

# 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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## ERRATA.

Page 127, line 5 from bottom, for Jeremiah read Isaiah.

„ 237, „ 7 „ „ for II. read III. (see pages 31, 216).

# NEEDED TRUTH.

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## THE BURNT OFFERING.

(LEVITICUS 1.)

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

I DO NOT think there is any doubt as to who the antitype of this offering is—namely, the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ. In Ephesians 5. 2 we have Him distinctly spoken of as the offering and sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God, which is the New Testament substance of the Old Testament shadow as found in Leviticus 1. Moreover, so vast, and full, and precious is the Son of God that no one shadow could tell Him out. Hence God, in seeking to convey to the mind of man somewhat of the heights and depths of the perfections of Calvary's spotless victim, has given a number of shadows. Each one of the offerings shows out a different aspect of the life or death of God's well-beloved Son. How precious they become to the Christian's heart as, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, he learns the truth underlying these different types!

God begins with the Burnt Offering, and finishes up with the Trespass Offering. We begin where God leaves off. This is beautifully told out in the order of the Tabernacle. First the altar, then the laver, then the holy place. Christ, in coming forth from God to us, came by water and blood (see 1 John 5.). We, in going in to God, go in by blood and

water. How foolish, then, for any one to put the water before the blood, and seek through baptism, or any religious observances, to be accepted in the Holy Presence of God! First blood, then water, which would speak of the word of God, for His people's obedience thereto.

God, in presenting His Son to us in the shadows of these offerings, begins with the Burnt Offering—that which was all for God, of which no priestly one partook.<sup>1</sup> Only the Infinite God could see, and know, and appreciate the fulness of that sacrifice, all for God. Whatever we may grasp of that precious Sacrifice, don't let us for a moment think we have grasped it all. We are like children by the mighty ocean's brink: even if we find ourselves to the loins in its waters, there lie unsearchable depths beyond.

This offering begins with the highest order of the presentation of Christ by God—a Bullock. Then a Sheep, or a Goat, then a Turtle Dove. But it must be a male; no female was allowed, for the female was inferior to the male; and here it is Christ in fulness presenting Himself to God. The highest of each of the three kinds of victims was chosen to represent Him. Oh, the deep perfections of the Lord Jesus! Whatever He may be to you and me, He is all in all to God.

Now, ere we look at this offering more particularly, there are two things I would like to call your attention to—things which are essential unto the pleasing of our God. You cannot but be struck as you slowly read through the opening chapters of Leviticus with the many different things which God commanded to be done with the offerings. You will at once come to the conclusion that the things of God have to be learned distinctly and carefully, if the priest would do the will of God.

Look now at the 10th chapter of this book. The last

<sup>1</sup> Unless it was the skin, which alone was the priest's (Lev. 7. 8).

verse of the 9th chapter tells us that there came a fire out from before Jehovah and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat, and all the people fell on their faces. What a moment! Yet at this very time, in the light of such a manifestation of the Divine presence, the next thing the Holy Spirit records is the death of Nadab and Abihu. Not privilege nor position, nor even the very presence of God Himself, will ensure against failure. For Aaron's sons, with their eyes filled with that glorious sight, and the voice of God yet echoing in their ears, took strange fire and went unto God's altar with it, only to be stricken down in death by the Holy God. They died, not for doing what they were commanded not to do, but for doing what they were not commanded to do. Here is a solemn lesson for us who are God's children to learn. It is not enough that we have no word of God against a thing, but we must have a word of God for the thing ere we can know for a certainty that we are pleasing to Him.

And be it remembered that while God may not smite saints to-day as He did in that day, yet through sinning against God saints die, and, like Nadab and Abihu, who died childless, they die fruitless, to know their loss at the judgment-seat of Christ. But it is for verses 9, 10, 11 that I have turned you specially to this chapter, and may it not be that their close connection with the account of the death of Aaron's sons suggests the thought that the young men may have been under the power of wine or strong drink at the time of their sin? God said unto Aaron, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink . . ." He needed a clear head to do the will of God in the place of his service, and wine or strong drink may muddle the mind and dull the senses. What wine would do to a priest in that day things and persons will also do for a Christian to-day. A Christian gets his or her mind filled with a leader; he may be a clergyman, or a gifted brother in an assembly of saints.

And "because so-and-so sees no harm in this, or believes that to be right, surely I can do the same. He is such a good man and such a dear brother."

The mind is filled with the person until one is perfectly unable to rightly divide the word of truth, or enter into God's mind as revealed in His book for the obedience of His children. Sometimes it is a creed or the pleasures of this world that intoxicate the poor saint, and unfit him for doing the will of God.

If we would be fitted to do His will, we need to have our minds freed from all predispositions, nothing answering to wine or strong drink, to confuse the mind. "Jesus only" filling the eye and heart, as we set ourselves to learn the will of our God.

The other thing I wish you to think upon is, no matter how many things God commanded to be done in connection with the offerings, nor how intricate the manner was, God expected the priest to carry it out to the very letter. Every jot and tittle that speaks of Christ is precious to God, and correspondingly precious to the heart in fellowship with God. Who can set a value upon the smallest action in connection with that Burnt Offering? Who would be foolish enough to say this or that was not essential? The very jot and tittle of it has infinitude in it, if we had only eyes to see it. And if the order of things in a past dispensation, be such, what are the things in the New Dispensation like, of which the past is but a shadow? Remember the God who loved and loves the poor, perishing world beyond any other has been pleased to legislate for the worship of His saints, and the Christian who has not time or heart to learn the instructions God has given as to how we should worship Him, and, learning, to obey them, will suffer loss at the judgment-seat of Christ.

The Burnt Offering is but the unclathing of the blessed

Christ of God, revealing Him to our gaze in these shadows as God sees and knows Him.

While God needs no shadow to educate His mind concerning His Son, as in John 12. the voice from heaven was for the sake of those who stood by, so it is for our sake. That our bliss and joy may be full, He has put these precious things in Leviticus. The Burnt Offering aspect of the Cross is not Christ making atonement for sin, but rather, as Ephesians 5. has it, "An offering of a sweet-smelling savour to God." It was all for God, it was all sweet to God. Oh, how precious is the truth revealed in this, for in all the acceptability of that holy sacrifice are we, who have believed in Christ, to God. The word used for the burning of the Burnt Offering, and the word used for the burning of the sin offering, in Leviticus 4. 12, are different words, the first meaning to burn as incense, all going up to God, the last meaning to consume in the fire. Here is one of those beautiful distinctions in the different aspects of that one victim on the Cross of Calvary.

The fire is typical of the holy delight of God as He feeds upon the deep perfections of His Son. The altar was holy, representing the claims of God, and whatever was laid upon that altar must be holy. Never was such a victim laid upon it as God's holy, spotless Son. The fire burnt on that altar day and night, it never went out. In the daily Burnt Offering a lamb was laid on the altar about nine o'clock in the morning, and another one about three o'clock in the evening. Christ entered Jerusalem four days before He was crucified, answering to the four days of Exodus 12. from the time the Lamb was taken until it was slain.

He was nailed to the Cross about the time of the morning sacrifice, and died at the time of the evening sacrifice. Let us try and grasp how every stone fits into its place, as you see the shadows completely answered to in the precious substance. He was the morning and evening sacrifice.



Behold that Bullock as it stands at the north side of the altar, the place of judgment. There in the full light of God's holiness he is put to death; put to death before being laid upon the altar. But remember the being put to death and the burning upon the altar are both answered to by the Cross of Calvary. It was next flayed. Why? Only to make manifest to us what God saw with deepest delight—the perfections of His Son beneath the surface. He was as perfect beneath as He was outside; men could find no fault with the outside, and God could find no fault with the inside. Peerless sacrifice! Then the knife is applied again, and the very innermost recesses of that faithful heart is laid bare. . . What beauty, what perfection, the holy eye of God sees there! His head and fat are next laid upon the altar. What would God teach us by these things? Why is He not all laid upon the altar at once? Ask that heart in Song of Songs 5. 10 why she speaks of her Beloved in the same way as God does of His Beloved Son—bit by bit, piece by piece. Is it not that He is too precious to be looked at in the aggregate? The Beloved in the Song of Songs and the Beloved of God's heart are one and the same. In the Song of Songs it is sinners brought into fellowship with God about Him. The word for fat is a word which means the "*best*." Hence of even the sin offering the fat was laid upon the altar.

Man had no part in the fat, as man had no part in the blood; they were both and *all* for God: the one to meet the claims of His throne for sin, and the other to delight His heart for man. So that, deep as we may go into the perfections of the Son of God, as by faith we draw near to the Cross, the best of Him is all for God.

There are depths into which only God can go, which only God can appreciate, in that eternal sacrifice. In the head of the Burnt Offering we have the mind and thoughts of the Lord Jesus brought before us. Oh, how infinitely pre-

cious to God was that head. We cannot know it in its fulness, but here and there, as we study the Holy Scriptures, we get glimpses of its beauties.

Here is a mind upon which God could write His will, all His will, the jots and tittles being deeply revered by the Son of God, as well as the greater matters. Philippians 2. shows us His mind. There we have those seven downward steps which terminated at the Cross; and in them we have the mind of Christ Jesus. What deep delight filled the heart of God as He traced the thoughts which filled that mind from the manger to the Cross! Father's glory, Father's business, Father's pleasure, were first in the mind and thoughts of the Lord Jesus. In the midst of popularity, with the hosannas of the crowd ringing in His ears, He is seen with the tears staining His cheeks, as He weeps in fellowship with the Father over the departed glory of Israel. Again we see Him in the midst of a handful of unlearned and ignorant disciples, rejoicing and thanking God that He had been pleased to hide from the wise and prudent of this earth, and reveal unto babes. No thought ever filled that mind out of harmony with the Father. The deep delight He had in doing the will of God comes out in every action of His life. Isaiah 50. 4, 5 tells us of God's wakening (stirring up) that Blessed One morning by morning, as if it was a fond parent awaking, with the gentle touch of a loving hand, the sleeping child. Then He opened His ear, as if one threw a door wide open; no hindrance to God speaking all His instructions into that opened ear; and, when once known, with what deep delight did He run to obey! You do not wonder that that head should be laid on the altar, and that God's heart should feed upon it with ravished delight; and, as we stand by, looking on, our hearts exclaim, "Lord Jesus, Thou art worthy."

The inward and legs were first washed in water, then laid upon the altar, and all accepted by God. Not a particle of

that Burnt Offering but what God accepted. Here, in the application of water to the inward and legs, we have the purity or holiness of the Truth, as spoken of in Ephesians 4. 24, R.V., which characterized the heart and ways of the Holy Son of God. He answered to the clean animal which chewed the cud, and divided the hoof. That holy inward may well be laid upon the altar with the head already lying smouldering there, for both of them are in perfect harmony—the one but a counterpart of the other. God's Blessed Son did not learn the will of God in His mind only; but that holy heart was in closest touch with that perfect mind, as we hear Him say, by the Spirit, in Psalm 40., "I delight to do Thy will, My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." There is the sad possibility of our hearts being estranged from our heads, and we may know the will of God in the head, and the heart be indifferent to it. Oh, how clear we may become on much of the Truth of God, and yet the heart not be in it; or rather, the Truth is not in the heart. Hence the clearness is only equalled by the coldness, and there is little fruit for God or man.

This was not so in the case of the one we have been thinking upon and looking at. Deep in that heart of love was God, and the will of God. Every action He did was permeated by love. Never was God loved by man before in such a manner or measure. Never had the will of God such a place in the heart of a man before, nor since.

His obedience was an obedience of love; He needed no goad to urge Him on to do the will of His Father and God. Even when He stood by the side of the deep waters, where the waves and billows of God's righteous judgment broke upon Him and passed over Him, His was an obedience of love, and He faced Calvary in the keeping of the Father's command. Well may that blessed inward part be laid on the altar, while we leave God to His immeasurable delight in the infinite depths of that heart of Christ. While

we see the inward, in connection with the mind or head, let us also see the legs, in connection with the inward.

Those blessed feet always left the imprint of grace and truth. No step was ever trodden by the Son of God that was not in the truth, rightly divided. Every footprint is precious to God. These perfect legs are fitting accompaniments for the other parts of the Burnt Offering. They speak of that pathway He trod to Jordan's waters, to Sychar's well, to the side of the sick, the sorrowing, and the dead; and, at last, to Jerusalem to die. Look at that altar, and see the fire feeding upon that whole Burnt Offering, and let the voice of the Spirit of God ring in your ears, and impress your minds and hearts, as you hear Him say, "Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell" (Eph. 5. 2).

F. VERNAL.

## GOOD WORKS.

How many there be to-day who are hindered by Satan from seeing God's way of salvation by believing his lie that good works are essential to our being saved. The remedy for this is to see from the Scriptures what God says about the atoning work of Christ. And if that was completed on the cross to the satisfaction of God, then the sinner's good works have no efficacy whatever in obtaining remission of sins.

Turning to John 1. 29, we read, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Again, in Hebrews 9. 26 (R.V.), "But now once at the end of the ages hath He been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Now what God the Father sent Jesus into the world for, this He accomplished, for He was made sin (2 Cor. 5.). He alone was the sin-bearer; His cry on the cross was, "It is finished." His death and the shedding of His precious blood met the claims of a holy God against sin. Justice cannot ask any more, for God is satisfied. God now can meet the sinner and save him on righteous grounds.

In the atoning work of Christ we had no part; Jesus did it all.

"The atoning work is done,  
The Victim's blood is shed,  
And Jesus now has gone  
His people's cause to plead.  
He stands in heaven a great High Priest,  
And bears their names upon His breast."

The reader may be one who believes that good works are necessary unto salvation. If so, let him read and meditate upon Romans 4. 5: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is

counted for righteousness." Again, Titus 3. 4, 5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." Also read Ephesians 2. 8.

If salvation was obtained by creature effort or merit, when and how should we know that we had worked enough?

Those who believe are saved through the merits of the precious blood of Christ, and through that only. For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (Lev. 17. 11); and without shedding of blood is no remission (Heb. 9. 22). Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law (Rom. 3. 28).

#### GOOD WORKS AFTER CONVERSION.

Good works should follow faith, for by this means we show to others that we have faith, as it is written, "I will show thee my faith by my works" (Jas. 2. 18, last part). Read also from 14-26, where James, by the Spirit, is writing, exhorting his brethren (those who were already born again, and in the family of God; note verses 14 and 15) to show their faith in God by their works. The woman of Luke 7. 36-50 showed to Simon the Pharisee that she had faith in the Lord Jesus by her good work of washing His feet with tears and wiping them with the hair of her head. It was evidence to Simon of her love to the Lord Jesus. She did not do it to be forgiven, but because she was forgiven. The believer is exhorted to be careful to maintain good works (Titus 3. 8).

The believer that does not maintain good works is a backslider and needs restoration (Ps. 32. and 51.). It is solemnly possible for a child of God to stumble by the way. But giving diligence to do what we are exhorted in 2 Peter 1. 5-7, we read in verse 10: "If ye do these things, ye shall never stumble." This does not mean falling from grace, for those in Galatians 5. 4 who fell from grace fell through

seeking to be justified by the works of the law. So Paul, by the Spirit, warns those who were thus doing, and says Christ is become of no effect unto you.

If any one could be justified by law keeping, Christ and His atoning work are of no avail whatever.

To fall from grace does not mean to be eternally lost, for that would be contrary to John 10. 27-30, where we are told that His sheep shall never perish.

