thereof* and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His Name together (epi to auto)" (Ps. 34. 3).¹ Here it is evident that there is no possibility of bringing in the thought of place. All the humble who heard could be glad and exalt His Name, having common consent, and being at one in

¹ In quoting from Psalms or elsewhere, I give the number as found in the English Version, and not as in LXX. Ps. 34. 3, E.V., is Ps. 33. 3 in LXX.

their purpose of praising Him. The same applies to another verse: "Hear this, all *ye* people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world; both low and high, rich and poor together (*epi to auto*)" (Ps. 49. 1, 2).

When all the inhabitants of the world are named, it is sufficient to show beyond dispute that the words are used here altogether apart from any thought of locality.

"Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together" (Ps. 122. 3) in the LXX. is, "Jerusalem is built as a city whose fellowship is '*epi to auto.*'" Thus, all in the city, though dwelling in houses apart, are spoken of as "together."

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together (*epi to auto*)" (Ps. 133. 1). All Israel are here spoken of in their unity, illustrations of which are gathered from the sanctuary and from all the land. Israel occupying the land from Dan to Beersheba are yet together (*epi to auto*), not as to place, but in heart and purpose.

"They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine's flesh, and the abomination; and the mouse, shall be consumed together (*epi to auto*)" (Isa. 66. 17). Here again the words imply a common judgment upon the ungodly among the Jews, but they are spoken of as being apart locally in gardens, etc.

"In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together (*epi to auto*) out of the land of the North" (Jer. 3. 18). Thus, not one locality, but spread over the land of the North in their captivity, as they will be spread over the whole land of Palestine after their restoration.

The few passages, culled from many, will be sufficient to cite here. The words are shown to be used in the LXX. translation, exactly as they were centuries after by Justin Martyr, and as they are in the New Testament itself.

They are found in Matthew **22. 34**; Luke **17. 35**; Acts **1. 15, 2. 1, 2. 44, 3. 1, 4. 26**; 1 Corinthians **7. 5, 11. 20, 14. 23**.

"The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together (*epi to auto*) against the Lord and against His Christ" (Acts **4. 26**), is a quotation from Psalm **2. 2**, where in the LXX. the words also occur, and are translated "together." But when quoted in Acts **4.** there is the clearest proof that they are used of those who were acting "on the same thing," or "for the same object," as the words convey, but who were not together as to place: "For of a truth against Thy holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together" (ver. **27**). When the Lord Jesus was betrayed and brought before these different rulers, it was not to one place where they all were gathered, having combined together to judge Him. They led Him to **Annas** first (John **18. 13**); after that to **Caiaphas** (ver. **24**). After that they brought Him before **Pontius Pilate** (Matt. **27. 2**), who, hearing that He was of Galilee, sent Him to **Herod** (Luke **23. 7**). **Herod**, having set Him at nought and mocked Him, sent Him back again to **Pilate** (Luke **23. 11**). **Caiaphas**, with the Scribes and Pharisees, **Herod** and **Pilate**, were acting "*epi to auto*"—that is, "alike," in perfect agreement—yet they were not together as to place, but each remained in his own court of jurisdiction.

It may be well specially to refer to a verse in Matthew as helping to make this point clear: "But when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together" (Matt. **22. 34**); "*sunēkthēsan epi to auto*" are the words used. But the verb "*sunagō*," with its prefix *sun* (preposition, with, or together with), would, in itself, convey the thought of being "gathered together" if that were all that was intended.

But when "epi to auto" is added, it is specially to point out the oneness of will and purpose, to endeavour in every possible way to silence or confuse the Lord Jesus by their questions.

The words occur again in Acts 3. 1 in the Authorized Version, but should be found at end of chapter 2. The word Church in 2. 47 is omitted in MSS. & A, B, C., etc., and by Alford, Tregelles, Tischendorf, and Revisers (see Revised Version). "And the Lord added 'epi to auto' daily such as should be saved." Again, we find these words, "And all that believed were together (epi to auto) and had all things common" (Acts 2. 44). Here it does not refer to their coming together in assembly. There were then the three thousand just converted, as well as the apostles — a number of disciples. No one for a moment surely would seek to maintain that they all lived under one roof, and they had "all things common." But if the Scripture declares that they were, although scattered over Jerusalem, dwelling in many houses, yet "epi to auto," then certainly it could be and was equally true that they were "epi to auto," although they broke the bread locally in different parts of the city. Thus their being together, or "epi to auto," for worship, etc., was blessedly true, because schism and dissension had not yet come in, and their being in distinct parts of the city worshipping did not alter the fact. The teaching that a Church of God in New Testament times only consisted of those who actually remembered the Lord being gathered within the same four walls from time to time cannot be maintained for a moment from these words. We have but to trace their use in the passages referred to to see that they will not bear such a construction being put upon them. Dr. Owen and other early "Independents" went astray on this very point. And in their revulsion from the mere external of a World's Church, which embraced in it all parishioners, went to the

other extreme, and gave up that which is clearly taught in Scripture. The Church in a city embracing a number of local churches is not understood. And the translation "into one place" has been a leading means of obscuring the truth, as well as in helping on the erroneous idea that wherever, as to locality, Christians meet to break the bread and worship, there is a Church constituted in its completeness as to teachers and pastors, rulers, etc., and it is independent. There is another passage remaining in which these words occur that perhaps more than any other has led to this: "If therefore the whole Church be come together *into one place*" (*epi to auto*) (1 Cor. 14. 23). Surely one may say this proves there was but one single meeting-place in Corinth. The whole Church was gathered "for the same object," the words show, but they do not, as we have seen once and again, imply all being within the same four walls. And one verse in this chapter clearly shows that as to Corinth they were not: "Let your women keep silence in the churches" (ver. 34). The use of the plural shows that there were more assemblies in Corinth than one. "Let your women (those in Corinth) keep silence." The word "your" is omitted in R.V. and by leading editors, but that does not affect the question. The reference undoubtedly is to Corinth.

If any one maintains that the essential form of a Church in any city in New Testament times consisted of a single congregation, the burden of proof lies with him. As also it will be necessary to show that there never were in any city more Christians at any given time than could meet in one place. This "Congregational Church" is but a theory, an idea that has grown until many have wholly accepted it without searching as to it. And they have been helped by the words "into one place," which do not at all convey the proper meaning of the words "*epi to auto*." There were thousands of saints at one time in Jerusalem. In Corinth,

Ephesus, and other large cities there were large numbers, and not a single statement in the New Testament as to this congregational system. From it has sprung the notion that overseeing brethren could only exercise oversight or take care of those with whom they actually broke the bread within the same four walls. Yet the Apostle could write as one having "the care of all the Churches" (2 Cor. 11. 28). It is beside the mark altogether for an objector to say, "But Paul was an apostle." The capacity for the work was God-given, and He did not confine the Apostle within limits as to the exercise of the gift bestowed. So with the apostles in Jerusalem, their oversight was in connection with the Church, the one in Jerusalem. There were not, say, twelve congregational Churches, with an apostle in each, one saying to the others, "You must not interfere in our internal matters! We receive and we put away. We may intimate what we do to the other eleven Churches, but we do it, and cannot allow any interference. Our Church is complete in itself. We come together to see as to matters, and you are not expected to come." The stating such a proposition is enough to show the fallacy and absurdity of it. The apostles unitedly counselled (Acts 6. 2, 8. 14, 9. 27), etc. The Church was one, though the meeting-places were many. In the present day, however large a city may be, if you found what claimed to be a scripturally gathered assembly, and only one meeting-place, then, although, say one hundred composed it, who lived widely apart and scattered in different suburbs, and although those who professedly took oversight lived apart also, it would be admitted on all sides that they had oversight over all the hundred. But let distance at last become a difficulty, and certain of the number meet separately, then from the moment of their thus meeting they would call themselves a separate Church, and would no longer admit that brethren who had taken oversight over them possessed it

any longer. Why? Because for two hours on a Lord's Day they did not meet within the same four walls, although still gathering "epi to auto" "for the same object," and those who had taken oversight might daily in business and work come in contact with them far more than any other one.

It is not my object in this paper to deal with the subject of rule. I have only referred to it at the point where it touches the question of "the Church; the one" in the city. It is not for the purpose of controverting the opinions of others I have thus written. "Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). The Church in the city was one, no matter how many places there were in which they met from time to time for worship. The fellowship of Churches of God in all cities and countries was maintained and upheld. One passed from one to another of them with a letter of commendation, unless such was unnecessary, as in the case of Paul; and there was no distinction of occasional and fixed communion, save as it resulted from occasional or fixed residence in a place: every Christian was as much in and of every Church while he was there as any who were constantly dwelling in the place.

R. T. HOPKINS.

THE RULE OF GOD.

(Continued from page 41.)

PASSING on to Joseph, sold into Egypt by his brethren, but sent before by God to preserve life, we find him, and the family of Israel after him, strangers in a strange land for four hundred years, till God's appointed time for their deliverance draws nigh. But here we must specially again refer our readers to Genesis 50. 7, as we wish them to give this verse their careful attention. We here get mention made of the elders of Pharaoh's house, and the elders of the land of Egypt, and it is here for the first time that the elderhood is brought before us in its representative character; this is a matter to be carefully noticed, as we shall have frequent occasion to refer to it in the following pages. We would remark here also that the elders are mentioned in connection with a Gentile nation; the next mention we have of the elderhood is in connection with the people of Israel (Exod. 3. 16, 18), on account of whom God is now dealing with Egypt for their deliverance. The elderhood is here seen as both the responsible and the representative company, a company that can be gathered together, a known number of men, and it is they who are to go in unto Pharaoh. In chapter 4. 29 we find all the elders gathered to receive God's message concerning the people of Israel. In chapter 12. we have the responsibility of the elderhood very specially brought before us; in verse 3 the Lord commands Moses to speak to all the congregation of Israel. He then gives directions concerning the Passover. When we consider the vast multitude of the children of Israel, the question naturally arises, how was this to be carried out? We have the answer in verse 21: "Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover." So that the responsibility of ordering the Pass-

over Supper in accordance with the will of God devolved upon the elders. Firstly, then, we have the will of God revealed; and, secondly, the way in which it was to be accomplished. In verse 28 we see the children of Israel went away and did as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

Thus God first reveals His will to Moses, he in turn communicates that will to the elders, they again carry it out among the people, and we here repeat that it was upon them the responsibility devolved of seeing that the Pass-over Feast in all its details was ordered in accordance with the revealed will of God.

We have thus arrived in our inquiry at a point where a distinct revelation of God's will has been given to His people, also the way in which that will was to be carried out. It would make this article too long were we to attempt to dwell upon all the passages in which the elderhood is mentioned, but we would earnestly press upon our readers to study these for themselves, and in so doing they will be much helped to the understanding of our subject. The passages we shall refer to are but few out of the many, and these will be with the object of more fully establishing the line of thought we are now occupied with.

In Leviticus 4. 15 we arrive at a point in the history of God's chosen and separated people where He has far more fully revealed to them His will. In verse 13 of this chapter we read, "If the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance," etc. (ver. 15), "the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord." Thus we see it is the people who have sinned, but the elders who are responsible to act on behalf of the congregation, and this in association with the priesthood.

Passing on now to Numbers 11. 16, another passage of Scripture demands our attention. In verse 11 Moses'

natural disposition seems again to manifest itself: his burden is too heavy for him, and instead of rolling it upon the Lord, his wonderful faith seems for a moment to break down. God does not hide the imperfections of His servants, as man so often seeks to do, but He shows Himself as the God able to make all grace abound. We question much if that which we find Moses doing was in accordance with the will of God, when looked at in the light of other Scripture. It would seem much more like another display of human weakness, such as probably lost him the priestly position when Aaron had to be associated with him.

With regard to verse 16, it will be noticed that the men who were specially to be associated with Moses and appointed to a certain work were not *made* elders by this appointment; on the contrary, we here see that they were already elders, known as such, and officers over the people. Neither here nor in any one case throughout Old or New Testament Scriptures do we find men *made* elders. The seventy then chosen to share responsibility with Moses were chosen from amongst the known elders of Israel, and unto them was given a special portion of the Spirit (vers. 17, 25).

It has been suggested that these men were made elders by Moses upon the advice of his father-in-law (Exod. 18. 21, 25), but it should be noticed here that no mention is made of these men being made elders, although there is little doubt that they would be chosen from amongst the elderhood; the character of the men also should be noticed, as it corresponds in great measure with the character of those chosen for rule in New Testament times. The fact also that elders have been referred to previously, and their position in connection with the congregation, proves that the elderhood was not a new thing commenced by Moses at the suggestion of his father-in-law.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SHAKEN.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON PSALM 40. 2.

THIS psalm is "for the Chief Musician." And any who desire to make melody in their hearts to the Lord can only do so as they listen to the notes that are sung by the Chief Musician, in order that all their praise and worship may be in perfect harmony with Him who said, "In the midst of assembly will I sing praise to Thee." It is only the Chief Musician who could ever put music to some of the solemn and momentous words that we find in the Psalms that are so headed.

The Rock in verse 2 undoubtedly refers to the eternal character, the unchanging stability of our God. There is no rock like our rock. All Scripture testifies this. The song of Moses in the end of the book of Deuteronomy may be mentioned as one of the many scriptures showing us what the rock is. The security of the believer is no question of "final perseverance"—a most objectionable phrase. The security of the believer depends upon the fact that he is established on the Rock of Ages, the eternal Rock.

" Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Lo, I hide myself in Thee."

The rock portrays to us His eternal, unchangeable character as an adequate security for us. We rest upon that which never can give way; we are builded upon that which never can be moved. There has been in days gone by a time of shaking; but whereas there was a day when God shook the earth, there comes a day when He shall shake, not the earth only, but also the heavens. Now this word "once more" signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. Who is a

rock but our God? When the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll and the elements shall melt with fervent heat the immoveable and unchangeable things shall remain, our Rock, our God, the Rock of Ages. And thus the security of the believer is in God, and not in the believer himself. And were it needed that the nail thus driven through in a sure place should be clenched on the other side, that it might not be moved, such manner of comfort is to be found in the tenth chapter of John, where we are described as being in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore safe; but while the Lord Jesus has us in His hands, and we might be well satisfied with the security of His grasp, He leaves it not there; on the other side, as it were, it is clenched, and we are told that we are in the Father's hands. And thus, between the almighty hand of the Son and the almighty hand of the Father, we may well speak of two immutable things, and have strong consolation, and indeed rest ourselves in the security of that whereon we have set our faith: the unchangeableness of an unchangeable God.

It occurred to me to connect with that for our help a thought which is somewhat different, such as our Lord Himself gave expression to in the conclusion of the Gospel of the kingdom, as He proclaimed it upon the mountain (in what is usually called the Sermon on the Mount), where you remember He divides between two classes of people, the "doers" and the mere "hearers," and He speaks of them in a comparison—two men, one of whom built a house upon the sand, and the other built a house upon the rock. Now I mention that in order to impress upon our hearts the very grave difference which there is between being on the rock and building on the rock: the solemn possibility of a man who is himself on the rock building his house on the sand. Whilst our being on the rock depends absolutely upon the grace of God, undeserved by us, our building upon the rock is a matter of responsibility. This should stir our

spirits and move our hearts that we see to it that we are building upon the rock. We will not dwell upon the consideration of what we are building, whether it be gold, or silver, or precious stones; or whether it be wood, or hay, or stubble. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid (as the Apostle Paul tells us), which is Jesus Christ." And sure it is that when the great day of shaking comes only those shall abide as to themselves who are on the rock. Equally sure is it that when that great day of shaking comes only that building will abide which is upon the rock. And, therefore, there will be those in that day who will be upon the rock, and thus saved, and yet whose building will be burned up (to use Paul's figure), or blown away (to use the figure of our Lord in Matthew), or shaken (to use the words in which Hebrews speaks), whilst the believer himself is saved, yet so as by fire.

The foundation that will abide is in its essence, its character ever the same. The foundation ever was and is Jesus Christ, even as He Himself is the rock on which we have been placed by God. Now, whilst we rejoice in the remembrance that He Himself has put His hand down into the pit of horror and lifted us therefrom, and set us upon the rock, let us not forget to take heed to our goings and to our building, that when we build our building may be upon the rock. But whilst some of us may build much slower than others, better far to spend a lifetime in laying one stone in its place upon the rock than hurriedly to pile up mountains of rubbish, or to build what we build on a sandy foundation. Better far a small coin which we can carry into eternity than heaps of treasure which will be destroyed and lost for ever. You and I have time, and opportunities, and abilities that God gives us. Be the same short or long, few or many, great or small, little or much, whatever it may be, we have that which it is possible for us to use for God to-day unto our profit, and our blessing, and our happi-

ness throughout the coming countless ages. That is a possibility. The very fact of it being a possibility carries with it that there is a possibility of our spending that time, using those opportunities and those abilities to please ourselves in the day that now is, to satisfy the lusts of the flesh or the desires of the mind. In spiritual as well as in temporal affairs is it possible for us to spend those opportunities, to waste that time, to misuse that ability with the very best intentions, with the very highest motives, with the most exalted desires; it is possible to be spendthrifts of that whereof we are stewards; whilst it is also possible—happy possibility!—for us to use the world as not abusing it, redeeming the time because the days are evil, not merely nor chiefly in great things, or in important decisions at critical times, but in the use that we make of the days, hours, and minutes as they fly, and in the readiness to avail ourselves of the little opportunities of daily life, and never to neglect the use of the smallest abilities which God has entrusted to us to the pleasing of Himself, remembering the smallness of the means which God ever uses to the accomplishment of His purposes!

C. M. LUXMOORE.

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 72.—*What and where is the Kingdom of God?*

This question may be answered in few words or it may be answered, as we are seeking to do, by tracing the subject of God's rule and rulers throughout the pages of Old and New Testament.¹ But we may now briefly reply that the Kingdom of God is first established in our hearts, our wills being subjected to Him and His will done in us; secondly, that it is His will done in the larger circle of the family;

¹ See “The Rule of God,” pages 41, 73.

thirdly, the carrying out of His rule and order in the assembly and assemblies of the saints; and, fourthly, it will be the carrying out of this same rule in the widest circle—the nations of the earth—when He comes whose right it is to reign.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 73.—Is it implied in 1 Tim. 3. 4, 5 that the habitual ruling well of one's house will result in one's children being in subjection? If so, must one who apparently has desire to "shepherd the flock" abstain from such work, despite urgent need for the same, because his children are manifestly disobedient?

In reply to these questions, there can be no doubt, in the first place, that where there is true subjection to the Lord on the part of the parents, and the children have been from early years brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, godly subjection will be the result. There can also be no question that when disorder is manifested in the household to such an extent as to bring reproach, it will disqualify for the work of oversight. And if this work is persisted in under such circumstances, it is more than likely that what has given rise to failure in the family circle will be repeated in the larger circle of the assembly.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 74.—Does Acts 20. 28, "Take heed unto yourselves," lay upon overseers according to God the responsibility of dealing with any who seek to take oversight not possessing the qualifications of 1 Tim. 3., Titus 1.? What behaviour becometh the spiritual of the flock toward overseers contrary to God?

When once a godly circle of overseeing men had been formed the purpose of God was that the circle of overseers in all new assemblies should be formed in fellowship therewith; and the directions in 1 Tim. 3. and Titus 1. were for the guidance of those who ruled in so acting. The spiritual prosperity of the flock largely depends upon these requirements of God being complied with. It is not that the flock appoints its shepherds, or that the shepherds appoint one another; but there will be acceptance on the part of both the one and the other of that which is given of God.

J. A. B.

GLEANINGS FROM THE SECOND LETTER BY PETER.

(Continued from page 52).

ALTHOUGH all prophecy of the Scriptures ever came only by the moving of God's Holy Spirit in and on men, that did not prevent Satan from seeking to render such grace null and void, by raising up false prophets among the true people. The difficulties, the severities, and the deliverance from such are enumerated in the sure, far-reaching words of Deuteronomy 13., which please see and note. As then so now—there is positive danger to all that have obtained equally precious faith. Which, though precious, yea, perhaps because precious, may be overthrown. (Compare here 2 Tim. 2. 18, 19.)

But that peril lies not so much now in the many false prophets that are gone forth into the world, and who therefore may be the more readily discovered to be such (as see 1 John 4.). No, indeed! For a much more subtle device has Satan adopted to deceive and destroy God's own of present time. The certainty whereof the Spirit, through Peter, makes very plain, by the indisputable fact that, of old, "there arose false prophets among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers."

These are the less likely to be known as such, inasmuch as privily (that is, not openly, but stealthily) they bring in destructive heresies, and go even the fearful length of denying the Sovereign Master who bought them, thus bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

Their fair speech, their philosophy and vain deceit prove attractive enough to many, who are carried off by them as spoil. Wherefore, let every saint beware.¹ Yea,

¹ Col. 2. 8.

“many shall follow their lascivious¹ doings, by reason of whom,”—that is, not of the false teachers, but those who are drawn away to follow them—even by them

“THE WAY OF THE TRUTH

shall be evil spoken of.”

Let the reader pause and consider what is revealed here: namely, that, by reason of the many who leave the way of the truth and follow after the destructive heresies of those false teachers, yes, by reason of those apostate self-opposers, others shall be emboldened to speak evil of the way of the truth.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding those maligners and such as forsake the right way, the way of the truth abides, and is open to all who will hear and heed the Lord. Also, God and the word of His grace, with faithful men able to teach others that they may be saved, and not destroyed, continue within the reach of such as would escape the fowler's snare, as also from every false one and thing.²

Where is the Christian that makes light of the salvation grace of the Lord Jesus as being Himself

THE WAY;
and THE TRUTH;
and THE LIFE?

Who that himself has tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious delights not to point the wandering, bewildered, and sin-convicted perishing sons of men to Him?

Why, then, can any Christian be a party to having

THE WAY OF THE TRUTH

forsaken and evil spoken of?

Was there aught but good found in Him as “the Way and the Truth”?

¹ That word denotes, “Lawless insolence and wanton caprice” (compare Rom. 13. 13).

² See Acts 20. 32; 1 Tim. 4. 16; 2 Tim. 2. 2.

Can there be else than like good in the way of the truth? We trow not.

Here, here alone, is the good way for His loved and His own to walk in by His commandment, and so *find* rest to their souls. This rest is as consciously real and blissful as that rest He *gave* so free from fear when to Him such came as sinners, and were saved.

“In covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.”

Surely here again is the error of Balaam; uttering the words of the true God, but that only as a cloak to work in their own destructive heresies.

Little wonder that the Psalmist cried out, “Who can understand errors?” Of a truth the errors that constitute destructive heresies are hard to understand. Yet not so very difficult if searched and proved by the right dividing of the word of truth. Part thereof those false ones will have as huckstering wares;¹ and, after all, they only buy and sell their dupes so as their own gain is served.

Nevertheless, their sentence God long ago pronounced, and though it be not speedily executed, it lingereth not, neither doth their destruction slumber.

How sure! how sharp! how sore these are! let the proof establish; even, For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell (Tartarus), and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

AND SPARED NOT THE ANCIENT WORLD,

but preserved Noah, with seven others; a preacher of righteousness, when He brought a flood upon the world of ungodly. “Who knew not until the flood came and took them all away.” Methinks, they knew then! And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned

them with AN OVERTHROW (catastrophe). Having made them an EXAMPLE unto those that should live ungodly.

AND DELIVERED RIGHTEOUS LOT,

sore distressed by the lascivious life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds). The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and (how) to keep the unrighteous under punishment (torment; compare Matt. 25. 46, and 1 John 4. 18) unto the day of judgment, but chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of defilement and despise dominion. Daring, self-willed, they tremble not to rail at dignities, whereas angels, though greater in might and power, bring not a railing judgment against them before the Lord.

JOHN BROWN.

THE RULE OF GOD.

(Continued from page 75).

SOME further light on the elderhood may be derived from Deuteronomy 32. 7, as this scripture indicates who could be looked upon as belonging to this company. There may be differences between the elders of the city and those of the congregation, into which we will not now attempt to enter. Deuteronomy 21. 19, 20, should be noticed by our readers as indicating the responsibility of the elders, but it is to Deuteronomy 19. 12, with Joshua 20. 4, that we would specially draw attention, for here we have a most interesting and suggestive history.

In the latter portion referred to we find the manslayer fleeing to the city of refuge, where he is received by the elders of the city, and by them taken in and given a place. He is not received by his friends or by some of those who have previously fled there. No; but by the responsible

men of the place. Human friendships and relationships are often the strongest ties by which Satan seeks to lead us from the pathway of obedience; while, on the other hand, family contentions and feuds introduced into God's assembly are another fruitful cause of defilement (Heb. 12. 15). The men whom God would have carry out His rule are those whom grace has rendered capable of rising above these things. Natural affection, unless sanctified by the Spirit of God, may be and often is wholly misleading; the honey love, so easily turned to bitterness, is altogether another thing from the Divine love which suffereth long and is kind (1 Cor. 13. 4), and yet withal does not pass over sins that are unrepented of. The man of God who wishes to walk with God in these things must expect oftentimes to be hardly judged and misunderstood even by fellow-saints who, it may be unknowingly to themselves, are being influenced in their conduct by the unsanctified wills of the flesh and mind.

In the other passage referred to we find God's way of dealing in the case of one who is a murderer fleeing to a city of refuge. He is not safe because he has been received into the place; on the contrary, the elders of his own city, after investigating his case and finding him guilty, send and fetch the man from the city to which he has flown. The elders of this city do not reply, "We manage our own affairs and will not permit your interference," or again, "When we want you we will send for you." No such wicked, godless independency is allowed in God's kingdom, and when it is manifested, it will be found in connection with the breaking up of the nation (Judg. 20. 12, 13). So in the assemblies of God's saints it is an indication of the commencement of spiritual death and corruption. "The elders of *his* city shall send and fetch him thence;" "thine eye shall not pity him"—solemn words. Easy to carry this out when there is personal feeling, when we have been offended

by the offending one; when, it may be, we consider our character at stake, then, alas! we are only too ready to fight our own battles and act with all the energy of the flesh. It is easy to talk of principles and to speak loudly of the failures of others, but a very different thing when the trial comes to act quietly and patiently ourselves before God, willing to be anything or nothing so long as He is glorified.

It will be noticed that the responsibility of searching into the guilt or otherwise of the manslayer devolves upon the elders of his own city, and not upon the elders of the city to which he has fled for refuge. This is important, for if any are fit or able to investigate a matter, it will surely be those on the spot, who are and should be best acquainted with facts, if there has been anything like the "ruling with diligence." The forgetting of this Divine principle or the wilful setting it aside is a continual cause of sorrow and weakness. If we fear that a mistake has been made by those who *should* be better acquainted with facts than we are ourselves, yet let us have faith in God that His way is the best, and that He in His time will manifest the failure, if there has been such.

In passing we should notice Judges 8. 14 and 16, also 1 Samuel 16. 4. At the point at which we have now arrived it is important to observe that the people of Israel are in the land. The revelation of God's will to them as a nation is complete. He has given to them that which He has given to no other nation—a distinct form of government, and He has indicated the way in which, and those by whom, this government is to be carried out amongst His saints. We shall remember that the land of Israel has been divided by twelve under Joshua's direction. It is not the earth that is divided, for the nations of earth are in rebellion and the sphere of God's direct government is in the land. At this point the land of Israel is not divided according to Gentile will.

2 Samuel 19. 11 shows us that there is no change in the responsibility of the elders after the kingly authority had been established.

In the reign of Solomon we see foreshadowed the coming dominion of our Lord Jesus Christ, when the greater than Solomon shall set up His kingdom, and righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, and the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. But all too soon the splendour of that reign is ended, the ruler fails, and after his departure the nation is rent with internal discord. Ten tribes are given to Jeroboam, and he leads them into gross idolatry. In the long line of Israel's kings this sad testimony occurs continually, "And he did evil in the sight of the Lord, as did his father." There is no direct royal line. Imitations of Divine things characterize this dark period, towards the close of which apostasy and rebellion towards God become more and more marked.

In these days Ezekiel the prophet calls backsliding Israel to repentance. He pictures the departing glory. But yet there is an opportunity for mercy to be extended to them upon their repentance, and a vision of the returning glory is seen by the prophet, and in connection with this and a repentant people the land is to be divided afresh, according to the twelve tribes (Ezek. 48.), but not, it will be seen, in the same order as divided by Joshua 11. 2 Kings 10. 1 shows us the elderhood in connection with the ten tribes still unaltered as to its position. The ten tribes are carried away captive, and soon the two tribes follow into exile.

In Babylon, where the latter are in captivity, the rule of God cannot be carried out as delivered to the nation, for at this point the reins of government and the rule of the earth is placed in the hands of the Gentile powers. We do not mean to say that the Gentiles have a distinct form of government given to them, nor yet that they are responsible to carry out the form of government delivered to

God's people Israel, for this latter idea has led to many of the errors of modern Christendom; we understand rather that responsibility is afresh thrown upon the Gentiles to do the will of God as made known in the early ages (see Genesis 9. and Daniel 2. 37, 38). Yet Nebuchadnezzar had to learn that he was but a tool in the hand of God to work His purposes upon earth (chap. 4. 25); as such he had to be prepared, as had others that followed him (ver. 27, and chap. 5. 18, 19).

Amidst the captives in Babylon the elderhood for a time is lost sight of; but no sooner do we find the remnant returned to their own land by permission of the second great Gentile power (2 Chron. 36. 22) than the elders are seen again in their place of responsibility (Ezra 5. 5, 9). The last-mentioned verse is remarkable: the elders are addressed as if the whole of the responsibility of the building devolved on them. Again in chapter 10. 8 we have a striking example of rule as exercised by the elderhood, and in connection with this verse we would remark that if there is any parallel between the returned remnant of Israel and those seeking to-day to return to a position in which the will of God can be carried out in its entirety, this verse would go to prove that whatever position the elders held in the Churches of God during its early history, the same would be theirs to-day in connection with the remnant returning out of the spiritual Babylon.

We are now occupied with those who have returned to their own land. This company, we believe, whilst largely composed of the two tribes, contained members of all the twelve tribes, for it will be noticed that when the ten tribes went away with Jeroboam, those who sought the Lord and desired to continue in obedience to His will followed Rehoboam, strengthening the kingdom unto *Judah* (2 Chron. 11. 16, 17; and 15. 9). This returned remnant are in very different circumstances from the nation; they are back

in their own land, but they are there by permission of the Gentile power, as we have before noticed. There is no division of the land by twelve spoken of as under Joshua, or as mentioned in the book of Ezekiel, but we shall see further on in our subject the Gentile division of the earth and of the land of Israel are accepted in connection with the rule of God amongst His saints.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

THE Cities of Refuge have been a favourite theme from which to preach the Gospel. They may well be so. How forcibly they bring out the lovingkindness of the Lord. Six cities scattered over the land: three on each side Jordan (Joshua 20. 7, 8). "A way" was to be prepared (Deut. 19. 3) that the manslayer who had "unwittingly" slain his neighbour might be able to flee to one of them and remain in safety beyond the power of the avenger of blood. But it is by way of contrast that the Gospel can be brought from them. Although there were six cities, of necessity in many cases the nearest would be a long way off. Miles of road would have to be covered ere the man could consider himself safe. Thus the city was far off, but Christ is near. Wherever the sinner may be there He is. "The word is nigh thee" (Rom. 10. 8). The way prepared to the city was distinct from the city itself. But Christ is the Way (John 14. 6) as well as the City. If one said, "I am on the way to Christ, but have not yet reached Him," he would only show that he was occupied with himself and his doings. The city and the way were distinct for the manslayer, but Christ is represented by both for the sinner. Then it was only a refuge for one who had committed accidental murder

(Deut. 19. 4-6). If he had hated his brother aforetime and had deliberately planned the murder, then, even though he reached the city, there was no safety for him. When brought before the judges, if malice and hatred were proved as having brought about the crime, then he would be delivered over to death. Thus the cities never said "whosoever." They were limited to a class, but in Christ there is refuge for all.

Again, it was but for a time the manslayer remained in the city. That time was determined as to its length by the life of the High Priest (Joshua 20. 6). As soon as he died the manslayer could depart to his own home. Temporary refuge alone was afforded, but in Christ there is eternal salvation and security. These cities set apart for the manslayer were Levitical and Priestly cities (Joshua 21.); thus he became on his entrance to one of them a fellow-citizen with the priests of God. But that in no way made him one. But once the sinner has found refuge in Christ he becomes himself a priest (1 Peter 2.).

There were six, and it was a matter of indifference as to which one the manslayer fled to—he would be equally safe in any one. But there is only one Saviour. Thus again by contrast we learn. Six, not seven, and thus we can learn of Christ in the activities of His work for us. But my object in this paper is not to dwell upon the secondary and Gospel teaching conveyed by the setting apart of these cities, but to look for a little at the primary teaching contained in them as they were set apart for Israel and for the security of any one among their tribes who thus accidentally murdered his neighbours. Undoubtedly, in providing cities of refuge on the east side of Jordan as well as on the western, we can learn Jehovah's equal ways shown out and maintained, as well as His universal pity and love. Evidently prophetic teaching lies underneath their outward application to individual teaching concerning Israel as a whole.

Moses, through whom the instructions were first given as to these cities, was the first prophetically to depict Israel's failure and the scattering among the nations that would follow (Deut. 4. 25-27). Notwithstanding all their promises and vows, and exhortations and repeated warnings from the Lord, Moses foresaw what they would soon fall into. The state of heart and soul in which they were at that time would produce it. Already it was there as in seed. It needed but the surroundings of nations practising idolatries before their eyes to lead them quickly to copy such evil ways till they outstripped the heathen in folly. At last there was no remedy, and the Lord cast them off, but not as a whole until He sent His Son, and they said, "This is the Heir; come, let us kill Him" (Matt. 21. 38). It is a striking fact that although Joseph is never named distinctly in the New Testament as a type of Christ, yet we get here in the Greek the exact words that are found in the LXX. translation of Genesis 37. 20: "and come and let us kill him." By so doing they brought about that scattering from their own land which has lasted until now. Their preservation as a distinct people during eighteen centuries of scattering and oppression is not only a miracle in itself, but it should teach us that God means to fulfil His promises to them. Therefore it is He preserves them as in a City of Refuge, not until the death of the High Priest, but until the High Priest, who has an untransferable priesthood by reason of His being the eternal Son of God, rises up from His throne and comes again in His power; in His Second Coming to be known and owned by that people who rejected Him at His First Coming.

When first we read these portions concerning the Cities of Refuge we see God's care for man in the person of the manslayer. Then we learn the foreshadowing of salvation in them. But when more closely studying these chapters we see clearly their applications to Israel. "And now,

brethren, I wot that IN IGNORANCE ye did it, as did also your rulers. But the things which God foreshowed by the mouth of all the prophets that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, *even Jesus*" (Acts 3. 17-20, R.V.).

Ere the manslayer could remain in safety within the city after he had reached it he had to be brought before the judges in the congregation. It rested with them to determine whether it was accidental or intentional. Now God Himself acts as the Judge with regard to Israel. And having declared their act to have been in ignorance, He prepares the Refuge, and sees to their continuance in it until the sending of His Son.

Thus Peter, in addressing the multitude who ran together wondering at the miracle wrought in the healing of the lame man at the Temple, plainly brought out the unwitting manslayer as the type of Israel in their act. During this present time, when He is taking out a People for His Name, the Tabernacle of David is in ruins yet (Acts 15. 16). The land is desolate, keeping her Sabbaths; the people are scattered, without King or sacrifice (Hos. 3. 4), but preserved as in the refuge provided for them by God. Out of this they will be brought in His time, after the Saints of this dispensation have been caught up. And as the manslayer, on the death of the High Priest in his day, returned to enjoy all the privileges of his home and city as before, so Israel will return to the land the redeemed of the Lord, not only to enter upon blessings and privileges which were theirs in Solomon's day, when peace prevailed and everything was theirs in abundance, but in far greater measure.

The whole land shall be theirs then. The King Him-

self shall be there—"Jehovah Shammah, the Lord is there" (Ezek. 48. 35) shall be the language for that day. Thus fitly when Moses gave the instructions as to the severing of the three cities on the east side of Jordan it is said, "Then Moses severed three cities on this side Jordan TOWARD THE SUN RISING" (Deut. 4. 41). Their eastward position having been referred to would, in itself, have conveyed their position in reference to the sun, but that was not enough: he adds, "toward the sun rising." For there is more in all this than meets the eye on the surface. It is not the mere manslayer who is thought of and graciously planned for, but it is Israel as a nation. Moses in thus writing is as the Prophet. What a sunrise awaits Israel in the future! "Oh, what a sunrise will that Advent be." When Christ shall be to them "as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds" (2 Sam. 23. 4).

It is written concerning Jacob, after recording the eventful scene of the night in which, by his wrestling, he would ignorantly have kept himself out of the blessing had not the "Man" touched the hollow of his thigh, and so withered up his strength: "And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him" (Gen. 32. 31). What light and blessing once the flesh was withered! Thus is it still, and with Israel it shall be equally so when the flesh is withered and the true light shines; what a sunrising it will be! "Unto you that fear My Name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings" (Mal. 4. 2). "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. 2. 17). "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people" (Isa. 30. 26). For though the darkness now covers the people

the Lord shall arise upon them. "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. 60. 3). Not only so, for it is further written, "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy Glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended" (Isa. 60. 19, 20).

R. T. HOPKINS.

THE GREAT PRIEST.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON REV. 1., 2., 3.

IN verse 11 of chapter 1. John is directed to write the Revelation, which charge is repeated in verse 19, but this time in terms which distinctly divide the Revelation into three portions—(1) "The things which thou hast seen"; (2) "The things which are"; and (3) "The things which shall be hereafter"—past, present, and future.

"The things which thou hast seen" refers to the vision of chapter 1.

"The things which are" evidently points to the existing state of the assemblies as unveiled in detail in chapters 2. and 3.; while "The things which shall be hereafter" (literally, after these things—*i.e.*, after the things which are before us in chapters 2. and 3.) evidently points to things belonging to the prophetic future, which things are detailed from chapter 4. to chapter 22.

It is of first importance in reading the book of Revelation to have this threefold arrangement of its contents distinctly before our minds; indeed, apart therefrom I seriously doubt whether it is possible to read the book with understanding. If we grasp this Divine arrangement, we will be able to understand the things with which it

deals in their Divine order, at any rate as regards their broad outline.

In looking at chapter 1., which, it is almost needless to say, together with chapters 2. and 3., deal with the dispensation in which we ourselves live, we observe that the first thing which John saw (ver. 12) was "seven golden lampstands." He had been instructed to write what he saw in a book, which book—one book—was to be sent to the seven assemblies mentioned in verse 11. And in these seven golden lampstands the Lord lets John into the secret of His thoughts about the seven assemblies to which the book was to be sent—His thoughts both as to their constitution and their use.

Three things strike me in regard to this vision. First, the number of the lampstands, which symbolize the assemblies—the number seven. Seven is the well-known number symbolic of completeness or perfection. Second, the material of which these lampstands were made—seven *golden* lampstands: gold being the symbol of that which is Divine in its origin, Divine in its character—points to the Divine constitution and character of the assemblies symbolized by the lampstands. They are not merely assemblies, but they are assemblies of God; they are not merely lampstands, they are *golden lampstands*. Thirdly, the use of the lampstand—viz., that of lamp-holding, of light-bearing. Here we get the thought of what God's intention is in the assembly in regard to its use.

The golden lampstands, therefore, tell us of the vessels for collective testimony which God wills to have on earth, and which He creates according to His will.

Now, in verse 13, John sees in the midst of the seven golden lampstands One like unto a son of man. This expression arrests our attention because it is as Son of Man that the Lord Jesus Christ is given authority to execute judgment (see John 5. 27). If we think of the different

connections of that title, Son of Man, we will find that it is a title connected with judgment. The One like unto a son of man is then described in completeness, a full-length portrait, so to speak, is given of Him. He is clothed with a garment down to the foot: the priestly garment evidently, and one, therefore, which points to His office of Great Priest over the house of God. I need not dwell upon the difference between the High Priesthood and the Great Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ; that would be a little irrelevant to what is before us. Suffice it to say the whole connection distinctly points to Him here as Great Priest in connection with God's House, not as High Priest for God's people individually.

"Clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt at the breasts with a golden girdle." The girdle, the symbol of service; the golden girdle telling us of a service exercised in Divine righteousness and faithfulness, as it is written of Him, "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." That which He does as Great Priest is strictly according to Divine righteousness and Divine faithfulness.

"His head and His hair white like wool, as white as snow." The symbols of wisdom, that perfect wisdom according to which He administers the affairs of the House over which He is set as Great Priest.

"His eyes as a flame of fire." Penetrating discernment, complete intelligence, according to that which God is in Himself, for our God is a consuming fire.

"His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace." Judgment characterizing His ways; His feet swift to execute that which His eyes discern.

"His voice as the sound of many waters." His word in its authority, its power, and its majesty.

"And in His right hand seven stars." The seven stars being symbolic, as we are told at the close of the chapter, of

the angels or messengers of the assemblies, speaking of the ministry. As Great Priest over God's House He has full control of the ministry. He holds the seven stars in His right hand, which is full of Divine ability.

"And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." The application of His Word in the judgment of evil.

"And His countenance as the sun shineth in his strength." The expression of supreme glory.

Such is the portrait of God's Great Priest over His House, which when John discerned he fell at His feet as dead. I think, beloved, if we were only to enter into what the Lord Jesus Christ is in this character in connection with God's House, we should be down at His feet too.

In our learning to know the Lord Jesus in the many ways in which He is set forth in God's Word, do not let us overlook seeking to have a better acquaintance with Him, as set forth in these verses in connection with the circle which is here in view. These things ought to interest and concern us very deeply, seeing that all we get here is in connection with a department of Divine truth, which, in our efforts to express practically, has cost us more than a little. As we understand the teaching of the seven golden lampstands in connection with the One who appears in the midst thereof, as we come to know who and what He is in His administration of God's House, it will keep us at His feet, we shall be held fast by the truth as that truth radiates around the person and character of the Great Priest. May we understand it increasingly; may we be held by the truth, and discern more and more what God's mind is in regard to assembly position,—for that is what we get here. We get the assemblies of a province (what more nearly than anything else answers to a province in these days is a country, such as England) in their completeness, in their perfection as a Divine creation, planted by God Himself, and linked together in a Divine unity, which has for its centre the One

in the midst, who is both the glory in the midst and the Great Priest over the house to govern it.

Here let us think of those words, In the midst (of the lampstands), in connection—shall I say in a certain sense in contrast?—with the same expression in Matthew 18. : “Where two or three are, gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.” .

He in the midst in Matthew 18. is the Divine centre for the unit as it may exist in a single town or city, which we may correctly describe as the assembly of God in such a place. But in Revelation 1. what we get is not One in the midst of two or three disciples gathered into His name ; it is One in the midst of the assemblies of a whole province in their completeness. And He who is the centre of the Divine unity, the collective thing of God and for God in the city, is also the centre of the Divine unity of the province ; or if we look the wide world over (for it is only an extension of the same principle) the thought will extend as far as the fellowship of God's Son may reach. Happy for us as we remember that the Lord Jesus is the centre in whatever circle He may be.

Our attention has been directed of late years to these things. We have viewed associations in which we were in relation thereto, and we have found those associations to differ—to essentially differ from God's standard, from God's pattern given us here. We have not only thought of whom we were in fellowship with—that is, the persons in the particular place—but we have thought of *what* we were in fellowship with, and our eyes have scanned the wider circle, that which answers to the province in apostolic days. We have looked over the country at large, and we have not seen golden lampstands linked together into a Divine unity around the One who exercised the office of Great Priest over God's House. We have seen something very different ; and because of that the conviction of the truth has led us to step

outside that which differed, which was contrary, which was even antagonistic to the Divine pattern. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

Let us now turn to God's purpose in having His saints together in a position according to His own word. What are we together for? What purpose are we to serve? What is His intention, His design?

We are to be lamp-holders. He would have us to be those through whom instrumentally the light of Divine truth, the lamp of His word, is to be diffused. If the golden lampstand is not holding up the lamp, of what use is it—that is, in its manward aspect and relation?

One thing is absolutely essential to the fulfilling of God's purpose in this respect—namely, that our condition, our state, should be answerable to His mind as given in chapters 2. and 3. Now notice the connection between the second division of this book and the first. In chapter 1. we get a perfect picture of the position which is according to God, and the use which God intends to make of His saints in such a position; in chapters 2. and 3. we find the Lord dealing with the assemblies in such a way as to bring their state up to the position in which they had been set. And so we find in the words of the Great Priest to the seven assemblies in chapters 2. and 3. words of reproof, of warning, of encouragement, as were needed, to the end that the state of the assemblies might correspond with their position. We know the Lord's word to Ephesus: He commends much; but he also speaks (ver. 4) of that which His eyes, like a flame of fire, discerned as existing in that assembly, which, if permitted to continue, if not rectified, would inevitably lead to the complete extinction of its testimony.

Here, to my mind, the force of the title of the book comes in: the Revelation (that is, the lifting off of a veil, or unveiling). The words of the Lord Jesus here in regard to assembly state and assembly failure go to the root of the

matter. And what is the root of the matter? It is a question of the heart, the affections. "Thou hast left thy first love"; a fallen assembly! "Remember from whence thou art fallen." Then comes the most solemn, yet gracious word, "Repent." And so He calls back to that which characterized it originally, "Repent, and do the first works." Thus does He deal with the heart; and may we respond, and return in some small degree His love, which is so perfect and so full.

H. ELSON.

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 75.—*Does the rapture of the Saints settle the doom of the Christ-rejector; or will he receive another opportunity whereby he may seek unto God?*

When God speaks to sinners it is always in the spirit of the words, "To-day if ye shall hear His voice"; again, "Now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation." Therefore we cannot for a moment hold out any hope to a man that if he reject Christ to-day he will get another chance to-morrow. At the same time, it is a great mistake to suppose that the coming of the Christ for the Church will put an end to the preaching of Gospel tidings. The very reverse is the truth. That myriads and myriads of mankind will be saved after the rapture of the Church is abundantly clear from many Scriptures (for instance, *Rev. 7. 1-9*). This, however, as it appears to us, has no direct bearing on the manner of Gospel preaching, for an evangelist is called on to speak a message of life to men who may go to their long home ere the sun goes down. What has an unregenerate person to do with the coming of the Lord Jesus as the Son of God? Absolutely nothing!

C. M. L.

NEED OF SINNER, SAINT, AND SERVANT.

THERE are in the Gospel according to Luke happy groupings—miracle, narrative, and passing event, all linked together into a most beautiful order — an arrangement and distribution of material to hand that is according to God, who is not a God of confusion. Such we have in the Samaritan parable, the Mary and Martha incident, and the man out of his way (as seen in Luke 10. 21–11. 13), all expressing the threefold need at the head of this paper.

Luke 10. 21. “In that hour” of terrible disappointment, as the faithful and patient Servant looked back upon His ministry in Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and saw so little return, so little response,¹ the disappointed Servant found a joy in His Master and in the will of His Master. “Lord of heaven and earth,” I thank Thee for *hiding* as well as *revealing*. All who serve, in however little a measure, have again and again found little to cheer in the work, but much to make glad in the Master and the Master’s will, Who hides as well as reveals.

The knowledge of Father or Son, or both, depends upon *revelation*; but it is a revelation only to need and faith. Whether it be the written Word or the living Word, its treasures are only open in response to need and faith. The Son is jealous for the honour of the Father; and not until the sinner has known himself, and owned his guilt to God, will there be a revealing of that in Christ which answers to his *need*.

So it was with Joseph. Not until Judah had said, “God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants” (Gen. 44. 16) did Joseph reveal himself. He had again and again to

¹ More especially Capernaum, as He once lived there. “He came and dwelt at Capernaum”; indeed, they saw “great light.” Bethlehem the city of His birth, Nazareth the city of His bringing up, but Capernaum the city of His choice—and yet no response.

refrain himself, that most painful restraint. They had owned their guilt *one to another* (42. 21) when Simeon was bound before their eyes (and there is little doubt but that it was Simeon who had bound Joseph when they put him in the pit). With amazement they saw that binding and the anguish of that face, telling of past crimes and guilt against their brother. But they had also *wronged the father who had sent that son*—this must be learned in Benjamin. And as he is being kept, Judah pleads as he remembers the father's anguish, and in those few verses mentions the father fifteen times. And not until the lesson of guilt as seen against Joseph in Simeon, and against the father as seen in Benjamin, both are owned, can there be the knowing of Joseph. So not until the sinner has justified God can he know the Son in His Saviour character.

But the Father is jealous for the honour of the Son, whom He has made both Lord and Christ; and it is only as *saints* own their wrong against Him as Lord, in being in and of that which denies Him that place, that the Father can fully reveal Him as Lord to such saints.

Now as to the man who fell among thieves—first, the stripping in order to *need*, for he was so *rich* and increased in goods, and far from need: he became a splendid catch for Jericho robbers; it was not often they had such a good day. Stripped, wounded, and half dead, there he lay. Doubtless amongst those coming from Jerusalem, there comes along, to his unspeakable joy, a priest—a neighbour, perhaps one who for many a long day had known many kindnesses, and many a time had his feet under his groaning table, one whom he well knew; but, alas! he passes by on the other side. Who can depict the blank amazement, the disappointment? But it is also a revelation to him of one whom he *thought he knew*. Ah, I know you now; nothing like adversity to prove your friends, the real from the sham. Same with Levite as

with Priest. Some men we trust because we know them ; others we trust until we know them.

Thank God for blighted hopes, withered expectations ; the need is too big for such miserable men. Now there comes one whom he *never knew*—the Samaritan ; not one highly esteemed as Priest and Levite, but a hated one. And why hated ? Because not known. To be known is to be loved ; but he can only be revealed to need. And such in all *its depth is now before him*, on the Jericho road. This is the opportunity he had long sought ; it was to him the happiest moment he had had for many a long day. What a joy to make known a love to one from whom he had received only *hate*. The Samaritan knew him as he had never known himself ; no one living had a more bitter, more painful experience. The cold, contemptuous look, as he *passed by on the other side*, lest the shadow of the Samaritan should reach him. Now, however, things are slightly changed. The man on the wayside, with wounded spirit and injured pride as he thinks of the heartless conduct of his friends, the Priest and Levite, dumb with amazement, sees the Samaritan coming to where he is. This is insult to injury. What does he want ? Ah, he is taking a mean advantage to pay me out for all the hard things I have said and done to him. This is cowardly. All this would show how little the man was known. Now, with the tenderness of a nursing mother, the Samaritan stoops and raises the unfortunate man, pouring in oil and wine—oil for wounds, wine for lips, parched and dry, the man faint and well-nigh spent. Not a word of upbraiding, not a word as to past misconduct, not a word as to good or better behaviour for time to come, not a word as to any sorrow for the past. This is strange ; but is this a Samaritan ? Yea, surely. How far from what I had supposed ! how far astray through Priest and Levite teaching have I been ! It is well they passed by to make room for a better. The

only man of the three worth knowing, and this is the one I have sinned against, wronged, belied; and all this good for ill, love for hate. How he loathes himself now! He looks upon and *laments* a lost and *wasted life*, a life in which this one has had no place. What a blank! How utterly lost, worthless, and misspent has been all his past!

To know *Him is life*. I have only just *begun to live*. And he loves Him with all his heart and soul and strength and mind, and his neighbour as himself. And how came all this about—to love the One he hated? Because He first loved me. To know Him is to love Him.

What a mighty upheaval! what a change of mind! what a mighty work of God in the soul!

He brought him to the inn, stayed with him all night, and on the morrow, *when he departed*, he left twopence, and said to the host, "Whatsoever thou spendest more I will repay when I come again." He departed. Why? Because there was now a *need* of another kind. Not the need of the sinner upon the highway, but the need of the saint. Christ-like, he came to where the sinner was to meet the sinner's need. But again He departs, to the right hand of the Father, to meet *from thence* the saint's need—"And it is expedient for you that I go away." A need that will last until He come again.

He must meet *all*, from the smallest expression of it, twopence, to that which knows no limit—"Whatsoever thou spendest more." May we, as saints, know Him now; but there must be in us as saints that which will call forth the *revelation of Him*; that is, our *saints' need*.

Now look at Mary and Martha. The blessed Lord has turned in weary and *needing* rest and refreshment. Martha is occupied with His *need*; Mary is occupied *with His fulness*. Mary has chosen that better part, and she has laid *all* her *need* before Him who is the fulness of God. From the wayside, wounded and half dead, to His feet, the

sinner and the saint. To know what He was to us on the wayside is blessed, to know what He is in Himself is better. This brings us to His feet. It is the double knowledge fits us for service. Not to begin with the Martha place, but the Mary. And hear His word. Then serve.

Now we look at chapter xi. The disciples say, "Lord, teach us to pray." The good men never prayed better, for what is prayer? *need* told out; and this was a felt *need*: as praise is fulness told out.

As HE was praying; and did He need to pray, how much more we!

No vain repetition in what follows. Seeking first God's things—"Thy Name, Thy Kingdom"; then our things. God first. May we be enabled to grasp what follows.

See a man at midnight out of his way, *lost*. He has a friend somewhere near, who is waked up by the loud cries of the out-of-the-way man. And indeed waked up he is of a truth to two things—viz., first, the *need* of a man *lost*; and, secondly, his own inability to meet it. My own cupboard is empty. In *this lies the secret of all prayer*, and midnight will find us *praying*, and not *sleeping*. Blessed waking, there are signs of such in our midst. God has saved many who were out of the way in answer to the cries of the saints. The prayer-meetings well attended. What follows? "Come," says the waked-up man, "I know one who has plenty;" and he in turn is waked up. "Friend, lend me three loaves; a friend of mine is out of his way." How he can plead for another! And the heartless response only intensifies the case, and makes him importunate even until, because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. Callously indifferent to another's need, and to cries on behalf of such. Yet not so with regard to his *own comfort and interests*. Like the widow and the unjust judge—"Lest by her continual coming she weary me."

This man was troubled at the importunity of the man wide-awake to *needs*, that of others and his own. And, oh! think of it, *God is troubled*. At what? *our importunity*? Alas! no, but the *want of it*; insomuch that *He prays us*, "Ask, seek, knock." And oh! that we should ever say from *our within*, "Trouble me not. It is only a Gospel meeting, only the prayer-meeting—it is only brother So-and-so going to preach." "The night is wet and cold, and I am very comfortable by the nice warm fire," or "I am very busy." "Really these business claims." "I am afraid I shall not get to-night." So he from his within is troubled at God's importunity! How much of this! how little of going to *seek* men when out of the way, and bring them to the One whom we knew when we lay half dead on the wayside, and whose heart love we proved as we sat at His feet and heard His Word!

G. R. GEDDES.

"HOW SHALL WE ORDER THE CHILD?"

A SEQUEL TO

"THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD."¹

CONSISTENTLY with the requirements of the Lord's will, that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Cor. 13. 1), we would seek to add our testimony, as the expression of the exercise the Lord has given in the matter. Viewed from our standpoint, the homes of those who are in and of assemblies of God should be a reflex of such assemblies. God has inseparably associated the two in that most important, although much neglected, word, "For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of a church of God?" (1 Tim. 3. 5). Rule for God in the home is thus shown to precede rule in the assembly. Need we add, the ruling of oneself must of

¹ This Volume, pages 9, 24. (See Judges 13. 12.)

necessity precede the rule of the home? The assemblies of God being constituted of such as are together in the will of the Lord, that such are Christians becomes imperative, yet is not sufficient; the further requirements of the Lord's will being a subject condition of heart to whatsoever the Lord hath commanded—a will to do His will. Thus, and thus only, can such be of *one mind* IN THE LORD.

The force of the word, "Married . . . only in the Lord" (1 Cor. 7. 39) is thus made plain. The fact of the man and woman being Christians is not sufficient to constitute a marriage in the Lord, for this requires that such should be brought together in the prayerfully sought and intelligently learned will of the Lord. A marriage between two Christians believing and practising different principles could not surely constitute a marriage in the Lord; but both accepting and being subject to the Lord's will in their individual path, such could be together in the Lord. Not by the force of circumstances, not even by the mutual regard and affection for each other *alone*, but also the indications of the Lord's will in the matter being sought and found; who will then be, in the mercy of God, not only to each other what such need for their mutual blessing, help, and joy, but those through whom the will of God may be done on the earth, in that new and important, albeit responsible sphere, which they have thus been called upon to fill, of the home. For which, in the *dwelling* together, as the outcome and result of having been *brought* together, the grace of life shall abound, that in the energy of which living and acting their "prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3. 7). Furthermore, where children have been given as the fruit of that union there is then the opportunity to express the rule of God through them towards those under their care; the will of God being done in the husband, in the wife as subject to the husband, and thus through the parents presented to the children.

From the child or children is expected obedience to the parents. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Eph. 6. 1). Please note it is not "parent," but "parents." And here, alas! is where so often the saddest failure is seen in connection with the rule of the home, and where the wrong of the unequally yoked husband and wife is made most painfully manifest. Father believes such is right; mother believes different. Father says such is wrong; mother says the opposite. If the child obeys father, he will disobey mother; if he obeys mother, he will disobey father. Which condition of things makes it impossible for the child to carry out the scriptural injunction, "Obey your parents." We write thus plainly because of the importance of the subject, and ask, Are not these things so? That such—that is, the parents—should be of one mind in the Lord is an absolute necessity, otherwise there is a divided house, and as the result an end to godly rule and to all intents and purposes of God's will. We do not say that husband and wife may never view matters differently, but whatever difference there may be should be talked over in private alone, and not in the presence and hearing of the children, until they can, as the result of being of one mind, give a united judgment, and thus preserve the rule, peace, and happiness that should and will characterize the home.

Take, again, the assembly in its rule. In such as are together of God will be found those in whose hearts He has put care for the little flock, and through them is presented to the flock the rule of God—that is, the will of God being firstly done in them, and through them expressed to the assembly, who again are required by the Lord's will to "obey *them* that have the rule over you" (Heb. 13. 17). That such should be of one mind in the Lord is absolutely necessary ere this injunction can be fulfilled. Otherwise a divided judgment amongst such as guide in an assembly is almost tantamount to a divided assembly. Hence the

urgent necessity that no matter should come to the assembly until it come as the united judgment of those who guide. This will necessitate talking matters over alone amongst themselves, and will call for the exercise of patience, yea, the much patience, too often lacking (2 Cor. 6. 4); until, as the result of being of one mind in the Lord, they can be of one mouth to the assembly, as well as for the assembly.

Yet again, as discipline is necessary for the maintaining of godly rule and godly order in the individual assembly, as well as in the House of God, so is it necessary in the home. Righteous and impartial judgment should ever characterize the rule of the home and the training of the child. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son" (Prov. 13. 24; also chaps. 19. 18, 23. 13, 14, 29. 15, 17).

Children's faults should be lovingly and faithfully pointed out and corrected, and when necessary chastisement administered. It is necessary, again, that the parents be of one mind in the matter; otherwise the child will look for sympathy and escape from the discipline in the other parent. This it should be impossible for him to get. If he does, either from one of the parents or from the other members of the family, discipline is hindered, and godly rule is at an end. Chastisement should ever have for its object the repentance and restoration of the erring one. It may cost the parents much, even heartaches and tears, but it is necessary, and must not on that account be avoided. It is not *true* love to the child to allow him to have his own way. He may require to be corrected again and again. "*Train* up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22. 6) implies that. The natural will of the child is prone to the wrong. Remember always "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" toward us, and let us seek grace to be and do likewise. To have favourites in children may become a fruitful source of sorrow and trouble, both to them and the parents,

as witness Esau and Jacob (Gen. 25. 28), and Joseph (Gen. 37. 3-5). The expression of pleasure and approval in the ready obedience can surely be shown in a way not calculated to arouse the jealousy and envy of the others. Much wisdom doubtless is here needed in connection with the training of children.