And again, in Romans 8. 35-39, we learn that nothing shall separate the believing one from the love of Christ. Also Colossians 3. 3 we read: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." So the Lord Jesus Christ must perish ere any who have believed on Him could be eternally lost.

### *Fragment.*

Let evil-doers be deterred by public opinion ; but right-doers never.

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## JESUS, CHRIST, LORD.

THE name Jesus describes the Son of God as the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, being the only name He was known by as a man among men (the others more correctly speaking being titles). Although He was called this name by the angel before He was conceived in the womb (Luke 2. 21; compare Isa. 49. 1), yet men afterwards were the agents employed in giving Him the name. Hence we find Him known as "Jesus, the carpenter," describing His trade; "Jesus of Nazareth," describing His abode; the name occurring by itself alone about 700 times, about 600 of these occurrences being in the Gospels. And a little reflection on this will give a flood of light as to its significance. The name is identified with God manifested in the flesh, the eternal Word who tabernacled among men. "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt (tabernacled, R.M.) among us." Compare Luke 1. 35. "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a *body* didst thou prepare for Me." Again: "Since then the children are sharers in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook<sup>1</sup> of the same; . . . for verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2. 14, 16). These are a sample of many Scriptures which suggest to us that the teaching in connection with this peerless name is perhaps especially manward, as, on the other hand, the teaching in connection with the title Christ is Godward. For as Christ He suffered for sins (1 Peter 3. 18). Under the name Jesus He suffered at the hands of Satan and sinners, but under the title Christ, at the hands of a righteous, holy God, as a sacrifice for sins. Jesus speaks of His nearness to man, Christ of His near-

<sup>1</sup> For the different words used here, see NEEDED TRUTH Vol. 5. pp. 252-257, and Vol. 7. p. 212.



ness to God. Men crucified Him under this name: "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews"; but the hour is coming when all shall have to bow and own His claims under this name, which is above every name (Phil. 2.); owning Him as Lord of all. Matthew 1. 21 is conclusive that the name speaks of "salvation." Jesus means more than "Saviour";<sup>1</sup> it is understood to mean Jah, or Jehovah, our Saviour. But it is also suggestive of suffering, as we shall presently see. We would submit the following as a sort of outline of leading truth in connection with each:—

<i>Jesus</i>	is suggestive of	<b>S</b> alvation and <b>S</b> uffering.
<i>Christ</i>	„ „	<b>P</b> osition and <b>P</b> ower.
<i>Lord</i>	„ „	<b>R</b> ule and <b>R</b> esponsibility.

While we believe that the above will be found a key to open many treasures in connection with each, it must not be supposed that in every particular case the key will exactly fit, although we believe in most it will, always bearing in mind that we know nothing yet as we ought to know. We also find the following expressions in connection with each, and that the mind may more readily grasp the truth in connection therewith we place them in order thus:—

<i>In Jesus</i>	speaks of	<b>S</b> uffering for the truth of God.
<i>In Christ</i>	„ „	<b>S</b> tanding in the presence of God.
<i>In the Lord</i>	„ „	<b>S</b> ubmission to the will of God.

We read of four things in Jesus: Truth, Tribulation, Kingdom, Patience (Eph. 4. 20, 21; Rev. 1. 9, R.V.). Let it be noticed that all four have to do with a body-condition,

<sup>1</sup> There is another word for Saviour in the Greek Scriptures—namely, σωτηρ, sōtēr; which occurs, for instance, in Acts 5. 31; Ephesians 5. 23.

truth in Jesus resulting in the three other things of Revelation 1. 9. All will entail a path of *suffering*, and consequently salvation; for as we suffer for the truth of God, we shall be saved from all that is displeasing to Him. Thus, indeed, we shall be shown "the path of life," emulating Him whose sole delight was to please the Father, who could say in truth, "For I do always the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8. 29). Thus it will be seen that the path of the saint who desires to please God must be a path of suffering; "truth has to be bought" (Prov. 23. 23). His was a path of untold suffering. We too must suffer, for He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps. We should be careful to distinguish His sufferings at the hands of Satan and sinners and His sufferings at the hand of a righteous, holy God as a sacrifice for sins. In the former we *can* partake; nay, if pleasing to our God, we *must* have a share; the latter we, as redeemed ones, never can, as proven in the following Scripture: "He that heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh *not into judgment*" (John 5. 24). We are reminded in the following Scriptures of this awful suffering at God's hands: "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him" (Isa. 53. 10). "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" What He suffered at the hands of men during His life as a man on earth was not as a sacrifice for sin, if so, the judgment of God was upon Him all the time; but this we know was not the case, and His obedience spoken of in Romans 5. 19 is His one act of obedience unto death. "For if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought" (Gal. 2. 21). So likewise the life of the saint, however godly it may be, can never add one iota to the merits of the perfectly finished work of Christ on the Cross, through which work alone God can on righteous ground justify the ungodly. Let us, therefore, never confound the fruit with the root. If it was other-

wise, justification would be by works, but see Ephesians 2. 8, 9; Romans 4.

The meal offering appears to suggest to us the thought expressed in the name "Jesus." There we see the crushing and the bruising, yet nothing but the sweetest fragrance was emitted; no life was taken, no blood shed. But it appears to me never to have been offered without an offering in which life was taken, reminding us of that life of loving, lowly obedience that did not stop short of death—yea, the death of the Cross.

The Greeks desired to see Jesus (note the word is not Christ). Doubtless they heard of Him as an extraordinary man, accomplishing many mighty works, healing diseases, raising the dead, feeding the multitudes, etc. They desired to see Him. "We would see *Jesus*"—as such He was indeed a Saviour. The Lord Jesus takes this opportunity of giving utterance to one of the most touching parables concerning His death and the inestimable blessings resulting therefrom. "And Jesus answereth them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the earth and die it abideth by itself alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit." If we needed further proof that the death of Christ was necessary for the salvation of sinners, surely it is here, for blessing could never have come to man unless the corn of wheat had fallen into the earth and died.

But what I want to point out is that the Lord here draws a practical lesson for His followers (John 12. 25): "He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Here is one of those remarkable paradoxical statements of Scripture. Eternal blessings to man resulted through the death of Christ. He not only lives Himself by the power of God, but all His redeemed live in Him. In like manner, only as we die

daily to the things from which the Cross has for ever severed us shall we live to God ourselves, and be the means of blessing to others as well. Compare 1 Timothy 4. 16. Hence we "live to die, and die to live." Thus may it be ours to bear *much fruit*.

Every thought of man as opposed to God being brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10. 5), which is not our obedience *to* Him, but like Him who in doing the will of the Father became obedient unto death. In doing this, oh, what He suffered! "Though He was a son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5. 8). Which means, not that He learned to be obedient, for that He ever was, but rather learned, or experienced, what obedience unto the will of God entailed in this world, which lieth in the evil one, where sin, death, and darkness reign. The foregoing may help to throw light on 2 Corinthians 4. 10, 11, which we would ask our readers to please prayerfully read; for the life of Jesus (that is, a life like Him on the earth) can only be reproduced in us as death to the natural man takes place in us. Also note that it is in mortal flesh, body condition, which the name Jesus suggests. The Revised Version helps considerably in respect to this verse.

It is worthy of notice that in the letter to the Hebrews we have the name "Jesus" comparatively often by itself (nine times); and although at times doubtless referring to His life on earth (for example, see chap. 12. 1, 2), yet in some of the places it suggests the fact that there is a *man* in the glory. As we have seen, "He learned obedience" in order that we might have one in God's presence touched with the feeling of our infirmities. "Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God (great high priest telling of His nearness to God for us, Jesus telling of His nearness to man for God). . . . For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the

feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like we are, without sin" (Heb. 4. 14, 15). It is suggestive that the name of *Jesus* in this book is so constantly associated with *suffering*. We would allude here to a fact which ought to speak loudly to our hearts—that after the resurrection it is nearly always the "Lord Jesus," but seldom do we find the name "Jesus" by itself; when we do, as in Hebrews, there is some special teaching in connection therewith. Never do we find a qualifying adjective with the Name, it needs none; the nearest apparent approach to such is "thy holy servant, Jesus" (Acts 4. 27), where the word "holy" qualifies servant, not Jesus. Who was God's set-apart servant? "Jesus"—for commentary thereon read the Gospel according to Mark, the Gospel of the servant of Jehovah. How irreverent and unbecoming are such terms as "dear," "sweet," "precious," attached to the Name which is above every name. Let it be ours to say from the heart, "Lord Jesus."

The conversion of Saul, afterwards called Paul, affords another example of the name of Jesus being intimately connected with suffering. With letters of authority to arrest any that were of the way, "he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *ME*? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And He said, I am *Jesus* whom thou persecutest" (Acts 9.). Further on in the same chapter, Ananias being commanded by the Lord to go to Saul, we read the words of the Lord: "For I will show him how many things he *must suffer* for My Name's sake." Methinks to him, for ever afterwards, the thought of suffering must have been associated with that name, for in his turn Paul himself was counted worthy of suffering shame for *the Name*.

## JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS.

WHEN a sinner has been brought to a real consciousness of his condition before God as a guilty and lost one through the convincing power of the Holy Spirit and Word, he then through simple, child-like faith lays hold upon the Saviour of God's providing, even His only begotten and well-beloved Son; Him who so fully satisfied the righteous claims of God. For He hath made Him to be a sin-offering for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21). Then such a sinner is justified before God (on account of what Christ has done), but not before men. The one who has been working and manifesting the works of the Devil is now a child of God, and as such he seeks in some measure to testify of that which God in His mercy and marvellous grace has done for him; and thus justify himself before men through works that are in keeping with the mind and will of God.

Therefore, faith in Christ as Saviour brings justification to the sinner before God (*see* Rom. 3. 26-28), and works bring justification before men (*see* James 2. 22-24). It is, therefore, by the Christian's good works which God hath wrought in him that he seeks to make known to the unsaved or saved that he has been with Jesus, that he is born from above, that he is a justified sinner.

Simple lip testimony, apart from works, will not convince men that a sinner, by the grace of God, has been saved and knows it; it is to him foolishness. Some despise it, some wonder at it, and by doing so, sad to say, many perish; but after one has made confession with the mouth that he is saved, that one is *carefully watched* to see if his manner of life—his works—go to prove that to be true which he has already confessed with his mouth. It is far

easier to confess Christ with the mouth than by such works as are in keeping with the mind of God. A Christian's good works are not laid out for him to do through the dictation of his own mind; if such were the case, the flesh would be in perfect harmony with the works being done, but because of the works being pointed out by the Word of God, the flesh, the Devil, and the world are in direct opposition to them. Therefore, what is required is the grace of God daily, so that one may work the works that God can bless and honour, in order to our being justified before men. "Having your behaviour seemly amongst the Gentiles; that wherein they speak against you as evildoers they may, by your good works *which they behold*, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2. 12, R.V.).

Such is the great responsibility of the born-again one before God and before men. It is God's desire that such an one should be His testimony amongst men, making known to them through godly works that God of a truth is with him; and as one has truly said, "When we lose our testimony God loses His in us." Such works do not lead us to make friendship with the world, but the reverse; but such works, as we have already said, God will bless and honour. "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him (Prov. 16. 7.). When the Lord Jesus Christ walked down here amongst men, He ever sought through doing the works of His Father to make manifest to them that He was the Son of God from on high, but notwithstanding all this they rejected Him, sought to stone Him, and latterly put Him to death. In John 10. 37, 38 we read, "If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do them, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John 12. 26).

Therefore, it becomes each and all of us who are heirs of that inheritance undefiled and that fadeth not away, through the cross of our blessed Lord Jesus, to work the works that are of God. This will justify us before men, so that we may yet hear these blessed words in that day spoken to us, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

"Chosen not for good in me;  
Wakened up from wrath to flee;  
Hidden in the Saviour's side;  
By the Spirit sanctified.  
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,  
By my love, how much I owe."

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### ECCLESIASTES AND THE SONG OF SONGS.

THINGS are the object of desire in the former, A PERSON in the latter.

"All *things* are full of labour, man cannot utter it" (Eccles. 1. 8), or, as the R. V. gives it, "full of weariness." As we read down the first verses of the book, everything is seen in motion, no rest. One generation passing away and another coming. The sun arising and going down and hasting to the place where he arose. The wind going toward the south, and then to the north, and whirling about continually, and returning again according to his circuits. All the rivers running into the sea and returning again to the place from whence they came. The eye ever desiring to see more, and the ear to hear more. Though all the rivers run into the sea "yet the sea is not *full*." "That which is *wanting* cannot be numbered," no fulness, no deep satisfaction in Ecclesiastes: all hurry and worry, work never properly settled up, something still wanting until the dark, dismal day of death, so solemnly and sadly depicted in the latter part of the book, winds up the scene.

Contrast with this the Song of Songs, which begins so



beautifully with the words "Let *Him* kiss me." The men singers and women singers with all sorts of instrumental accompaniment<sup>1</sup> could not sing a song like this, a song which has *Him* for its theme, not *things*, a song which is sustained right onward, except when His presence is lost through carelessness (but the "time of singing" comes again) and has its loudest note at the end.

The Ecclesiastes song falls flat, and at last, in the presence of death, "all the daughters of music shall be brought low."

Plenty of fruit trees in Ecclesiastes, but none like the apple tree of the Song.

Many flowers in the gardens, but none like the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys to which the Bride likens herself.

No time for *sitting down* in Ecclesiastes but in the Song, "I *sat down* under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste."

To be occupied with *things*, giving them their place, as servants and means to an end, is lawful, and our clear duty: but to be taken up with them as the portion of our hearts is unlawful, breaking the tender cord of communion with *Him*, and brings weariness and disappointment and an ever-deepening sense of dissatisfaction.

Ecclesiastes begins with *things* and ends with death. The Song begins with *Him*, and ends with that loudest and fullest of notes, "Make haste, my beloved."

W. J. LENNOX.

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#### CONFERENCE NOTES.

ELGIN, 18TH OCTOBER, 1897.

Mr. John Brown spoke of the importance of the Scriptures, from which we have *hope* (Rom. 15. 4) and *assurance* that we are doing the

<sup>1</sup> Eccles. 2. 8.

will of God or not (2 Tim. 3. 14). He then read in Leviticus 24. and pointed out the importance of the order. Chapter 21. deals with those in whom are *defects*, who may eat, but not offer, the bread of their God.

Chapter 22. speaks of *defilement*, which causes the defiled one to be put outside the camp, thus being hindered from the privileges of chapter 24. The normal condition of a child of God ought to be cleanness; but uncleanness and defilement are possible. Therefore God requires that the feast be kept in the light and under the judgment which His word demands, as in 1 Corinthians 5. and elsewhere.

Leviticus 24. 5-9 gives four things in connection with this feast: (1) *What* God wanted to be done; (2) *When* God wanted it to be done; (3) *Who* may do it; and (4) *Where* these may do it.

Mr. F. Vernal read Ecclesiastes 7. 13, "Consider the work of God," and gave a sketch of God's working in past day's beginning with (1) Abraham as an individual, with his altar; (2) The household of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; (3) The people of Israel, first, in the wilderness with the Tabernacle; second, in the land as a nation with the Temple.

He showed the various workings of God at the different times, and how He brought out a people as a whole at the first unto *Himself*. At another time, later on, He stirs up the heart of individuals, forming together the remnant who went up *unto* Himself. So at the beginning of the history of the Church, all that believed were together, but in these last days He is dealing with individuals here and there, and bringing them together unto the same *one centre*, into the *one Name*, and around the *one Person*.