And now, last, although not least, God fully estimates the importance of this matter, and lays the responsibility of it upon parents. Do *we* rightly apprehend that responsibility, as well as the privilege God has given us in connection with those entrusted to our care? We hesitate not to say that the influences brought to bear on the child, either for good or evil, in his early years will make impressions that will remain while life lasts.

A word to mothers. With you and upon you very much of the children's future welfare depends. Through their being so much with you, as also on other accounts, you, mothers, to a great extent have the making or marring of the future of your children (see 2 Tim 1. 5). God's estimate of the importance of training the young may be found expressed in the words of Exodus 10. 9, and again in Ezra 8. 21; while, on the other hand, the failure and neglect thereof is witnessed to in Jehovah's message to Samuel concerning Eli, priest of God though he was, in these most solemn words of 1 Samuel 3. 11-13. And the secret of all this Jehovah in that word makes plain: "Thou honourest thy sons above Me" (1 Sam. 2. 29). God has said, "Them that honour *Me* I will honour" (1 Sam. 2. 30), and in our seeking to bring our children up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" we may indeed prove the fulfilment thereof, in our God saving them in their very early years, and "leading them in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake." Amen and amen.

DAVID SMITH.

THE RULE OF GOD.

(Continued from page 89.)

PURSuing our inquiry now in the New Testament Scriptures, we must bear in mind that there is no change in the dispensation, the four Gospels in their primary teaching being almost exclusively addressed to Israelites, and even after the resurrection of our Lord we find the Gospel of the Kingdom especially directed to the nation (as see Acts 3. 26).

The first point to which we would draw the attention of our readers is that the Lord chooses twelve apostles to be with Himself, and to them He gives authority over unclean spirits (Matt. 10. 1, R.V). So that again we have the number twelve; not now in connection with the nations of the earth, nor yet in connection with Israel and the land, but in association with the One who received authority from the Father and came to do His will (Luke 5. 24). These twelve are sent out to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, proclaiming it to be at hand (Matt. 10. 7). The special form of the kingdom is not so much spoken of, but the power and authority of our Lord is directed against the usurped dominion of Satan (ver. 8); for Satan, working behind and through the fourth great earth power, has sought, and is yet seeking; to secure the rule and dominion of this world to himself. First he is found offering the kingdom to our Lord, and this apart from the cross and the suffering, yet at the terrible price of His rebelling against the Father's will and becoming a worshipper of Satan. We know how the Archfiend failed, how with indignation our blessed Lord spurned the offer and drove the Tempter from Him. But yet, not to be baffled, Satan is found working his purposes through the Gentile powers, to whom authority had first been given in the Head of Gold, which has descended to the fourth em-

pire, as we have already pointed out. Notice especially the words of our Lord addressed to Pilate: "Thou couldst have no authority at all against Me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19. 10, 11. See R.V.).

Thus as the blessed Master trod the pathway of obedience He found all the powers of earth and hell arrayed against Him, and it was now in the narrowest circle that His will was being done, and with that circle, as we have noticed, the number twelve is associated. The disciples who once gathered round Him have fallen away, offended at His doctrines, for He came not to please men, but to manifest the truth. At last we find Him addressing those sad and searching words to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Oh, that the people of God would give heed to this solemn lesson. With this little company and in this little circle the purposes of God are being carried out; the majority has failed, the minority is that with which God is working. "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptation." What grace! what mercy! that failing company, yet those who clung to the Master in their weakness through the pathway of trial. And now comes the promise of future blessing and coming authority in the kingdom yet to be set up in connection with the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22. 28-30).

A careful consideration of Luke 17. 20 and following verses will show us that there was a double aspect of the kingdom. The Prince of the Covenant was in their midst; God's will done in Him in all perfection, and round Him those that owned His authority. Had the rulers of the people known in this their day the things that belonged to their peace, they would have seen that He whom they were rejecting and whom they were about to nail to the cross was in very deed the Christ, the Anointed of the Father; but their eyes were holden, they had not seen the glory depart from their temple, nor had they seen the glory

return in Him who was the image of the Father. His message of love and mercy, His withering words of warning fell alike on ears dull of hearing, for they had shut their eyes and closed their ears, lest the message of Jehovah should reach them.

The other aspect of the kingdom has a wider significance. We have traced it in connection with the nation in the past; the Gospel of Matthew especially deals with it; and the verses already referred to in Luke 17. When He shall come whose right it is to reign, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ (Rev. 11. 15).

We are often asked the question, What is the difference between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of God? We look upon the kingdom of heaven as the wider circle in which the authority of God is owned upon the earth; and it is only mentioned in the Gospel according to Matthew, where the Lord is seen as King of the Jews. Yet it is to be noticed that the expression "kingdom of heaven" is dropped in Matthew 21. 43, and the "kingdom of God" is substituted. The reason for this we understand to be that the kingdom in its broader sense is reserved for Israel, and will only be restored to earth with a restored people. The kingdom in this aspect is never connected with the saints of this dispensation. When in Acts 1. 6 the disciples asked, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" the Lord's reply in no way indicates that the kingdom never would be restored, or that it would be made over to the spiritual Israel, as some put it; on the contrary, He replies simply that it was not for the disciples to know the times and seasons. The kingdom of God as expressed in Acts 14. 22 and Acts 20. 25 we understand to be the rule of God amidst the saints of the present age, the circle in which alone we can contend earnestly for the Faith (Jude 3) once for all delivered to the saints. Denominations may con-

tend for creeds and catechisms, which may contain more or less of the faith, but if we are to contend for all that God has given us, we can do so only when we are where He would have us to be—that is, in a church of God which is in Divine association with the Churches of God.

But again for a moment to “consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners.” How often we have looked at a beautiful flower, its colours glowing in the sunshine. We have watched it day by day, until the petals have faded and fallen, and the beauty has departed. But in the centre of that flower there remains still by far the most important item: the outward beauty has perished, but the little seed has not, and from it again will burst renewed life and beauty with a coming spring-time. This illustrates the present aspect of the kingdom. In the little thing of this age is reserved that which will yet develope into all the glory and beauty of the coming kingdom of the Christ. Israel has faded away, her beauty has perished, the King and the kingdom of heaven have been rejected by her, but in the kingdom of God the seed of the coming glory is reserved.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

A THREEFOLD TEST OF DISCIPLESHIP.

THE Lord Jesus had just revealed the things which awaited Him in the path of obedience to His Father and God (namely, sufferings, sorrow, and death) to the little company which gathered around Him at the close of one of those busy days in the brief life of the Master on earth.¹ And having pointed out the pathway His feet must tread, He said: “If any one desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.” Thus

¹ Luke 9.

the path of the Master must be the path of the *disciple*, for true discipleship consists in learning the doctrine and imitating the manner of life of the Master or Teacher.

“And it came to pass when the days were well-nigh come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.” He had come down from the Throne to the manger. Being in the form of God, He had emptied Himself, and taken upon Him the form of a bond-servant.¹ And now He was about to be received up again, back to the place of authority and power, with all the additional glories and honour that wreath His brow and surround His person to-day. But Jerusalem lay in the path: between Him and the glory and joy stood the sufferings of Jerusalem, the mockings of ungodly men, the scourging-post, the spitting and shame, and, finally, the Cross, where man’s hate reached its climax, and God’s wrath burst as an awful storm upon the spotless Holy One, whilst He sank beneath the waves and billows of Jehovah’s righteous wrath.² What a weight of meaning it gives to this word, “He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem,” when we remember that Jerusalem was to be the scene of such untold, such unutterable sufferings as He endured in the path of obedience to God. Nothing could move Him: His face was set, stedfastly set. The joy which lay beyond it so attracted His holy soul that He despised the shame.³ Satan had tried to prevent Him. Foes and friends did their best to prevent Him from treading the path of obedience—the path of suffering. But one and all were put aside, and that face stedfastly set for Jerusalem. Well might the poet say,—

“Unmoved by Satan’s subtile wiles,
By suffering, shame, and loss,
Thy path, uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the Cross.”

It is at this point in the life of the Master that three men

¹ Phil. 2. 6, 7.

² Psalm 42. 7.

³ Heb. 12. 2.

are brought before us, to illustrate a three-fold test put before those who would follow Him with His face stedfastly set to go to Jerusalem.

1. The first man said, "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest"; and Jesus said unto him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He had left heaven to come down to this sin-blighted scene, to do a work for God—a work which would glorify God, and give Him a rest once more in the very place where Satan had disturbed it, thousands of years before; and while in the midst of this scene of ruin the men of this world, like foxes, may have their very beautiful holes (see Luke 13. 32.), and, like the birds of heaven, may build comfortable nests wherein to rest in the enjoyment of sin for a season—the Son of Man had no place where He could rest in fellowship with His Holy, Heavenly Father. Everything that was in the world was opposed to the Father; the will of God was completely set aside, and Satan's will being done.

Thus to the blessed Master, whose heart was filled with love to His Father, there was no place of rest, until the Cross was past, and God was glorified, and He entered into His rest in God's presence upon the Throne, in a scene of perfect holiness, where the will of God alone is done. In the words that fell upon the ears of the would-be disciple we have the first *test* which faces the one who would follow the steps of the Master—viz., *denying self*. If we would be disciples of the One who passed through Jerusalem to the Throne and victor's crown in the presence of God,¹ we must have no love for self. The fox's hole and the bird's nest, where the flesh would delight to revel and enjoy itself, must be denied. No room for the claims of the flesh, when God's estimate of it is acquiesced in; it is put in the place He has given it—death.² Human love says, "Pity Thyself,

¹ Heb. 2. 9.

² Rom. 6. 6.

Lord." Divine love says, "Deny Thyself." The child of God who has fallen in love with himself can never be a disciple of the Lord; the path is too trying for the flesh to endure it, and sooner or later he will find a hole to rest in, like Demas of old.¹ Learning the doctrines and imitating the ways of Christ will bring upon the disciple fellowship in the sufferings of Christ,² which only the love of God, and the grace which is in Christ Jesus, can enable him to set his face stedfastly to endure. The Holy Spirit testified to Paul of the sufferings that awaited him in his following of the Master's steps,³ but he set his face to go to Jerusalem, fought the beautiful fight, and now rests in his Master's presence, waiting the coming awarding day of Christ.

2. Then we hear the Lord saying to another one, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their own dead, but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." Here it is love for the dead (natural affection, for he was his father) that comes in to hinder the disciple from immediately following the Master. How it brings the words of the Lord Jesus to our minds, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." Many a child of God has been hindered from walking in the path of separation—in the path of true discipleship—by their dead friends. Sad indeed is the scene where the one called by the Lord to follow Him turns aside to join the company of the dead ones, and thus the Master and the work of the Lord are left for the association of the dead. One cannot help but lift their voice against one especial feature of this, which is becoming more and more common as the end draws near—viz., believers joining themselves in marriage with unbelievers—a child of God and an unsaved person, an heir of God and an heir of wrath, God's

¹ 2 Tim. 4. 10.

² 2 Tim. 3. 12.

³ Acts 20. 23, 24.

child and God's enemy linked up together for time. The Devil rejoices in such a union, as he has succeeded in marring one more life, and drawing, it *may be*, a disciple from following the Master into union with the dead. Surely no disciple who is himself or herself following the Lord Jesus would rejoice in or countenance such a union. Love for the dead must not be permitted to come in and hinder the disciple from following close behind the Master. The Kingdom of God is infinitely more important than the burying of the dead. Let the dead bury their own dead, and let the dead marry the dead; but let us see that we follow the Master, proclaiming in our daily life the Kingdom of God by our subjection to the laws of the Kingdom.

3. A third man comes upon the scene with the words, "Lord, I will follow Thee, but first let me go bid them farewell which are at home at my house." And Jesus said unto him, "No one having put his hand to the plough and looking unto the things behind is fit for the Kingdom of God." Here it is love for the living ones that is attracting the heart of the disciple from following the Master. In the answer of Jesus the individual is looked upon as having turned his back on things which are behind, yet in his heart going back to them: he is looking unto the things which are behind, while he professes to be following the Master as a labourer in and for the Kingdom of God. But how can the ploughman who is constantly looking behind him make straight furrows with his plough? Surely the work will bear the impress of that heart going back, and those eyes looking back to the things which are behind; and thus the individual be unfit for the Kingdom of God. May our God teach us the lesson contained in these words.

God has called His child to leave, like an Abram, his country, his kindred, and his father's house—to entire and absolute separation. Thus many of God's saints have had

to turn their back upon beloved fellow Christians (who elect to remain in that which is not God's House)¹ in order to follow Him to a place where the will of God may be carried out. But after having left all and come outside the camp to Him, the heart goes back to that which they have left, and they are, it may be, like a David mourning for an Absalom every day,² until they are unable to do the work of the Lord where they are in a whole-hearted way unto His pleasing. And the time comes when they want to go back again; it is only to bid them good-bye. But He who knows the secrets of the heart sees that love for the living is supplanting the love for the Master and the Rule of God being carried out on earth. The blessed Lord could put His own mother aside when it was a question of the will of His God.³ And he who would be a disciple of such an One must be prepared to put the living ones (children of God), as well as the dead ones (children of wrath), on one side, in order that he may be fit for the Kingdom of God. Many a dear saint is kept in the sects by the love which he has for some prominent leader or preacher, who is perhaps a Christian.

God grant that the love which fills our hearts to the Lord Jesus Christ may be so strong that it will constrain us to *deny self*, leave *dead* and *living*, so that we may bear the Cross and follow Him; if, through overcoming, we may hear His "Well done" at the close. Suffering with Him, we shall be glorified with Him in that day. But let us count the cost; the pathway will be one of suffering and self-denial; but it may not, yea, it will not, be long, for He who has trodden the path of suffering and sorrow will soon come for those whom He has redeemed with His precious blood.

F. VERNAL.

¹ Matt. 23. 38; Heb. 3. 6.

² Sam. 13. 39.

³ Matt. 12. 46-50.

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 76.—*What kind of meat did Paul receive in Acts 9. 19? Was it the same as is spoken of in Hebrews 5. 14? Was it his body got strong or his soul?*

The scales fell from his literal bodily eyes, for his blindness was a literal bodily blindness. So the food was natural food for the natural body, and it was the natural body that was strengthened thereby. Deeply pregnant as God's Word is with hidden and spiritual meaning, we must be on our guard against the insidious attempts that the Devil is ever making to lead us to avoid the plain, straightforward meaning of the simple and easily understood words used by God. Lest otherwise we find ourselves led through a mist of confusion into a quagmire of uncertainty and even of unbelief.

C. M. L.

QUESTION 77.—*What is the spiritual House in 1 Peter 2. 5? Is it an assembly gathered into His name, met to worship and to break bread on the Lord's Day morning?*

It is well for us to keep in mind that the figures used in Scripture are intended to convey a truth to our minds, lest we get occupied with the figure and lose sight of its signification. The term House in Scripture seems a comprehensive one. My child is of my house; although it may not be under my roof always, yet it is under my rule. House would seem to embrace all the assemblies of the saints, whether together for breaking the bread or in the world, if they are owning the rule of God as revealed in His Word. An individual assembly is part of the House, as a saint is part of an assembly.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 78.—*Does the Scripture Acts 1. 11 speak of the Lord's coming as the hope of the Church, or is it in connection with His coming to the earth in judgment as Son of Man?*

Probably this passage will have a double fulfilment. Those spoken to were Israelites, and when addressed in this chapter the Church was yet in mystery. Further on these disciples were builded into the Church, and became partakers of its hope. They, therefore, will be caught up with other sleeping saints to meet the Lord in the air. To them, therefore, He would come in like manner as they had seen Him go up, silently and quietly, unseen by the world; yet shortly after He returns with those of the elect remnant (Rom. 11. 5), and His feet stand on the Mount of Olives. Then will He appear as Son of Man.

J. A. B.

WHAT IS HELL?¹

THE English word Hell represents in the Authorized and Revised Versions of the Scriptures several different words used by the Holy Spirit in the original languages in which He caused the sacred writings to be indited.

SHEOL.

Firstly, attention must be directed to the Hebrew word שְׁאוֹל, Sheol; concerning which we quote as follows from the preface to the Revised Version of the Old Testament. After explaining that "In some words of very frequent occurrence, the Authorized Version being either inadequate or inconsistent, and sometimes misleading, changes have been introduced with as much uniformity as appeared practicable or desirable," two or three instances are mentioned, and then it goes on to say, "Similarly the Hebrew Sheol, which signifies the abode of departed spirits² and corresponds to the Greek Hades, or the under world, is variously rendered in the Authorized Version by 'grave,' 'pit,' and 'hell.' Of these renderings, 'hell,' if it could be taken in its original sense as used in the Creeds,³ would be a fairly adequate equivalent for the Hebrew word; but it is so commonly understood of the place of torment that to employ it frequently would lead to inevitable misunderstanding. The Revisers, therefore, in the historical narratives have left the rendering 'the grave' or 'the pit' in the text with a marginal note, 'Heb. *Sheôl*,' to indicate that

¹ A correspondent having sent a question, What is Hell as commonly understood by that name? the attempt to reply to him has stretched beyond the limit of an answer to a question, and is here offered for the careful consideration of our readers.

² Of course this should have been "souls." See further on.

³ Referring to certain statements of belief drawn up by well meaning but fallible men, which are commonly known amongst many Christians under this name.

it does not signify the place of burial; while in the poetical writings they have put most commonly 'Sheol' in the text, and 'the grave' in the margin. In Isaiah 14., however, where 'hell' is used in more of its original sense and is less liable to be misunderstood, and where any change in so familiar a passage which was not distinctly an improvement would be a decided loss, the Revisers have contented themselves with leaving 'hell' in the text, and have connected it with other passages by putting 'Sheol' in the margin."

We have quoted thus fully in order that intelligent readers of Scripture may not allow themselves to be embarrassed or confused by the variety of words still left by the Revisers in the English translation to represent the one Hebrew word Sheol. Whilst we are convinced that no English readers of Scripture can afford to neglect the help of the Revised Version, we, nevertheless, suggest that in the special study of any particular subject it is important to learn, as far as the Revisers' preface may enable us, the principle on which they have altered or left unchanged the Authorized Version set forth in 1611.

In the above extract from their preface one point is worthy of special notice. They distinctly say that though they have left "the grave" in certain passages (for instance, in Genesis 42. 38) to represent the word Sheol, yet this does not signify the place of burial.

That Sheol is the habitation of the souls of the dead is proved by the following Scriptures:—Psalm 16. 10; Psalm 49. 14, 15; Proverbs 23. 14.

That it is not the spirits of the departed who dwell there is shown by the fact that when man goeth to his long home and the mourners go about the streets, the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit returns unto God who gave it (Eccles. 12.).

Gross confusion between the spirit and the soul of man is

extremely common. Yet in point of fact they have but little in common. Both the spirit and the soul differ entirely from the body in their nature, and are therefore both probably quite imperceptible to the bodily senses. This may be the very reason why in common language the words "spirit" and "soul" are used almost interchangeably to denote that part of man which is not the body. But in Scripture the two words are used to express entirely different things, and they are indeed very sharply contrasted in not a few places (see, for instance, Hebrews 4. 12). It would seem not unlikely that the nature of the soul differs as much from that of the spirit as the nature of the body does from either. Be this as it may, God's Word distinctly assigns Sheol as the place where dwell the souls of such of the departed as are not with the Lord, and tells us that their spirits return to God when their bodies return to the earth whence they are taken.

There was, however, one fearful occasion when, in the exercise of Jehovah's creative power, and as a witness to His servant Moses, down alive into Sheol in mortal bodies a whole company of rebellious sinners was hurled in the sight of all Israel. The description of this horrible catastrophe seems clearly to confirm what Isaiah 14. suggests—that Sheol is located in the interior of the earth.

HADES.

Turning now to the New Testament, we have first to notice the word Ἅδης, Hades, which undoubtedly is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Sheol. Its occurrences are, however, very few compared with the occurrences of the latter word in the Old Testament. It is used in Matthew 11. 23; 16. 18; Luke 10. 15; 16. 23; Acts 2. 27, 31; Rev. 1. 18; 6. 8; 20. 13, 14.

The scriptures in Acts 2. are just the quotation from Psalm 16. 10. The Mediator between God and man, Christ

Jesus, being Himself a man, had spirit, and soul, and body. When, in the hour of His mighty atonement work, He laid down His life, He committed His spirit unto God, His body was buried in the rich man's grave, but His soul went down into the upper part of the place called in the Hebrew tongue Sheol, which is in Greek Hades, and in English Hell. But in Hell His soul was not left. He was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father.

We must take note of Luke 16. 23, a scripture which clearly teaches three important lessons:—

(1) Though previous to the Lord's victory over sin, and Satan, and death, all the dead went down into Hades; yet in Hades there was a great gulf fixed, separating those who died in faith, and who were carried by angels into Abraham's bosom from the wicked dead.

(2) That in Hades these latter were in torments.

(3) That the torments were of such a character that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Faithful Witness, describes them in the solemn words of verse 24. We are told that the rich man lifted up his eyes, though he had no bodily eyes, and that he saw Abraham, though with no bodily sight. Moreover, we read of Abraham's bosom, and of the finger of Lazarus, as well as of the rich man's tongue, though the bodies of these three men were in the silent grave. This language all being calculated to impress on us the dread reality of the anguish that the rich man suffered even in Hades. And be it well noted that, though that fearsome place is unseen by us and invisible to our eyes, it is not beyond the piercing gaze of the omniscient One, who presented this vivid picture of its horrors to the money lovers of that day to warn them and all whom it may reach.

As the words spoken to Peter committing to his care the keys of the kingdom of heaven have too often been misunderstood, as though the keys of heaven were in his

charge, it may be well to direct special attention to the fact that it is the Son of God Himself who has the keys of Death and of Hades. When He had been raised from the dead and entered into heaven, by His own blood He liberated from the upper part of Sheol those who had died in faith, from Abel to the dying thief,¹ and since then they who once reposed in Abraham's bosom are now

"Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast."

And He has taken to be with Himself all those who have been put to sleep through Him, all who have died in Christ.

On the other hand, the souls of the unregenerate sons of men are shut up in the lower part of Hades² till the last great day shall come, when the Great White Throne shall be set; when Hades shall give up the dead which are therein; when the dead, small and great, stand before that throne; again inhabiting the bodies in which they have lived their life on earth, they will be judged every man according to his works.

That day shall then reveal to the full much that now is known only to the great Searcher of hearts, by whom mankind will then be judged. Nevertheless, certain of the fundamental principles by which He will be guided have been made known to us in the Scriptures of Truth. And first we may observe that, though the Word of God speaks decisively of the widespread corruption and degeneration of the human race, it will not be, as some erroneously believe, that all who stand before the great

¹ But left behind in Sheol such as have died to be rewarded, as Rom. 2. tells.

² Where, we repeat, their spirits are not (Eccles. 12.). This of itself is sufficient to show that the Lord's descent into the Abyss is not alluded to in 1 Peter 3. 19. Besides which, as we have also pointed out, the Lord went into the upper part of Sheol (whither the repentant thief followed Him), whereas the wicked dead are in the lower part.

white throne will be condemned. True, those who in this day of grace believe the Son of God will not be brought before that throne at all. Whilst still in mortal body such become the happy present possessors of eternal life, and will have enjoyed all the beatitudes of the presence of the Lord for more than a thousand years ere that throne is set. Israelites also who have died in faith, and many, many others who have obeyed such Gospel as God has sent to them, will have entered into their blessing ere that time.

Nevertheless, it is written that at that dread day not only shall books be opened, but another book shall be opened, even the book of life. As to what manner of persons shall be found to have their names written in the book of life, Romans 1, 2. tell us at least that eternal life will be rendered to such of the sons of Adam as, having in them and around them such evidences of the power and divinity of the Creator as His works manifest, seek by patience in well doing for glory, and honour, and incorruption.

Whereas all whose names shall not be found written in the book of life shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, into which Hades itself will also be cast.

For the sake of definiteness, we again repeat that Sheol, which is Hades, never signifies the grave nor yet the place of the spirits of the departed. Neither is it the eternal abode of such as are or yet may be there.

THE LAKE OF FIRE.

We read this expression, the Lake of Fire, the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, only in the latter part of the book of Revelation, and it is never translated hell; nevertheless, it is necessary to allude to it here somewhat briefly, inasmuch as it is the Lake of Fire which is often meant by the word Hell, as the same is commonly used by Gospel preachers and others.

The distinction between Hades and the Lake of Fire may be made clear by noting the following facts:—

(1) At the coming of the Son of Man, the Beast and the False Prophet are cast alive into the Lake of Fire, whilst the Devil is then bound and cast into the Abyss. The expression, "the Abyss," is chiefly used to describe a place peopled by demons, unclean spirits, and the like, but from Romans 10. 7 we gather that if Hades and the Abyss are not two names of the same place, at least Hades is a place in the Abyss.¹

At the end of the thousand years Satan, having been loosed from the Abyss, and having made his final attempt against the saints, is cast into the Lake of Fire and brimstone, where are also the Beast and the False Prophet, and they (as the R.V. correctly renders the Greek) shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Moreover, when Death and Hades have disgorged their prey, they themselves, even Death and Hades, shall be cast into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death, even the Lake of Fire.

In this Lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone, shall all the wicked be punished.

Wrath and indignation there will be upon every soul of man that worketh evil, even upon such heathen as having opportunity to know God, from the evidences of Him in His visible creation, yet glorified Him not as God, nor were thankful, but exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, and so on (see Rom. 1. 2).

Greater is the responsibility of those who bear the name of Jew, and rest upon the law, and glory in God and know His will. More severe, therefore, will be the punishment

¹ The Abyss is spoken of in Luke 8. 31; Rom. 10. 7; Rev. 9. 11, 11. 7, 17. 8, 20. 1, 3, and the Pit of the Abyss in Rev. 9. 1, 2 (see Revised Version in every case). The Authorized Version uses the expression "bottomless pit" sometimes for the Abyss, and sometimes for the Pit of the Abyss.

of such as, being Jews, have hardened their hearts against God, and died in their sins.

Time and words alike fail us to speak of those who have come under the sound of the Gospel of the grace of God, and turned away therefrom; of those who, in a country where Bibles are to be found on every hand, where words of Gospel grace have been printed and reprinted beyond all counting, yet go on their way neglecting the proffered grace and mercy of the still long-suffering Son of God; yea, rejecting the convictions wrought in them by the Holy Spirit. Human words cannot tell their responsibility, nor can human thought conceive what dire punishment must await them.

GEHENNA AND TARTARUS.

The Greek word *γέεννα*, *gehenna*, occurs about eleven times in the Gospels, in the recorded utterances of the Lord Jesus Christ, and once in the Epistle by James, and is generally translated "hell" in both the Authorized and Revised Versions. That it does not signify Hades is clearly shown by the Lord's words in Matthew 10. 28, where, seeking to remove the fear of man from His disciples, and instil the fear of God in their hearts, He says, "Fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." For into Hades go the souls of men, and not their bodies.¹

We will not, at the present time, go into the reasons which lead us to believe that the place called Gehenna is not the Lake of Fire. Both, however, are places of Divine punishment for sin, into which as yet no one has been cast, though probably both, and certainly one, are in existence at present.

One other word is translated "hell" in the New Testa-

¹ Except, of course, the company of Korah.

ment, namely Tartarus,—in 2 Peter 2. 4, where the place into which the angels were cast when they sinned is so named.

We hope to be able to write more fully concerning Gehenna and Tartarus on another occasion.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

BALAAM.

How fruitful in its lessons the history of Balaam as recorded in the book of Numbers! Does the Old Testament contain the record of a life equal in several respects to that of his? Apart from Moses, he is the first prophet we read of in connection with Israel. But there is not one redeeming feature in his character. How scrupulous he appeared! Continually telling Balak that he could not go beyond the Word of the Lord. Yet no one comes before us in Scripture of more determined character, constantly pursuing his own way if possible, to attain the goal he had set before himself as his one aim and ambition.

Balaam, the son of Beor, dwelt in Mesopotamia. He was a Gentile. Known to Balak as having powers beyond his own, he was eagerly sought for and earnestly urged to come quickly to practise his divinations against Israel, "a people come out from Egypt" (Num. 22. 5), of whom Balak was forced to say, "They are too mighty for me" (ver. 6). So he sent elders of Moab and Midian to bring him. And they took with them "the rewards of divination in their hands" (ver. 7). What folly on the part of Balak in seeking Balaam to *make* events, not simply to foretell them! He was to make the future and curse Israel. And, moved by lust for reward, he sought to do it. He did all he could to accomplish the desire of Balak, and to earn "the wages of unrighteousness" (2 Peter 2. 15). How cunning and unscrupulous he was is manifested in the ways he adopted.

The Divine command was peremptory, and should have sufficed, and would have done but for the deep-seated love of money, which caused him to attempt the impossible task of securing his own will while appearing to be subservient to God's will. "A people come out," said Balak. How little he understood the meaning of the very words he uttered: "Come out." But for that, universal darkness would have prevailed. Darkness intense and awful hung as a pall over the nations. Idolatry and immoralities in connection with them had so debased them that it was a distinct mercy from God when one and another were annihilated. Sin and disease thus stayed in their progress. Light and revelation were connected with elect Israel. All had departed. God had chosen. As He did before—Abel, Seth, Noah, Abram—so now Israel. Yet mercy could shine out in connection with the Gentile as once and again God's grace was displayed in connection with Melchizedek, Abimelech, Jethro, Ruth and others.

Balak's thoughts never seemed to have risen higher than Balaam. "I wot that he whom thou blessest is blessed, and he whom thou cursest is cursed" (ver. 6). Yet Balaam knew better, and, therefore, his sin was the greater. Balak shut out God. But while Israel was as yet all unconscious of his attempt against them, God was, unknown to them, interfering for His people, and acting on their behalf. When the princes of Moab came Balaam said, "Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the Lord shall speak unto me" (ver. 8). "And God came unto Balaam, and said, What men are these with thee?" (ver. 9). Balaam answered, Balak had sent, "Come now, curse me them" (ver. 11). How peremptory the word that followed!—"God said unto Balaam, Thou SHALT NOT go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed" (ver. 12).

"No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but

men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1. 21, R.V.). The will of man, a Balak, or any other, could not produce prophetic utterance of that which they desired. And men waited upon God for His word, not requiring "thou shalt not." And though the rule was that God employed holy men as His mouthpieces, yet we have extraordinary exceptions given to us of the opposite. Caiaphas, in the New Testament, is one, and Balaam, in the Old, another. The will of man at work doing its utmost to get him to utter curses against God's Israel. He most willing to do it, his heart bent upon it for sake of the gold he coveted, yet compelled to utter words exceeding grand and sublime, as they contain the ultimate blessing of the people in the latter day, when "there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (Num. 24. 17). And Edom, Seir, Amalek, and the Kenites, whose nest was in the rock (ver. 21), shall come under the judgment of Him "that shall have dominion" (ver. 19). How grandly in the prophetic utterances forced from the lips of Balaam does God lift the veil, and in a way which passes all our powers to comprehend lays bare His purposes, and causes the light of coming glory to shine upon the future of that people who had "come out," and who would most assuredly come in to the land in all the fulness of God's blessing!

But what a striking contrast between the holy men through whom God usually spoke and this remarkable exception in the person of Baalam. They were themselves ignorant to a large extent of the far-reaching words they uttered, but their hearts were engaged in them. They "inquired" and "searched"; "what, and what manner of time," were all considered by them in their eagerness to know that which should be (1 Peter 1. 10-12). And in their lives, and by them, they sought to urge home the truths and warnings God gave them to utter, as they them-

selves waited with utmost longing for the glories that should follow the sufferings of Christ—glories in which they looked for a share and a place. But, alas! it was not so with Balaam. As he uttered the prophetic words God put into his lips his heart was far from them. Both heart and life were wanting. God's first restraining action would have been more than enough if there had been heart found in Balaam at all. But there was none, save for the world and its gold. "Thou shalt not go." How plain! If righteous and holy in himself, how at once he would have responded, and Balak's messenger been sent back in such a way that it would have been impossible for him to send "more and more honourable," with the hope that he might yet succeed in his object. But he was not righteous. He speaks as one who knew something about righteousness, though at the same time unrighteous in his own life and ways. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his" (Num. 23. 10). A glimpse of the great future passes before him, and for a moment it seems as if by its birth had been given in his soul to higher aspirations and hopes. But it was not so. The world had been his idol and snare, and still was. For it he was losing all, in the vain hope of gaining present reward. No desire for the present expressed by him as to righteousness, holiness and God-pleasing. All, all was lacking. "Let me die"; "my last end." Beyond death, resurrection. Evidently these words do not give a mere repetition of the one desire. In death and resurrection he desired to be as the righteous, but not till then. The world will not do to die with. Yet the worldling can have nothing else. As death comes in apace and rapidly, the closing scene of life is enacted here, how deeply solemn for the one who has pursued his own path with utmost determination, and how awfully sudden it sometimes is! How it was so in the case of Balaam, as he perished by the sword! What a deep tone of despair runs

through his language, "not now," "not nigh"! (24. 17). Not only distance in time, but distance in person.

Israel had "come out," and they were "a people near unto Him" (Ps. 148. 14). As now the Christian is made nigh. The Lord is near. His coming hath drawn near what joy to the child of God. Gladness to Israel ere long; but one of the saddest and most sorrowful pictures in Scripture. Balaam saw the day, but could not welcome it, prophesied concerning the Star and Sceptre, but could not hail the advent of One who claims the heart and condemns the world. Fearful will that day be to Balaam, as to others who have, though uttering God's words, kept their hearts occupied to the full with this present world. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent" (23. 19), are words uttered by Balaam, yet without affecting his heart in the least. What a terrific power Satan and the world had gained over him! Ere Israel entered into the land Satan was making one last grand effort against them. And he had secured an instrument wholly given up to the world, and ready in his daring to go any length if so be he could. But "God is stronger than His foes." And at the very time that in the plains of Moab Israel was murmuring in their tents, yet only Jordan flowing between them and the Land of Promise, and manifesting themselves as "a stiff-necked people" (Deut. 9. 6), God was compelling Balaam to tell out the absolute security of Israel, therein manifesting His own unchanging love and faithfulness. They had "come out," that was of God. They should enter in and dwell safely, and that also should be the result of His grace; grace that neither Balak nor Balaam could prevent in its onflowing. No, not even Israel, who, if aught had depended upon themselves, had forfeited everything once and again. Marvellous grace of a wonder-working God. Well might the prophet exclaim, "Who

is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? . . . Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old" (Micah 7. 18-20). Well to note how, when Israel had failed, all reference to future blessing in and for Israel connects with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, with the promises made to them and to the fathers ere law came in at all. On unchanging grace and unfailing promises all rested, and therefore nothing could prevent or turn aside.

R. T. HOPKINS.

(*To be continued.*)

GLEANINGS FROM THE SECOND LETTER BY PETER.

(*Continued from page 84.*)

PURSuing the contrast of angels and men, the Spirit, through Peter, declares: "But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing (speaking defamatorily) in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their corruption surely be destroyed (corrupted), suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing."

What a presentation of the wages of sin!

How terrible is the reward of unrighteousness!

It is vitally important that the listener to the Spirit's revelation should carefully note the word as in the verse before us.

The description is parabolic. As men would seek to capture and destroy creatures that are very pests to them, so these wicked men, by their choice to do evil, shall be taken by their own iniquities and suffer wrong. Being

themselves cheated by what has enticed and ensnared them, despite God's warnings (Remember Eve !), until as the moth by the flame that consumes it so with them. Yes, *suffer wrong* as the hire of wrong-doing !

Let, then, every soul awake, and every spirit be filled with fear by the certainty of the word spoken : " Shall in their corruption surely be corrupted." " Men that count it pleasure to revel in the daytime." Spots and blemishes, revelling in

THEIR LOVE-FEASTS.

Where are these observed? we ask. And how is fulfilled

WHILE THEY FEAST WITH YOU?

Who are these with whom such hold those things? Perhaps the answer would be more difficult if one were called to say where, and with whom, such are not! Is the affinity so uncommon that children of God need not bestir themselves as to whether or not those love-feasts are held with them?

Nay, are not " their love-feasts " what, alas ! too many of God's very own love to have?

Is there none to hear Him lamenting, " My people love to have it so " ?

The words themselves show plainly that all these things appertain to men upon the earth in mortal body. Should not reader and writer seek grace to pause and ask, What has such commingling to do with me? Yea, get to our watch-tower, and see what " He will answer me."

Having eyes full of an adulteress (compare here Proverbs 7.), and that cannot cease from sin. Please stay and read here, by way of contrast to this sad, sad picture, 1 Peter 4. 1, 2.

Enticing unsteadfast souls, having a heart exercised in covetousness—that is to say, covetousness is the gymnasium

of their heart. Children of cursing. Forsaking (turning from) the *right way*, they went astray, having followed out

THE WAY OF BALAAM,

the son of Beor, who loved the hire of wrong-doing. But he was rebuked for his own transgression. A dumb ass spake with man's voice, and stayed the madness of the prophet.

These are springs without water, having the appearance but lacking reality, mists driven by a storm, for whom the blackness of darkness hath been reserved.

For uttering great swelling words of vanity, they entice in the lusts of the flesh by lasciviousness¹ those who are just (all but) escaping from them that live in error. Promising them liberty, while they themselves are bond-servants of corruption, for of whom or what a man is overcome of the same is he also brought into bondage or enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. As to which compare diligently Matthew 12. 43-45.

For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to turn back from the *holy commandment* delivered unto them. Remember Balaam (Num. 22. 12, 22).

It has happened unto them according to the true proverb (fit counterpart of the true grace):—

“The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire.”

Wherefore let each prove his own self and every man his own work (2 Cor. 13. 5-9).

JOHN BROWN.

¹ See footnote at page 82, May number, for the meaning of this word.

THE RULE OF GOD.

(Continued from page 114.)

WE must, however, again return to the more direct line of thought with which we are occupied. There is no attempt on the part of Him who is the perfect example to set aside the powers that be. It is a deeply solemn and instructive lesson to consider Him as the subject One. He was perfectly aware that the rulers of the people, the elders of Israel, were taking counsel to slay Him, but He did not resist them. He had taught that the Scribes and Pharisees sitting in Moses' seat were to be obeyed. Notice the Lord's words (**Matt. 23. 2, 3**): "Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works." Yet this was not to be a mere blind following of man, far otherwise, for they are bidden not to follow in their ways. How solemnly instructive for a lawless day this example of the law-loving Son of God! how unlike the godless conduct of men professing to be His followers! "We do not believe in these so-called overseers!" and why not? Because the speaker's will has been crossed, it may be, or he has been rebuked. Perhaps for years the men thus spoken of have guided the assembly, and been owned as thus acting for God; yet there is no hesitation in using this contemptuous language against those who are the guides. They may have failed; but when have men not failed? How unlike this is to the meekness and gentleness of Christ! And guides will sometimes speak thus of fellow-guides, with whom they have been long associated in the work of oversight! Let us sit at the feet of the Chief Shepherd and learn of Him; the One who taught respect even to the very men who were shortly to be His betrayers and murderers. May the lesson humble us. Less care for our own honour and more care for His would work a mighty change in our lives and the assemblies with which we are associa-

ted. If we knew our own hearts better, we should too often find that our apparent zeal for the truth rises more from the restless energy of the flesh than from any deep conviction as to what the will of God is, more from a spirit of opposition to things as they are than from any real spiritual apprehension of what they should be. How bitter oftentimes the discipline by which our wills are broken, our proud hearts subdued; and yet it is with us and by us, when thus, as sanctified vessels, we have been prepared of God, that He can do His mighty works, and accomplish His purposes upon the earth.

We would gladly enlarge on this part of our subject, but space forbids. We would point out that when the Master came to earth both Jews and Gentiles had sunk into the lowest state of darkness and ignorance, and yet, as we have shown, there was no attempt on His part to set aside the powers that were ordained of God; He submitted Himself to the authority of the blind guides and did not resist them. Yes, the mighty God of power suffered Himself to be spit upon and buffeted; He yielded Himself up to Pilate, and even unto death. So long, and only so long, as He was not hindered in His perfect obedience to the Father, He resisted not evil, but gave His back to the smiter; and in this His perfect obedience was the will of God done, and the powers that sought His destruction were made to accomplish the purposes of God. Let not these lessons be lost upon us, but let them have full weight on our conscience, if by the grace of God we have been called to a position where His authority is owned, and where His will can be carried out. Although there may be much failure, yet this is no sufficient excuse for us to turn away from the truth. We are not called to repeat the failures of others, nor to be turned aside from wholly following the Lord by their disobedience. Nevertheless, we are called to give honour to whom honour is due.

Thus we have sought to trace our subject through the Old Testament dispensation, bringing it down to the time when our blessed Lord walked this earth full of grace and truth, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps. Our subject not only now takes us into the New Testament, but also into the new dispensation—the dispensation of the grace of God.

We trust our readers have carefully noted the many passages referred to in the old dispensation which indicate the mode by which the will of God was to be carried out amidst His people Israel, and that through the whole of this dispensation the representative character of the Elderhood and their responsibility remains unaltered. Such passages as 1 Chronicles 15. 3, 25 specially illustrate this point, where the gathering together of all Israel seems to the writer to be accomplished by the gathering together of the elders.

Such passages also as Luke 22. 66, Acts 4. 8 have been referred to in the New Testament, and many suchlike ones will be found in confirmation of what we have said concerning the unchanged character of the old dispensation to the end.

But all this will be admitted by most, and it is only when we come to the new dispensation—the present age, in which the grace of God is reaching forth to the Gentiles, not in the order that an Israelite would have expected it (see Ps. 22. 27, 28), Israel coming in first for the blessing as a nation, but in the order which God's mercy and grace fore-ordained when He brings Jew and Gentile on the same footing into the place of blessing—that many seem to suppose a complete change takes place in God's principles and mode of government amidst His saints. What exactly this change is we do not remember to have ever seen pointed out. We are not under the law, but under grace. But what is to be built upon this statement? It clearly does

not mean that what was sinful in the sight of God in the past age is that which He tolerates to-day; it cannot mean that we are to continue in sin that grace may abound. Now, all lawlessness is sin, and that which the law-loving and law-abiding Son of God hates.

Is there then no law to-day for the guidance of our individual and collective walk? Was there never this from the commencement of the new dispensation? Or, if there was in connection with the Churches of God during apostolic times, at what point did this state of things alter, as some seem to suppose, and a new condition arise in which new principles and new agencies are permitted of God? This becomes a most serious question, for it is evident that unless those who hold such views can give us most direct and definite scripture for what they believe, their teaching and practice could do nothing but land us in a labyrinth of confusion and doubt and in every man doing that which is right in his own eyes, not because the will of God has not yet been fully revealed, but because that revealed will has been set aside (Deut. 12. 8; Judg. 17. 6). The difference between these two things will be seen after a careful examination of these passages. To break up what is of God is Satan's first effort, then the door is opened for him to bring in that which is in accordance with his desire. Democracy sets aside God's will and God's way by reducing everything to the lowest level of man's will, whilst clerisy sets aside equally the will of God by introducing an order of men and a priesthood that hinders the universal priesthood of all believers. Both errors, therefore, are to be alike avoided, and recognised as fleshly and Satanic in their origin.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued.)

THE RULE OF GOD.

(Continued from page 140.)

WE shall now endeavour, as we obtain help from God, to trace His principles of government, and the mode by which those principles are to be carried out, and with whom. We would like our readers carefully to notice that the number twelve is restored in Acts 1. 22. This choice of one to be a witness is consistent with Jewish practice (Prov. 16. 33). But more than this, we believe there is much significance in the restoration of this number. To the writer's mind, it denotes that the government and authority of the Lord is now to be in the small circle brought before our notice in Acts 1. 15. "So all Israel were reckoned by genealogies" (1 Chron. 9. 1); "The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and three score" (Ezra 2. 64); "The number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty." How interesting, how instructive! First the number of Israel, then the number of the remnant, and, lastly, the number of the little company in whom and through whom God is about to work His mighty purposes upon the earth. There is order here, yes, God's order; slovenliness in the things of God is first practised, then becomes a creed, and lastly is contended for as though it were a truth. Some object to a list of those in the assembly being kept; and in many cases it would be impossible so to do in the midst of the drifting in and out that goes on. Nor must there be a register of the assemblies of God in a county; this would be system, yes, and, we believe, system in accordance with the will of Him who has caused it to be written for our learning that there were seven Churches in Asia.

It is well for us to notice that this gathered-out and gathered-together company in Acts 1. *did not* at this point include all disciples, as shown by 1 Corinthians 15. 6. Further

on in its history there was a gathering together and a manifested union of all that believed (Acts 2. 44). We suppose that no one would question that at this point the guiding and controlling power in the midst of the Church at Jerusalem were the twelve apostles—themselves indwelt by the Spirit of God. In this centre, and from this centre, a mighty work is developed, and as the nation of Israel fades from the scene, like the moonlight before the sunrise, the Church comes out in her distinctive characteristics. You might not be able to say at what exact point the moonlight ceases and is replaced by all the brilliance of the sunshine, for there would be a point at which the two would be blended together; yet that point is passed, and the sun shines at last in all his glory. So it may be difficult—perhaps impossible—to point to the exact period when Israel has faded as a nation from the scene and the Churches are established in all their earthly responsibilities, the centres in which His will should be done, Who has been rejected by the nations, rejected by the nation, but owned and gathered to by the elect remnant. We can at this point but briefly observe with what care God guards against independency, that which would have soon ruined, as it has now ruined in this our day, the corporate testimony of the saints. Multitudes of believers were added to the Lord in Jerusalem (Acts 5. 14), but the grace and mercy of God is about to break down every barrier and flow forth to the utmost ends of the earth, not in the blessing of the nations as such, but in the gathering-out from the nations, as from Israel, of a people united as one (Eph. 2. 19). This gathered company is again seen in verse 20, in its heavenly aspect with the apostles and prophets in the foundation. The apostles again here pointing, we believe, to Divine order in connection with the number twelve.

In order to understand the operation of the Spirit of God our readers must carefully study for themselves the history

of the Samaritans, always a thorn in the side of the Jews. We find them contending for Samaria as the place where God should be worshipped. "Our father Jacob," said the woman to the Lord at the well; yet, as will be seen from 2 Kings 17. 24, they had no claim to any such descent, being persons placed in the land of Israel by the Gentile king, and taught by one of Jeroboam's priests, we believe, to add the worship of God to their other worship. But the grace of God is about to reach this people, and Philip is seen in Acts 8. 5 going down and preaching Christ to them. When Philip had preached the things concerning the kingdom of God in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Notice, nothing is said of children. The things concerning the kingdom would surely, therefore, from this passage include baptism; for baptism stands as the very first act of obedience, if it obtains its right place; for it is here in figure that the old nature, with the wills of the flesh and mind, is laid in the place of death. An infant has neither will nor mind in opposition to the will of God, therefore the figure in its case would be inapplicable. But notice now, especially, these Samaritans believe, are baptized in water, yet they await the baptism of the Spirit till the apostles from Jerusalem come down and lay their hands upon them. Here is an end of Samaritan independency, the end of the controversy between this mountain and Jerusalem; for it is from Jerusalem God's purposes of grace and mercy reach forth and lay hold of perishing Samaritan sinners.

Let us now turn our attention to the first Gentile converts. We would like to have dwelt more fully on Peter's difficulties in this matter than our space allows. Suffice it to say, that whilst we believe Peter would have been perfectly prepared for blessing to reach to the Gentile nations through a restored and blessed Israel, according to the order of Psalm 22. (that is, the congregation coming in for blessing

first), he had to learn what to him, as a Jew, was most difficult—that the Gentile “dog” was to be placed on the same foundation with the remnant according to the election of grace. This in its fulness he would only learn when the principles and government of the House of God were revealed through the lips of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. Yet it will be noticed at this point there is a distinct breaking up of the Jewish order of things; and whilst in Acts 10. 44 Peter is found preaching to the Gentiles, the Spirit is seen descending from heaven upon them. This point is specially dwelt on by Peter when rehearsing the matter in chap. 11. 15; so that in this case, instead of the Spirit being communicated by the laying on of the hands of the apostles, it is manifestly given to the Gentiles from heaven, as it was given to the Jews on the day of Pentecost. The Gentile believers are baptized in the Holy Spirit; but it is after this that, in compliance with Peter’s command, they are baptized in water. It is well for us to remember here that the command for baptism would equally apply to the baptizers and the baptized. Were a servant to be sent by our command to call our children to the supper-table, that command, whilst given to the servant, would come through the servant with the parent’s authority to the child.

There is a point here we would like specially to notice before passing on, as we believe it to be important. It is this, that Peter, with all his Jewish prejudices, which cost him so much sorrow, is yet one specially chosen of the Lord to rule the sheep (John 21. 16). Also in his epistle we find him exhorting the elders and directing them with regard to their responsibilities in the House of God. Would not this seem to indicate that the elderhood is unchanged in character, for Peter is found using the same word (1 Pet. 5. 2), “Rule the little flock,” that is used by the Lord to him in the verse already referred to (John 21. 16). It is also the same word which is used in connec-

tion with the authority to be given to the overcoming one in Rev. 2. 27; also the same word is used in Rev. 19. 15. Whilst bringing forward these passages prominently, let it not be thought for a moment that we confine shepherd work to that which is expressed by this word; far be the thought. Any one knowing the work of the shepherd, or who has noticed even in small measure how varied it is—sometimes pleasing to the sheep, sometimes most painful when the knife has to be used and there is cutting, even to the quick, in order that the sheep may walk with freedom, keeping with the flock—will understand that one word will but poorly express a shepherd's occupation. We therefore find other words used in Scripture, as in John 21. 15, 17, or as in 1 Thess. 5. 12. We would ask our readers carefully to consider this point, that Peter is the apostle chosen by the Lord Himself to open the kingdom, and also to rule and do shepherd work. It is he again who addresses the elders as himself an elder, exhorting them to do the work for which he himself had been specially chosen.

On careful consideration of the subject, we are inclined to think that Paul will be found rather supplementary in his teaching in connection with rule, and that he does not so much bring forward the mode of rule, in which, if we are right, there is no change as to the administration from the old dispensation; but that he in his writings more dwells on the qualifications for rule and the need of true spirituality in those who go before as guides or stand beautifully before the flock. This we shall consider, God willing, further on. We find, however, Paul using the same word in Acts 20. 28: "Feed or rule the church of God," as we have pointed out that the Apostle Peter employs.

We must now turn our attention to Acts 11. 30. This is the first time in which we find the elderhood mentioned in connection with the church of God in Jerusalem. Not a word has been said about their appointment or ordination.

They are suddenly brought before us without comment or explanation. We are naturally led to inquire, Who are these men? From whence do they come, and how is it that they seem to be occupying a parallel position with the elders of the Old Testament? The natural answer to this question would seem to the writer to be, that the members of the Sanhedrim, when converted to God, would naturally take their place in the Presbytery in association with the apostles, and sharing with them responsibility, as is seen in Acts 15. 6, 22. It must be remembered that for generations the elders of Israel had been under the training of God, and although they terribly failed in their responsibility and are charged by Peter with being the murderers of the Lord Jesus, as we have already pointed out, yet their previous training in the things of God would be by no means unimportant, but, on the contrary, would surely better fit them to take their place as rulers in the House of God, as seen in 1 Timothy 3. 15; for, be it remembered, they were already in the House of God according to the Old Dispensation (Heb. 3. 5, R.V.). Just as the training of a child, when godly, is of immense value to it when converted; so we believe it would be to these Jewish elders when under the school-master (Gal. 3. 24).

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued.)

BALAAH.

II.¹

THAT we may gain a deeper insight into the character of Balaam, as well as learn more closely the grace of God toward Israel, I purpose in this paper looking at the prophecies that Balaam uttered concerning them. As we learn from them the deep and precious things of God, we

¹ See page 129.

learn more fully how utterly insensible Balaam was. The sublimest words of truth were spoken by him, whilst in heart and spirit he was entirely apart from them himself. No share in them at all. The fullest handling of the ways of God toward Israel, and yet walking in his own perverse ways. How terribly like, in many ways, to Judas Iscariot! Three years of constant attendance upon Christ, surrounded with the evidence of His power, by the miracles of healing wrought, and the raising of the dead, yet untouched; His words, that one would imagine would have been irresistible, warded off by the power of a mighty longing for money; words that bring tears to the eyes and cause exultation of heart to the present day with many when read, yet did not in the smallest degree affect him as he heard them! How clearly and powerfully it shows us that the natural man understandeth not the things of God. The nearer in apparent intimacy with God, His Son, and Divine truths, the worse the conduct and the life. The man who could heartlessly surrender the Lord to an armed band in Gethsemane's garden, and that with a kiss, only stands before us as a type of what all men are by nature, and how absolutely impossible it is for man, as of himself, to please God. "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8. 8).

Let Judas and Balaam convey once more to us, not only the lesson of the worthlessness of the flesh, but of the even deeper and more solemn fact that the Spirit of God can come on such, as also is seen in the case of Saul, and prophetic utterances can fall from their lips with which they have no intelligence nor heart. And while the truth uttered remains, and shall be fulfilled to the very letter, they who uttered it pass on in their own way to deeper depths of infamy, until sudden destruction overtakes them, and they go to their own place—only to become solemn warnings, which God sets up by the highway for all time,

that saints may learn how one can seemingly be to the front in prophetic and other ministry for God, yet in reality be one of the most callous and indifferent of men. With Balaam as with Judas, all was done and spoken with their eye and heart upon the gold, which to them was their god. Thus Balaam, while apparently speaking for God, was only speaking God's words, because unable to do otherwise, though strenuously seeking to do so. What truths he handled! If we had no other Scripture concerning Israel than these words of God which He put into Balaam's mouth (Num. 23. 5), how they would unfold to us the past and future of their history. "They are blessed" (22. 12), God said to Balaam. Impossible to reverse. That blessing thus stated, Balaam himself was compelled to unfold, fourfold, as we see it in his words, spoken from different standpoints, to Balak.

Complete statement of their calling and justification, their order and beauty, in the eyes of Jehovah. The vision of the Almighty as He saw Israel, no spot or stain. Balaam took up his parable: "How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (23. 18, 9): How clearly their calling was thus unfolded! They were to dwell alone. Subjects of Divine election, He had separated them. Balaam took up his parable. There it was lying before him: Israel in their camp, "called out," "come out," dwelling alone, separate. Then, though seemingly weak, how blessed and cared-for! All their power resulted from this. But when they departed from God's ways, and mingled with the nations, what judgments befell! How indignant was Balak:—"I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether" (Num. 23. 11). To what straits he was driven in his earnestness

to get the people cursed! what ignorance he displayed! "Come," said he, and he took Balaam into the field of Zophim, "thou shalt not see them all." How debased man becomes when God is shut out! As if the blessing hung upon Balaam having Israel within his own vision or not. Again the word is put into his mouth by God, and his parable deals with truths of yet deeper import—"He hath blessed; and I cannot reverse it" (23. 20). Quite ready and anxious to do it, but impotent! "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them" (23. 21). What a triumph over all the hatred of Balak! God among them, as His called-out ones. And "whom He called, them He also justified" (Rom. 8. 30). Marvellous fact! "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob." No iniquity nor perverseness. How complete and perfect! And so it is with the Christian now: the measure of his justification is not his conduct, his life-walk, and obedience here; but it is only to be measured by God's Divine and perfect work. He has called and justified. Complete in Him who died for us, and rose again for us; "being justified by faith, we have peace with God" (Rom. 5. 1). Then let life and walk be pressed home, but not till then; to do so before is to produce a legalist in one who lowers the standard that he may appear to reach it, and a Pharisee in one easily satisfied with his attainments, but despair in one who, with deep consciousness of failure, sees that if in any measure his justification depends upon his life, he has no hope. Firm foundation God has given in His Word. Justification complete and perfect results from Christ's finished work, and independently of the walk of the believer. "I am not fit for heaven;" "I am not prepared yet," may be the language of one whose vision is obscured by faulty teaching and by anxious self-examination for proofs of his justification; but one who stands

upon the Word of God, and therefrom has "the vision of the Almighty" before him, can say, "Who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (the Son of His love) (Col. 1. 12, 13). Satan has to reckon with God, not with the believer. And the one who is established in the grace of God, his call, justification, presence, and power, though deeply humbled as and when he has to deplore the overcomings of sin or the world, still stands on the unchanged grace and irrevocable call of God.

Balak having found the impossibility of calling forth a curse upon Israel, and dismayed at the still further blessing pronounced, said to Balaam, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all" (23. 25). But that cannot be. "Go not," God had said. Balaam, spite of the command, went; and, having gone, he cannot, though he would, act as of himself. Cursing was impossible; blessing had been pronounced. Yet only in measure. And when Balaam might have gladly stayed his words at the call of Balak, he could not. "The voice of a King was among them," and the rule and authority of God had to be obeyed even by Balaam, who only feigned obedience when he said, "All that the Lord speaketh, that must I do" (23. 26). All the blessings must be told out; the prophetic intimation must be complete. Yet again, for the third time, Balak removed Balaam to another spot: brings him to the top of Peor (23. 28). But place alters not Him "with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning" (Jas. 1. 17). Now Balaam has learnt the folly of his enchantments. God has blessed, and will. And seeing Israel abiding in tents according to their tribes (24. 2), he takes up his parable again. Remarkably, he speaks of himself for the first time as "the man whose eyes are open" (vers. 3, 4). "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" The order

prevailing in Israel's camp became his theme. When first they came out, no order had been assigned to them. They might have intermingled as tribes, and pitched in any order they pleased. But once the tabernacle was constructed and erected, then how different: Jehovah in His, the central tent, and each tribe in its own position, ranged on either side, "according to their tribes." Thus He who called and justified gave them His Divine protection, seeing that He delighted in them. Their moral order and beauty came from Him also. And they were to be the destined source of triumphant truth and power in the latter day.

After the outburst of Balak's anger against Balaam, when he said, "I called thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast altogether blessed them these three times" (24. 10), Balaam detained him for one more utterance. Three times had Balak sought to gain advantage over Israel; as often had Balaam been forced to speak well of them, and to bless altogether. Now when Balak, hopeless, is ready to turn away, Balaam utters his last, unsought-for words—words that now not only tell of blessing on Israel, and absence of cursing, but tell, in language plain and forcible, of judgment on the nations, and Moab is mentioned first. Jehovah had been King, owned in His rule by Israel, though sadly and quickly they turned from Him. But the Star was to come, and the Sceptre. Figures that pass over the first coming of Jesus as the Messiah, and bring before us vividly His Second Coming.

Miriam, who had celebrated the triumph of grace, was gone; Aaron had ascended Mount Hor with Moses and Eleazar, had taken off his high priestly garments, and died. Moses was ere long to be taken also. Discouragements because of the way had brought out both lack of faith and power. How much, if Balak had been but aware of it all, to make him even more persistent in his efforts to get Israel cursed. Yet at that very time, by such an one as Balaam,

God designed to tell out the call and justification, as well as the order and the Hope of Israel. Looked at from man's standpoint, they were weak, faint, and weary; but from God's they had "the strength of an unicorn," ready to "eat up the nations," "couching, laying down as a lion, and as a great lion" (24. 8, 9).

R. T. HOPKINS.

(*To be continued.*)

GOOD WORKS.