In the evening Mr. Brown read 2 Timothy 2. Referring to Philipians 3. 2, "Beware of evil workers," or beware of *bad workmen*, we see a contrast to the workmen of 2 Timothy 2. 15. In verse 14 we get the work of those—viz., the subverting (which comes from the word meaning catastrophe) of the hearers; whereas the good workman, rightly dividing the word of truth, needs not to be ashamed, being commended unto God by Him whom he has owned as both Lord and Christ (2 Cor. 10. 18.) "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Many a good man is a *bad workman*.

Mr. Henry read Psalm 131., and pointed out the condition of heart necessary to learn the mind of God and to be able to carry it out. A *humble heart*.

Mr. Vernal followed, showing the weaned child to be one that has quieted itself after having given up its will to the mother. So we ought to behave ourselves and submit our will to the Father's will, and make it our delight to do the will of God.

## 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 113.—*Please explain 1 Cor. 15. 19: “We are of all men most miserable.”*

To the right understanding of the above Scripture we need to keep in mind, firstly, that God had given many deliverers to Israel. One of the last of these did much for a time to release his people from their yoke of bondage. We refer to Judas Maccabæus, who lived during the Grecian empire. Such men did more or less towards the freeing of their fellow-men from Gentile oppression. But what did the Lord Jesus do? As far as His brethren saw, nothing; for His deliverance did not commence with freeing them from Gentile rule, and this was what Israel was hoping for, what they expected their Messiah to do for them, and still expect. Even His own disciples looked more for this than anything else. See Luke 24. 21: “We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” Now the Lord *will* yet deliver Israel from the Gentiles, but His first great work touched the condition, not the position, of Israel, for God always deals with *condition* first; and it was through death and resurrection the Blessed Lord worked deliverance. In the chapter referred to Paul has been dwelling on the resurrection, pointing out that everything depends upon Christ having risen; for if He has not risen, faith in Him is vain, sin is not put away, there is no redemption, no salvation. If the hope of the apostle and other disciples was placed in such a one, were they not of all men most to be pitied? They would have left all to follow a man that did nothing for their deliverance; their hopes would be buried in the grave with the one they hoped in, somewhat as the hopes of those referred to in Luke were. Then all the sufferings of fire and sword that Christians were then enduring for the Name's sake would be useless; for be it remembered that the Name of Christ cost His followers dear in early days. If it were a hope in this life only in the Christ, to be buried in His grave, without a ray of resurrection light, surely such men, and Paul amongst them, were of all men most to be pitied.

J. A. B.

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## MY CHURCH.

WHAT THE LORD JESUS SAID AT CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.

(MATTHEW 18. 13-20.)

FROM of old God the Mighty One has wrought, but He whose power is boundless, whose will none can gainsay, has seen fit to suffer His work to be marred and His purposes withstood in order that the chaos and wreck that result may give Him further opportunity of displaying His wisdom and His grace, and making His power known.

As illustrative of this principle, we cite the first creative work—that which is recorded in Genesis 1. 1.

**In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.**

We read but very little in the Scriptures of this beginning work. Nor do we know much of the history of those heavens and that earth, or of the circumstances that led to the stupendous catastrophe—

**And the earth was waste and void,**

**And darkness was upon the face of the deep.**

That God was not the author of this confusion we are sure; indeed, He has spoken through His prophet Isaiah (45. 18)—

**He created it not a waste.**

Perhaps amidst the overthrow of the first earth we may catch a glimpse of the first downfall of the Mighty Being who in his pride had aspired beyond his place, and whose aim and purpose ever since has been to frustrate the will of the Creator against whom he had vainly rebelled.

However this may be, we know what God has been pleased so plainly to tell us of the way in which He brought good out of evil—

**The Spirit of God was brooding upon the face of the waters;  
And God said, Let there be light, and there was light—**

and so forth. Six days of work and then rest for the Triune Worker. For everything was very good. But the Serpent entered the garden, tempted Eve, and thus overcame Adam, and they fell, and

“Brought death into the world and all our woe.”

And thus again God suffered His work to be marred by the Fell Fiend. Was this the last time? No, indeed.

Did God, in care for His people, the seed of Abraham, the sons of Israel, vanquish the Egyptians for their sakes, bear them on eagles' wings, and bring them to Himself? Then Satan succeeded in causing the people to sin a great sin, to make and worship a calf of gold, whilst yet Moses in the Mount was receiving commandment for the Sanctuary to be made for God to dwell among them.

And thus again, and yet again, did God suffer, and will yet again suffer, the Adversary to oppose His will; only that in the end He may yet more gloriously triumph over him. When all the subtlety of the Ancient Serpent shall be exhausted and all his works brought to nought, he himself shall be hurled into the depths of the Lake of Fire, eternally to reap the bitter fruit of his senseless malice, powerless and hopeless for aye!

So successful had the Devil been in corrupting the chosen People of God that when the Former of all things came to the world, which His hands had made, His people received Him not. Of them, indeed, there were some (not many wise, or mighty, or noble) who received Him, and to them, even as individuals, He gave the right to become children of God. But the people as a whole, led by their elders, were rejecting Him. Then, according as Jehovah had said to Moses—

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him; and it shall come to pass that whosoever will

not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name I will require it of him—

so it came to pass that from the People of Israel and their rulers God was about to require it, that they had rejected His Servant, His Son, and so the wrath of God was about to come upon them.

These were the circumstances that led to the memorable visit to Cæsarea Philippi.

And first of all the disciples were asked—

**Whom do men say that the Son of Man is ?**

Note the impersonal form of the question. It is not here “who I am,” as in the so-called parallel passages in Mark and Luke, but “whom the Son of Man is.” And this for the obvious reason that He is not speaking in His character as Son of Man, but in a very different capacity, as presently appears. They said—

**Some say, John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.**

This is the testimony of twelve witnesses,—that He was not recognised as the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed by the people generally. Therefore, now and here, He turns from the many to the few, and asks—

**But who say ye that I am ?**

**And Simon Peter answered and said,**

**Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.**

**Jesus answered and said unto him,**

**Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah : for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto Thee, but My Father which is in Heaven.**

This then was what at this period marked off the few from the many. The few knew Him, the many knew Him not. As for the many, a veil lay upon their heart. As for Simon Bar-Jonah and his fellows, not by flesh and blood, but by the Heavenly Father, the veil was removed, and they beheld the glory of the Only Begotten One. Thus far the Lord has

answered Peter, speaking backwards, that Peter and his fellows may trace their blessedness to its Source, and know Who made them to differ.

He now speaks forwards, turning the searchlight of His prophetic utterance towards the future, enlightening His friends and companions as to His purposes of grace.

**And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter,  
And upon this Rock I will build My Church.**

What is a Rock? Is it not that which is firm, and solid, and enduring? Such is the Christ as the Son of the Living God, and like unto His Father, the Rock of Ages. And so even we in our English tongue address Him in the words of the hymn—

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me.”

It is upon such a Rock, then, that He is about to build. He who had brought the worlds into being by the word of His power, who bound the cluster of Pleiades, and loosed the bands of Orion, spake of a new creation which, unlike the earth that He hangs upon nothing, was to be builded upon Himself—

“The Church’s one foundation.”

But what is this which He would build? That in which He would have place and portion worthy of Himself, and, therefore, which He emphatically calls His own—

### MY CHURCH.

But what is a Church?<sup>1</sup> The root word in the Greek tongue is a verb, *καλέω*, kalēō (or calēō), I call. Prefixed to this is the particle *ἐκ*, ěk (or ěc), meaning—out. This gives the verb *ἐκκαλέω*, ěkkalēō (or ěccalēō), meaning literally—I call out. This word is used in the sense of summoning. The word *ἐκκλησία*, ěkklēsia (or ěcllēsia), usually translated

<sup>1</sup> This has been explained in *Needed Truth* previously, but, in view of its great importance, we make no apology for repeating the explanation.

Church in the English Bible, is derived from *ἐκκαλέω*, *ëkcalëō* (*ëccalëō*), and signifies the company of persons who have been called out, or summoned. To use a modern illustration—When the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland calls Parliament together, she calls out, or summons, the Peers of Parliament to come out at her royal bidding from other occupations and surroundings. They come together at her command as the House of Lords, and being together, duly authorized, form an estate of the realm to which power and dignity belong, according to the law and constitution of the country.

So the Church which the Christ, the Son of the Living God, spake of building consists of such as are as individuals called out, or summoned. We have in this eighteenth verse four things about the Church: (1) From its very name we learn it is formed of called-out ones. Then we learn (2) Who is the Builder. (3) What is the Foundation. (4) Who is the Possessor. These three things form a threefold chain in the assurance that they convey of the stability and permanence of His Church—He is the Builder, and it is founded upon the Rock of Ages, that will abide when all that can be shaken has been removed.

They whom He was about to build into His Church are not seen here as in the world; there is no conflict here, no fainting, no wearying—a safe and secure foundation far beyond the scene of earthly strife.

But this we know, not only for the reasons we have already given, we have His further words—

**Upon this Rock I will build My Church,  
And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**

From following verses we know that Satan was not far off when the Lord had His own around Him in the parts of Cæsarea Philippi, and little doubt he would again set the battle in array against the purposes of Jehovah.

Of old Wisdom had cried aloud to sons of men, and, as a



master-workman, sought to attract attention to the House she had builded, where Divine blessings were abounding; but Satan succeeded, through the foolish woman, in enticing away the simple sons of men to become her guests, and thus find their place in the depths of Hades (that is, Sheol, the place of the dead. See Proverbs 9., 10.).

So likely enough would he who has the power of death exert all his skill, nor spare his restless, malignant energy to wreck this new building whereof the Son of God was speaking. To bring it to ruin, to introduce death and corruption, was all his aim; and every engine of infernal war, every dastard trick, all that boundless malice can suggest, or ceaseless wit devise, the mighty, stupendous forces of the one who is perhaps the greatest of all created beings are brought to bear against this edifice. But let the Devil and his angels war, let them spend their strength on this attack; now at last they may learn,—

**There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against Jehovah.<sup>1</sup>**

**The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.**

And be it noted, please, that it is not here merely or chiefly the security of the individual. It is the security of the Church that is assured.

But tread we softly here:—

**From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must . . . suffer many things . . . and be killed, and the third day be raised up.**

How could the Son of God set guilty sinners upon the righteous throne of God? Only by bearing their sins. How could God allow worthless wretches to enter His presence? Only as they were justified by the righteousness accomplished at Calvary. How could they be separated

<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 21. 30.

from the world that rejected Christ? Only by a death of shame and sorrow, on the cross, without the gate.

How little the disciples understood what it would cost the Son of God to build His Church!

Let us, in conclusion, simply note that because of what He is, because of what He did upon the cross, because of what He has done in fulfilment of His words, "I will build"—because of these things the Church stands, and will stand: His own, He the builder, He the foundation.

Whether we have anything of ours standing after all that can be shaken is removed depends on whether we follow Him, as see verses 21 to 28 of the same chapter.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

## LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF GIDEON.

IN the sixth chapter of Judges, verse 11, we are introduced to Gideon while threshing wheat in the wine-press to hide it from Midian. May we not gather from this that Gideon was dissatisfied with things as they were, as these are seen in the first six verses of the chapter? Not only dissatisfied, but doing what he could to save his substance from Midian. Is not this a characteristic to be seen in men in all ages whom God has used unto the delivering of His people? Moses in his day slew an Egyptian as evidence of his dissatisfaction with the bondage and oppression God's people were in and suffering at the hand of Pharaoh.<sup>1</sup> So David in his day, when God's people were helpless in the face of the Philistines, when for forty days (a period of testing), their champion defied the armies of the living God cried, "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"<sup>2</sup> Yes, David alone brought God into the scene.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. 2. 11, 12.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. 17.

He saw and felt the dishonour to God, and he alone brought God in to wipe out the dishonour. Saul might be careful of his own honour, but David's care was for God's. It is to be feared that many are like Saul at the present day. They cry, "The Church is in ruins!" and endeavour to be content in the midst of the ruins which they say exist. They indeed once, like Saul, fought the battles of the Lord. The few, however, are like David—ready to be used by God unto the delivering of His people. And so might we multiply instances to show that it has always been the men who would not simply sit and sigh with folded arms that God has used for the deliverance of His people. You speak to an unsaved man; tell him from God of his awful condition and terrible danger, and is it not appalling? How many such admit it! But the admission means nothing. Meet the same man again and again, and you will get the same admission, and he passes on unaffected by the tremendous issues involved in what he admits, and is it not so with the majority of the professedly born-again at the present hour?

But to return to Gideon. It was while seeking to save all he could from Midian<sup>1</sup> that the angel of Jehovah appeared and said unto him, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."<sup>2</sup> Gideon, in his reply, uses the word *us* no less than six times. Now the angel said, "The Lord is with thee," not with Israel, and do we not well to ask ourselves the question in the light of this: Are we not kept from doing His will because of our failure to single ourselves out as individuals? Notwithstanding that we know that as individuals we were saved from coming wrath, and are, we trust, being saved from present failures. So would our God have us know that an individual responsibility, according to our measure, rests upon us. This, of course, never touches the question of united action and fel-

<sup>1</sup> Judges 6. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 12.

lowship. Indeed, if individual exercise had continued in Israel, united action and fellowship would not have ceased.

So it is as an individual that the Lord is dealing with Gideon, and He speaks to Gideon as He knows him, and not as Gideon knows himself. Gideon addresses the angel as Lord,<sup>1</sup> in evidence of submission, which title means owner or possessor, and thus does Gideon confess that he is not his own. "If the Lord be with us, why is all this befallen us?" No wonder he says if when he says us. He cannot reconcile the presence of Jehovah with Israel with their deplorable condition and position. Well were it indeed that others, in a similar condition and position, would cease crying about the presence of the Lord with them, and confess things to be as they really are. "And where are all His miracles, which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" What a contrast is brought before us here! in what Gideon sees God's people now to be, and what is briefly expressed in Psalm 105. 37, "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person amongst their tribes." This is what God sought to bring before His people in the wilderness, that He might recall them from their disobedience. God desired to show them His power and love. No wonder Gideon asks in the light of it, "Why then is all this befallen us?" And yet we know Jehovah had not changed, but, alas! how His people had! But now "the Lord has forsaken us, and delivered us into the hand of Midian." No shirking plain facts. No declaring things to be what they are not, nor yet that they are not what they are. And the Lord looked upon him and said, "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from Midian; have not I sent thee?"<sup>2</sup>

Oh, beloved, is it not when, like Gideon, we are living in the freshness and power of the Cross, and yet enter-

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Ver. 14.

ing into His thoughts of things as they are, that we may expect to hear His voice to us, "Go in this thy might; have not I sent thee?" What was the might of the sent-one? Surely the might of Him who sent him. How little we know of this indeed,<sup>1</sup> and yet who goeth a warfare at his own charges? Gideon knew about the deliverance from Egypt through Moses. He knew doubtless of Moses being sent, and the miracles God wrought unto the delivering of His people, and yet Gideon, like a Moses, fears. A Paul could glory in his infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon him, and further say, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me"; and Gideon said, "Oh, my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."<sup>2</sup> Now whereas Gideon linked himself up with Israel, and failed to see himself as an individual when spoken to as such, he now goes to the other extreme, and fails to see Jehovah with him. Jehovah no more intended Gideon of himself to act than He intended all Israel to act with him.