WE have repeatedly been constrained to give expression to our firm conviction that God, who has undeniably made the way of salvation for the sinner so plain that wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein, has acted in no less gracious manner as to the way of salvation for the saint. Indeed, it had well been a matter of surprise had He not done so, for in this, as in much else, "doth not Nature teach us" that if, when we were enemies, the way of life was so suited to us, much more so may we expect it to be for us, now His children? And not only so, for, through Paul, we learn that God's will is not merely that all men should be saved, but also that such as are saved should come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2. 4). Yea, more, whilst there is joy in the presence of His angels over every sinner that repenteth (Luke 15. 10), He has no greater joy than to see His children walking in the truth. How sad indeed that, despite the fulness of the provision, the plainness of the way, so many sinners should remain unsaved, thereby courting eternal destruction! Sadder still, though, that saints, who have known the grace of God in truth unto their eternal salvation in their acceptance of God's provision for them as sinners, should fail to apprehend His will concerning them as saints, and, alas! but receive

His grace in vain. How solemnly sad does the contemplation of such cases become as we remember that, as none liveth, so none dieth alone. Of a truth, were saints taking full advantage of God's provision for them, the saving of themselves and of others would be ensured (1 Tim. 4. 16); but the engrafted word is *not* in meekness received day by day, and so souls—that is, lives—are lost (Jas. 1. 21).

It will be readily granted that every Godly characteristic for manifestation by the saints is comprehended briefly, but very fully, in the words, "the life of Jesus" (2 Cor. 4. 10), and in the matter of good works, we have His own testimony that many such He showed (John 10. 32), and God's testimony, through Peter, that "He went about doing good" (Acts 10. 38).

What incentive unto the diligent exercise of care in seeking to have realized in one's self the will of God in this matter do we find in the fact that even our Saviour, Jesus Christ, gave Himself for this very purpose (Titus 2. 14). As we know the Spirit of Truth, taking of the things of Christ in the law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, and revealing them to us, even yet our heart shall burn within us, and we shall know indeed increased reason for being zealous of good works. Looking around us, we behold many turning their backs upon Him in their rejection of His truth. Listening for the "still small voice," we may yet hear those words, uttered long ago in like circumstances, "Would ye also go away?" (John 6. 66, 67). But having known the peculiar blessedness of His presence, oft expressed in Peter's words, "It is good for us to be here" (Matt. 17. 4), in his words again may we be enabled to exclaim, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life" (John 6. 68); and seek, moreover, not to be sayers only, but doers also. Thus shall we be of such as are being "purified unto Himself; a people for His own possession, zealous of good works."

To those thus minded it cannot but be the occasion of grateful thanksgiving to God that He not only reveals this as His will, but that He also makes it clear what good works we are to be zealous of (Eph. 2. 10), and leaves no room for speculation as to those with whom we are to engage in such (2 Tim. 2. 21, 22). Concerning which also we shall find in the *Word of God* all we need unto our *knowing* them (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17); and in *God Himself, by His grace*, all we need unto our *doing* them (2 Cor. 9. 8). In all which one understands better why Paul should commend such as were especially responsible to know God's will in this matter (1 Tim. 3. 1; Titus 2. 7; 1 Pet. 5. 3) to God and the Word of His grace (Acts 20. 32). And whilst God very particularly legislates for women (that their chief concern should be adornment through Good Works, rather than adornment by gorgeous apparel, 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10), does it not further enhance His grace in our eyes to know that He records the cases of two, one of whom has testimony by the Lord Jesus Himself, as to working a good work upon Him (though, alas! as now, so then, the thoughts, even of disciples, were not as the thoughts of the Lord, Matt. 26. 6-10), and concerning the other, a disciple in very deed, who knew the truth and enjoyed consequent liberty, by the Spirit through Luke we are told that she was "*full of Good Works*" (Acts 9. 36)? Is there not grave reason to fear that, though in our day "Dorcas Societies" may be increasing, the Dorcas-like ones are not so? Therefore would we seek to bestir sisters unto the saving of themselves from this untoward generation by a present application of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Go and do thou likewise" (Luke 10. 37). But even with such exhortation must we entreat that earnest heed be given to 1 Timothy 5. 4-8 and Titus 2. 4, 5, for, alas! the things acceptable to God are often reckoned by the many non-essential or unimportant, and that which is truly neces-

sary to preserve God's Word from blasphemy is too often counted "drudgery."

Unto the realization of God's will concerning us in relation to Good Works, it is needful that we be, from time to time, put in mind to be ready thereunto (Titus 3. 1), and not only so, but also that prayer, continual and fervent, should be made by the righteous on our behalf (Col. 1. 9, 10), which blessed privilege is indeed a vast responsibility. Wherefore would we remind all that, whilst the good and the bad of some are evident, they who are otherwise cannot be hid (1 Tim. 5. 25); for we must *all* be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, that *each one* may receive the things done through the body, . . . whether good or bad (2 Cor. 5. 10).

Thus, under the shadow of Calvary's Cross with its suffering Victim, and in the blaze of that judgment-seat with its exalted Victor, may we be stimulated to give effect to the exhortation, "Cleave unto Him with purpose of heart." Yea, "abide in Him," so that we may not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2. 28), even His who says, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to render to each man according as his work is" (Rev. 22. 12). Well indeed is it for us if we can add, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

JOHN P. A. TAYLOR.

I am waiting for the coming
 Of the Lord, who died for me.
 Oh! His words have thrilled my spirit,
 "I will come again for thee."
 I can almost hear His footfall
 On the threshold of the door,
 And my heart, my heart is longing
 To be with Him evermore.

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER AND WITH HIS SON.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

JOHN'S first epistle might be called an epistle of Christian testimony, or the Divine verities attested on credible evidences. You remember how like a golden thread throughout the epistle we have the expression "we know," as indicating the certainty, the unmistakable certainty of those things of which John spoke. So in the first verse he speaks of that which had been heard, that which had been seen, that which had been looked upon, and that which had been handled. Evidently he who can say, We have heard, we have seen, we have looked upon, we have handled, is a witness whose evidence is admissible. But while that is so,—and I say that simply to suggest a line of meditation in the reading of this epistle,—the words imply increasing acquaintance with the subject of which he speaks. In the distance he had heard, coming nearer he had beheld that which he had heard, coming yet closer he was able to look upon it, and presently the very thing of which he speaks is within his grasp, and he is able to say, We have handled. Closer and closer from the distant sight to the near beholding, closer and closer until he could claim to have handled, and to be acquainted with Him of whom he speaks.

Does it not suggest to us the blessed privilege of becoming increasingly acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ and with the truth of God? How many appear to content themselves with a distant acquaintance with Him, and a distant knowledge of His Word, a feeble grip, and a very meagre sight of that which God holds up for us to look upon and handle: the things of Himself and of His Son and of His Holy Word. Oh, that we may enter more into the blessed privilege and the great enjoyment of a close,

and yet closer walk and communion with our God and His Christ! In this lies the secret of our joy; the secret of our fruitful service; the secret of our acceptability as servants to Him whose we are and whom we serve; in this lies our usefulness the one to the other. As we are closely walking with God we derive that fitness that enables us to please the Lord, and to be of use to others.

“For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

Again and again, within recent months, the question has been asked, “With whom is our fellowship?” and this question in its relation to fellow-believers. But I would suggest that, however important that question is (and it is of great importance, and all God’s children should face it, and seek to get light upon it in the presence of God, and to act accordingly), we shall certainly be helped in our right understanding of that question as to with whom our fellowship should be, speaking of fellow-saints, if we approach it from the way in which it is presented to us in this chapter: “Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.” God has laid hold of us, not only for our eternal salvation; He has reached down to the tremendous depths in which we were, as described in Ephesians 2., not only to put us from the reach of wrath, but also to bring us to be sharers in His own thoughts, in His own desires, in His own ways, and in the thoughts, the desires, and the ways of His Son Jesus Christ. And we reach to that when we come to the practical and constant enjoyment of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And this must ever precede and regulate with whom our fellowship is besides, for we are only right in our relationship

with others as we are in fellowship with Him. Fellowship with fellow saints which forfeits to us the fellowship of the Father is not worthy of the name, is a disgrace to children of God, is dishonouring to the Spirit of God, is grievous to Him, and is contrary to the purpose of the living God, who has laid hold of us to raise us into the enjoyment of fellowship with Himself and with His Son. So that, I repeat, fellowship with the Father and fellowship with His Son must regulate all company that we keep and the fellowship that we seek unto. Any fellowship that necessitates our stepping outside this intercommunion, that estranges us from the Father and the Son, is a fellowship that ought not to be once named amongst children of God. So that if it be asked why we could not enter any denominational place, our answer surely would be not only that we cannot have God's truth there, that we should be going contrary to the command of the Lord by going there, but we should have a fuller and perhaps a better answer if we said, We cannot enter there in fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

Now, the Father and the world in this epistle are placed in contrast: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (or the vainglory of life), is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (chap. 2. 15, 16).

If we are in fellowship with the Father, then how can we be worldly? We can only become worldly as we get out of fellowship with the Father. Every little bit of worldliness allowed in our lives, in our homes, on our persons, no matter what its shape, no matter what its character, indicates most plainly and most assuredly that we have got out of fellowship with the Father; for if walking with

the Father, a child of God will enter into his Father's thoughts, will grasp the Father's purposes, and wish to make those purposes his own. Every child thus walking with the Father is lifted above the world, the lusts of the eyes, the lusts of the flesh, and the vainglory of life. And there is nothing that can make us so truly pilgrim in our character, that can make us so truly separate in our walk, nothing that can so lift us above and put us outside the ways of the world, as living in day-by-day communion with God our Father. Then our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

This same epistle that points out to us the Father in fellowship with us, and us in fellowship with the Father, putting us beyond the world, also leads us to see how the fellowship with the Son is expressed. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (3. 16). That is fellowship with the Son. As we lay hold of His love that led Him to lay down His life for us, in communion with Him, it raises us so completely above all selfish considerations that we too become alive to the obligation,—for, mark, it is put as an obligation,—“we ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren.” What can put us outside the world's lust? Fellowship with the Father. What can lift us outside ourselves and make us ready, if needs be, to lay down our lives for the brethren? Fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And communion with the Son leads us on to the Cross, watching the marks of His faithful steps, who was faithful amidst unfaithfulness. It leads us along the track which He trod, leads us into participation in His ways, leads us into doing like things to which He did, of course in infinitely less measure. Fellowship with the Son puts us in the position of obedience: “Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?” “We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” “But

whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

CHARLES MORTON.

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 79.—*Is a tea meeting or an excursion amongst the young a work or labour in the Lord (1 Cor. 15. 58), or would Matthew 23. 19, and Deuteronomy 31. 12, 13, be a work or labour in the Lord as well as the former?*

Yes; it is our privilege as Christians to do everything heartily as to the Lord, even to our eating and drinking. We are also called to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6. 10). The great apostle of the Gentiles became all things to all men that he might gain the more. The Lord Jesus Himself fed the multitudes that followed Him, although He knew that they sought Him, not because of His miracles, but because of the bread that perisheth. Surely all this would teach us that we are to seek to win old and young to the truth by the varied means that God has placed at our disposal. In Zechariah 8. 5 boys and girls are pictured playing in the streets, and this in connection with a redeemed earth. This would be according to the will of God as He has made the young. Surely, therefore, we can be in His mind when we seek their enjoyment.

J. A. B.

BALAAM.

III.¹

HAVING looked at the history of Balaam, as to his actions, and traced the order of blessing on Israel, starting with their "coming out" on to their "coming in," with Jehovah-Jesus as the Star and Sceptre in their midst, and all nations put under Him who shall have dominion, it may be well to look deeper still into parts of these most fruitful and heart-searching chapters in connection with the repeated references to Balaam in the New Testament.

"Cursed children: which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, *the son of Bosor*, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, but was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet" (2 Pet. 2. 14-16).

THE WAY

is that which Peter, by the Spirit of God, seizes upon to illustrate the subject in hand. And that required the reference to the "dumb ass" speaking. Balaam expected his ass to be obedient to him, to take his way, and not its own. He was angry when the ass ceased to be obedient, and appeared to be acting in rebellious self-will. Therefore he struck it once and again. The ass saw that which was hidden from him—the angel of the Lord. When first the ass saw the angel, there was room on either side to avoid him. The ass, no longer acting under the guiding hand of Balaam, took its own way and went into the field. Brought back into the path, she thrust herself unto the wall and crushed Balaam's foot. He smote her again, and then, the angel having moved into a narrow way where there

¹ See pp. 129, 146.

was no place to turn, she fell down. Again Balaam sought to have his way. It was then the Lord opened the mouth of the ass in defence of itself. She was acting rightly. He was not. The dumb ass rebuked: "Was I ever wont to do so unto thee?" (22. 30), asked the ass, when Balaam had exclaimed he would have killed her if a sword had been in his hand. It was then his eyes were opened. A higher power had controlled the ass. A will superior to Balaam's had acted upon her. And the angel said: "Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because THY WAY is perverse before me" (22. 32).

This, then, gives the basis for Peter's use of Balaam. The way was not God's, but his own. At the very first God had said, "Thou shalt not go with them" (chap. 22. 12). Plainer direction could not have been given. Balaam understood it well enough. God's way had been expressed: "Thou shalt not go." "Thou shalt not curse, for they are blessed." Nay, more, he sent the princes of Moab away. "Get you into your land; for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you" (ver. 13). But though he knew, yet in his heart he wanted to go. And when Balak sent yet again he proved himself wanting. His was not a heart exercised in the things of God because loving Him. The very opposite. While dealing with truths of highest character, he loved and ever loved the wages of unrighteousness. Miserable man! Mad! "The madness of the prophet," said Peter. What madness to pursue a path that involved disappointment and ended in a violent death! God had spoken; unmistakeably had He declared His will and way; yet Balaam, loving "the wages of unrighteousness" and desperate in his attempts to earn them, instead of immediately sending back the second messengers of Balak, bid them tarry the night. "That I may know what the Lord will say unto me more" (ver. 19) was his excuse for so doing. How submissive he appeared! what instant

and implicit bowing to the will of God one would imagine was his, judging him by his words!—"I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, my God, to do less or more" (ver. 18). Yet trying to do so all along, and never more so than at that very time. The Divine will had expressed itself clearly, but he wanted to alter it. Instead of praying or waiting upon God that he might act upon it, he did the opposite, and bid the messengers tarry in the hope that he might be allowed to go.

One has said, "There is such a thing as praying too much, as well as too little." To pray earnestly and constantly when mind and heart are submissive to His will is one thing; to pray that we may get our own way is quite another. A solemn statement follows this. God allowed Balaam to go. If they come and call for thee "rise up and go" (ver. 20). Enough for Balaam: he was on the alert at once. No record stating that they came. He was too eager to go to think of waiting for that. "And God's anger was kindled because he went" (ver. 22). Rebellion had been at work, therefore He allowed Balaam to go. He gave him a freedom that was most disastrous to himself eventually, as we have seen. Freedom given by God became a more severe test. His safety would have been to refuse his liberty. The dumb ass was obedient and submissive when he was not. And when the angel spoke to him, he said, "Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because THY WAY is perverse before me" (ver. 32). Balaam said, "I have sinned." Did he realize it? Not one bit. Was he any the less anxious to go and earn the wages, the gold he coveted? Not in the slightest.

As Saul could say, "I have sinned," and add, "Honour me before the people," showing what his inmost thoughts were, so with Balaam: "I have sinned," "IF." Did it require an "if"? Was he in doubt as to God's will? How clearly expressed! When he transgressed how God had withstood!

But such an one can learn nothing. "If it displease Thee I will get me back again." Was any one ever more persistent, and yet with it all cringing in apparent earnest willingness to do just what God would have him. "Go with the men" was now the word. He was not allowed to return. It was too late. He had chosen his path, and he must walk in it. He becomes involved; result of self-will. How often is this the case! One makes circumstances and then has to walk in them. "Go." He must, yet alone. One who had "God" and "the Lord" constantly on his lips, but, alas! not in his heart. He must tell out all God's blessing. He cannot do otherwise. He had gone with alacrity with the princes Balak had sent, hoping for gold. But he never received it. All the toil of going, moving from one place to another, uttering words with his lips that his heart could not enter into, and at the close he had to rise up and go to his own place, frustrated, as Balak, his master, was, in every point.

Solemn, indeed, the chapter in which Peter refers to Balaam. "There were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you" (2 Pet. 2. 1). Note that which has been pointed out by others, and is important—"false teachers," not prophets. Prophets, as apostles, are in the foundation, and were not continued. The Scripture is complete, and men speaking by revelation are not required. The teacher has to give God's Word as his authority for what he says; he cannot speak of anything as being revealed to him. False teachers secretly bringing in "damnable heresies," or, as it should be, "heresies of destruction, denying the Master (Greek, Despot, not Kurios, Lord) that bought them." The Master has bought all. The Lord has redeemed His own. Many follow their wanton ways, as in covetousness with feigned words they make merchandise. What a fearful description of corrupt Christendom! Their judgment lingereth not, their damna-

tion slumbereth not (ver. 3). This is followed by historical proofs that God will punish. He has done. The angels were not spared, nor was the old world, neither the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. In every instance their actions resulted from unrighteousness and the most determined exercise of self-will in taking their own way. They were led, and in every instance their leaders were ungodly. Peter is evidently referring throughout the chapter to false teachers, professed ministers of Christ. Yet only as wells without water, clouds carried with a tempest (2 Pet. 2. 17), speaking great, swelling words, alluring through the lusts of the flesh (ver. 18), promising liberty, yet servants of corruption (ver. 19). As sows washed (ver. 22) by a climax revealing through simple illustrations that the nature had never been changed. Whatever power of language and persuasion by which they swayed others, the terrible fact remained that their profession was not real. The way was their own, and led to a bitter end.

Balak, ever urging Balaam on to use his gift of prophecy against the Lord's people, is but a picture of Satan's efforts to produce a ministry that will remain under his evil influence, because destitute of the Spirit. God's things handled and God's words as written and spoken by the lips of Satan's ministers. Words that slake no thirst; empty wells. Words that refresh none; for they who utter them are as clouds without water. Balaam persistent in an apparent service for God, as if under His direction, yet only pursuing his own way, and in reality a devoted servant of Balak for the wages he longed to earn. A heathen man stands boldly out before us—solemn warning! An awful type of a false ministry that exists on every hand, serving themselves, and not the living God. Balaam was not serving God, but himself; and therefore again Jude uses the expression, "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness" (ver. 4), not by denying the grace or love of God,

though some may do that, but by denying the only Lord (Greek, Despot) and our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a character of things abroad, and increasingly, that should put all on the watch-tower and make all more earnestly than ever study the warnings of such Epistles as 2 Peter and Jude. God's judgments hang over the corrupt system, that, alas! abounds and increases. God had blessed Israel. None could reverse. Balaam might take his own way, but could not succeed. Now false teachers are abroad they are not walking in "the way of truth" (2 Pet. 2. 2), nor in the "right way" (ver. 15) that they have forsaken. The righteousness that Peter insists upon they would set aside. The punishment he declares awaits unrighteousness they deny. With alarming rapidity during the last twenty years have the doctrines of "Annihilation," the "Better Hope," "Restoration of all," etc., spread. But God is holy, and righteousness must do its work. Men may promise "liberty" (2 Pet. 2. 19), being servants of corruption, but God will allow no liberty for sin, neither will He separate it from its fearful and eternal consequences. We are to know the long-suffering of God, though corrupt men presume upon it until they develop into the scoffers of the last days. He withholds the judgment; He did in Noah's day; He does in this; but how fearful the moment in which that long-suffering ends! Patience becomes exhausted. Corruption and iniquity reach high-water mark, and then, as with the Cities of the Plain, judgment falls, and the overthrow is complete. Or as with Balaam, whose history we are considering, death by the sword suddenly dashes all his hopes to the ground, and as suddenly takes him from the world to which all those hopes attached, and from which he looked for all that he counted worth seeking after.

R. T. HOPKINS.

(To be continued.)

GLEANINGS FROM THE SECOND LETTER BY PETER.

(Continued from page 136.)

By the opening verse of this third chapter we learn that this second letter, like the first one, has been written with the intent of stirring up our pure minds by way of remembrance, even that we should be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, as also of the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through our Apostles.

In doing so, it is needful that we know first that there shall come in the last of the days mockers with mockery, walking according to their own lusts, and saying,—

WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING?

withal justifying their boastful, mocking speech by asserting that since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. To which there is fit answer, which we shall repeat presently.

Meanwhile, we may point out that this awakening of our already shaken and winnowed mind, as that from which the natural, but no longer needed, chaff has been threshed and blown away, is to save us from being forgetful hearers of the word already learned. With which please compare James 1. 22–25. Not only so, but to assure us of the value and place that the before-spoken words by the holy prophets should have in our estimation and use.

It is a serious comment upon, and revelation of, the wrong condition and position of God's beloved saints when the words given in the Old Testament are either lightly valued or, as by many, for the most part neglected. Whereas in God's account we need every word thereof; as see 2 Timothy 3. 15–17, Romans 15. 4–16, and 1 Corinthians 10. 1–14. May we then seek grace for this grace, and so be

delivered from the grievous error of receiving God's grace in vain. Inasmuch as, though those words be well fitted to make wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, yet we, through being either ignorant or negligent thereof, should miss the mark and destroy ourselves.

Probably the use made in Acts 15. 15 of the before-spoken words will give a fair beginning to the following out of the relation of those words to the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through our Apostles.

In olden time God spoke in divers manners in or by the prophets.

In these last days He hath spoken unto us in or by His Son, who in turn hath given His commandment. Note well this unique description of the whole or oneness of the will, even His commandment as the Lord and Saviour through our Apostles. Thus the matter, the source, and channel are plain by which all others who say that they are Apostles may be tried and found that they are not, but are mere liars. Compare Revelation 2. 2.

It is most needful that we know and forget not that in our taking heed to remember the words spoken before by the holy prophets we shall have the taunting mocking of mockers here foretold.

Has not this been rather forgotten by some who have been over-distressed by the boastful and specious arguments of not a few who, after a little patience, have again and again been discovered and refuted by their own propositions to have been but "wise above what is written," and so have found themselves taken in their own craftiness, despite the wisdom and knowledge that was or is in them?

Thus their adding to or diminishing the words spoken before by God's holy prophets has but led to their being convicted as liars. Compare Isaiah 47. 10-15; 1 Corinthians 3. 18-21; Deuteronomy 4. 2; Proverbs 30. 6. One particular phase of such mockers is the challenge as to His coming.

They say, Where, not What, is His coming? The answer to which is: It is set in the long-suffering of God, as see verse 9 of this chapter. Moreover, that promise was given in two halves or parts.

The first part was given in the Temple, as see Matthew 23. 37 to end of chapter 25. The second part was given in the house when the traitor had gone out, as see John 13. 30 to chapter 14. 1-4, which agree with and shall be fulfilled by the two stages of His one Coming Again.¹ Those mockers emboldened to discount and disparage what the holy prophets have before spoken as to His presence, as also to befool what our apostles have made known as the commandment of the Lord and Saviour, assert besides that since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation.

Ignoring willingly the fact that things are not as they were at the beginning of the Creation. This time, which those ignore, with its condition of things so very different from what they were at Creation, does not eye further back than the Flood-time. Thus reaching not as far back as the period when there were no depths (Prov. 8. 22-24). As again presently there shall be no more sea (Rev. 21. 1). Neither is it the time when the deep was over all the earth or dry land (Gen. 1.). Hence they are held to be "willingly ignorant," for God hath told thereof by His holy prophets and by the Lord and Saviour's commandment, even affirming that by the word (not saying) of God the heavens were of old and the earth compacted out of water and through water, by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, was destroyed; but the heavens that now are and the earth BY THE SAME WORD have been stored up for fire against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. In this circum-

¹ See "The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus Christ": "Needed Truth" Publishing Office, London.

stantial yet casual way does God offer proof of that which is past and that which is future.

But forget not. this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day.

JOHN BROWN.

THE RULE OF GOD.

(Continued from page 146.)

THOSE who have followed us in our article entitled "The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord" will better understand what we now refer to. It will be remembered by such that in those articles we sought to show that the early training of the young, teaching them to yield their own wills to those who are over them, will be of the greatest benefit to such when converted and brought into the house of God; so we believe that the training of the elders in the Jewish economy would greatly help them, when converted, in the caring for the flock and behaving themselves aright in the house of God. It may be felt by some that in writing on this subject as we have done we have dwelt too much on authority and rule, but surely it is needful in a day of increasing lawlessness to point out what the writer believes is the mind of God, that brethren may carefully test it by His Word, to see whether these things be so. It is our earnest desire that nothing we have written or may write should be accepted without careful investigation, but we would press this upon our readers: if we have brought these points into prominence, it is in order that we may yet show the solemn responsibility devolving on those that go before the flock.

So far, then, as the elders of the Church of God in Jerusalem are concerned, we read nothing about ordination

or appointment; this only appears to come in when the assemblies from amongst the Gentiles are gathered out and gathered together. In those early Churches the apostles and those under their *special* direction selected from among the elder brethren those fitted to rule, tend, and feed the flock. Such when appointed became elders of the Church—Acts 20. 17, "He called for the elders of the Church." Such were not made elders by their appointment, in the writer's understanding, any more than the seventy were in the days of Moses (Num. 11. 16); but they did become elders *of the Church* when set apart by the apostles. As we have shown in the previous part of this article, elders were not peculiar to the people of Israel; in such passages as Numbers 22. 7 and others these Gentile elders would have been especially associated with idolatrous worship and the wicked and immoral practices connected therewith. Such a training would indeed be a terrible one, the tendency of which would be to unfit them, even when converted, for rule amongst God's saints. Many of them may have had more wives than one, with unruly children, who had never been trained in their youth; this and other reasons seem to point to why a selection was necessary from amongst the converted Gentiles. It seems evident that this careful selection would be necessary down to the end of the Church's history, for as long as the Gospel of the grace of God is preached Gentiles will be saved and Churches from amongst the Gentiles gathered out. Is there, then, we would ask, no power to-day to make choice of fit persons? and none who are authorized to do so? Are all to be accepted as rulers who choose to assume that position? Surely, brethren, this is a solemn question, and one needing our careful and prayerful consideration, that we may not perpetuate mistakes of the past, but should the Lord in His goodness leave us yet a little while in the place of testimony, may we be found better able to build according to the Divine model.

It is now for us to consider whether the elderhood is to be continued, or, in other words, whether there can be to-day elders of the Churches, and, if so, the manner in which this is to be brought about. In the first place, then, the apostles were empowered to set in order the assemblies, appointing elders in every Church (Acts 14. 23). And here we find Barnabas associated with the great apostle of the Gentiles, as we also find Titus acting under his direction (Titus 1. 5). Yet neither of these men were of the number of the twelve, although Barnabas is called an apostle. In Acts 15. 6 we find the apostles and the elders linked together. Thus we see a divinely organized company, fitted for the guidance and care of the flock, whose duty to watch and tend it after the apostle's departure is specially pressed upon them (Acts 20. 28 and following verses). But now we come to an important point in our inquiry. Many will admit all that we have thus far written, but they will say, Whilst things were so ordained in the early Churches, what proof is there that such a state of things was intended to continue? or, in other words, is it the mind of God that this should be the order in the assemblies of God to-day? and if so, how is it to be brought about, seeing there are no apostles and none deputed to act by them, as Titus was? We would here ask our readers to give special attention to what we write, or we may be easily misunderstood. The point is this—Can we to-day have elders of the Churches without such being appointed by apostles or those authorized by them to do so. Any one who has carefully followed us will see that without question there were elders without appointment in the Old Testament dispensation. At what age they became elders in the nation may be difficult to determine. And we are not aware of any Scripture that throws light upon this point, yet their existence cannot be questioned. We have also shown that there were elders of the Church in Jerusalem, and nothing is said of their

appointment. Apostles then appointed elders under the special guidance of the spirit, and set in order the Churches. Titus, and, possibly, others with him, placed or appointed under the direction of the apostle, but in a very different way, as we understand, from an apostle. An apostle could go into an assembly and point out the men fitted for rule, not because they had proved their fitness before men, for this they might have had no time to do, but because the apostle was specially guided of the Spirit in his selection, so that he could say, "Over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (Acts 20. 28). With Titus the matter was, we understand, quite different. The apostle draws a picture of what an overseer should be, and, notice, this describes his life as manifested before all (Titus 1. 6). It was not that Titus had a special power given to him to discern what was in the men, but that he might bring them alongside of the Divine picture drawn by the apostle, and when they corresponded with it, appoint them as elders. But still here is appointment, and an appointment which we believe none are authorized by Scripture to practise to-day. But when we turn to 1 Timothy 3. we again find the Divine picture before us of what an overseer should be, and even more fully drawn than the one in the epistle to Titus. Nothing, however, is said to Timothy about appointment, nor have we any right to assume that Timothy—a young man—was called upon so to act. He was told to command and teach those doctrines, and that in so doing he would both save himself and those that heard him (1 Tim. 4. 11, 12, 16).

Now be it remembered that at this point the elderhood was formed, and was acting in fellowship with the apostles. Notice specially Acts 16. 4, 5: "Ordained of the apostles and elders." Titus is told to act with all commandment (Titus 2. 15, R. V.). We believe, then, that the circle of Divine government once being formed, it was God's intention that

it should be continued unto the end. If Timothy could not appoint, neither could elders appoint one another; but what they could do would be to receive into their already formed circle those fitted for rule according to the Divine pattern delivered to Timothy to be taught by him to others. Thus the elders would be responsible to receive amongst their number those, and only those, who corresponded to the Divine model. This, then, could go on when once set in order by the great Head of the Church through His apostles, when they had passed away, when those acting under their special direction had passed away, and when all authority to appoint had passed away, and when it had become a simple matter of the recognition by those already guiding of those whom God from time to time fitted to be associated with them in the special work of caring for and guiding the flock. It would not be the work of the flock to choose their shepherds. When David left his sheep he left them in the hands of the keeper of the sheep. The Chief Shepherd has left His sheep in the hands of those fitted to care for them, and those who do this work in accordance with His will will have a special shepherd's crown from the Chief Shepherd's hand when he shall appear (1 Peter 5.).