But we have Gideon as he is, not professing to be what he is not, nor yet not to be what he is. He speaks of his family, tribe, and person. What could he do? Ah, what indeed?—the least of a poor family, of a small tribe. "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man."<sup>3</sup> It is, therefore, really a question of what Jehovah is, and not what Gideon is. "My Presence shall go with thee,"<sup>4</sup> He had said to Moses in days of old, and Moses had so realized the needs-be for it that he had said, "If Thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence." Later on disciples had listened to like words: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age,"<sup>5</sup> from their and our Lord. "If now I have

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 9. 7.<sup>2</sup> Ver. 15.<sup>3</sup> Ver. 16.<sup>4</sup> Exod. 33. 14, 15.<sup>5</sup> Matt. 28. 20.

found grace in Thy sight, then show me a sign that Thou talkest with me. Depart not hence, I pray Thee, until I come to Thee, and bring forth my present (or gift offering), and set it before Thee; and He said, I will tarry until thou come again."

The evidence that Gideon had indeed found grace is seen in his desire to offer a gift offering to Jehovah. We do crave the attention of beloved ones to this. It is not grace found because of the gift, but the gift because of grace found, and we fear that (unwittingly, it may be), but yet really, we reverse this order. Oh, let us see to it that our gifts are the promptings of grace; and yet if we measure the power and extent of that grace in us by the gifts that are from us, might feelings of shame not possess us, and a healthful exercise be begotten in us, even unto the increase of both the grace and gifts, for is it not written, "But He giveth more grace,"<sup>1</sup> that promise, moreover, being confined to the humble. The manner of His giving the said grace is also set forth in 2 Peter 1, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord."<sup>2</sup>

Who amongst us can over-estimate, nay, but who amongst us does not under-estimate, the importance of giving heed to this? inasmuch as His testings of us are with the view of bringing out of us the grace He has put in, and this in contrast to the temptings of Satan, which are that he may bring out of us the evil that is in us. An Abraham<sup>3</sup> might be adduced as an example of the testings or provings, while a David<sup>4</sup> might suffice as an example of the operations of the enemy. Noah found grace in his day,<sup>5</sup> and as a result he is a worker for and with God, the work he wrought being the outcome of the grace he found. Now let us look at this

<sup>1</sup> James 4. 6.<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. 1. 2.<sup>3</sup> Gen. 22.<sup>4</sup> 2 Sam. 11. 2.<sup>5</sup> Gen. 6. 8.

in the light of Matthew 5. 23: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Here, indeed, are heartsearching words, which, taken with Matthew 18. 15, are well known and yet so little heeded that it would be difficult to find words better known and less heeded, and yet more needed. The bringing of the gifts may go on, but, beloved, pause and ask the question of yourself, Where is the grace that prompts the gift? Are there not indeed matters here which grace will never ignore? for grace will never seek to set aside the will as that is expressed in the words of Him who is the source of grace; and is not His word plain? If the gift is an expression of grace, then in the power of that grace go to thy brother (that is, of course, if thou rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee). Why hesitate? your refusal is not only disobedience against God's word, you are also denying the power of His grace; and yet, alas! eternity alone will reveal how much of this is going on. May God in His mercy reveal much of it now. Let beloved ones who visit amongst the flock but speak out, and they will tell us. Alas! it is true something (often imaginary) between brother and brother, and between sister and sister, has continued, and still continues. Lack of knowledge how to act? Oh, no. They in most cases at least know of the legislation God has given. Notwithstanding the gifts continue; but where, oh, where is the grace?

WM. ROBERTSON.

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## CHRIST.

WHEN Samuel was commanded by the Lord to go to Jesse the Bethlehemite to anoint the king whom the Lord had provided among his sons—on looking first at Eliab he said, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him”—these memorable words were uttered by the Lord: “Look not on his countenance or on the height of his stature; because I have rejected him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16.); after which the other sons were made to pass before him, but with a like result,—“Neither hath the Lord chosen this.” Possibly Samuel (being a man of like infirmities with us) may have trembled lest there should be a mistake, and we can imagine his intense earnestness when he asked the question: “Are here all thy children?” Jesse replied: “There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold he keepeth the sheep.” The word of Samuel, “Send and fetch him,” and the subsequent story is so well known that we need not here enter into details. That forgotten shepherd lad would serve to remind us of Him “who was despised and rejected of men”—even “Jesus” the good Shepherd, who layeth down His life for the sheep. “He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not.” Nevertheless, the most despised among men was the man of God’s choice (Matt. 12. 18). In the next chapter (1 Sam. 17. 28) we find David is falsely accused and insincere motives attributed to him, thus filling up the type of the great antitype, who was, whilst on earth, “the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” The word of the Lord came to Samuel, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and *anointed* him in the midst of his brethren” (1 Sam. 16. 12, 13).

It is evident that “Christ” is a very comprehensive title, having a wide range of thought. By a reference to John



1. 41 it will be observed that the titles "Messiah," "Christ," "Anointed," are synonymous, being the equivalents in Hebrew, Greek and Latin, the three great languages known at that time in the history of the earth (see John 19. 20). Thus (Isa. 61. 1) the Lord reads in the synagogue at Nazareth and applies to Himself "He anointed Me." Again Ps. 2. 2 refers to God's Anointed, and, quoted by Peter and John, Acts 4. 26, 27, as immediately referring to the Lord Jesus. Further on, in Acts 10. 38, we read, "Jesus of Nazareth . . . God *anointed* Him with the Holy Spirit and with power." Of Him who should come into the world and suffer the Old Testament Scriptures abundantly speak. Martha said, "I have believed that Thou art *the Christ* (anointed), the Son of God, even He that cometh into the world" (John 11. 27). Unfortunately much of the teaching in connection with this title is lost to ordinary English readers through the omission or otherwise of the definite article "the." As *the* Messiah He presented Himself to Israel for their acceptance, but He whom they should have received with acclamation was received as such by a mere handful of the poorest people. Martha believed on Him as the Christ—as also Andrew, Peter, etc. The people knew Him as the man Jesus, but not as *the Christ*; to believe on Him as such was to have a birth from above. The Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered, Thou art *the Christ*, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven" (Matt. 16. 15-17). In confirmation of which we read, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is *the Christ* is born of God" (1 John 5. 1). John 20. 31 tells us the purpose for which the book was written: "That ye may believe that Jesus is *the Christ*, the Son of God." It was to this great fact that the apostles and disciples bore witness, in the Acts of

the Apostles (see Acts 5. 42, 8. 5, 9. 20, 22, 17. 3, 18. 5-28, R.V. Carefully read these scriptures). Almost always, if not invariably, the title Christ is used when suffering Godward is mentioned: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise from the dead the third day" (Luke 24. 46). "But the things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His *Christ* should suffer, He thus fulfilled" (Acts 3. 18). (See also Acts 17. 12, Acts 26. 23, Heb. 9. 14.)

In the Old Testament Scriptures we find that three classes of persons were *anointed*, viz. kings, priests and prophets; these three offices combined in the Lord Jesus. David, as already shown, may be taken as a type of the first; he was also a prophet (see Acts 2. 30). Melchisedec is a type of Christ as king and priest (Heb. 7.). Moses appears to be a faint type of all three, but preeminently as "Prophet" (Acts 3. 22, Deut. 18., Hosea 12. 13), "King" in Jeshurun (Deut. 33. 5), "Priest" (Ps. 99. 6).

1 Kings 19. 16 gives us an instance (I think the only one) of a prophet being anointed. These offices were seldom combined (with the exception of the one given) until He came, to whom all three belonged and of whom the others were but figures.

Uzziah, King of Judah, presumptuously sought to combine the office of the priesthood with the throne; but the judgment of God came down upon him for so acting in defiance of Azariah, the priest, with 80 other valiant men. "And he trespassed against the Lord, his God, for he went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense" (2 Chron. 26.). This king wandering from his place, "as a bird wandering from her nest," resulted in his being cut off from the house of the Lord (a leper dwelling in a separate house until the day he died), a solemn warning against pride and presumption. For "if any man destroyeth (mars) the temple of God, him shall God destroy"

(mar) (1 Cor. 3. 17). The Lord Jesus whilst on earth was very especially in His character as prophet. The word of the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration in testimony to the Son was, "Hear ye Him" (Matt. 17. 5); on which words the letter to the Hebrews appears to be a Divine commentary (see Hebrews 1. 1, 2; 2. 3, 4; 12. 25, 26). At the present time His office as Great High Priest is very conspicuous, whereas in a future day His character as King will be shown forth in royal splendour when He sits upon the throne of David (see Ps. 2.; Zech. 14., and so forth).

Not only does the title "Christ" present the foregoing thoughts, but has also very special application to this dispensation, inasmuch (wonderful thought) as the expression "*the Christ*" is the term that the Holy Spirit uses to express the unique thing of this dispensation which is composed of all immersed ones in one Spirit into one Body (1 Cor. 12. 12, 13). For as the body (natural body) is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is "*the Christ*" (see Mr. Newberry's Bible for article). "For in one Spirit were we all immersed into one body." Unfortunately, the definite article is omitted in our ordinary English versions, as it is retained where it should not be in verse 27 of same chapter.

Genesis 5. 2 gives us a picture of this, where we find that "when God created man, male and female, He called their name Adam," so here the last Adam and His Eve are called "*The Christ*" (expressing the indissolubility of the union). This wondrous title of Christ and His Church would appear to express the fulness of our blessings and riches in Him, as we read of "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3. 8); also telling of our nearness to God in Him, the measure of His acceptance before God being the measure of ours. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places *in Christ*" (Eph. 1.). Here we have *position*, but we find also the thought of *power* in the title as suggested by the following: "Christ the *power* of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1. 24). "God *anointed* Him with the Holy Spirit, and with *power*" (Acts 10. 38). Hence we read of "the exceeding greatness of His *power* to usward who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which He wrought in *the Christ* when He raised Him from the dead" (Eph. 1. 19, 20; compare Phil. 3. 10). We see from these scriptures that we not only have *position* before God *in Christ*, but, being anointed ones (2 Cor. 1. 21, 22), have *power* to walk as He walked, pleasing His Father whilst on earth, who went about doing good, etc. (Acts 10.). "For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness; but of *power*, and love, and discipline" (2 Tim. 1. 7); the same power that raised Christ from the dead, "that He might live unto God," being the same power that works in you and me, raising us up from the moral death, with which we are surrounded, in order that we might live unto God, separated from this evil world, as He was Himself when sojourning therein.

As risen ones we are never said to be in Jesus, but *in Christ*, speaking of a position which is unalterable and unchangeable. The words in 1 Thessalonians 4. 14 (R.V.) should read as the margin—"through," not "in" (verse 16). "And the dead *in Christ* shall rise first." Death cannot alter our standing in Him; such ones are said to be asleep *in Christ* (1 Cor. 15. 18).

Perhaps the most striking Scripture confirming this is 2 Cor. 12., where the Apostle Paul speaks: "I know a man *in Christ* fourteen years ago (whether in the body I know not, or whether out of the body)." Notice that if he was out of the body he would not have been out of Christ, and, moreover, that even if death had taken place he would

have been a man still, for the body is but the outside casket enclosing the man. We see, therefore, that position *in Christ* remains intact and inviolable.

“What from Christ the soul can sever?  
Bound by everlasting bands;  
Once in Him, in Him for ever,  
Thus the eternal covenant stands.”

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

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## I'LL SEE YOU IN THE MORNING!

I WILL see you in the morning,  
So I'll wish you now “Good-night.”  
May His loving care protect you,  
Until breaks the morning light.  
Think how endless are His mercies,  
How His grace can never fail;  
He who gave up His beloved  
With Him freely gives us all.

Yes, I'll see you in the morning;  
Oh! that morning bright and fair!  
When in clouds caught up together  
We shall meet Him in the air.

I will see you in the morning,  
Although dark may seem the night;  
He'll be with us through the darkness,  
Shedding in our hearts His light.  
With His mighty arms around us,  
While His never-ceasing love  
Works His never-failing purpose,  
Till we're perfected above.

Yes, I'll see . . .

I will see you in the morning,  
 When our loved ones gone before  
 He shall bring, and shouting call us  
 To be with Him evermore.  
 Then we'll praise Him for each moment  
 He in grace has left us here;  
 For we'll know His wondrous workings  
 Never caused a needless tear.

Yes, I'll see . . .

Yes, we'll see *Him* in the morning;  
 Oh, what rapture it will be!  
 Gazing on the Lord of Glory,  
 Like Him for eternity.  
 And His grace which now enthalls us,  
 When, among that countless throng,  
 We with all our hearts and voices  
 Then shall praise in endless song.

Yes, we'll see *Him* in the morning; . . .

W. E.

## 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 114.—*Is it right for a Christian to become engaged or married to an unconverted person?*

What is not the mind of God is not right. In Eph. 5. 8 the unconverted person is darkness, blinded by the god of this age. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4, Eph. 4. 18. In Eph. 5. 8 the Christian is now light in the Lord, having been delivered out of darkness. See Col. 1. 13, 1 Peter 2. 9. "And what communion hath light with darkness?" "Or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?" 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, R.V. In Gen. 1. 4, "God divided the light from the darkness," He calls upon the Christian to be an imitator of God (see Eph. 5. 1, R.V.) in this way. 2 Cor. 6. 14, Eph. 5. 7, see Rev. 3. 22.

Will God join light and darkness together to be (or into) one? Nay! Or a person of light and one of darkness? Surely nay! Amos 3. 3, see 1 Cor. 14. 33, Acts 17. 11, 12.

## AMALEK.

IN that wonderful story which God has caused to be written for our learning, concerning the journeyings of His people Israel, from the day in which He delivered them from the bondage of Pharaoh and brought them out from the land of Egypt, to the time when under Joshua they crossed the Jordan and entered the land of promise, there is, perhaps, no event in their history more deeply fraught with interest and instruction, especially for the young child of God, than that of their encounter with Amalek.

Much has been written and spoken concerning this portion of God's Word and that which it foreshadows so clearly—namely, the conflict in the believer between the flesh and the Spirit. And yet, if we consider the prominent place given to this subject in New Testament Scriptures, and the oft-repeated and solemn warnings as to walking after the flesh, with the exhortations to mortify that which has been crucified; to walk in the Spirit; to be led by the Spirit; to be filled with the Spirit; surely we cannot consider too often, or too attentively, that which has been written concerning Israel's conflict with this same enemy; and learning by their experience, be thereby better fitted to grapple with this deadly foe, who lies in wait for every child of God as he comes forth out of Egypt (Deut. 25. 17; 2 Tim. 3. 16, R.V.).

Turning then to Exodus 17. 8, we read: "THEN came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim." The opening word here draws our attention to the time and place that Amalek made his descent upon Israel; and to fully appreciate this it is necessary to make a brief survey of their previous history. The story is familiar to all: how God appeared to Moses in the back of the desert, and revealing Himself as Jehovah, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, sent Moses down to Egypt with the glad

tidings to His people that Jehovah had visited them, and was about to fulfil His covenant with Abraham and bring them forth from under the bondage of Pharaoh, into a land flowing with milk and honey.

We know how Moses and Aaron came and announced the glad tidings to the weary, oppressed people; a people who had, no doubt, long ago given up all hope of deliverance; who thought that God had forgotten them; to whom "Jehovah" was an almost forgotten name, and whose promises to Abraham seemed but a fable. When those people were gathered together and heard that at last Jehovah, the great Jehovah, the God of their fathers, had visited them and seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Very soon, however, their gladness changed to sorrow, when they found that as a result of the message of Jehovah to Pharaoh their burden and the oppression of their taskmasters were increased tenfold; and turning upon Moses and Aaron, they upbraided them bitterly as the cause of their increased woes.