Before proceeding further with our subject we would like to give a few thoughts concerning the laying on of hands. There are at least two things signified in it: one is, the imparting of gift and blessing; the other, identification. That the laying on of hands does not necessarily imply the giving of the Holy Spirit is abundantly proved by Acts 6. 3. Here we see the men on whom hands were to be laid were already full of the Holy Spirit, and in this case the laying on of hands indicates identification with the persons and fellowship in their work. In the Old Testament we see the former of those in the case of Jacob blessing Joseph's two sons (Gen. 48. 14), while the latter is illustrated by the priest laying his hands on the head of the scapegoat, as we

read in Leviticus 16. 21. Both are again met with in the New Testament: in Acts 6., as already referred to, identification; while in 1 Timothy 4. 14 we get the imparting of gift. This imparting of gift, however, appears to have been by the Apostle Paul alone (see 2 Tim. 1. 6), the laying on of the hands of the presbytery being an act of identification and fellowship. Although we have dwelt on these two points thus briefly, we would not wish it to be thought that we understand nothing more to be implied by the laying on of hands, but we do not wish now to enter further into the subject.

In any real revival we would expect to find a return to Divine order, and the movement that took place now over half a century ago was characterized in the leading out of the sheep by those who had cared for them whilst still in the sects. We refer to the gathering out of assemblies some seventy years ago. Men of power, men of known godliness and ability, and who were known as leaders, led out the sheep and gathered them together. Thus far we believe the movement was truly of God, and the blessings resulting from it will only be fully seen and known when all things shall be manifested in the light of the Lord's presence. The writer has in his possession an interesting manuscript describing some of these early assemblies, written by an aged brother who was gathered with them. They were very far from seeing the mind of God in many matters, but as they learnt His will they dropped practising that which they found was opposed to it; yet there was a point in their history where they seemed to have failed. Whilst the assemblies were gathered together and formed very much after the Divine pattern, the forming of a godly elderhood seems to have been almost entirely neglected, and from this has arisen, we believe, many of the disastrous results but too clearly manifested to-day. We here give an extract from the manuscript in our possession.

Dr. Cronin tells us: "There was little intelligence as to the real character of God's movement amongst us; *special membership*, as it is called among Dissenters, was the primary and most offensive condition of things to all our minds, so that our first assembling was really marked as a small gathering of evangelical malcontents. We felt free up to this time and long afterwards to make arrangements among ourselves as to who should distribute the bread and wine and take other ministry in the assembly. We were also, from ignorance or indifference, careless as to conscience and godly care one for another." Mr. T. P. H. says: "As light dawned upon these children of God and His Word was studied, so the arrangement as to who should break the bread, etc., gradually gave place." Mr. Bellett tells us: "The settled order of ministry which we had in Fitzroy Street gradually gave place. Teaching and exhorting were at first the more common services amongst us, while prayer was not open to any, but was restricted under the care of two or three who were regarded as elders; but gradually all this yielded. In a little time no appointed or recognised eldership was understood to be in the midst of us, and all service was of a free character, the presence of God through the Spirit being more simply believed and used."

We have often heard the practices of these early gathered-out ones referred to as our example, but surely these extracts would show that, at least in their earliest days, they themselves had a very imperfect knowledge of the order of God's House, and many things that they practised in ignorance had to be given up. At what stage, then, would they become an example to us? Surely it is to the Word of God, and not to the practice of brethren, that we should appeal, no matter how godly these may be. They gave up much of what was wrong in their Church order, but we fear they also gave up some of the truth. When they discovered that elders had nothing to do with the ordering of ministry,

they not only gave up the arrangement, but also the recognition of elders, and with this necessarily the responsibilities that devolve upon such.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Fragment.

(From an old Magazine.)

Do you love Christ? I ask not if you feel
The warm excitement of that party zeal
Which follows on while others lead the way,
And makes His cause the fashion of the day.
But do you love Him when His gait is mean,
Nor shrink to let your fellowship be seen?
Do you love the Lord when blind, and halt, and maimed?
In prison succour Him? nor feel ashamed
To own Him, though His injured name may be
A mark for some dark slanderer's obloquy?
Say not, "When saw we Him?" Each member dear,
Poor and afflicted, wears His image here.

A PILGRIM SONG IN THE DESERT.

(May be sung to the tune, "Lion of Judah.")

As a slave 'neath the wrongs of servitude galling
Lifts the heart in its anguish and cries to be free,
So creation, oppress'd in its bondage appalling,
Is sighing and pleading and groaning for Thee.

Not willingly sunken and subject in sorrow,
But by reason of Him who will'd it should be
A scene of the testing of Heaven-born sonship,
Which groans through its wilderness lonely for Thee.

Ah, the maddening strife in the darkness around me,
Poor man in his blindness is striving to see,
But pushing aside God's grace, that has found me
And made me a pilgrim so lonely for Thee.

Poor dupe of the prince of this age of gross darkness,
Has marr'd and corrupted in mighty degree
This scene once so fair, now so blighted and bonded,
And caused it to groan out its longings for Thee.

It travails in pain, but cannot bring forth
A rest for the weary, a home for the free,
Poor earth may well weep o'er its roses so withered
And lament for the thorns that it wreathed upon Thee.

No joy for the joyless, nor peace for the troubled,
No city abiding in creation I see.

Alas! can a slave give freedom to bondmen?
Ah, no! it is groaning and waiting for Thee.

And so, blessed Lord, as a stranger and pilgrim,
I'm pressing along o'er life's desolate sea.
The wild waves rage o'er the wrecks all around me,
And I'm wearied and waiting and lonely for Thee.

Thou hast saved me, my Lord, from sorrows eternal,
And set me a child in the Holiest with Thee ;
But while I'm down here 'mid the trial and conflict,
I often am homesick and long to be free.

Not tired of warfare in which Thou'rt enduring,
Not weary of burdens I'd carry for Thee,
But oft in the strife my home is alluring
In Thy presence, Thy likeness, Thy glory to be.

But oh, when I think of my wandering footsteps,
When the joy of salvation was stranger to me,
I smite o'er my heart, in sorrow confessing
And cry out in anguish I'm lonely for Thee.

Like a strange bird escapèd from exile returning
Sends its keen vision forward some traces to see
Of the far away homeland for which it is yearning,
So longs my poor heart to be present with Thee.

There's a circle down here of the ransomed and gathered,
A place where the Lord deigns in presence to be,
Our minglings of spirit are joyful and pleasant,
But still we are longing and lonely for Thee.

Sweet hours thus together in sympathy sharing
The joy and the sorrow we're sharing for Thee,
But they pass away quickly and leave us a craving,
A longing, a yearning in glory to be.

And oh ! it will come, all our longings then ended,
Our hopes all fulfillèd, our hearts ever free,
We'll roam through the vastness of glory eternal,
And never complain that we're lonely for Thee.

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 80.—*Is it right to leave a Gospel Meeting open without making arrangements for one to speak, or is there anything to condemn it in the Scriptures?*

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16. 15). This is the commission given by the Lord after His resurrection. During His lifetime we find He sent out His disciples two and two (Mark 6. 7) to preach the Gospel of the kingdom. In the epistles we frequently find two associated in the work of the Lord. No doubt these two in fellowship together would be prepared to speak as ambassadors for Christ, and would not be each waiting for the other to begin. For whom then is a Gospel meeting to be left open? The question implies a state of things that we do not see contemplated in the word of God. A Gospel meeting to-day often consists of a number of Christians and perhaps a very few unconverted. Yet if it is a Gospel meeting these few must be kept before our minds; it is to them we are speaking on the principle of going out into the world. Would it not be much better if Christians were more occupied (if able to preach the Gospel in any measure) with the going out and seeking to win sinners than with the matter of who is to take part in what is often but a Gospel meeting in name?

J. A. B.

QUESTION 81.—*What is a confederacy?*

This word is used in Isaiah 8. 12, and an explanation of it will be found in chap. 7. 2, where we read that the house of David was informed of the confederacy between Syria and Ephraim. Syria was one of Israel's great enemies, and when the house of David heard of this ungodly union between Gentiles and the people of Israel, we read that his heart was moved and the heart of the people as the trees are moved with the wind. But the Word of God is, "Fear not, neither be faint-hearted, although they have taken evil counsel against thee, for it shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass" (verses 4, 5, 6-7). A confederation to-day would be a union of God's people with the world, or even a union of saints on principles opposed to the Word of God and the unity of the Spirit. Study carefully these two chapters.

J. A. B.

THE RULE OF GOD.

(Continued from page 177.)

It is difficult for us to approach a subject with an unbiassed mind, far more so than we are aware of. No sooner does some truth begin to force itself upon our conscience than we look on to see what it will cost if we carry it out. If it costs us dear we may be unprepared to buy it, and then our deceitful hearts will likely enough lead us to argue that the truth is not the truth. Or, again, our minds may be so taken up with our own thoughts and ideas that there is no room for God's thoughts to enter. "We do not believe in elders," say some; and this being so, it is surprising with what ease they set aside the subject. But how do they come to this conclusion? If, as we have shown from Scripture, elders were never made such in Old or New Testament, how comes it that there are none to-day? If, on the contrary, there be hundreds of men more or less fitted of God to guide the flock (although such, owing to their false position, may be unable to act in accordance with the mind of the Chief Shepherd), how solemn is their position: their gift laid up as in a napkin, and they, according to their surroundings, more or less unable to do the work that God would have them to do in the way He would have it done. Were such to be awakened to a sense of their duty, they might find that they would either have to leave their present associations or remain in them with a bad conscience. We have already drawn the attention of our readers to the coming out of Christians over half a century ago, and to the flood of light that has spread through this land and others from what may have seemed to many but a small and insignificant beginning. We have pointed out that this movement was characterized by shepherds leading out the sheep; we have also pointed out that in giving up

what was wrong what was right was given up also—that the formation of the elderhood was neglected by those connected with this movement. It is true that, although the name was set aside, the work was in some measure carried on by the men who led in the movement; still, the most important part of that to which they were called was neglected, they did not seek to form the circle of the elderhood according to the Divine pattern, shutting out the disqualified, helping on and welcoming into their number those they saw were being fitted of God to guide the saints. Division came in in these early days. On the one side a man would be found taking up the position of being *the* elder of the assembly, *the* angel, as some said, or what was little better than *the* minister. Not only was there little care to lead others on with themselves into the true work of oversight in many cases, but there was a jealousy apparently of any seeking to stretch forth to the work. Many assemblies became almost entirely dependent upon the ruling elder, or in many cases the ruling *younger* brother. When he was removed by death or other circumstances, his place had to be immediately filled. Ofttimes this man was supported in his unscriptural position by some wealthy brother at a distance. Another party, again, acted on somewhat different principles, forming a sort of judicial court, where a case was tried and judgment given, far from the locality where the trouble had arisen. These brethren, again, disclaim the elderhood, and seem to our understanding more to act upon an assumption of a restored apostolic centre such as we find at Jerusalem (Acts 15.). It is our desire to take up the truth afresh at the point where these dear brethren diverged, seeking in patience to carry out the will of God, and expecting in His good time to see real blessing result to the assemblies by a return to God's order.

But some urge that the elderhood having failed in the past it must be set aside at the present time. Let us apply

this principle to every-day life. The mainspring of my watch has broken, it has failed to accomplish the purpose for which it was made; in the future, therefore, let me carry my watch without a mainspring, turning the hands from time to time with a watch-key, and so keeping up the deception that it is going according to the mind of the maker. Yet, after all, it is but a deception. That which is essential to the whole machinery of the watch, fulfilling the purposes for which it was made, is lacking; and what is an assembly which lacks that in its organization upon which God would have us bestow the greatest care in its formation, that which should be, and would be, we believe, if rightly formed, the very mainspring by which the assemblies of God would manifest heavenly government in the midst of a rebel world? We must remember, however, in this illustration that the mainspring of the watch is as dependent upon the hand that winds it as the watch itself is upon the right action of the mainspring; so the oversight is dependent upon Him who guides the universe to act simply and only according to His revealed will. While we freely admit the truth that elders have failed through Old and New Testament, yet we must again ask that those who do not believe in them should point out the scripture which sets them aside and brings in some other mode of rule in the house of God. If they are unable to do so from the Word of God, we must still abide by His Word and the faith *once for all* delivered unto the saints, seeking the old paths and grace to walk in them.

Yet, again, if failure is a reason to set aside the original order of the house of God, we would ask why is it that in Acts 15. we find such men occupying so prominent a place in the new and heavenly kingdom? We frankly admit that the want of proper shepherd care in an assembly is most disastrous, the bad example too often set by those ruling is soon seen by younger ones, and is too often followed

in after life, when some root of bitterness has sprung up, and thereby many have been defiled.

Before concluding these articles we yet have to notice two most important points. First, the qualifications for going before the flock; secondly, the sphere in which the rule of God is to be carried out. It will be evident to our readers how very largely these subjects might be dwelt upon. We might also enter into the characteristics of the present kingdom of God in distinction from the kingdom passed, and those comprehensive words, "The faith once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), but space forbids our entering more fully into so broad a subject as the principles of Divine government revealed to the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11. 2). He it was who laid the foundation; and let others take heed what they build thereon.

That part of our subject which we now propose to deal with is most important, for it must be very apparent to our readers that, admitting we are right in our understanding of the mind of God in what we have already written, there is but one conclusion at which we can arrive with regard to the importance of a God-given godly elderhood. So important and so vital a matter, and one so essential to the well-being of assemblies, both in their individual and collective capacity, is not likely to have been missed by that wily Fiend, who is not only working for the ruin of individual souls, but also for the obtaining of the kingdom for his christ, who will be the man of sin, the son of perdition, coming in his own name, and through whom he will work his purposes upon the earth, doing away with all rule of God so far, and only so far, as he is permitted. Not only have the elders of the assemblies been made targets for Satan to assault in a special manner, but "men have risen up speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." Turning again to 1 Timothy 3., we there find described, firstly, the personal qualifications of one stretch-

ing forward to or desiring the ministry of an overseer. "He must be blameless." This does not mean that a man thus seeking to serve God is never known to fail, as some would have it, for Peter, who was placed in so responsible a position by the Lord in connection with the present kingdom, had not only then failed bitterly, but again after this he was withstood to the face by the Apostle Paul because he was to be blamed. Blameless, then, we understand to mean that in the personal qualifications that follow no one is able to point out that he habitually fails. "The husband of one wife." We do not understand this to mean that such a man must be married, for the Apostle Paul himself appears not to have been; and if it were necessary for a man to be married, then should his wife die he would be disqualified for rule in the assembly until married again. That which we understand to be meant by "the husband of one wife" is—that a Gentile with two or more wives would thereby be unfitted to stand before saints as a representative man. With regard to the Jews, at this point in their history we believe that polygamy had in great measure ceased to be practised. "Vigilant"—or one who will rule with diligence (Rom. 12. 8). One who will watch that the wolf does not come in sheep's clothing, and that men rising up and speaking perverse things are not suffered to lead away disciples after them. "Sober, of modest behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach." But be it remembered that apt to teach does not mean that a man must be a public speaker. Such a one may hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught (Titus 1. 9), and may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convict the gainsayers, yet he himself may never occupy a public position as a teacher. We would here specially notice the words, "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught," or, "according to the teaching." We would link these words with 2 Timothy 2. 2, where Timothy is told to commit the truth which he has

learned to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also—a most important matter this, and one that has been sadly neglected. Again, “Not given to wine, no striker.” “A man may be a striker with his tongue” (Jer. 18. 18). The sharp and bitter word easily drawn forth when offended by his brethren would, we believe, be much the same as the blow from the fist of an unconverted man. “Not greedy of filthy lucre,” and, again, “Not covetous,” as we read in the same verse. Not one who is ever grasping a little more of the world, coveting a little better position in society, and learning, it may be almost imperceptibly to himself, to have respect of persons (Jas. 2. 1). Such a condition of heart would soon lead to-day to that to which it has led in the past—the sumptuous living, the costly apparel, the gold ring first getting the high place in our thoughts, then getting the high place in our affections, until the example of the Lord of glory, who ate and drank with publicans and sinners, is lost sight of, and the solemn words, “Have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons” become descriptive of such a one. “Patient.” “Ye have need of patience” (Heb. 10. 36) is spoken to all saints, but how greatly needed for those who seek to guide the flock. Their patience will be tried continually, first with fellow guides, then with the flock; and if there is not the patience which results from a knowledge of the impatience that is natural to all of us when our wills are crossed, and therefore the continual waiting upon God and keeping a watch over the door of our lips, the characteristics of a brawler will soon be developed, such a one will be a sower of discord amongst his brethren, and thus be found in association with the seven-fold abomination that God hates (Prov. 6. 16, 19). These qualifications, then, that are to be sought for in one stretching forth to the work of oversight refer first to his individual character.

We would again specially press upon the notice of our

readers that these qualifications are what would be apparent to all, it would not require any miraculous or special power to discern them, it is a description of one in whom the will of God is being done on earth as it is in heaven—of one who having been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, has been shaped and moulded by the indwelling Spirit of God in accordance with the Divine pattern. Such a one, walking in the Spirit, and not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, their whole life before men being under the influence of the indwelling Spirit of God, is the one that God marks out in the Divine photograph brought before us in this chapter as fitted to go before the flock.

Let us pause for a moment before we go further and ask ourselves the question, When the Spirit of God caused the great apostle of the Gentiles to pen these words, was there to be a point in the history of God's saints when this teaching was to become obsolete? when none would have responsibility of bringing those who were desiring to rule among the saints by the side of the Divine standard, and if found wanting in the characteristics therein depicted to set such aside as unfit for the high and holy work to which they aspire? It is manifest that this would be a work of the utmost importance, and would devolve on such men, and only such, as were themselves fitted of God for the work of oversight even on the elders of the assemblies. Timothy was not told to appoint, nor should we expect it, he being a young man, but the teaching or doctrine was committed to him, he being himself a teacher (1 Tim. 4. 6, 11) in a very special sense (see also chap. 1. 18), that he should teach the truth to others (see also 2 Tim. 2. 2). In these verses it is specially to be noticed that he is charged to commit to faithful men that which had been committed to him, and the truths of the third chapter, that we are at present occupied with, were among the things that he had heard, and which

were to be committed to faithful men, who in their turn should teach the same to others also, and this to go on to the end of the Church's history. How plain this is! What use would there be in teaching these things if there were none who could carry them out. Yet some would seek to build upon these verses a theory which would set the practising and carrying out of the truth aside.

After having spoken of a man's personal qualifications, the apostle next proceeds to describe his household. What it must be if he have one, and what are to distinguish his children should he have any. He must be one who is able to rule for God in his own house, having his children in subjection; for, asks the apostle, if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of a Church of God? We believe that God contemplates in His economy that elder men would be married; the following Scriptures, along with many others, indicate this: 1 Corinthians 14. 35; 1 Timothy 5. 14. If women are to marry it must be "in the Lord." This implies, therefore, that men likewise are to marry. With regard, then, to a man's house, it again must be ruled in accordance with the mind of God; for in like manner as a man rules himself so should he rule his house, and as he rules his house so should he rule in the assembly. The man who is loose and careless in his own walk, gratifying his fleshly desires and led by his own will, will so act in his own house. His rule will be that of self-will; his children may fear him before his face, but they will set his wishes at defiance behind his back, and will be known—as, alas! too often is the case—for their lawless, disorderly behaviour, instead of being known as "faithful children" (Titus 1. 6). The unfitness for rule in the assembly often appears in small things in themselves, connected with the family and its management. We have seen the father return from his day's work, and very soon after entering his house the child, which probably all day had tried the weary mother

and given her little rest, sets that mother at open defiance, knowing that the father will take its part and shield it from any chastisement. These may seem trivial things to some, but they are not so. Such a father will act on the same principle in the assembly, and with much the same sad results—making a party around himself, hindering godly discipline, and sowing discord amongst saints. We do not dwell here on the qualifications of the overseer's wife, for it is with the man we have now to do; yet, alas! we would say, how many a man who might be useful for God and helpful to the saints has had his life testimony marred by the woman! The house that should be a house where God is honoured and saints cheered and comforted, being confirmed in the faith, too often is but a meeting-place for gossippers, where speaking evil of one another is freely indulged in, where the slandering of brethren is permitted, and thereby disgrace brought on the name of the Lord. We would entreat our dear sisters to remember the words spoken to them in this same chapter (ver. 11), reading it in the Revised, in which is set forth what all wives should be.

Again, "Not a novice," or one newly come to the faith, lest he fall into the condemnation of the Devil—or, as we understand it, the like condemnation—who once occupied a high place, but fell through being lifted up with pride (Ezek. 28. 17). What disaster we have seen follow the setting aside of God's revealed will in this matter! which has only too plainly proved the wisdom of God's order. One newly come to the faith should be occupied in patiently learning what that faith is, so that in due time he may be able to earnestly contend for it (Jude 3); for those who begin to contend for the faith before they know what that faith is will probably end in becoming contentious, not obeying the truth (Gal. 3. 1). "Moreover, he must have a good report of them that are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the Devil." How weighty are the

words! how solemn! how significant! In this first epistle to Timothy, God is pointing out the men qualified to lead; their personal qualifications, their home-life, and even their reputation in the world, all has to be considered.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

NOT DRAWING BACK.

It has been well said by one, "Better he that creeps in the way than those that run out of the way"; and let the progress we do make be ever so little, if it is in the right direction there is much to thank God for." On the other hand, we may run, but if it is a wrong course we are pursuing, it is not only ruinous to ourselves, but destructive to all those who may be influenced by us. How much need we have, therefore, to bring our walk and ways to the test of the Word of God.

Progress ever marks the work of God, whether in things natural or spiritual. When the death of winter is past, spring comes upon us, and nature soon looks its brightest and best. In things spiritual God expects that we should go on from an infantine state to perfection or full growth, although we are ever ready to settle down perfectly satisfied with our attainments, a most dangerous condition.

In Hebrews 6.1 the believers in that day are exhorted to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on, to leave them in the sense that the child learns the alphabet and leaves it, yet takes it with it; and in Hebrews 10.38 they are warned not to draw back. Although there was much to discourage on the one hand, yet there was much to encourage on the other. Afflicted and persecuted by their own countrymen, they take it joyfully, for the

soon coming of the Blessed Lord is the hope that illumines the darkness and cheers them in their time of trouble. "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." And yet it is very evident that some had drawn back (10. 39); like God's people of old, their hearts were discouraged because of the way.

In a former day, in happy fellowship with God, they had gone forth at the bidding of the Lord outside the camp, sharing His reproach. They had turned their backs upon the Temple, with all its religious rites and ceremonies, for His place as Son over God's house had been denied Him there.

And taking His place outside of the whole thing, He said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate"; for soon Roman legions levelled it with the dust.

And what if in this our day and generation some have gone back, gone back to the false systems of man, that are as much under God's displeasure as was the Temple of old? Let us go on, it may be amid increasing difficulties, seeking to imitate the perfect example set before us in the appointed pathway of the Son of God, who was neither flattered by the presence of the multitudes that thronged around Him nor discouraged because of the few. Many of His disciples may turn back and walk no more with Him. There came a point even when the faithful few forsook Him and fled, and at last, when hanging on the cross He could say, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Yet there He is the obedient one even unto death.

Again, in Numbers 13. and 14. we have a people brought out from Pharaoh's rule and in the wilderness with God. God having brought them out of Egypt and led them on through the wilderness, is about to lead them into the Land of Canaan. Twelve representative men are chosen, a man out of every tribe, to go over and search the land

and bring back word again as to the people, whether strong or weak, few or many; as to the land, whether it be good or bad; and also as to their places of defence; and to bring of its fruit. They search the land for forty days, and bring back to the people word that it is a land flowing with milk and honey. There are difficulties, however, to surmount and obstacles to overcome, for there were giants and walled cities. But when God begins to work these difficulties disappear like mist before the rising sun. Who will roll away the stone was the difficulty of the women on the way to the sepulchre. But God was there before them.

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take :
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and will break
With blessings on your head.”

Their eye off God, discouraged and disheartened by the report brought back by the ten, they say one to another, “Let us make us a captain, and go *back* into Egypt.” Back from under God’s rule, back to Pharaoh’s, with its oppression and tyranny. They had forgotten the cruel lash and the burdens of Egypt. They had also forgotten how God had delivered them from the judgment of Egypt, and had provided with unwearied care for all their need in the wilderness. And they might have reasoned that they were right, for it was the majority that was in favour of going back to Egypt, while it was only the few that were determined to go on, and their confidence was in God. “The Lord is with us; fear them not,” were the words of Caleb and Joshua, who had had a precious foretaste of the Land of Canaan.

And just as there were those that could feast upon the fruit of Canaan while in the wilderness, so we in like manner need not wait till we get to heaven to enjoy things eternal—it should begin down here—ever seeking to keep in mind that not only were these things

written aforetime for our learning, but also for our warning, for we should be warned by the past failures of God's people and be encouraged by their triumphs. While the faithless are punished for their sin and unbelief, Caleb and Joshua, the overcoming ones, are bountifully rewarded (see Josh. 14.). The path may seem rough and difficult, but if God is leading the way faith reckons it to be the right way. Let us press forward then. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Heb. 10. 38.).

BALAAM.

IV.

THE ERROR OF BALAAM.

WHEN different words are used we have to consider carefully what distinctions are intended to be conveyed by such changes. Whereas Peter uses the word "hodos," "way," Jude takes up another—"planē," "error." The "way" of the Lord (Matt. 3. 3), the "way" of truth (2 Pet. 2. 2), are passages sufficient to show us the simple use of the word. In ordinary Greek it is used for "the bed" of the river. One passage in which it occurs will be familiar to readers generally, and is useful to quote here not simply for the purpose of showing the way in which the word is used, but that it may bring out into bold contrast the Apostle Paul and Balaam. Writing of Timothy, he says, he "shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church" (1 Cor. 4. 17). Of immense importance such words as they link with the precious verses starting with, "Now ye are full: now ye are rich: ye have reigned as kings without us; and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might

reign with you" (ver. 8). How forcibly he brings it home! They, in exercise of their will, were walking in another way to that in which Christ led. In the world gaining a place honoured, strong, etc., and all because they were puffed up. The will at work, and thus a way, not Christ, marked out. But Paul, "weak," a "fool," "despised," persecuted and offscouring of the world, because he bowed his will to the Lord's, and thus walked in Christ's way. And this he taught everywhere in every church. There was not a saint but what needed it. Not doctrines to be held and discussed, but a way in which to walk; and that would only be walked by one who lived not for the present, but the future. Balaam had no such motive, and therefore was not able to tread any such way.

But Jude, while pronouncing a woe upon any who had gone in the way of gain, adds, "and ran greedily after the error of Balaam" (ver. 11). Thus going beyond the outward "way," as he refers to the deep-seated "error" from which the way resulted. One verse in James gives us both the words, and as they are used together of one individual the verse becomes helpful as to the meanings of them. "Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error ("planē") of his way ("hodo") shall save a soul from death" (Jas. 5. 20). The "error" led on to the way. Deep-seated purpose of evil. Balaam afraid of God, constantly acknowledging to Balak that he could not speak apart from Him or contrary to His will, yet acted as if he scarcely believed his own assertions oft made, for he still sought all in his power to speak that which he would have done if he could. The silver and gold were imbedded in his heart, the error was there. The way was a natural result. And once professed servants of God rush into the error of Balaam, then it is the world's reward that leads them on and governs their actions. It may be the actual silver and gold, or it may be the more subtle power, still the honour

that cometh from the world and the position which it gives to one who acts on the Balaam principle. As Balak sought to use Balaam out of the exceeding evil of his heart and the absolute ignorance of God that was in him, so men of the world to-day simply desire to use one like Balaam for their own purposes. And they are prepared to buy the use of God's gift if they can control it and make it subservient to their own ends, curse where God had blessed, and bless where God had cursed. What a fearful prostitution of gift when one can lend himself to the artful and cunning ways of Balak!

If in Romanism one can see the way of Cain, surely in Protestantism, as well as in the former, there is the selling of professed service for God to the world, that bids for it and would then control it. Alas! how many a true servant of God, instead of walking in His way, has thus bartered his freedom, and having become a "minister" in a world's church, has sunk to the level of his hearers, and preached to please them, rounding the sharp edges of truth and preaching a citizenship here, thus enabling those who listen to him to do the very thing that Paul so sharply rebuked the Corinthians for (1 Cor. 4.). To link Christ with the world is to act on apostate principles; it is to surrender the place, character, and condition the cross of Christ has given. Yet to such an extent has it grown that some not only scorn the position of separation which heavenly citizenship, when acted upon, gives (Phil. 3.), but they turn round upon those who seek in true loyalty to their Lord to take it, and tell them that they are committing sin if they do not vote at the world's elections and take their place in one or other of the political parties of the day. If servants of Christ remain as stars in the right hand of Christ (Rev. 2. 1), they will shine for Him and with all the light He gives them to display in the place in which He sets them. Whereas mere professors in service will manifest them-

selves as "Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 13).

THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM.