How evident is the counterpart of this in the awakened sinner, and how often does the first entrance of the Gospel bring nought but sorrow and anguish of spirit, as the light of God's Word shines into the darkness of his heart and reveals his state before God; unknown to him before because of the darkness which reigned there. And how often Satan, fearful of losing his prey, with infinite craft and cunning seeks to turn the awakened one against that which is about to bring him deliverance, by telling him that this is the cause of all his trouble; and tries by every means in his power to blind their minds and turn them against God, "that the light of the Gospel of the Glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (2 Cor. 4. 3, 4); and so seeks to rivet tighter and tighter the chains which bind them to him.



Israel, however, was soon to learn that "God is stronger than His foes." And in the judgments which followed they found that He that was for them was greater than they that were against them. And in that final and awful night of judgment, as they rested securely in the blood-sprinkled houses, they learned somewhat, not only of the power, but of the grace of their God, as the destroying Angel passed through the land and smote all the firstborn of Egypt. And as morning broke over that scene of death and judgment, they realized with glad hearts that God had proved faithful, and that His Word had been fulfilled: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

We next find this company of now redeemed people on the shores of the Red Sea. Behind them in hot pursuit comes Pharaoh and his host,—utterly powerless, had they only known it, to harm the redeemed of the Lord,—before them rolled the waters of the Red Sea. And again their hearts sank within them. But the word of Moses to them was: "Stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah"; and as he stretched out his hand over the sea, the waters rolled back on either side, and the children of Israel passed over dryshod. And in the morning, as they looked upon the Egyptians lying dead upon the sea-shore, songs of triumph and gladness rose from every heart. They had proved that "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

And again we trace clearly the resemblance in all this to the experience of the young child of God. Having known the sorrow and trouble arising from an awakened conscience, and having at length found peace upon the ground of "Redemption through His blood," awakening to the knowledge of the blessed truth, that he who held us in bondage has been overthrown, has been destroyed (Heb. 2. 14, 15), and that we are free! redeemed! saved! how our hearts shout for joy, and we rejoice in the God of our

salvation. And, like the children of Israel as they sang that morning on the sea-shore, how little thought there was in our hearts of the pathway that lay before us. How little we dreamed of the weary desert journey, of the bitter waters, of the hunger and thirst, and of the many foes that lay in wait for us as we "came forth out of Egypt."

And yet all these things had to be encountered; and we find how the children of Israel grew weary and faint, and murmured against the Lord and against Moses. Passing over the intervening chapter, which speaks of those trials, we come to chapter 17. 7, and there we read: "And he (Moses) called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the striving of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, *Is the Lord among us or not?*" And it is at this significant point we read: "THEN came Amalek, and fought with Israel." And in Deut. 25. 17: "Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, as ye came forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way and smote the hindmost of thee, all that were feeble behind thee, when thou wast faint and weary; and he feared not God."

And has each one of us not known this in our own experience, when we began to realize that the Christian pathway was not to be altogether a path of roses; when we began to experience somewhat of the bitter trials and disappointments that were in store for us, and we grew faint and weary; and perhaps at times the thought rose in our minds: Am I a Christian after all? has it not only been a passing excitement? "Is Jehovah among us or not?" THEN comes Amalek; then it is that this subtle foe rises up within us, and the flesh begins to assert itself, when we are faint and weary and beginning to doubt God's interest in us. And in this short account of Israel's encounter with and victory over Amalek there is much to encourage and help the young Christian in his conflict with the same foe.

“And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek.” Notice the injunction to Joshua. It was not, “Let all Israel go”; or, “Let any one go”; but “Choose us out men.” This was no mean foe they had to deal with, and to meet him they required chosen men; picked men; men who would be able to endure in the conflict, and men who would be able to handle their weapons to some purpose. “And go out, *fight* with Amalek.” There was to be no truce with this enemy; there was to be no entering into negotiations with him, or coming to terms with him; no agreeing that there was room enough for them both in the desert, and that they could get on comfortably enough together. Ah! no; it was to be war to the death with Amalek. “The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.” This reminds us of the New Testament scripture: “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, *and make not provision for the flesh*” (Rom. 13. 14). And what trouble we, as Christians, might save ourselves, and what power we might have individually and collectively, by bearing this always in mind and acting upon it: that God has declared war with the flesh (see Rom. 8. 6-8); that this war is going on in every believer (Gal. 5. 17); and that all our actions must be either on one side or the other. Every occasion given to the flesh; all pandering to the flesh in whatever form, however little it may be is taking sides with the flesh against God. And is not our language occasionally that of Lot in Gen. 19. 20?—“Is it not a little one?” In our every action, and every word, to say nothing of our every thought, we are either in the flesh, or in the Spirit; walking after the flesh, or walking after the Spirit; fighting against God, or fighting for and with God.

(To be continued.)

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## LORD.

WE read in 1 Samuel that Jonathan loved David even as his own soul, and promised him that "Whatsoever thy soul desireth I will even do it for thee." "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his apparel, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle" (1 Sam. 18. 4). It might be asked with some reason, did Jonathan leave anything undone for David that he could have done? There is but one answer to such an inquiry—namely, that Jonathan kept back *himself* from David; he never threw in his lot with the one who was the man of God's choice, though rejected by the people. Compare Romans 12. 1. If he had done so, it would have been well for him; for though an outcast and rejected, yet he would have been in safety (1 Sam. 22. 23). He never became one of those 400 (a very few in comparison to the numbers in Israel) despised ones in the Adullam cave over whom David became *captain*. However, Jonathan knew and owned David as God's *anointed*. He said to David, "Thou shalt be *king* over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee" (1 Sam. 23. 17). Alas for Jonathan, for that he never was, for to share the throne there must be the sharing of the cross. For similar principle please compare carefully 2 Timothy 2. 12; Revelation 2. 26 and 3. 21.

How very solemn and searching are such examples to us! Many,—indeed one fears the many are like Jonathan, who delighted much in David (1 Sam. 19.),—their talents, time, and treasures devoted to Christ, yet they know nothing of what Hebrews 13. speaks of: "Let us therefore go forth unto him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (verse 13). We do well to remember, however, that just as Jonathan incurred the displeasure of Saul because of his attachment to David: "Thou son

of a perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own shame, and unto the shame of thy mother's nakedness?" (1 Sam. 20. 30)—so these also at times, and under certain circumstances, have a measure of reproach, more especially from those who are unsaved.

We cannot read such Old Testament Scriptures without having numerous passages in the New Testament forced on our consideration. First, let us look at 1 Corinthians 15. 58: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of *the Lord*, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain *in the Lord*." Christian work is not of necessity the Lord's work, or work *in the Lord*. When Paul went to Troas for the Gospel of Christ, he made sure a door was opened unto him *in the Lord* (see 2 Cor. 2. 12). Let us, following in his steps, make sure that our doors are opened unto us *in the Lord*, and not the open doors of our own impulses and imaginations. If it is indeed the Lord's work, then, though the work may be trying, needing much patience, and apparent results few, yet there is not the slightest need to be discouraged, for the reward at the judgment-seat of Christ is as sure as the Word of God itself. And "Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6. 9). Seeing that the loss to the Christian at the judgment seat of Christ will be so great to the one who has *not* laboured *in the Lord*, how earnest ought we to be to seek to rescue our fellow-Christians from a path which, though trodden ever so earnestly, will ultimately end in a few ashes at the fire in the day of Christ (great and bulky though the wood, hay, and stubble appeared in the eyes of man). Let the terrible loss once be seen which the believer, who has not walked according to the Book, will incur at the judgment-seat of Christ, and we will be as earnest for the salva-

tion of such saints (salvation of the life) as we have been, and trust still are, for the salvation of sinners. It was when Peter proclaimed Jesus as *Lord and Christ* on the day of Pentecost that 3,000 were baptized and added (Acts. 2. 36). Indeed, the whole chapter hinges on this verse, and the apostles never preached anything else. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord" (2 Cor. 4. 5) was the word of the Apostle Paul many years after. Peter preached Jesus *as Lord*, and Paul preached Christ Jesus *as Lord*—"Jesus Christ is Lord" (Phil. 2. 11). And God, has decreed it that every tongue must confess to this fact. Well for those who own His claims as *Lord* here, but solemn for those who know Jesus indeed as the Christ, and yet have never bowed to Him in acknowledgment of His claims on their obedience as *Lord*.

There are three scriptures which in our present subject are especially helpful as corrected by the R.V. (1) "Mary sat at the *Lord's feet*" (Luke 10. 39). All Scripture study, to be profitable, must take place in spirit there; then, indeed, we shall become not only hearers, but doers (steadfast doers) of the word (James 1. 22). (2) "Let every one that nameth the name of *the Lord* depart from unrighteousness" (2 Tim. 2. 19).

Union *in the Lord* is altogether a different thing from union *in Christ*. The many will meet on one platform on the ground of the blood of Christ, with some such motto, "All one in Christ," written in large letters above their heads; but let the majority of such have the truth of the Lordship of Christ brought to bear upon them, and it will be resented with the bitterest resentment, even in its initial step of obedience to Him in Baptism (immersion). It is imperative on those who desire to please Him who paid such a price for us, in order that we might be His (and only His) (Titus 2. 14), to depart from *all* unrighteousness; but for this, separation from Christians would be

ungodly, but now it is most ungodly for those who name the name of *the Lord* to remain in associations where the will of the Lord cannot be done, even though those associations may be composed nearly entirely, if not altogether, of born-again ones. For it is *Christ as Lord*, and not Christians, that the apostles preached. (3) "But sanctify in your hearts *Christ as Lord*" (1 Pet. 3. 15). If any further proof be needed that these titles are *not* synonymous or interchangeable, surely the most exacting must be satisfied here. Those who have believed on Jesus as the Christ are further admonished to set Him apart in their hearts *as Lord*, absolute proprietor and master. "We are not our own, we are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6. 19). Seeing such is the case, we must not have an affection that we cannot share with Him—nay, which has not sprung out of intercourse with Him, and is the behest of His own will.

All actions in our life are to be regulated according to this maxim, "*in the Lord*," submission to the will of God in everything; not, however, like the submission of an idle schoolboy to his master, but more like the devoted submission of a slave who has been purchased by a kind benefactor and then set free, and in return for such kindness throws himself down at his benefactor's feet and promises to be his for life, and such really are "*bond-slaves*," acquiescing and delighting in their master's will.

How much misery and unhappiness would have been avoided if such teaching had been heeded in regard to marriage, for this step in life is to be taken "*only in the Lord*"; which means, in the first place, more than to marry *in Christ*. The many think the latter is quite sufficient, but in the majority of cases such persistence against the will of God (arising from ignorance in many cases) leads to the saddest results; the children of such parents being nurtured under a divided roof—and not in the fear and admonition of the Lord—eventually turn out, as might be expected,

sceptics or something of the same sort. But "marry in the Lord" would not only teach us this, but would suggest that the marriage is to be suitable in every way—in short, as God would have it, and so designed it a beautiful and fit emblem of Christ and the Church (Eph. 5.). It will readily be seen from what has been written that "Lord" suggests the thought of rule and responsibility—One who has a right to govern my life in every particular, holding me responsible to respond to His claims; and if I do not, my loss will be very great at the judgment-seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5. 10).

How suggestive are chapters such as 2 Samuel 23. and 2 Chronicles 12. when read in this connection—where we find David's faithful ones (a sample, at least) mentioned, whilst others far more renowned in valour are passed over in silence—men who in the eyes of their fellow-men were very great; take, for example, Joab, one who played such an important part in the history of King David. How very suggestive of the following Scripture: "And if also a man contend in the games, he is not crowned unless he have striven lawfully" (2 Tim. 2. 5).

"Deeds of merit as we thought them,  
He will tell us were but sin;  
Little acts we had forgotten,  
He will own were done for Him."

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

A BRIEF MEMORIAL  
OF ROBERT THOMSON, OF NEWARTHILL,  
A GOOD SOLDIER OF JESUS CHRIST.

WE here give an outline of his last words in public on earth. He based his remarks on the Song of Solomon, chapter 1, verse 2: "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." She was so near she could embrace Him. But



what a contrast we get in chapter 5. ! He is out in the cold and she is sleeping inside, like many of God's saints ; once they were so near they could kiss Him, but now they are taken up with themselves, therefore they often experience verse 7 of chapter 5. He then read to us John 20. 11-18, and remarked that Mary's heart was greater than her knowledge of Him ; therefore He forbade her to touch Him, as He was about to ascend on high and send down the Holy Spirit to give a fuller revelation of Him than He could do at that time. She called Him Lord from her affections, yet lacked a right knowledge of what He was. Alas ! to-day many of God's saints have the knowledge of His will, but they lack the heart affection. Beloved saints, see to it you do not let your head go in advance of your heart. God would have them go together.

Our brother then referred us to the first chapter of Revelation, verses 10-20. He showed how the Lord walked in the midst of the seven golden lampstands. His breasts are mentioned first. He was girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. He went on to say that the girdle bespeaks restraint. The Lord could not let His affections flow out as He would like. Their backslidings in heart and ways hindered Him. "But," he added, "up yonder in the glory there will be no girdle." His love will flow out unhindered to all eternity.

This short address was given four days before he was taken to be with his Lord. The last song he gave out was 87 in the Believers' Hymn-Book. We hope this may be made a blessing to all, although somewhat incomplete, being written from memory after our beloved brother's death.

*Communicated by* ALEXANDER LIVINGSTONE.

## ABRAHAM, THE FRIEND OF GOD.

BEFORE we look at our subject it is indeed important that we should have right thoughts concerning "the Old Testament Scriptures." We hear said on every hand, "Oh, it is 'the Old Testament.' What has that to do with us who live in 'New Covenant' times?" I say *much*, and unless we let this *much* have a firm grip of us we will make very little progress in the "Divine Life."

It has been said, "In the Old Testament the New lies hid, and in the New Testament the Old is revealed." One thing we do know, and our God desires that we should grasp this blessed fact, that all Old Testament Scripture is full of Christ. "And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."<sup>1</sup>

Again, they contain "the Testimony of Jesus"; for we read, "THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS is the spirit of prophecy."<sup>2</sup> And again, Jesus says, "Ye search the Scriptures because ye think that in them ye have eternal life, and THESE ARE THEY WHICH BEAR WITNESS OF ME."<sup>3</sup> In these three spoken words of God we surely have "a threefold cord which is not quickly broken,"<sup>4</sup> and the Divine fulness of testimony<sup>5</sup> to Christ in the "Old Testament Scriptures."

We are expressly told by God that they are written for our instruction (that is, for our teaching), that through their patience and comfort we might have hope.<sup>6</sup> They also admonish,<sup>7</sup> teach, reprove, correct, instruct in righteousness, and completely furnish the man of God unto every good work.<sup>8</sup>

The disciple whose ear He openeth, like the ear of

<sup>1</sup> Luke 24. 27, R.V.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. 19. 10.

<sup>3</sup> John 5. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Eccles. 4. 12.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 18. 16.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 15. 4.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 10. 11.