Fully prevented by God from pronouncing a single curse upon Israel, Balak, having exhausted all his ingenuity in leading Balaam from place to place, in the hope that he might attain his purpose, gave up all hope and went his way, as Balaam did. But place never alters persons, and Satan never wearies in urging on those who are ready to do his evil work. If impossible to curse God's Israel, is it hopeless? Can no way be found of reaching them and effectually stumbling. Satan has other schemes ready whenever one fails. And at once, as Balaam goes his way a disappointed man, brooding, doubtless, over his loss of reward, Satan meets him. If impossible to reverse the blessing of an unchangeable Jehovah, who is not as a man, that He should lie, then cannot Israel themselves be reached and turned aside from the path? Result is seen in the chapter following. No mention of Balak or Balaam; not a word as to any influence of theirs bringing in the terrible sins that resulted in the death of twenty-four thousand. Yet Scripture shows us that Balaam behind the scenes was the prime mover as to it all. It is reserved to the Book of Revelation to bring this out. "But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. 2. 14). Important to notice that it is in this Epistle Jesus Christ is spoken of as "He which hath the sharp sword with two edges" (ver. 12). The Word has lost none of its power as found in His hand. He has the sword, and knows how and when to wield it. It divides asunder; it penetrates innermost recesses; it reveals things as they are

(*Heb.* 4. 12). All that can be is commended first. They were dwelling where "Satan's seat" (Greek, throne) was; but He can say, "Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith" (*ver.* 13). Note in passing as important that "hold fast" (*ver.* 13) and "hold" (*ver.* 14) are translations of the same word, and "hold fast" properly expresses the meaning; so also in verse 15. While certain were holding fast His name, others were holding fast the doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes. But mark also as of utmost importance to the understanding of the passage that He does not commend those who held the doctrine of Balaam and of the Nicolaitanes any more than He charges those who held fast His name as if they held the doctrine of Balaam. It was impossible to hold fast to both. But what He does urge home on those who hold fast His name is the fact that they tolerated those who held the doctrine of Balaam in their midst—"THOU HAST THERE THEM" (*ver.* 14). Could anything be clearer? "I have a few things against THEE: thou hast there THEM." Then they had no business to have them there. They were commended in that they held fast the name; they were not charged with having themselves the doctrine of Balaam, but they were certainly addressed most solemnly as to having "them" there. They should have used the sword. It should have been used upon themselves to the absolute separation between them and such as had the evil doctrine. Will any one dare tell us, in the face of the deeply solemn words, "Thou hast there them," that they had no power to do otherwise? But yet more ere the epistle closes. Words calling to repentance: "Repent; or else I will come unto THEE quickly, and will fight against THEM with the sword of My mouth" (*ver.* 16). If you do not deal with them, I must. If they had repented, they would have dealt with the matter. Not simply with the doctrine, for that they did not hold; but with the holders and teachers of it. Where any energy

was seen and displayed for Christ, there the wicked one sought to cast in evil first. A strange voice abroad. Evil doctrine held and leavening. His were to be free from it.

Not enough to be able to say, "We hold fast His name; we are not of those who hold fast any evil doctrine." All that might have been true, yet need for solemn rebuke and earnest call to repent, because they had there them who held fast the evil. THERE, a definite place pointed out—that is, the place in which they were. There also were—they were together. In the outward aspect of the Epistle to Pergamos, how many seem easily to see and to condemn the being together! If you say, "Should the Church and the world be together?" the reply quickly, unhesitatingly comes, "Certainly not." "In an assembly, should there be those who hold fast the doctrine of Balaam?" we ask. Hesitation begins at once, "We must not judge!" But Christ said, "Thou hast there them." Was that in approval, or do those words express emphatically His disapproval? Can there be a moment's delay in the full assent to the fact that Christ's disapproval settles the matter? Those who held fast the name had sinned, not in holding fast the Balaam doctrine, but in settling down, with those who did, "*there*," and together "*there*." This was sin, and this called for repentance and action. They were to act; if not, let them know that He would.

Now, with such plain, unmistakable teaching in this as in the other epistles to the Churches (Rev. 2. and 3.), how can any one imagine that they are presented as a pattern for saints to follow or be guided by? When under judgment how could they be? Is Christ presented as being in the midst as Lord? Assuredly not. He is in the midst as Judge (Rev. 2. 1). With eye of fire He is surveying all, commending all that He can, but seeing all the evil, bringing it to light, rebuking it, telling of judgment upon those in it and of it, and then warning His most solemnly not to

have any complicity with it. These chapters bring before us specimens of declension, and, therefore, they are given as solemn warnings. Could one imagine a Christian, however little taught in the Word, coming to the Revelation, emphatically a book of judgment, to look for guidance as to discipline and action in the Church? All this we get in the Epistles, and plainly enough on all points necessary. But it is not young Christians who go astray here. It is older ones, and often those who have a doctrine and an elaborate theory to maintain. Such come to these Scriptures, and with an air of triumph exclaim, "You see how much evil was to be found in these Churches in Asia, and yet Christians were not told to put away such as held it—and certainly they were not told to separate themselves!" What does all this imply but that those who thus speak forget that "no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation"? (2 Pet. 1. 20). We are not to allow any one to isolate Scripture. The Spirit of God had spoken plainly (2 Tim. 2.): there was to be no sufferance of doctrinal evil. They were to "purge out"; or, if they could not, then, as an alternative and the only one, if they would maintain the holiness demanded, they were to purge themselves out. Let me repeat, "Thou hast there them" was enough for an exercised heart—for one that loved Him and loved to obey. Words, plain and simple, demanding that those who held fast the name should not be in the same place (there) with those who held fast the doctrine of Balaam. To be in it was wrong, and therefore the necessity for the call to "repent." That call was not to those who held fast the doctrine of Balaam, but to those who did not themselves hold it, but were "there" with the holders. If repentance needed, what caused it? What was the sin in which they were involved, concerning which they had to clear themselves? There was a sufferance of evil. Moral evil was taught by the holders, for, as with Balaam, it is to

be seen in the actual sin, as well as to be seen in the union of saints with the world.

On the confines of the Promised Land, just as Israel were ready to enter in, we see this tremendous energy of Satan manifested in Balaam—Satan's last supreme effort. How, in the present day, moral and doctrinal evil abounds, and because of it the mere worldling is terribly stumbled by the wrongdoing of Christians and professors! What need for watchfulness! "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." "Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas. 4. 4). Satan can never alter (Rom. 8.). There is no charge, no accuser, no executioner. God Himself has cleared the court, having justified us Himself. But while that is true, the flesh is still within, and Satan seeks to get at the flesh in us and to use it against us. Therefore "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8. 4).

R. T. HOPKINS.

“HOW SHALL WE ORDER THE CHILD?”

II.¹

IMPORTANT and necessary as it is for parents who are Christians to heed the exhortation to “train up a child in the way he should go,” unto knowing the fulfilment of the promise, “And when he is old he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22. 6), yet to do so it is needful, first of all, to understand what that way is. To try and answer this it is proposed in this article to consider the Gospel in its relation to the child. Certainly the *first* responsibility is that which is directed toward the greatest need, even that which relates to its eternal interests. The *spiritual* welfare should have the first concern. Do we as parents fully realize the solemnity of the thought that that babe which is born, that precious human being, has entered upon an existence which time does not measure nor limit, but which is an everlasting one? His lifetime in mortal body may be but a few brief days, or months, or, at the most, years, but that does not cover, neither does it close his existence. Surely, then, his eternal welfare should have the first claim upon the parents. Yet is it not, alas! so often otherwise? the great, absorbing thought of many parents, even Christian parents, on behalf of their children being, how they can best promote their prospects as regards the things of time, with little, if any, regard to their future and eternal welfare. At least, the *time* interests of their children get by far the predominant place in their thoughts and endeavours. In this, as in all else, the Divine principle is true and applicable—“Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6. 33). Looked at from this standpoint, the

¹ See page 106.

spiritual interests of the child, as being the most important, as surely all will admit, will then have the first place in our thoughts, and care, and dealings towards them. It is not here intended to take up the matter of the salvation of such as die in infancy; the matter before us is the responsibility of parents toward their children in relation to the Gospel. This, again, can only be seen aright as we enter into God's thoughts of the child, first as to his need. "They that are whole need not a physician;" and if the child is sinless and pure, then salvation is unnecessary. But are they so? And here the testimony of God's Word must be heard reverently and accepted unquestionably if we would see them as He sees them, and thus as they really are. And the child, so apparently innocent and faultless and pure, is yet, nevertheless, sinful (Ps. 51. 5; 58. 3; Rom. 3. 10; Eph. 2. 3: "By nature the children of wrath").

Thus to get the child to know what God says about him, and thus to learn what he really is in the sight of God, to put the plain, solemn facts of God's word before him as to his condition and his need of a Saviour, becomes the responsibility of the parent in relation to the Gospel. Whenever the child is able to understand anything he can and may understand the plain and simple facts of God's Word. Tell him what God says he is, and that he needs to be born again. Do not deceive him by telling him he is *good*, as it may leave an impression on him it may be difficult afterwards to remove. Illustrate by his relationship to you, as your child by natural birth, how alone he can become a child of God, by being born again, or anew; or in any other way you can make plain these truths, counting upon God that, by the operation of His Spirit through the word, conviction may be wrought.

The simplicity of the child in readily and unquestionably believing what is spoken is a necessary condition in the man or woman, as we read, "Except ye be converted and

become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." This being characteristic of the child, he is consequently more easily impressed in early years, and the truth more readily accepted. Some there are, we know, who do and will question the rightness of such a course; and others doubt if the child can be got to understand. For our own part, we have never seen reason to doubt or question that the plain, simple statements of God's Word may be understood and believed even by a child of very early years. We believe, in many cases, children do not get the credit of understanding to the extent they can and do. We have often known in our experience a grown-up person silenced by the question of a child.

Then, further, is the Gospel message suited to the capacity of a child? Will any one question or doubt this? Surely not! For instance, the Gospel truth told out in that wonderful scripture, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son: that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16); the sweet, interesting story of the life and ways and words of Jesus, whose interest in and desire toward the children is so forcibly expressed in that word of His own: "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." Mark also the example of those who brought them to Jesus, which is surely worthy of our imitation to go and do likewise; bringing them to Him by teaching them of Him, and thus leading them to know Him as the One who loved them and died for them, the One who lives at God's right hand, and is willing to receive them and save them; as we find it written, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Bringing them to Him on our hearts and lips also, as Jairus pleaded on behalf of his little daughter (Mark 5. 21); and even although the answer may be delayed, it will not be denied.

Where there has been the faithful and earnest dealing

with the child or children in this way, looking in faith to God for the answer, one may reasonably expect that He *will* save them, and that in early years. That things as they really exist are so far otherwise from this does not at all prove that this cannot be and shouldn't be. It may only go to prove the failure of carrying out of such principles relative to the matter. That God willeth the salvation of the young, that they need to be saved, and that the Gospel is God's provision for that need, there must surely be but one answer, and that in the affirmative.

That many are not saved, yea, have grown almost to manhood and womanhood and are yet unsaved, does not, we repeat, prove that this is just as it should be, but, we believe, far otherwise. It is only probable that the reason, in many cases, is that the parents have had little, if any, exercise at all in the matter—little apprehension of the responsibility God had laid upon them in connection therewith, and thus of carrying out such responsibility. Yet, if such has been, we do not blame nor find fault. Our object in thus writing is to cause an exercise where there is none, and to increase it where it exists, trusting and praying that such an object may be accomplished.

Then, again, has it not been the case at times that where a young person professed to be saved there has been over-much diffidence and distrust in the reality of it? and this it may often be after there has been the earnest putting the Word of God before them, yea, and earnest praying to God for their salvation. Then when the child professes to accept the Gospel it is disbelieved.¹ Doubtless it is often thus when God answers our prayers we are surprised, and

¹ Whilst caution should be exercised, we believe in positively accepting the profession of any person, even though it is supported by a manner of life that answers to fruits meet for such profession, the greatest care ought to be taken not to discourage or check a Divine work.—Ed.

sometimes actually disbelieving; yet certainly it should not be so. We are not overlooking the fact that much, very much care is required in dealing with the young with reference to the Gospel, lest there should be a mere lip confession, it may be to please parents or friends, without any real work of God in the soul. Such a danger is too apparent, and the issues thereof too sad and sorrowful, not to be carefully guarded against; but let us not run to the other extreme, and suppose that every profession of faith by such as are young in years must of necessity be unreal. There has been clear, unmistakable evidence of Divine life in the case of some very young.

As to the leading on of young Christians unto and in the ways which be in Christ, what a responsibility on elder ones lies here! How often the babes in Christ, at this early and important stage, are left wellnigh to perish for lack of the care and nursing and feeding that should be theirs, to become a prey to the many grievous wolves eager to seize upon them, instead of being patiently and wisely led on and into the goodly inns of the Churches of God. Here, too, comes in a further privilege and responsibility on parents, such as know the truth, and have had mercy of the Lord to be faithful therein, to teach the same to those under their care. And in this connection we most sorely deplore the lack, alas! so common in the homes of Christians, of the daily calling together, at some time or other, for some brief or longer period, as the circumstances and opportunity permit, of all under the parental roof, for the reading of the Word of God and calling upon God by prayer; while we would earnestly plead for the performance of the same, if there is to exist the rule and order and godliness that should characterize the home sphere and relationships, and consequently the enjoyment of the blessing of Jehovah thereupon. The principle of Deuteronomy 6. 6-9, linked with 2 Timothy 3. 15, we believe most applicable in this

matter, and affords sufficient definite instruction therefor.

But some may urge that this belongs to the province of Sunday School work, and lies in the line of the Sunday School teacher. Much as we value the work of the Sunday School—that is, presenting the Gospel and truth to young persons, at a meeting specially called for them—which in its importance, we believe, is yet but little understood as it should be, and would plead for a deeper exercise concerning, and a more real interest in it, on the part of the Churches of God, yet, nevertheless, we would most emphatically repudiate the thought that the Sunday School is a substitute for the responsibility and privilege of parents toward their children at home. Is it possible that a teacher, no matter however godly and earnest and willing he might be, who has the care of the child for one hour in the week, could *train* that child in the way he should go? The idea is utterly unreasonable. The *training* is a home responsibility, for which no Sunday School work, however efficient, can ever act as a substitute. Yet how prevalent the thought, and how soothing to the conscience at times to parents to know that their children are attending the Sunday School, as if that were all that is necessary.

The same thing may be said of parents leaving their children altogether, or almost entirely, to the charge of nurses or servants, and who thus know little of the parental influence and example and training that should be theirs; which things ought not to be. Important indeed is the charge, and valuable indeed the trust, lent us from the Lord, to be trained for Him, for the fulfilment aright of which we will find all human expedients and resorts insufficient. But as this again casts us in our extremity and need upon the all-sufficient provision and grace of God, while seeking to train our children, God may be training us through them, causing us to know ourselves in

a manner that may humble us, and thus lead us to know "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" in a manner and measure we would not otherwise have known.

In conclusion, we wish and pray that what was spoken by the Lord concerning Abraham of old may be true of us: "For I know him, that *he will command* his children and his household after him, and *they* shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18. 19).

DAVID SMITH.

GLEANINGS FROM THE SECOND LETTER BY PETER.

(Concluded from page 170.)

THE comparison character of this epistle is most fully evidenced by the verse cited.

What mistakes have been made! what follies have been propounded by lip and pen, through not observing, or non-attention to, the word "as" in the passage!

"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

Let the *as* be disregarded, then confusion worse confounded shall be the issue. The force of the comparison seems to be that "TIME" is but one great, continual "NOW" to the Lord.

Nevertheless, He does betimes mark times and seasons, days and hours. As witness the word, "He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the (habitable) world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17. 31).

Truly "in His sight a thousand years are but as yester-

day when it is past." That also explains what some are too ready to account slackness on His part in regard to His promise. But the truth is, He is not slack, but longsuffering, through His eye and heart being upon man rather than upon time; and that coupled with His wish that none should perish, but instead thereof come to repentance, to which end, indeed, all His goodness, forbearance and longsuffering are. Alas! that so many perceive not God's gracious purpose, and instead, after the hardness and impenitence of their own heart, treasure up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief. Note well "The thief cometh not, but to steal, to kill, and to destroy."

As a thief, then, the day of the Lord will come.

In it the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

What a time! What a scene!

Peter is not bidden tell us at what part of the day of the Lord these things shall come to pass. But we know through John that the time will be the close or end of that day: as see Revelation 20, 11 to 21, 1-8. These scriptures, linked with 2 Thessalonians 2., show that the day of the Lord extends over a very long period of time. Certainly much longer than a thousand years.

The Spirit's point with our conscience in the light thereof is, "Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, *what manner* of persons ought ye to be in all holy manner of life and godliness?" But are we such? Have we an exercise of heart in the matter?

Further, He urges home the appeal by commanding us to be "Looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God, by reason of which the heavens being on fire shall be

dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." But, according to His promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

The import of the word "*new*" here is kind rather than time. A fair paraphrase of the word would be—

"New kind of heavens and a new kind of earth."

What surpassing power, and grace, and glory are laid out in what we look for because He hath promised! But, ah me! ere then, what sorrows, what intrigues, what experiences shall be known by the dwellers upon the earth! The poet has wrought that out in a very word or two—

"Her King cometh down with His people to reign,
And His presence shall bless her with EDEN again."

What a mercy that, when the new heavens and new earth are, no Eden will be!

Then shall all tears be wiped away by God Himself, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (departed). Selah! Hal-lelu Jah!

The introduction of the name of God in connection with that day shows that the Lord of this day is God the Father, which is most interesting in the light of the fact that at times the name Lord designates Jesus, the Son of God, and at other times means as definitely the Holy Spirit. For this last 1 Thessalonians 3. 11-13, with 2 Thessalonians 3. 5, will be found explicit examples.

In the currency or course of the day of the Lord there shall be a time when the present earth shall know righteousness reigning; but when the new earth is, then righteousness shall find a home and dwell therein.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot

and blameless in His sight, accounting meanwhile the long-suffering of our Lord as salvation; *even as* our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant" (unlearned as undisciplined) "and unstedfast wrest, as they do

ALSO THE OTHER SCRIPTURES,

unto their own destruction." Let the means and the mode and the issue be duly noted.

Thus these words refer us with reverent care to what Paul was made to tell of these things. By his writings the precise order, the subjects, the objects, and results of these things we may learn, and so be saved from misunderstanding what Peter does say, which, however brief and terse, in nowise clashes with nor contradicts what Paul hath written; although, sad to say, Peter's words are made to do both in the teachings of certain from whom better and worthier things had well been expected.

Let, then, every reader take heed how and what he hears. Wherefore, seeing ye know these things before, beloved, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace (which is the theme of the first letter), and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (which is the burden of this second letter). To Him *be glory both NOW* and to the day of eternity. Amen. Yea, indeed Amen. See also, as to this worshipping of Him, 1 Timothy 6. 13-16 and 2 Timothy 4. 17, 18.

JOHN BROWN.

THE RULE OF GOD.

(Continued from page 190.)

SATAN is ever seeking to ensnare the feet of the saints, and if he succeed in doing so with the guides, he is likely to succeed in drawing away many with them. We would ask our readers to carefully notice these words, "Lest he fall into the snare," and contrast them with what we find in the second epistle to Timothy, chap. 2. 26. Here we have God's mode of recovery for those who *have* fallen into the snare. We cannot now dwell on the subject of deacons or servants, but would simply remark here that with them likewise God has given special directions, marking out the qualifications essential in those who come before the saints in deacon service, whether they be men or women. For a fuller understanding of this subject we would refer our readers to a little book by our esteemed friend John Brown, entitled, "Bishops and Deacons: the Persons and their Work."

Can any follow us in what we have written without feeling the grave importance of the matter? What care and exactitude God has bestowed upon the subject! And is all this to be set aside, and some fresh order, or rather disorder, introduced, where men take the place of rule, according to their own thoughts of themselves and their fitness for such work, without in any way being subject to others? Surely such things ought not to be. As with the gathering into assemblies the door has often been thrown wide open for those to come in who would, so with rule, the door has been left open, alas! too often, for those to enter who have proved themselves but little better than the hireling, who fleeth when he seeth the wolf coming. Many of those occupying a place of power not only have themselves failed to guide aright, but have hindered others from taking their right place, whom God

would have had to go before the flock, for the right men and those most fitted of God for the work are those most conscious of their own weakness. Moses commenced by being mighty in word and deed, and he slew an Egyptian (Acts 7. 22), but after forty years' training he so mistrusted himself and his fitness to lead out Israel (Exod. 3. 11-4. 10), feeling his own weakness and not having learned the power of Jehovah, that he pleaded not to be sent into the work to which he was being called, and thus brought upon himself the anger of his God.

We would press this point upon our readers, for a fruitful cause of sorrow amongst saints is, we are persuaded, the hanging back of the right men both in ministry and rule, so that wrong ones press themselves to the front. We would also point out, before leaving this part of our subject, that there is far more minute description given with regard to the fitness of those who are received into the circle of oversight than there is direction with regard to those who are received into the assembly. The reason for this is obvious: it is not the assembly which forms the elderhood, but the elderhood that forms, we believe, the fresh assembly. Thus the importance of its being godly and fit to act in such a matter according to the will of God. We might greatly enlarge on our subject, but space forbids. Yet, before considering the sphere of God's direct government upon the earth, we would again press upon our readers a careful and prayerful consideration of 1 Timothy 3. We have compared a godly oversight to the mainspring of a watch, and we believe its right formation to be of the greatest importance. As the individual should be so under the power of God's indwelling Spirit that the flesh in him be brought into subjection, so should the Spirit be able to work through such men that the flesh in the assembly may be subject to God's rule; but if I, as a Christian, am in the experience of Romans 7., and not

knowing the victory of the 8th chapter, and this be the condition of an oversight, it will not only be "wretched man that I am," but "wretched assembly," for it will be flesh striving against flesh; instead of the Spirit of God acting in and through the guides, thus accomplishing His will, even though it be on the part of some that they yield but "a feigned obedience," like to that yielded in the coming kingdom, in which sin will be put down with a strong hand by Christ, and those associated with Him in His rule, who, by the grace of God, are "overcoming ones."¹ For be it remembered that the flesh in the believer is the old nature, and if it is not brought into subjection by ourselves, it will need to be dealt with by those who rule for God, as it will be dealt with and brought into subjection during the coming age. Now the present sphere of rule is, as we shall presently see, the Church and Churches of God, not the world, where the tares and wheat grow together unto the end of the age.

Insubjection to the powers that be will be increasingly manifested both among Christians and in the world as the end of this age draws nigh. This is abundantly proved by such passages as 2 Timothy 3. 1 and following verses, Satan's aim being to hinder Divine rule, that he may accomplish his purposes. And this hindrance, we are persuaded, has been very successfully accomplished by the substitution of the one-man elder in place of the divinely formed circle of the elderhood.

For as the one-man ministry has hindered the formation and development of godly ministry and gift in the assemblies of the saints, so in like manner has the one-man rule been disastrous beyond measure in hindering the development of a godly elderhood. It is not only in the various sects of Christendom that we see this danger, where one

¹ Ps. 18. 44, 66. 3, 81. 15; Rev. 19. 15, 2. 26.

man is supposed to be an embodiment of ministry and rule, but also in connection with assemblies where godly men, in so far as their individual lives are concerned, act for the assembly, or even the assemblies. These men often seem willing that everything should hang upon themselves, thus hindering a right development of ministry and rule. They may not be conscious that they are so acting, in many cases we believe they are not, but it is much easier for some to do the work themselves than to patiently help on others to do it aright under their guidance. Although we thus speak, let none imagine that we desire to reduce anything in the assemblies to the dead level of democracy. Far be the thought from us. There will ever be in a godly assembly diversities of gift: there will be chief men amongst the brethren (Acts 15. 22). And there should ever be room for such to exercise their gifts without let or hindrance in the assemblies of the saints and the assemblies of God. Not only would we give such men their place, but we would press upon them the solemn responsibility to stir up the gift that is in them. The one-man ministry and the one-man rule owes much of its origin to the natural slothfulness in the things of God that characterizes humanity. Men too often seem to feel little responsibility to wait upon and improve the gifts God has given them, thus making full proof of their ministry.

It was once remarked by an aged brother that all old men ought to be elders, but, said he, they are not. We understand him to have meant that all elder men should be elders of the assemblies. Alas! how many are disqualified for this position! and what losers they will be by-and-by, when the crowns of glory shall be awarded by the Chief Shepherd's hand to those who have faithfully tended the little flock amidst the cares and difficulties of the earthly pathway. That all elder men should have a care for the saints is what we believe God contemplates in

the economy of His house, but how far it is from being so! Men will live close to saints that are needing to be cared for and cheered on in the pilgrim pathway, yet no responsibility seems to be felt to do this work. It is left to those who go to the oversight meeting, it may be; and if they do not do it, it is left undone. These things ought not so to be. The principle contained in these words, "Forasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me," should stir up elder brethren to do the work that is in their power to accomplish. And this would develop more fitness for a right and godly rule. It would not be, as too often in the past, men coming to a meeting of overseeing men in order to get a position, but doing work for God; and then the desire to come together with those who are doing a like work, for conference and prayer and mutual encouragement, would be the natural outcome of a real care for the saints.

Were there more seeking to do what is in our power, there would be more real gift developed in teaching, exhortation and rule (Rom. 12. 7, 8). Let men patiently seek to do the work that God has given them, and let the elders watch for and seek to help on those they see thus caring for the saints in a godly manner. Here, again, has been failure. Younger ones have felt a lack of interest in them on the part of elders, and this too often has led to one of two results: either work for God has been given up through discouragement, or continued in a contrary spirit, and the elders are then found at variance with the younger. The effect of this often is that the younger make shipwreck of the faith and become castaways. It is to some a cause of life sorrow that circumstances over which they had no control have thrown them into collision with elder brethren, at whose feet they sat, and gladly would have continued to sit, and there learn the truth they have had in the end to learn for themselves at bitter cost. We

would most gladly have been led by those worthy men, whom we still love and honour for their individual lives. And yet had we suffered them to lead us in matters concerning the rule of the House of God we should—we say it with sorrow—have missed the mark. We have suffered from not being led aright in our early days as we wish that none may suffer who are now seeking to walk in the pathway of obedience; suffered by not being able to yield that obedience to elder ones which is their due, when they themselves are found walking in the pathway of obedience.

Now, with regard to the sphere or place of rule during the present age, that which is expressed by the term Kingdom of God, as seen in Acts 1. 3, 8. 12, 19. 8, 20. 25, 28. 23, that into which the grace of God brings all those who are added to the Lord, it is the one and only fellowship in which the will of God can be done on earth as it is in heaven during this dispensation. We have before remarked in these pages that the widest circle of rule is expressed, we believe, by the word kingdom. John was in the kingdom (Rev. 1. 9) when on the island of Patmos, although probably there was no assembly there. One may be of an assembly, yet far removed from its place of assembling, and from any other assembly in the fellowship, yet such a one might, in the mercy of God, be still found acting as in the fellowship. What is contrary to the will of God in one place will be contrary to His will in another, for there is one Lord, one faith; and, if I am called out to express the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1. 9), by being in association with a Church and Churches of God—the only circle in which this fellowship can be expressed—I shall be equally separated from sects wherever my lot may be cast. We here speak of individual responsibility, but it is with the collective testimony we have to do in this present article, and it is important for us to recall at this point what we have already referred to in these pages—

namely, that the present sphere of heavenly government upon earth is not among the nations, nor yet in the nation of Israel, nor is it confined to any locality on earth, but is found only amongst the gathered-out and gathered-together ones who form the Churches of God throughout the world.

Let us be clearly understood here. We believe that in order to the doing of the will of God as He has revealed it a saint must be in or of a God-gathered assembly; and in order to an assembly being of God it must stand in a Scriptural association with other assemblies. To suppose that there is a Divine fellowship in an assembly and none between assemblies is contrary to all teaching of Scripture. Again, we must remind our readers that while the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men, there is but one sphere in which God's direct government on earth to-day can be carried out, and only one people who have a form of government given to them—that is, the saints whose citizenship is in heaven; outside of this circle every man may do that which is right in his own eyes.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be concluded in our next, if God permit.)

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 82.—*Please explain 2 Cor. 5. 3, 4: "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened."*

In this scripture the body is presented, according to a kind of poetical imagery, as a house in which the saint is dwelling, and as a garment with which he is clothed. The present house has many defects; it is sadly dilapidated. The future house, not made with hands, is eternal. The present clothing is very burdensome; the garments of immortality or incorruption will be garments of comfort and of glory. The sleeping saints are unclothed; they have put off their old bodies, and are as persons reclining, naked and unfit for action. It is not this that we desire: we long to put on our new clothes and to enter our new house, in which we shall be better able to serve our Lord.

C. M. L.

QUESTION 83.—*What is the teaching of Exod. 16. 22, 26?*

It would appear from these verses and others in this chapter that what was gathered by the children of Israel was put into a common store; when measured out it was found there was exactly enough to meet the real need of every Israelite in the camp, so that the abundance of one supplied the lack of another. This gathering went on for the six days, but on the sixth day on measuring what was gathered the rulers seemed surprised to find that twice the usual amount had been gathered—this was to supply the need of the seventh day. On the seventh day we read that the manna did not breed worms, or stink. The seventh day is a type of Christ, in it God rested and the people rested, in Christ God rests and is satisfied, in Him the believer also rests and is satisfied with Him as the living bread that came down from heaven. In Him our supply of heavenly food is always fresh. The ark again in which the pot of manna was to be preserved for Israel's generations is another type of Christ, but if we seek to lay up our past experiences and enjoyment of His love and make this the source of our present supply, instead of coming to Him with our fresh needs to be daily supplied from His fulness, we shall soon find that our past experiences will become that corrupt thing which will not satisfy the divine life in us.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 84.—*In what way are the four Gospels inspired? Can they be said to be the word of God in the fullest sense? If so, how can we account for the apparent contradictions to be found in them?*

Healing of the centurion's servant—Matthew says (8. 5-13), the centurion himself came and spoke direct to Jesus. Luke says (7. 2-10), he sent elders, saying he was not worthy to come himself.

The Syrophenician woman—Matthew 15. 21-28: "Yea, Lord, for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Mark 7. 28-30: "Yea, Lord, even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

The four Gospel narratives were written by the pen of four men, of whom two profess to have been eye-witnesses of the greater part of what they record, whilst of the two who received their information through others, one specially claims to have accurate knowledge. If, therefore, we judge them as human narratives, we shall compare them together, to find how far they agree in their testimony. If any fair-minded man with a moderate amount of experience of human affairs were to do this, he would come to the conclusion that the four witnesses agreed together, and that their evidence was trustworthy. Nor would he find in those narratives anything that could reasonably be called contradiction.

In the case first quoted in the question, Matthew says a centurion came, but he does not say that he came himself, or that he spoke direct to Jesus. This may, however, be a legitimate inference from what Matthew records, and is in no wise inconsistent with that which is stated by Luke, for neither of the narrators professes to give a complete and exhaustive account of the incident. The centurion might likely enough have first sent a messenger and then followed himself. The other scriptures quoted in reference to the Syrophenician woman are also in absolute agreement with each other. If the dogs were not below the table, how could they eat of the crumbs that fell therefrom? Is it not the children's crumbs which usually do fall from the master's table?