<sup>8</sup> 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

Jehovah's servant, "morning by morning,"<sup>1</sup> will not only hear many of his Master's speakings into that opened ear in the Old Testament Scriptures, but will find a knowledge of them necessary unto the understanding of God speaking "in Son."<sup>2</sup> How often do we find God in the New Testament revealing an abstract truth, the detail of which we find in the Old. Before leaving this point, remember how the Lord brings their threefold testimony to bear on "the adversary" unto his defeat, and especially those words, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by EVERY WORD OF GOD."<sup>3</sup>

In asking you to consider with me for our mutual help and cheer the God-given biography of Abraham, we enter upon a life so full of the blessing of God and the triumphs of faith, coupled with the intensity of human nature, which leads us to exclaim, "A man of like passions,"<sup>4</sup> that it is fraught with a very mine of wealth which God wants deposited in our hearts, that it may yield its fruit to Him in our daily lives.

What a relationship and sweetness is in the word "friend"! The English meaning of this word is, "One attached to another by sentiments of affection, esteem, respect; one not hostile, an associate." The Greek word is φίλος (philos), taken from the verb which you so often find translated in the margin of *The Englishman's Bible*, "To fondly love." Three times in Holy Scriptures you find God speaking of Abraham as His friend.<sup>5</sup> What a term of endearment! what an honour! what a relationship! "The friend of God." You may say, "Alas! that is infinitely beyond me. It is true of Abraham, but how can I ever attain to it in my experience? While it is true that it speaks of a relationship different in character to the relationship of children, which is the eternal birthright of

<sup>1</sup> Isa. 50. 4, 5.    <sup>2</sup> Heb. 1. 2.    <sup>3</sup> Matt. 4. 4.    <sup>4</sup> Jas. 5. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Isa. 41. 8; 2 Chron. 20. 7; Jas. 2. 23.

every believer, yet it is blessedly possible for every child of God to know, in all its fulness and endearment, that she or he is His friend. How? By simply fulfilling the conditions of friendship laid down by the Lord Himself.

The Lord addressing His disciples in the upper room on the eve of His betrayal and passion, said, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."<sup>1</sup> From this we gather that *obedience* is necessary unto this friendship; but obedience is only the effect of a cause, and that cause is LOVE. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."<sup>2</sup>

We have already looked at the meaning of the word friend, and have found it to contain affection, esteem, respect, no hostility. Let us each put the question, Are these true of me? Do I esteem the Lord Jesus? Ah, this is a vital point. If I don't esteem Him, I do not love Him; for all true love is based on esteem. Once my esteem for a person goes, my love goes with it. If I have the answer of a good conscience to this interrogation, then I do love Him, yea, fondly love Him; for it is the love of fondness; and the only proof of this to Him and others is my devoted obedience to His will—"He will keep My commandments."

Yes, fellow-believer, as really and truly as Abraham was "The friend of God," so it is your privilege and mine to know ourselves the friends of the Lord Jesus and to experience in communion the value of that friendship, not only to ourselves, but also to Him. To be His friend is to know (1st) The love of the Father.<sup>3</sup> What a love is this! It so fills and satisfies the soul that there is no room left for "the love of the world." These two loves cannot dwell together in the believer, as it is written, "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."<sup>4</sup>

By nature we were of the world. Our thoughts were

<sup>1</sup> John 15. 14.

<sup>2</sup> John 14. 15.

<sup>3</sup> John 14. 21-23.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John 2. 15.

worldly, our desires, our purposes, ambitions, attainments, joys, prosperities and religion were worldly. Our very being was of, and in, and maintained by the world. But in and by God's grace Christ and His Cross has lifted us out of it, severed us judicially for ever from it. Then He who died for our salvation has sent us into it, as the Father sent Him.<sup>1</sup> We are here for God and His Christ. May we ever remember this, and may the remembering of it ever be a powerful factor in keeping us in it separated unto Him according to truth;<sup>2</sup> the friend of Christ having the love of the Father filling and satisfying the every desire of our souls.

2nd. This friendship experiences the love of the Son: "And I will love him."<sup>3</sup> The thought here is very different from that in Galatians: "He loved me and gave Himself up for me.". There it is the love shown by Christ to every member of His body, proved and declared in His Cross. Here in John 14. it is the love of the Son drawn out towards us by our obedience and devotedness to His person and will, the love that results from association with; in other words, companionship, friendship; no doubt referred to in John 13. 8: "Thou hast no part WITH Me"; and in Hebrews 3. 14: "For we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast," and so on.

3rd. This friendship insures the manifestation of the Son, and the abiding of Father and Son. "And we will make our abode with Him."<sup>4</sup> What a friendship is this! May it be yours and mine to know it. Our very hearts the abiding place of the "Triune God." To Abram was given the high honour of entertaining the Lord of Glory at his humble tent on Mamre's plain, and also to know the still greater honour of being taken into the confidence of the Lord concerning His will and purpose. "Shall I hide

<sup>1</sup> John 17. 18.

<sup>2</sup> John 17. 17.

<sup>3</sup> John 14. 21.

<sup>4</sup> John 14. 23.

from Abraham that thing which I do?"<sup>1</sup> The one who spake these words was the same one who said, "But I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I made known unto you."<sup>2</sup> He must communicate to His friends all things that He heard from His Father. Dear reader, may it ever be yours and mine to abidingly know and value the sweetness of this blessed relationship, and to cherish no thought, word, or deed which would rob us and Him of the unspeakable joy of such a confidence and companionship; which will ever find its expression in our loving to be as He is and where He is in this present evil age.

J. CHARLETON STEEN.

## BAPTISM.

### IS "SPRINKLING" BAPTISM?

It is a prevalent idea that "sprinkling infants" and "pouring of water" on adults is sufficient to meet the requirements of God for Baptism. But the question comes to one's mind:—Is such an action really acceptable to God? If not, in what form can Baptism be accepted by Him?

Nothing is or can be accepted of God unless it is in accordance with the teaching of His Holy Word. Let us, then, look at this subject, taking the Bible as our only guide (the only inspired book in existence), trusting not to man's teaching, not even to the traditions of "the Fathers." As Baptism is His command, the only way of performing the act must be according to His Will as shown in His Word. The Scriptures being the only inspired writings given to us by God—surely sufficient—we must submit ourselves to them, and in this matter, as with every other, go to them for guidance.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 18. 17.

<sup>2</sup> John 15. 15.

But, some may say, If we go through an ordinance of Baptism, it is not necessary for us to be immersed. Nothing but immersion is Baptism, as the word itself indicates.

People of the present day are just like Naaman of old (see 2 Kings 5.). When he was commanded by God through Elisha to go and wash himself in Jordan, the act of obedience was too simple for him, but he found out that nothing but subjection would cleanse him, so he went and dipped himself. Was his leprosy cleansed when he had dipped himself six times? Decidedly not. He had to yield himself to God's demands, and the result of his complete obedience to the requirements of God was a complete cleansing from his leprosy.

In Acts 8. 38 we get an illustration of true Baptism: "And they went down both into the water."

#### WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

In the Acts of the Apostles there are nine instances of Baptism recorded, as follows:—Chapter 2. 41; 8. 12, 13, 38; 9. 18; 16. 15, 33; 18. 8; 19. 5. In all these instances we find that believers only were baptized. Not one of them was baptized until he had received Jesus as the propitiation for his sins. Since this is the case, where did the practice of "sprinkling infants" originate? Some infer that the Fathers of the third and fourth centuries prove that infants were baptized. Perhaps infants were baptized or sprinkled in the third and fourth centuries, but we have no account given by God that they were in the first century. If "Infants' Baptism" was intended by God, why is it not recorded in His Word? Because no such doctrine exists therein; we cannot practise it and be in subjection to Him. "Let God be true, and every man a liar," the Scripture saith.

Households were baptized truly (see Acts 16. 15, 33), but we must not infer that infants were baptized because

households were. Besides, we have no authority from God's Word to baptize any, whether old or young, unless they believe on the Name of the Son of God. We believe, therefore, that all who have been cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus should be baptized in obedience to His Will, and that *only such* should be is the teaching of Holy Writ.

### WHAT IS BAPTISM ?

It is not, as some infer, a ceremony enabling us to a better state of godliness and a help to approach God.

"All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," says Romans 3. 23; and we cannot approach God until that sin has been removed, because God is holy (see Josh. 24. 19, and Ps. 93. 5).

Because man cannot approach God by his own efforts, God in His mercy opened the way in the person of His own beloved Son. Jesus said, "I am the *way*, the truth, and the life; *no one* cometh unto the Father but *through Me*" (R.V. John 14. 6). - What a merciful God is He, who, seeing man in a powerless condition to save himself, "gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3. 16).

There are persons who declare they have power given to them of God to forgive sins—to stand as mediator between God and man—but such a doctrine is outside of the Scriptures. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2. 5).

Thus the demands of God have been met on Calvary's Tree for all who will accept Him as their Saviour. God hates sin, but He loves the sinner, and because of that love offers an approach unto Himself, through Christ, "the new and living way" (Heb. 10. 20).

We see, therefore, that Baptism is not a place of cleansing, nor a help unto regeneration. It is the acknowledgment of Christ as Lord by yielding to His blessed



command, the outward confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6.<sup>1</sup>), and the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Pet. 3. 21).

Baptism is His desire. Ere He left the earth, He commanded His disciples to baptize disciples (Matt. 28. 19, 20).

We trust that any believers who have not already been baptized will obey their Lord in this His loving command. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15. 22).

It is the duty of every Christian to be baptized as a disciple, and surely we shall willingly obey when we think of what He suffered for us, and of the eternal salvation freely given to us, which is the outcome of His death.

Jesus said, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15. 14).

"This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5. 3).

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye *do* them" (John 13. 17).

## GOOD WORKS.

IN Hebrews 9. 22, R.V., we read, "And apart from shedding of blood there is no remission"; and Hebrews 10. 4, "For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins." In the light of these Scriptures, the work of the cross was as necessary the day that Adam transgressed as it was four thousand years after. The words uttered by God previous to the transgression, "For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," had their fulfilment that very moment that that command was transgressed against. "Thou shalt not eat of it." "And why" (asks some one) "the patient waiting and forbearance in those

<sup>1</sup> It is necessary to read the whole of this chapter.

many years?" In Leviticus 13. we see that any one having a bright spot in the skin of his flesh was brought before the priest; and in order to satisfy the priest, and in like manner the one who had the bright spot, as to whether it was leprosy or not, that one was shut up for the space of seven days, and, if needs be, other seven days. Thus God was pleased to wait until His people were convinced that such a one was or was not a leper.

In the many years previous to the cross, God has sought, both without law and under law, to convince man of his lost and ruined condition through the fall; not "that He needed that any one should bear witness concerning man, for He knew Himself what was in man" (John 2. 25, R.V.). In the first three chapters of Paul's Epistle to the Romans we have man depicted by God both when he was without law and under law; and it is all summed up by the words of the 19th verse of the third chapter: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God; because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for through the law cometh the knowledge of sin" (R.V.). Following this, we find in the 4th chapter and verse 4, "Now to him that worketh the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but of debt." We read also in Galatians 2. 16, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law" (R.V.); and again in Ephesians 2. 9 we read, "Not of works, that no man should glory" (R.V.).

Many other scriptures could be brought to bear upon this very important truth; but to any who treasure the Scriptures as indeed the very words of God we think the above-mentioned will clearly show that a man in himself has not a vestige of ground to stand upon, nor can he do anything in order to obtain salvation.

Perhaps the reader has noticed the different manner in which the Lord Jesus, while upon the earth, spake to the different persons whom He came in contact with. Take, for example, the woman at Sychar's well, in John 4., and the ruler in the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 18. 18. To the poor woman He revealed Himself; but (oh, how sad!) the other He sent away. The secret of His acting thus was that the poor woman was convinced she was a sinner and could do nothing; the other had that lesson to learn. Thus, by precept and example, God has sought to prove to man that he is, as far as himself is concerned, helplessly lost. While man is in this condition, God has done all the working for man; for we read in Romans 8. 3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (R.V.). And again, in 2 Corinthians 5. 21, we read, "Him who knew no sin, He (God) made to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." For us now to think, in the light of such Scriptures, that our works, no matter how good they are, are in any way helpful to us in obtaining or maintaining salvation is to ignore what God has said, and to undervalue the work completed by Christ on the cross.

Seeing, then, our eternal salvation does not depend on our good works, what good are they?

According to the Epistle of James, chapter 2. verse 14 to the end, we see salvation is accompanied by works on the part of the recipient. In John 5. 36 we read, concerning the Lord Jesus, "For the works which My Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me." (R.V.). Thus, the works which God's Son did while a pilgrim in this world were a witness in themselves to the world at large who He was, and who it was that sent Him. So, in like manner,

if those around us are to know who we are and what we are, it will only be by what we do. "Even so let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5. 16, R.V.). "Having your behaviour seemly among the Gentiles, that wherein they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works which they behold glorify God in the day of visitation."

### AMALEK.

*(Concluded from page 48.)*

MAY each of us, then, be found as fellow-workers with God in His purpose of conforming us to the image of His Son: "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his doings, and have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created him" (Col. 3. 10).

"To-morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand." "Stand on the top of the hill"! Would it not be much more to the purpose if Moses went down and helped Joshua to fight? But Joshua knew and understood well what those words implied. Joshua was one who had learned to look beyond mere outward appearances; to look off to, and trust implicitly in his God; and when they came to the borders of the land which God had promised to give to them for an inheritance, his word to the faltering multitude was: "Jehovah is with us; fear them not." And Moses' words would bring strength and encouragement to Joshua's heart: "The rod of God in mine hand!" Ah! then victory was sure. Joshua had seen, in that night when death stared them in the face, when in front the angry sea barred their path, and behind them came the avenging Pharaoh, he had seen that rod of God

stretched out over the waste of waters, and through the very midst of their difficulty and danger a path to safety was opened up. The very water which had threatened to engulf them rose up a wall on either side, and they passed through dryshod. Again, in the morning, as that rod was stretched out a second time, he had seen the waters return as a mighty flood and sweep their pursuers to utter destruction. Again, in the desert, when there was no water and the people were parched with thirst, he had seen the living waters gush from the flinty rock, as Moses smote it with the rod of God. So that we can, in some little measure, understand what it meant to Joshua as he went forth to do battle with this mighty foe to know that Moses was on the hill top with the rod of God in his hand.

And there, down in the valley, through that long weary day, they fought with Amalek. And oftentimes, perhaps, their hearts would fail them and their arms would grow weary in the conflict; but lifting their eyes to the top of the hill yonder, they would see outlined against the sky the figure of Moses, and in his uplifted hand he held the rod of God; and at the sight, with renewed vigour, knowing that victory was sure, they would plunge into the thick of the fight; and we read: "Joshua discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword."

Although, in this picture, Moses undoubtedly speaks to us of our Lord Jesus Christ who is in the presence of God for us, yet surely we can also learn from it that in every sphere of conflict, whether it be with the flesh, or whether it be "striving together for the faith of the Gospel," there is a place for every child of God. How often one hears it said: "I am not a speaker; I cannot take any part in preaching the Gospel." But that does not hinder you from taking part in the conflict. There is a place on the top of the hill for you; a place that all can fill, be it brother or sister, young or old. While the Joshua-like ones are down

in the valley in the thick of the fight, we can be on the top of the hill with our hands up to God on their behalf; and in our hands that all-powerful rod, even our faith; for "this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." And perhaps only they who have been in the fight can understand how much it means to know that they are being supported by their brethren in prayer. It was as essential to victory that Moses should be on the top of the hill as it was that Joshua should go down and fight with Amalek; for when Moses let down his hands Amalek prevailed. And it may be, in that day when everything shall be made manifest in the light of His presence, we shall find that fruitless Gospel meetings, seed sown that came to naught, and times when Satan seemed to get the victory on every hand, will be traced to the fact that we on the top of the hill had let down our hands.