A closer verbal agreement than we do find would only lead to the suspicion that the one narrative was copied from another. It is a well-known rule in judging of the value of evidence that whilst substantial agreement between witnesses increases the value of their testimony, literal and verbal coincidence may lead to the suspicion that they are not independent witnesses. But our questioner, perhaps, is not aware that an unbeliever is always careful to be on perfectly safe ground in attacking the veracity of the Gospel narratives. It is a matter of perfect indifference to him whether they seem to agree or not. If they differ by a syllable, "they are untrustworthy and false"; if they do not differ at all, "Oh," say they, "Mark only wrote a short

abstract of Matthew's narrative"; and so on and so on. So much for the Gospel narratives, regarded as human narratives, written by credible and reliable witnesses, of things which they saw and heard.

But are the Gospels this, and only this? Are we to regard them as merely human accounts of the events which they record? Events, be it noted well, that have been unparalleled in the world's history. Is it so that God, having sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that that One, raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, poured out upon His chosen apostles the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and yet the two of those chosen ones who penned the Gospels that bear their names were left to themselves, to their own unaided memory, in what they recorded? If so, either the Apostle John himself stands convicted of a falsehood or the Son of God broke His own pledged word—see John 14. 26: "The Comforter . . . shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."

The issue is plain: either the Gospels are from God (all from God, and only from God) or they are not. If not, what are they? What can they be? Time would fail us to mention all the nonsense that has been written by those who would seek a middle way, and apologize for the mistakes made by the writers of Scripture, and so forth. But there is no middle course. The Scriptures from first to last claim to be from God in the fullest sense. The New Testament was God-breathed, as the Old Testament was. No prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit. Let it be well noted that what we are now saying is not a thing to be proved. Scripture comes to us from God, and demands our acceptance. God speaks; it is ours to hear. We have no need to defend God's word. It is a mighty word, a two-edged sword, and woe, woe to them who contend with it.

C. M. L.

Conference Notes.

(EDINBURGH, SEPTEMBER 21st, 1896.)

ALEXANDER LIVINGSTONE opened the *Forenoon meeting* by directing attention to Genesis 17. 1-8. God appeared to Abram under the title of "God Almighty," or God all-sufficient. The blessings promised at that time were consequent upon Abram's walk before God. In Exodus 6. God appeared to Moses as "Jehovah"—the one who ever was, ever is, and ever continues to be.

G. R. GEDDES following, asked further attention to the names by which it has pleased God to make Himself known, and pointed out that God will resume the same names in the future as He has been known by in past dispensations. In Genesis 1., in connection with creation, the name is *God*. The relationship seen there between God and man is that of Creator and creature. Such was the hallowed intercourse in the Garden prior to the fall. God, as Creator, has been denied His place; and Romans 1. shows us man throwing off God and taking a very "creeping thing" and putting it into the place which belongs only to God as Creator. In Revelation 14. 6 we find God's last appeal to His creatures, and see Him in matchless condescension coming down to the very lowest possible platform consistent with Him as God to ask acknowledgment of Himself as Creator from man.

God, finally rejected, then follows the development of the "Beast," and he shall sit in the temple as God, and they shall then worship the creature (man) more than the Creator, and receive from him the seal of their own damnation.

In Genesis 17. the name is God Almighty (all-sufficient), and this name is specially in connection with the *individual*. Abram is where none other than God can meet his need. We also as individuals find ourselves in circumstances where none less than God all-sufficient can suffice us. Israel in the wilderness could not get on one day without God, and so day by day the manna fell. The eleven days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea took them forty years, and during those years they learned something of their God (as well as of themselves) which they could never have known but for their wilderness experience. So assemblies of God cannot get on without Him for a single day. Blessed, indeed, it is to be where God all-sufficient can and must be known.

In Exodus 6. the name is "Jehovah," and is in connection with Israel as a nation, having special reference to their worship as a collective people, and tells of the greatness and holiness of the God whom we approach to worship. The shining seraphim in Isaiah 6. veil their faces in the presence of God and cry, "Holy, holy, holy is

the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory"; and this vision was seen in the year when King Uzziah died: Uzziah who, with unveiled face, dared to approach unto the presence of God, but whose face in judgment was veiled by God ere he went out, for, lo, as the priests looked upon him the leprosy rose in his forehead (2 Chron. 26. 16, etc.).

In John 20. 17 we read the words, "My Father and your Father, my God and your God," which give us the precious names by which God is known during the present dispensation to His children, and speak of a place of nearness which Israel never knew or can know. In Romans 1., already referred to, God gives men up to dishonour their bodies, but to those who have given Him His place as God He now says, Give me your bodies. "Present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12. 1), and upon the tongue—the most God-dishonouring member of the body—He puts the greater honour, for by the tongue of the redeemed God makes known the wondrous story of His matchless grace. Revelation 4. shows us a throne, four living creatures are *in* the throne, four and twenty elders are *round about* the throne, but who is *on* the throne? God Almighty. The Church is now with Christ, and as God Almighty He will fulfil every promise made to Abraham. Revelation 10. 5 presents to us God in connection with creation. The angel who comes down has a rainbow upon his head, which speaks of God in covenant relationship with the earth. A foot is placed on the *sea*. He shall claim it, for "the sea is His, and He made it." A foot is placed on the earth; He shall claim it, for "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." As Creator He will claim both. In chapter 11. two witnesses appear among men, who are to witness for "the God of the earth" (ver. 4). He is to deliver earth from its groanings and from the bondage of corruption, bringing it into the liberty of the glory of the sons of God (Rom. 8. 21, etc.). Thus shall God in times yet future resume the names by which in bygone days He was known, but during the present interval to and for us He is "God and Father." Blessed, indeed, are all those who know Him as such.

J. C. RADCLIFFE following, briefly called attention to some of the names and titles of the Lord Jesus, and sought to unfold the truths in connection with the same as follows:—

Jesus: suffering and salvation, "in Jesus" suffering for the truth of God. Christ: position and power, "in Christ" standing in the presence of God. Lord: rule and responsibility, "in the Lord" submission to the will of God.

Jesus is the name by which as man upon earth He was known and connects itself with suffering. The "Man of Sorrows" (Isa. 53. 3). As Jesus He suffered at man's hands. As Christ He suffered

at God's hands—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Ps. 22. 1). Four things are said to be "in Jesus"—truth (Eph. 4. 21), "tribulation, kingdom, and patience" (Rev. 1. 9). These things have all got to do with our lives as men upon earth. "In Christ," speaks of our standing before God, and our acceptance in the Beloved One. "In the Lord" speaks of submission to the will of God. "Let him that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." "Mary sat at the Lord's feet," not at His feet as Jesus. Our every relationship in life should be governed by this term "in the Lord." Let us, therefore, abound "in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord."

The *afternoon meeting* was devoted to reports of the Lord's work and answering of questions. The tidings from various parts caused the saints to rejoice and thanksgiving to ascend to God.

Evening Meeting—JOHN BROWN read Deuteronomy 29. 4, 5, and pointed out that although this people had been for forty years the object of God's unceasing care they had learned very little indeed of their God during all those years. They had neither "heart to perceive," nor "eyes to see," nor "ears to hear," and so God's love was as altogether lost upon them, and thus they received His grace in vain. All this shows how true the words of the Master are that "a man can receive nothing except it be given him from above," and "apart from Me ye can do nothing." "By My name Jehovah was I not known to them." Is it that the name Jehovah was never spoken before? No, indeed! that name was most frequently spoken before; yet God was altogether unknown by that name. How much to-day there is of sitting under faithful ministry for years and yet learning almost nothing of God's mind, hearing yet understanding not, listening yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. In the days of Ezra-Nehemiah the people stood under the pelting rain while the word of God was being read to them, and every one wept; but where are our tears, where is our sorrow? The truth is, we need our consciences reached and quickened by God.

Turning to Hebrews 10. 25, etc., Mr. John Brown went on to say that the faith of some might be overthrown and others might make shipwreck of The Faith, but we need not be surprised when this is so, indeed we may expect it on the right hand and on the left. This is no reason why we should cast away our confidence, "which hath great recompence of reward." Man may start out on the highway of God's truth and run and run, and speak and speak, yet speak they know not what and contend they know not for what. The foolish Galatians were bewitched, and the bewitchers only sought to raise opposition against those who told them the truth. Individualism as isolation is as contrary to God as anything men can name with

mortal tongue. "Ye have need of patience." "Let patience have her perfect work." Ten times in the Epistles to Timothy we read the words "in faith." "The just shall live out of faith." "But if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him." This does not mean that a child of God can draw back and perish eternally; it is entirely a question of drawing back from God and the pathway of obedience, so failing to give the pleasure to His "soul" which He desires in us. "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition" (that is, to the destruction of God's object in our life), but of them that believe to the saving (the acquiring) of the same. Seven names are grouped together by God in Hebrews 11. 1-16, giving us a sevenfold view of the life of faith. Abel, the faithful worshipper; Enoch, who habitually walked with God, and had this testimony that he pleased Him; Noah, the faithful worker for God; Abraham, who by faith, in obedience to God's call, went out not knowing whither he went, but knowing whom he followed. Then follow Isaac and Jacob, tent-dwellers along with Abraham; and thereafter God says and even Sarah as a fruit-bearer. All these by faith laid hold of God and His promises, and confessed themselves pilgrims and strangers on the earth, thus plainly declaring that they sought a better, even a heavenly country, looking for a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God. If indeed they had been mindful of that (country) from whence they "came out" at the call of God, many opportunities for their returning they doubtless had. But "returning" and "drawing back" are unworthy the life of faith. Therefore let our motto ever be, *Nil desperandum* (even never despair, never give up). God was not ashamed to be called their God. Is He ashamed to be called ours?

THE RULE OF GOD.

(Concluded from page 217.)

IN order to the proper carrying out of the rule of the kingdom in its present order, it is important for us to notice that the Gentile divisions of the earth are accepted of God, for be it remembered that the rule of the earth was given back into the hands of the Gentiles (Dan. 2. 37, 38) upon Israel's failure, although no form of government was delivered to the Gentiles to keep beyond the simple commands as given in Genesis 9. With this thought before us we turn to the New Testament, and there find the earth is divided by

the Gentiles into provinces, and at this point the division is by the fourth, or Roman power of Daniel 2., the power to which even the Lord Himself submitted, and the power that the Apostle Paul commanded the saints to be in obedience to (Rom. 13. 1). This fourth empire power, then, had divided the world (using the word in its limited sense), not by the number twelve, but into provinces. And this with the object of being better able to govern the nations subject to its rule. Had the Gentiles been faithful to the trust committed to them it is impossible to say what amount of blessing might have followed, but, as with Jeroboam, who might have ruled for God (1 Kings 11. 37, 38), and continued in His favour, they also turned away from the light and from Jehovah, so that those powers became subject to Satan's purposes; the one resulting in the apostasy of Israel's ten tribes, and the other in that of the Gentiles. Yet the Gentile divisions of the earth are accepted for the carrying out of the government of God amidst His saints.

Our readers can follow out this thought better by studying an ancient map which gives the Gentile divisions of the land of Israel and the other nations of the earth. We would also ask a careful study of such portions of the Word as 2 Corinthians 1. 1, "All Achaia," the Churches of Macedonia, the Churches of Judea. Again, we have the very striking case of the seven Churches which are in Asia. Also notice 1 Thessalonians 4. 9, 10, where the love spoken of is connected with the Gentile division. Why is this? Not because love to *all the saints* is not clearly taught us, but in this case the love referred to seems specially connected with that division of the earth in which their lot fell to be. But how would they be so specially brought in contact with the saints of Macedonia? some may ask. We think a reply to this question may be found in Acts 15. 3. Personal knowledge of one another

on the part of saints would have been difficult in those days, but the connecting link is seen in this verse; and it would be by such means that the saints would be kept in acquaintance with one another by those moving from place to place, as they fulfilled their joint responsibility. This thought is still more fully brought out in other Scriptures, such as 1 Peter 1. 1. Here we find the apostle addressing those scattered over a vast space of country; and in chapter 5. we see that there is a united responsibility to rule, tend, and feed the little flock that is among them. This passage brings out the united care on the part of overseeing men.

In those early days it would not be the easy matter that it is to-day for saints to come together in conference, and thus learn to know and love one another; but this mutual interest and love was produced, we believe, and kept alive by the moving of the elders of the assemblies and others from place to place. We know, in some measure, to-day the blessing of meeting beloved brethren from a distance, who can tell us how the saints fare in their locality, and how they are with us contending for the common salvation. When we speak of the elders being the link between the assemblies, some dear brethren seem far more taken up with the expression used than with the truth intended to be conveyed thereby. We believe that the responsibility of the elders in a province or county is much the same as their responsibility in an assembly; and who can doubt, if they have paid but ordinary attention to the matter, that the elders of an assembly, if truly men of God's choice, help to bind together and unite that assembly manifestly before the world? For be it remembered that the manifested oneness of the saints prayed for by our blessed Lord in John 17. was not merely a spiritual thing, this exists as a fact (1 Cor. 12. 12), but was something that the world could

see and comprehend. The independency of thought in which we have been trained greatly hinders many from seeing our collective responsibilities. District oversight is an expression to which many have taken exception; we would be glad if this term were dropped, as in it we see this objection: a district implies something that men have created; a county is that which the Gentile powers have made, also the boundary of a city. We do not make these divisions, we simply accept them as we find them, as Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria are utilised in the government of the assemblies. We are aware that "district" is also used by the secular powers, but this is another matter, and not as some use the term to-day in connection with the associating of assemblies in several shires, uniting such as a district. It is not that we object to such acting together.

Far from this, as we have pointed out, 1 Peter 5., we believe, demands united action. But when it comes to the uniting of certain assemblies to form a district, who, we ask, is authorized to do this? What assemblies are to be included, and what excluded? Also the coming together of the elders of the assemblies has been objected to by some. But why do such not object to the coming together of the elders of any special assembly on the same ground? If Acts 15. is quoted as sanctioning the latter, we believe on a closer examination it will be found to support the former also. Notice verse 2: "Certain others of them." The coming together here appears to include men from Antioch also. We think, moreover, that those who have followed us carefully through the Old and New Testament in this subject will have seen that the united action of the elders is continually taught, and this could not be without a frequent coming together.

When we speak of the united action of the elders, we would especially guard against being misunderstood by this

expression. It is not that they would act independently or apart from the assemblies that they are in. As we have before pointed out, the responsibility to act with the assemblies in a county on the part of overseeing men would be much the same as the responsibility to act with a Church of God in a city. Not that we believe in that which some appear to hold—namely, that a matter is to be brought before the assembly by the elders, that the assembly may give its judgment somewhat as in the capacity of a jury. Far from this. Yet, as some mistaken or wrong action on the part of an overseer would be checked by his brethren, so a wrong action about to be taken by the elders may be and should be checked by the spiritual in an assembly. For be it ever remembered that where a right state of matters exists among the saints there will ever be the younger ones stretching forth to the work of oversight, although not yet in the circle of the elderhood. Such are called to act under the guidance and by the advice of those who go before them, unless in some matter those guides have manifestly turned aside from the revealed will of God in His written Word. In order to the better knowing of those who are over us in the Lord, we believe there should be a public recognition of such in somewhat the same manner as when one is received into a Church of God, so that all may know, not only who are in the fellowship of the assembly, but also who are in the fellowship of the elderhood (1 Thess. 5. 12).

We have referred to the Roman division of the earth, but we would bring the subject down to our own day, in which we find the land divided into shires and cities, with their respective boundaries. These divisions we accept and utilize for the better carrying out of rule amongst the assemblies. Suppose there be need for the coming together of the elders of the city, then the city boundary will define that which is within its limits; or if there be need for the

elders of the county to be found together, then there is the boundary of the county, and all inside that boundary will respond to the call. If this principle be not acted upon, then the question arises, who are to be called together and who are not—who is to decide the boundary? But the matter becomes simple enough if we accept for governmental purposes among the saints the existing Gentile divisions of the land. We do not question there will always be a special responsibility of assemblies to one another that are approximate, although they may be in different shires. This would appear from Colossians 4. 16, where Colosse and Laodicea are linked together as neighbouring assemblies. But when the Churches of Asia are addressed (Rev. 1. 4) Colosse is omitted. We must guard ourselves against being supposed to limit the coming together of guides to a city or county. It may be, and often is, necessary for a wider coming together that would correspond very much with the coming together of the elders of the congregation (see Vol. II. of NEEDED TRUTH, p. 61, an article entitled, "The Fellowship of Assemblies"). In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom, and the coming together of brethren in cases of difficulty is the more needed to-day, when there is no Jerusalem centre of apostolic authority to appeal to. A correspondent for the county has been objected to, and we would not contend for the name, but the need of there being one in a city or county to whom communications can be addressed, a trustworthy servant of the assemblies, who will see that communications reach their proper destination, is, we believe, essential to godly order. Such a one in Scripture may be denoted by the title, "Angel of the Church," or "Messenger of the Church" (Luke 9. 52, same word). There are those who see that which is wrong, and separate from the evil, they "cease to do evil" (Isa. 1. 16, 17), but are slow to learn to do well. To separate from what is wrong is one thing, but to do what is right is

another. The negative position, to which many of us have been accustomed for years, has had a most disastrous effect; and if we have seen, by the mercy of God (for it is His grace alone that can give real deliverance, 2 Tim. 2. 25), the unscripturalness of the position we have for long occupied, we will also need to see clearly that fellowship into which God calls us, so that when in His goodness we find ourselves in a position where His will can be carried out, our energy may be turned to aggressive work, and not expended in fruitless debates. For many years some of us have groaned in the association in which we found ourselves, yet saw not how to be delivered. That much of that with which we were associated was most ungodly we had no question, but what was the remedy? We saw that no line could be drawn in the fellowship in which we were between the best thing and the worst, and the worst was bad indeed. Some put out of an assembly could meet together to break bread, and by-and-by such a meeting would drift into what was called the fellowship. Others, again, would go out from an assembly in a city on account of some quarrel, and commence another meeting in the next street, having no direct fellowship with the meeting they had left, yet both these meetings would be in "the fellowship." How could there be any unity of the Spirit in such a condition of matters? a state truly appalling to any exercised spirit, and one which has driven multitudes of thinking minds into that wrongly called "exclusivism" which appears at first sight to give a refuge from these difficulties. If the reception of an unconverted individual to the Lord's table was bad, how much more the reception of a whole assembly into the fellowship that very possibly had not one single characteristic of a Church of God, its very origin being evil, and associated with the self-will and sin of men. The remedy to this condition of things is simple in the extreme, if carried out in the fear of the Lord. As the al-

ready formed assembly receives into its midst the weak one, or the one newly come to the faith (Rom. 14. 1; Acts 9. 27), so a fresh assembly would be formed in fellowship with that already existing, whether it were an assembly of saints in a city, or a Church of God in a county; and those who would be responsible to act in such matters would be the elders of the Church in the city and the elderhood of a county. But some ask, What Scriptural authority have you for united elderhood? In reply, we would ask, What Scripture have you for anything else? Where do we get such a thought as a disunited oversight? Again: as the assembly receives one who has bowed in obedience to God's will in baptism, and desires to be added to the Lord in the full extent of the term, and as a fresh assembly is formed through the already existing assemblies, so, we believe, should the one stretching forth to the work of oversight (1 Tim. 3. 1) be received by the already formed elderhood. The question here arises, should one be received in an assembly where he may be, as an overseer, or should such a one only be received by the elders of the county in which that assembly is, in like manner as one would be received into the circle of the elderhood in a city, and not by those meeting in some separate hall or building in that city. The writer believes this should be so, and this action would meet the very great danger of unfit ones being brought into a position of responsibility by a weak or badly instructed assembly. For be it remembered that one brought into oversight in an assembly is brought into the elderhood of the county, and cannot be acknowledged in one place and disowned in another. Surely, then, in a matter of such grave importance the elders with whom he is to be associated, possibly for many years to come, should have a voice in his reception, and an opportunity of judging how far he is fitted for the position he desires to occupy (1 Tim. 3.), and not have one thrust upon them who turns out in

the end to be unfit for the solemn work to which he has put his hand. These are subjects of deep importance, on which we might greatly enlarge, but space forbids. "Let all things be done decently and in order," is the word. Be it remembered that believers were added to the Lord (Acts 5. 14), and not simply to the breaking of bread. In every adding, whether it be to an assembly or to the elderhood, or to the assemblies of God, the Lordship of Christ must ever be acknowledged, and His authority owned. Therefore, if we are called to accept that which our spiritual intelligence tells us is contrary to the order of God's house and the written Word, we know that it is something not in accordance with His will. As we have said, there is no such thought in Scripture, that we are aware of, as elders being responsible only in the assembly to which they belong. 1 Peter 5. clearly disproves this. For here the elders of a large district are exhorted to care for and tend the little flock among them. Yet, on the other hand, we do not believe for a moment that all men that guide have the same amount of responsibility. Some may have a more limited sphere of oversight in their own locality, others may see over a much larger portion of the flock, while it is the Chief Shepherd alone who sees over and cares for the whole of His sheep, and who will, when He comes in His Chief Shepherd capacity, give reward to those under-shepherds who have faithfully fulfilled their work (1 Pet. 5.).

We must now draw this article to a close, trusting that we have been permitted in the goodness of God in some little measure to help fellow-saints into His mind. We might refer to the coming kingdom, when righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, when the twelve apostles who are seen in connection with the heavenly building (Eph. 2. 20), and also in connection with the government of the Church of God at Jerusalem, are again seen sitting on twelve thrones, judging the twelve

tribes of Israel (Luke 22. 30). We might refer also to the number twelve doubled in Revelation 4. 4, where the four-and-twenty elders are seen seated on four-and-twenty thrones, around the throne, in close association with Him who is upon the throne. We might speak of the city with its twelve foundations and its twelve gates. But we forbear. We have sought to give somewhat of that which we have received, remembering the solemn word that if any man thinketh he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know (1 Cor. 8. 2). The whole truth is to be found *with God alone*, that which He has revealed is for the children of men. So full, so deep, is this revelation that the more we know the more we shall find we are but treading on the borderland of the infinite, picking up truths on the shore of the ocean of infinitude, with that ocean still unfathomed before us. It is not given to all to enter into the deep things of God. Of some it may be said as with Israel of old, "The Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day" (Deut. 29. 4). The turning away of the simple and the drawing back to perdition of others may stumble some, but let us seek to press forward, learning *the faith*; so that we may earnestly and intelligently contend for it. Walking in the light, may we there learn from God Himself, not deriving our knowledge from some polluted source of human wisdom, but from Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

J. A. BOSWELL.

GIRDED FOR MINISTRY.

It is very blessed for the soul to contemplate the Lord Jesus as the pattern for our service to God and to one another. As in John 13., on the eve of His departure unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And here we get a sample of His loving service for His disciples, leaving them an example to follow in His steps. He who was God manifest in the flesh stoops to wash His disciples' feet. What perfect humility and holy condescension is seen here! Laying aside His garments, and taking a towel and girding Himself, and pouring water into a basin, He begins to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He is girded. And the reason for this lowly, loving service is given in verse 14: "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." He who was our perfect pattern never calls upon us to do anything that He has not done Himself.

What a holy privilege He has given to us in the washing of one another's feet! Whilst down here in the wilderness we shall contract defilement of feet, which tells of our walk. But what is our responsibility when we see our fellow-believers' feet stained with world-dust? Not to go to the nearest believer and tell him about it, for from him, if unfaithful, it will be passed to others. He that is spiritual and having the mind of Christ will go straight into God's presence with the failure, confess and grieve over it as though it was his own. Then he is fit to come forward in all humility, considering himself girded and ready to wash his brother's feet through the Word. Surely a spiritual one would do this in love to his erring brother. For though he be washing his feet to-day, he that is washing may need his own feet cleansed to-morrow. This ought

to produce humility in one's own spirit. How many a sad spectacle would it save us from if we did first things first! This especially should be the practice of those whom the Holy Spirit has made overseers and caretakers in an assembly. For such truly are willing servants of all, taking the lowest place of servants to their brethren for Jesus' sake. "He that is greatest among you, let him be as he that doth serve" (Luke 22. 26). May our desire be to be kept from thinking that we are higher or better than our brethren because we serve. Truly it should be with us who shall take the lowest place, remembering that He who was the Son of the Highest took the lowest place on earth. Paul could also tell the elders of the Church in Ephesus that whilst he was amongst them he served the Lord with all humility and many tears (Acts 20. 19).

Again, in Ephesians 6. 14, we read: "Stand, therefore, having your loins *girt about with truth.*" How very essential this is to all, especially so to those whom the Lord has given grace and gift to teach and preach His Word.

First, in the preaching of the Gospel, how needful in these days of lightness and fables to hear His voice, saying, Preach the Word! How solemn was the apostle's charge to Timothy: "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, *preach the Word*" (2 Tim. 4. 1, 2)! Now, in order to preach the Word, it, first of all, must have its proper place in our heart and mind for meditation. Our souls should be like a storehouse well filled with the precious Word of God, so that when occasion is given we shall be able to bring out of our treasury things new and old.

The same applies to our Bible readings and addresses. God the Holy Spirit will not readily work through a barren heart. That condition arises from our own neglect of His Word. We cannot expect the Spirit to work through us to profit unto others unless the heart is furnished with that which the Spirit uses—the truth. And have we not found

that what God has made precious to our own hearts—that which has become very food to our souls—is that which we can give with power to others?

“Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind” (1 Pet. 1. 13).

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 85.—*Do the assemblies meet on Lord's Day for worship, or do they meet to break the bread in the remembrance of Him?*

We believe the answer to this question is that they meet for the breaking of the bread. This is the prominent thought before our minds as we come together on the first day of the week: “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer” (Luke 22. 15). The prominent thought before our blessed Lord is brought out in this verse, and it will be the prominent thought with us when coming together, according to 1 Cor. 14. 23. Yet worship will be included when we come together, for worship is the homage of our hearts, which may be expressed audibly by one individual as mouthpiece for the time being of the assembly. Yet let it not be forgotten that ministry is connected with the coming together of the assembly in assembly, as is clearly seen from the chapter already referred to—1 Cor. 14. Also let us remember that chapters 14., 15., 16., 17. of the Gospel by John were spoken after the Lord's Supper; also Paul's address in Acts 20. 7 was given on a like occasion. We believe that the breaking of the bread should occupy an early position in the coming together, and not be deferred, as is so often the case, until near the close of the meeting.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 86.—*Will all the Jewish nation, from their deliverance out of Egypt to the time of their being set aside as a nation, be saved and in heaven with all God's saints?*

What does Matthew 8. 12 mean?

It is difficult to understand upon what the universal salvation of all Israelites is based, unless it is through some confusion of thought with regard to eternal salvation and salvation of the body, or persons, for all in Egypt were saved who sheltered under the blood; yet this was something altogether different from those who died in faith (Heb.

11. 13). "Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do," were the withering words of the Lord to the religious ones of His day. Judas was a Jew. The rich man in hell addresses Abraham as his father, and requests that Lazarus may be sent to warn his brethren, "lest they *also* come into this place of torment" (Luke 16. 28). They likewise would be Jews, and if they might come into that place of torment through neglecting to hear Moses and the prophets, why should not any other Jews who, in like manner, neglected these writings come under condemnation? Whatever is referred to in the text Matthew 8. 12 it is after the breaking off of the nation; but we think the Scriptures we have already quoted should satisfy any one desiring to be subject to the mind of God that the eternal salvation of every individual Israelite is not taught in the Scriptures.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 87.—*Please explain 1 Cor. 16. 1-3. Does "lay by him in store" mean to lay part at home, or where?*

Should there only be one collection box on the first day of the week?

The passage of Scripture referred to, "lay by you," would, to our understanding, be the laying by at home. "As the Lord has prospered" indicates there should be an exercise of heart in the giving—not a mere mechanical thing because it is expected of us, or because others do it, but something that brings us before the Lord. When the apostle came there would be the bringing that which was laid aside to him; but this is a matter of convenience, not of command: the principle of laying by is as much fulfilled in bringing the offerings to the Lord on the first day of the week, and placing them in the box, or boxes, on entering the hall, remembering that with such sacrifices God is well pleased (Heb. 13. 16). There may be as many divisions in the box as there are objects of need to place before the saints. We find that those who preach the Gospel are to live of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9. 14), and the Philippians sent once and again to Paul's necessities (Phil. 4. 15). Then, as we have seen, there is the collection for the saints; and it should be remembered that the rent of the hall claims our first attention, as it is a debt, and all in the fellowship of the assembly are responsible for this debt. This would make three divisions in a box; and at times other matters may claim our care, such as the Children's Sunday School, or trip, Conference expenses, etc. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver." It is not the amount, but our ability that He takes notice of. This is shown out in the case of the widow's mite, cast, we believe, into the treasury on entering the temple.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 88.—*Would it be defilement for one professing to be gathered into the name of the Lord to go into a sect and to be witness at a marriage where a minister in connection with the sects officiated?*

Defilement in the Old Testament was by coming in contact with the dead, etc. (Lev. 9. 7); but in the New Testament it becomes a spiritual matter. If I associate myself with that which is contrary to the Word of God, and which involves an act of disobedience, the Spirit of God is grieved in me, and my conscience is defiled (1 Cor. 8. 7). I have, then, a conscience no longer void of offence (Acts 24. 16).

There is not in our country the slightest excuse for any one to be married by a sectarian minister, and thus, for the time being, return to sectarianism, so building again the things professedly destroyed, thereby becoming a transgressor. A minister, it must be remembered, in his official capacity is part of an ecclesiastical system.

The law of the land has, in the goodness and mercy of God, made ample provision for marriage apart from the clerical element; and were it not so, far better for one to remain unmarried than that they should bring reproach on the truth, and cause others to stumble; for, if we can recognise a denominational minister in one official capacity, why not in another? If being married by a minister is unscriptural and ungodly, it is clear that one wishing to walk in obedience to the will of God will not be found at a wedding where the will of God has been set aside and the order of the house disregarded. Let us hold fast to the truth; one false step will soon lead to another, and separation become a mere name without a reality.

J. A. B.

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