"Joshua discomfited Amalek with the edge of the sword." This would remind us of what our weapon must be in our conflict with the flesh: "The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6. 17). And notice, in connection with what we have said above, that in this Scripture the sword has to be taken "with all prayer and supplication." The two must go together if the victory has to be ours—the word of God and prayer. In Hebrews 4. 12 we read: "The Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart." This, then, has to be our weapon, and it must be used unsparingly, deep though it may cut, and painful though it may be; everything that is of the flesh must be cut off root and branch. And let us in this, as in all other things, look off to *our* Joshua, the captain of our salvation, the princely leader of our faith; when alone He went forth, and there in the desert met the great Tempter; that

mighty foe who had marred and corrupted God's creation, and was holding man, the image and glory of God, as a slave in the chains of sin. And here there comes to meet him One like unto that first man whom he had tempted and overcome in Eden's garden, a man in whom was no sin; a man who was the image and glory of God. And again, with subtle cunning, he lays before Him the same temptations: "the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the vain glory of life"; but instead of the open ear, instead of the willing heart, he is met with the lightning stroke of the sword of the Spirit, stroke upon stroke,—“It is written,” “It is written,” “It is written,”—until, utterly defeated and discomfited, he retires from the attack, having had a foretaste of that complete destruction of his power which was so soon to take place.

In the fourteenth verse we have the Lord instructing Moses to write in a book, and rehearse in the ears of Joshua, that: “I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.” And how cheering and comforting this would be to Joshua, as again and again he had to encounter Amalek, knowing as he went forth to meet him that the Lord was on his side, and that He had sworn to blot out the very remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. And we also have a word from the Lord bringing us strength and comfort in our conflict: that “sin shall not have dominion over you.” Even here and now in these our mortal bodies, “while we wait for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His Glory”; for “when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is; and every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure.”

“And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi,” that is, “Jehovah is my banner.” And

worship, praise, and thanksgiving ascended to God, who had given them the victory.

And the closing words of Moses are most significant. His literal words were: "A hand is lifted up upon the throne of Jah: Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation" (see R.V. margin). And while that hand is up there is no doubt as to the result, for "The battle is the Lord's"; just as when Moses lifted up his hand Israel prevailed. And oh, what joy for Israel to know that hand was up for them, and would never be let down! No need for Aaron and Hur to stay it up, for Jehovah had sworn to have war with Amalek *from generation to generation*.

And oh, child of God! weary and down-hearted in the conflict with the flesh and with sin, when all the host of Hell seems to have gathered around you, bent on your downfall, then, "put on the whole armour of God," and stand, "having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of the faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, with all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit"; and lifting your eyes above and beyond the hosts of evil, by which you are surrounded, away yonder, where on Heaven's throne sits your Lord, the Captain of your salvation. And see! His hands are up, and they are up for you. You are not alone; you are not forgotten; because for you "a hand is lifted up upon the throne of Jah." And while that hand is up "the victory is ours." And loud above the turmoil and the strife let our note of victory and praise be heard: "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."



## Correspondence Department.

"Hearken to me,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
I also will answer my part.  
I also will show my opinion."

—*Job* 32. 10, 17.

*To the Editors of NEEDED TRUTH. Jan. 11th, 1898.*

It is on my heart to write and thank you for the plan for Bible Reading that you have commenced in this month's number of *Needed Truth*.

Having proved the profit of the daily portions for ten days (see Dan. 1. 12), it gives me much joy in commending the plan to others, with the hope that many may be led to adopt the same.

My time is much occupied, usually working over twelve hours a day; but I have found opportunity so far for the reading of the portions. The noon portion I have read sometimes in the dinner hour and sometimes at tea; once or twice I have divided it, part at dinner and the remainder at tea, thus getting four meals each day for my soul (spiritual food) as well as for my body.

The portions from the Epistles I have found very interesting; they have helped me in the better understanding of the Book of Genesis, and show how closely the Old and New Testaments are linked together.

Some precious thoughts and lessons have also been gathered from the Gospel by Mark.

At a meeting lately we were reminded that there are one thousand four hundred and forty (1440) minutes in each day. *Surely every Christian can spare at least the odd forty minutes for the reading of God's Word.* If not, something is sadly wrong.

How one longs to see God's children generally stirred up to devoting more time to the reading of the Scriptures! We were reminded of the value of this in the January number of *Needed Truth* last year (vol. ix., pp. 16-20 and 37-40), and I do not think I can do better in closing than ask each reader to reconsider those words.

Yours in Christ,

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## JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS.

JAMES 2. 21.

“ WAS not Abraham our father justified by works when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? ”

Can the above phrase, “justification by works,” be separated from Abraham’s belief, and therefore from his act of obedience? I think not.

There can be no justification by works apart from faith, neither is there a justification by faith without its manifestation in or by works; for, as the same Apostle says, “Faith without works is dead” (preceding verse), conclusively justification by works cannot stand alone—it is the outcome of faith (Eph. 2. 8).

The whole testimony of Hebrews 11. to the saints’ victory gives witness to works as the result of faith, or believing God; and being taught, “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Heb. 11. 6), is incontrovertible proof that there can be no works pleasing to Him but those which emanate from faith.

James argues no power in works apart from faith, but that he will show his faith by his works.

Just as a plant in nature can only manifest itself by its fruit, unless it be dead, so the child of God can but set forth his faith by works.

Hence, “justification by works” is admissible only when the outcome of faith, and then the two are harmoniously blended.

As we are taught in that same chapter (Eph. 2. 9), “Not of works, lest any man should boast,” God herein shutting out any possibility of man’s merit, lest he should be exalted before Him.

Galatians 2. 16 teaches that “man is not justified by works of law,” which can be contrasted with works of the

Spirit; but works of or through the Spirit can only result from faith, because the Holy Ghost cannot be given apart from faith. James' whole argument in his second chapter bears out the needful harmony of the two. He says in twenty-second verse how that the works but perfected the faith; also in twenty-fourth verse he distinctly implies that faith is first—last clause, "not by faith only."

It is a fundamentally important doctrine to uphold that no work can be acceptable to God apart from faith; because "Abraham believed God, it was accounted unto him for righteousness" (v. 23).

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### 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 115.—*Referring to the answer given to QUESTION 109 in NEEDED TRUTH, December, 1897, please say if the grace that the Apostle Paul received as spoken of in Romans 1. 5 is the grace that he received as a sinner, or is it the grace that he received as a saint when he approached the throne of grace to help him in time of need? See Hebrews 4. 16.*

We judge that the grace spoken of in Romans 1. 5 was neither grace received as a sinner, nor such grace as is found by all saints, but grace shown to the Apostle Paul as a servant for his special service. Compare 1 Timothy 1. 14, contrasting this verse with verse 13, and connecting it with verse 12.

C. M. L.

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## FAILURES,

### WITH CORRESPONDING DISCIPLINE.

THE manifold wisdom of God is well manifested in the revelation He has given as to the possible need in those whom He has made His own. Withal the kindness of His grace is ever apparent. Herein is shown how thoroughly He knows our frame, and remembers that we are dust. Moreover, this mind and care of God but demonstrate the need there is for us to walk in holiness before Him, as also to humble ourselves to walk in lowliness with Him. The which beget a watchfulness to keep one's own heart in the jealous consciousness that out of it are the issues of life, as also to engender that humbleness of mind that delighteth Him and profiteth us.

This parental-like training, although trying enough at times, doth, after all, but

### SHOW US THE FATHER.

Certainly, as a tree is known by its fruit, so He has blessings for us as His beloved children that in the same measure and manner we probably could not know, possess, or show, apart from this His way with, and His will for us. How very dull the conscience of a Christian can be, as also what indifference to others may possess one's heart, is searchingly legislated for by the only Lawgiver in Matthew 5. These words, we submit, are a fit introduction to what is before us in this treatise. Yea, we are bold to affirm that these very words are also such as overshadow all discipline, both as regards those that show or enact it and him or them who are the subjects thereof.

Since called to so remember, in the relationship of one's brother, how much more may we say as regards God's claims and righteousness, "If therefore thou art offering

thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

In arranging the degrees of failure with the corresponding degrees of discipline, unto possible recovery manifested by forsaking the wrong and cleaving unto the right, perhaps the circles thereof that we have learned many years ago may be cited; and thereafter, the Scriptures that warrant such a summing-up of this subject. There is, then—

(1) failure between God and one's self, which being judged and confessed unto Him is forgiven, and the self-examined one cleansed by Him, which ends the matter. Then there is possibly (2) failure against one's brother or neighbour, which is owned to, and forgiven by the one wronged, and there ends. There is (3) possible failure IN THE ASSEMBLY of God (that one is of), which on being pointed out is repented of and forsaken, and there ends. Lastly, there is possibly (4) failure AGAINST the assembly (church) in and of which one is, that confessed thereto, and being forgiven thereby, is blotted out, and stands no longer against him that did the wrong. We suggest—

For (1) John 13. 10; 1 John 1. 8, 9, 10.

The alternative of which is, 1 Cor. 11. 30, 31, 32.

For (2) Matt. 18. 15 in the light of verses 21-35 of the same chapter.

Matt. 18. 16 in the light of 1 Cor. 6. 1-9.

The alternative of these is Matt. 18. 17, 18.

For (3) Gal. 6. 1-5; 1 Thess. 5. 14, 15.

The alternative of which is 2 Thess. 3. 6-15.

For (4) Moral Delinquency—

1 Cor. 5. 9-13. Supported by 2 Cor. 7. 8-12, also chap. 2. 1-11.

Doctrinal Errors—

Gal. 2. 18, with which compare James 5. 19, 20.

And note 1 John 5. 16, 17.

Titus 3. 10, 11. Remember well 1 Cor. 11. 19, with  
2 Cor. 10. 18.

Rev. 2. 14, 15, who hold wrong doctrine and there-  
fore not to be kept in the assembly.

As witnesseth—"I have against thee, because thou  
hast there them."

Rev. 2. 20. Who teach wrong doctrine.

Suffering, instead of refusing, such.

Therefore, I, saith the Son of God,  
have against thee.

With which compare Matt. 21. 12, 13, and chap.  
23. 38, 39, and 24. 1, which show when He  
could not purge out the wrong-doers, and their  
wrong, He could, and did, outpurge Himself.  
Demonstrating that what had been God's  
House is now no longer such. To all which  
Acts 20. 28-31; 1 Tim. 1. 3, 18, 19 and 20;  
2 Tim. 1. 15; 2 Tim. 2. 14-26, with Rev. 2. 1,  
stand in solemn and instructive counterpart.

Besides, let 1 Pet. 2. 21-25 not be forgotten.

The "modus operandi" of all the foregoing we may follow  
up by-and-bye in His goodwill.<sup>1</sup>

JOHN BROWN.

<sup>1</sup> Meantime we entreat a most careful perusal in connection with  
this article of the one on similar lines from the pen of our beloved  
co-worker under God, Dr. Luxmoore, and which appears in our present  
issue, entitled "The Dispensation of the Grace of God."—J. B.

## LORD CHRIST.

BEFORE the Revised Version was issued, we only found this sublime title in one place in our English Bible—namely, Colossians 3. 24. We find it now as well in Romans 16. 18. It is connected with service in both instances, a fact which is not without significance. In the former Scripture it is positive service: "Ye serve the Lord Christ"; in the latter it is negative: "They serve not." Bearing in mind what has been written concerning both these titles of which our present one is a combination, it will not be difficult to find a clue to the distinctive teaching attaching to this. Unquestionably the emphasis is laid here upon the title "Lord." In Colossians it will be observed that the passage is addressed to servants: "Servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord: whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the

## LORD CHRIST"

(Col. 3. 22-24, R.V.). It will be observed how frequently the title *Lord* occurs in these few verses.

The service here spoken of was bond-service—very different from the service of the present day—in many cases hard and trying, without any appreciation from master or man. How natural for such to shirk their duty, doing their work superficially, merely making sure that, to the casual observation of their masters, it would pass inspection, and that their deception would not be discovered! Such were reminded that it was not only an earthly master they were serving, but One who was at once proprietor of master and of servant (see Rom. 14. 9), and that if they served faithfully,

they would most certainly one day receive a reward from their Heavenly Master.

We would suggest that "Christ" here speaks of the riches which are laid up in Him, as we read of the unsearchable riches of Christ, out of which unsearchable riches He will abundantly reward those who, in faithfulness to Him, as Lord, have patiently endured in much toil, serving in obedience to their earthly masters; and also that it points on to that day when all rewards for faithful service will be given, and in view of which all service must be done: "the day of Christ" (Phil. 1. 10; 2. 16), this being the period in which the judgment-seat of Christ will be set (2 Cor. 5. 10).

In a superficial day like the present, one continual hurry and bustle, when there is so much eyeservice—that is, seeking to please men (compare Gal. 1. 10); where work is done so as to bring in quick returns, the future, even by Christians, being little contemplated; and when serving for love is well nigh a thing of the past, how such Scriptures as these ought to be turned up again and again, and prayerfully pondered by all of us, who, in whatsoever position we may be placed, are also bond-servants, serving the *Lord Christ*, remembering the injunction, "Whatsoever ye do, work heartily as<sup>1</sup> unto the Lord, and not unto men!" To those who work thus (whether it be under an earthly master—albeit it be to the *Lord Christ*—in the most menial things of earth, even to the very sweeping of the dust from under the mat; or whether it be directly responsible to the Lord Christ in any service) the recompense of the reward is awaiting—which will more than amply repay for all trouble and hardship endured—not looking for appreciation or thanks from men. May such kind of service be ours!

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

<sup>1</sup> Let the *as* be well noted here.



## THE DISPENSATION OF THE GRACE OF GOD.<sup>1</sup>

WE read in the fourth book of Moses<sup>2</sup> that the fighting men of the Israelites numbered 601,730. This did not include the Levites<sup>3</sup> nor the women and children; so that the whole of the people could not have been less than a million of souls, and may very likely have reached two million (2,000,000).

To this immense company of people at the close of the fortieth year from the date of the Exodus the veteran leader prepared to deliver<sup>4</sup> a solemn and final charge ere he was gathered to his fathers. How striking and unique were the circumstances! As he had neared the close of his eightieth year he had groaned over what appeared a wasted life;<sup>5</sup> at this very epoch<sup>6</sup> Jehovah his God had appeared unto him, and sent him to do a work the like of which the world had never seen—to effect a deliverance which in the fearsomeness of its execution and the perfectness of its result was only excelled when the Greater than Moses destroyed him who was greater than Pharaoh. For forty years he had led the people through the desert, in which for their sin and unbelief they were compelled to wander. And now at the ripe age of one hundred and

<sup>1</sup> The subject of this article has been suggested to the writer by two or three questions addressed to him. But he thinks the matter can be better dealt with in an article than within the limits of an answer to a question. In consideration of the great importance of the subject, his fellow-editors deem it well to say that this article has their hearty approval.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers 26. 51.

<sup>3</sup> 23,000 males, verse 62.

<sup>4</sup> Deut. 1. 3. How he could reach such a vast number of people is an instructive subject to consider, but at the present moment we leave it for our younger readers to search out.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. 90.

<sup>6</sup> Exod. 3. and following chapters; see especially 7. 7.

twenty years, with eyes undimmed and natural force unabated, this man, the greatest of all the leaders that the world has ever known, must go down into Sheol and never enter the promised land, for which he yearned, never cross the Jordan stream, to which by the good hand of his God upon him he had safely brought the people.

Therefore well may the people hearken to their lawgiver and their king ere those lips be silent in death.

And well may all thoughtful disciples of the Lord Jesus ponder all the words spoken by such a leader at such a time, and far more because we know that he spake as moved by the Spirit of God, and that the words were written for our learning, as well as for the earthly people to whom they were spoken.<sup>1</sup>

In the earliest of these words of Moses recorded in his fifth Book<sup>2</sup> he reminds his hearers of the appointment of wise men—men of understanding, men who were already known as such—to be heads over the Tribes of Israel. He then goes on to recite the charge which he had given to the judges, who (it seems to me) were some or all of the wise men just named. They were to hear causes and judge righteously, not to respect persons nor be afraid of man.

After recalling the circumstances that led to the wilderness wanderings, and recounting some of their journeys during these forty years, Moses proceeds<sup>3</sup> to set before the people the Statutes and the Judgments, that they might do them and live. We shall direct attention to a few only of the many things herein set forth—namely, such especially as bear on the manner in which justice was to be administered.

First, then, we may note the case of a prophet or a dreamer of dreams who might arise to lead away the

See 1 Cor. 10. 1-13, noting the R.V. marginal readings of verses 6, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 1. 9-18.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 4.

people.<sup>1</sup> Moses does not say that such a man would be taken away from them by the direct judgment of God, but "that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death."

Next Moses says,<sup>2</sup> "If thy brother entice thee, Let us go and serve other gods . . . thou shalt surely kill him ; thine hand . . . first . . . afterwards the hand of all the people."

Then comes<sup>3</sup> the case of a city which has been drawn away, and which after diligent enquiry, if found guilty, is to be utterly destroyed.

In the three cases just named little is said as to the manner of procedure, how guilt is to be established, and so forth. Later on Moses says,<sup>4</sup> Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates . . . they shall judge the people."

Then, again,<sup>5</sup> in the case of the worship of false gods diligent enquiry is commanded, and it is definitely stated that "At the mouth of two witnesses or three witnesses shall he that is to die be put to death : at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. The hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people."

We understand that this ordinance was to be read into the judgments in the previous parts of the book. For instance, the dreamer of dreams they were previously told<sup>6</sup> was to be put to death, but now it is made plain that there must be two or three witnesses in order that he may be convicted. If what we have just said is not clear in the light of what we read in chapter 17. 6, 7, then surely chapter 19. 15 is sufficient to establish it.

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 13. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 13. 12-18.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 17. 2-7.

<sup>4</sup> Deut. 13. 6, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Deut. 16. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Deut. 13. 1-5.

We pass to the case<sup>1</sup> of the stubborn and rebellious son. The father and mother are to lay hold on him and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place, and there and then bear witness against him, whereupon all the men of his city shall stone him with stones. It appears that here, too, we have procedure commanded which was generally applicable in large measure. The witnesses were they who knew the facts of the case from personal experience, but they were not the judges—the elders of the city were the judges. Then the place of judgment was the public place, the gate of the city. But when witness had been borne by the witnesses and conviction established to the satisfaction of the judges, then in the punishment decreed all the men of the city were to take part—not in witnessing, nor in judging, but in punishing.

We submit that if the cases mentioned above are read together<sup>2</sup> they give a concise account of the procedure which Moses ordained, and that only as they are so read together can we properly understand any one of them.

If we turn from the laws of Moses to the dispensation of the grace of God, we ask, what help does our knowledge of the former yield to our understanding of the latter? That in the house of God to-day there must be rule of God is unquestionable; that the sins that have to be dealt with, and the punishments to be awarded, are, to a great extent, different, is true; but, in the light of Philippians 4. 8, we deem the passages in Deuteronomy worthy of most atten-

<sup>1</sup> Deut. 21. 18.

<sup>2</sup> And with those which for brevity's sake we have omitted. Much of what Moses spake had reference to Divine judgments that would fall upon the people directly from God in case of their apostasy. To this portion of the book we have perhaps been accustomed to pay more especial attention. We would strongly urge the expediency of an attentive consideration of those passages which exhibit the manner in which the Israelities were enjoined to deal with those crimes which called for discipline at the hands of man.

tive consideration, that we may, at the very least, search the New Testament, and especially the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline epistles, either for confirmation of the suggestion that these things are to be imitated, or for evidence that they are abrogated.

The points in Deuteronomy to which we desire to draw especial attention are (1) The need of two or three witnesses; (2) The responsibility of the elders of the city as judges; (3) The co-operation of the men of the city, or the people as a whole, in inflicting punishment in certain cases.

As to (1) Matthew 18. 16 is so plain that I think we need look no further. The Lord Himself cites the words, and applies them to the case of discipline of which He is speaking. But this very fact confirms the thought that we are entitled to refer to Deuteronomy for guidance. For if it be a question of what is sin, the Lord said,<sup>1</sup> "It hath been said to them of old time, . . . but I say unto you"; that is, He establishes a higher standard of conduct altogether than Moses had enjoined. When again it was a question of punishment,<sup>2</sup> Moses had said, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth"; but He said, "Resist not evil," "forgive." But here, when it is a question of judicial procedure, He simply cites the Mosaic law to confirm it. In the face of which it would need, I think, very strong evidence to show that any of those safeguards with which the administration of justice had been fenced in Moses' day were set aside in the law of the house of God to-day.

(2) Let us consider next the responsibility of the elders of the city to act as judges. Is there in the administration of the law of God in the churches of God anything answering hereto? To make this question plain, let us put it in the reverse form. Is it that the whole assembly is responsible in a case of discipline to judge whether an accused

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5. 21-48.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 5. 38, 39, and elsewhere.

person is guilty or not? Will any one maintain such a proposition? Suppose, to make the matter clear, that the alleged sin is one of immorality, will any one affirm that every one in the assembly is to hear each of the witnesses? that these are to be cross-questioned, as may needs be, before the whole assembly of men, women, and children? The idea is monstrous. We maintain, on the contrary, that the overseeing men in the assembly are responsible to act together as a united whole in such a matter, to hear and determine, according to Divine principles of justice, what the facts are, and what the law of the house of God is, as bearing on the definite matter in hand; and then to convey to the assembly the conclusions to which they have arrived, as God may help, with demonstration of the Holy Spirit. We do not know anything that can be said against this, or any scripture of New Testament teaching the contrary, and we regard 1 Thessalonians 5. 12-15 as distinctly confirmatory.

It is clear from this scripture that certain ones in the assembly are recognisable as those that labour among the saints, are over (or in the front of) the saints, and admonish the saints. These brethren are exhorted, not only to admonish and encourage, and so forth, but they are bidden to see that none render unto any one evil for evil. They are, therefore, not only to exhort, they are responsible to rule for God. Does not 1 Timothy 3. prove this also?<sup>1</sup> Is it not clear, in the many places where oversight work is spoken of, that the responsibility of judging between good and evil rests upon the overseeing men? And if in the lesser cases they are to hear and to judge, are less wise ones to usurp their place where the utmost penalty has to be exacted, and the church has to put the sinning one out from her midst?

It may be suggested that our Lord in Matthew 18. 15-17

<sup>1</sup> See especially verses 4, 5.

is instituting a new method of judicial procedure; we do not regard it in that light at all. The Lord says, "If thy brother sin against thee." Under the Mosaic law, if my brother sinned against me, I should go to the judges, and they would punish him at once, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, and so forth. Now, on the contrary, I am to be ready to forgive him. But lest that might lead some evildoers to sin more abundantly, we have this provision—"Go, show him his fault," first alone, then with one or two more. And up to this point the whole thing is private; the elderhood as a whole may hear nothing of it (though often an overseer will be the best man for one to take with him). Now if he hears the matter is at end. But suppose he refuse, then and not till then is the matter brought to the church (this answers to the gate of the city); and if the church hearing (through its ears) and speaking (through its mouth), the man still refuses to hear, then, not only or chiefly for the sin originally committed, but for rebellion, must he suffer the extreme penalty, and be put into the outside place, he dead to us and we to him. Thus that which is new is not the judicial procedure, but that which precedes it—the opportunity given for repentance and the like.

It is well known that some ancient authorities omit the words, "against thee," in Matthew 18. 15; but if even the words were omitted, we judge that they are implied. It will be clear, we suppose, to all our readers that this passage is totally inapplicable to the case of a man who is a railer, or a fornicator, or the like; for the letters to Corinth<sup>1</sup> clearly show that the place for such an one to repent is without. Far, far less does it apply to one who is a teacher of false doctrine, as the letters to Timothy<sup>2</sup> clearly manifest.

<sup>1</sup> Compare especially 1 Cor. 5. with 2 Cor. 2. 5-11.

<sup>2</sup> Note particularly 1 Tim. 1. 18-20; 2 Tim. 2. 14-26.

Again the Lord had clearly told<sup>1</sup> what one should do who had sinned against his brother, as well as what one should do against whom a brother had sinned. Yet 1 Corinthians 6. needed to be written. For the Lord had not in His recorded spoken words stated explicitly what was to be done in such a case as this provides for. But it will be noted that Paul, to whom the dispensation of the grace of God was given, who was authorized by the Lord Christ to make known His will for the Churches of God, does not really introduce any new procedure.<sup>2</sup> He simply insists on disputes among the saints being heard and determined by wise men among them.

So also as to one overtaken in a fault, it is they who are spiritual who are exhorted to restore him.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, in many cases, the naughty child is recovered by a few words from the mother, anon the father's help has to be called and severe discipline may be needed, but if all means fail and the elders who sit in the gate of the city are satisfied that the son will not hear, then the solemn final penalty calls for the co-operation of the still larger circle.

(3) It is plain that it is only a church of God that can put away, as it is only a church of God that can receive, and it is equally clear that both reception and exclusion must be carried out when the church is in church—that is, when gathered into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with His power, He being present in the midst.

This does not, in the smallest degree, entitle the assembly, or any section of the assembly, to usurp the functions of the overseers, or to refuse to obey the word of the Lord in

<sup>1</sup> See Matt. 5. and 18.

<sup>2</sup> It is a great mistake to suppose, as some seem to do, that the Mosaic economy was an altogether faulty system. Hebrews 8. does not so teach. It was a Divine institution, and has only been abrogated in so far as it is inconsistent with the better things of the New Covenant, no further.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. 6. 1.



the matter on hand. The responsibility of the overseers is to make plain what the Lord's will and word is, as well as what the facts are; and any in the assembly is entitled to make private enquiry of them, or even to remonstrate with them, if it is believed that they are erring; but this enquiry or remonstrance, of course, would be made privately, at a time and place appointed for the purpose. It indeed behoves overseers to be patient and gentle with all. But nothing ought to be allowed to interfere with the obedience of the assembly to that which is the will of the Lord. And it seems clear to us that New Testament Scripture fully agrees with Old in throwing the special responsibility of judgment on those who lead the flock. Too often when persons in an assembly profess to be incredulous, and claim that they have a right to be satisfied, nothing but rebellion against God's rule is in their hearts. As, alas! in some cases it is evident that nothing but rebellion against rule of any sort brought them out from the sect wherein aforetime they were.

We cannot be too clear upon the point that none of us have any rights to insist upon save one or two—our rights as guilty sinners to sin's fearsome doom, our rights as ransomed sinners to obey the word of the Lord.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

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### 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 116.—*How are we to understand 2 Tim. 2, 12, "If we deny Him, He also will deny us"?*

This chapter is specially treating of apostasy, and those who have erred from the truth. This must be kept in mind when considering verse 12. Paul is speaking of believers—a man cannot err from the truth who has never been in the truth. Also we must notice that life in Christ is not the subject treated of, but reward. In verse 8

the apostle is specially approaching the subject on his mind—namely, the resurrection, which some asserted had already taken place. Verse 11, "If we died (R.V.), we shall also live"—the dying with Him was accomplished at the cross (Gal. 2. 20); our living with Him will be fully accomplished at the coming resurrection. Thus the apostle combats the error of the resurrection passed. Then in verse 12, "If we suffer." Suffering and rejection is the present portion of the Lord's people (see also Rom. 8. 17). The *if* here is connected with being glorified together. Therefore, if sufferers *with* Him, we shall reign with Him; but if we deny Him, He will deny us—not deny us eternal life, for that we have as in Him. Our life is hid with Christ. He cannot deny Himself, but He can and will deny us the reigning with Him if unfaithful in the present age. Our position in the kingdom will be according to our faithfulness to our rejected Lord. There will be those in the kingdom who have been made partakers of eternal life, but are saved so as by fire.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 117.—"*There is therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8. 1). *Who are meant here? Does it mean every born-again one or certain born-again ones?*

Undoubtedly this passage refers to all those who through faith have been made partakers of eternal life. We must remember that the epistles are addressed to those who are where they ought to be—that is, in Church and Churches of God. No provision is made in Scripture for the present apostasy; that is, no provision for Christians who wilfully remain in it. If this is borne in mind, we think it will greatly help in the solution of many such questions as the above.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 118.—*What are we to understand by the following expressions: "Our old man was crucified with Christ," and "We died with Christ"* (Rom. 6. 6, 8)?

By natural generation, as sons of Adam, we inherit from him a corrupt evil nature, ever prone to sin—the old man, as it is here called. This old man put his neck under the heel of sin and Satan and accepted service as his vassal when Adam hearkened to the serpent's lie. And since the wages of sin is death, the enslaved one ever becomes more completely under the power of the grim triple alliance of Satan, sin, and world. Seeing, however, that He who alone could overcome death suffered death, death the wages of sin, each believer has received once and for all completely the wages of sin, which unbelievers go on to receive ever and without end. It follows that the death of Christ (not the death of Jesus, be it noted) was a death to sin (Rom. 6. 10) of all those of whom He is the head. Thus

sin becomes powerless as a lord—"The chains of sin are broken and I am free." The old man died—that is, an end is put to every claim that the old man has. Just as Satan was destroyed at the Cross, and yet exists even now doing his deadly work, so the old man, though judicially slain at the Cross, still has an existence, but is to be kept constantly trodden under foot. See the whole of the chapter for a correct grasp of the subject.

C. M. L.

QUESTION 119.—*Were the Apostles or all those in the upper room at Jerusalem baptized with Christian baptism? If not, why not? See 1 Peter 3, 21, R. V.*

It is clear from the fourth chapter of the Gospel according to John that the Lord Jesus baptized His disciples. Therefore, we believe that all in the upper room (Acts. 1.) had been so baptized as His disciples. The same baptism was carried out on the Day of Pentecost, in the Lord's absence, by His disciples, guided by the Holy Spirit, in the Name of Jesus Christ, and into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. We say the same baptism because it was baptism of disciples of the Lord Jesus as His disciples; yet in some sort it was not the same baptism, for the Lord was absent, and there were other differences. Up to this point, and for a good while longer, the word Christian was unknown. We cannot, therefore, call the above Christian baptism. Much later on baptism was carried out still identical with the above, in that it was a baptism of disciples of the Lord Jesus, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, and in the Name of Jesus Christ, as well as, we are assured, into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and especially into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ; but differing from baptism as previously administered by this most important feature, that it was only permissible for such as had already received the Holy Spirit (see Acts 10.). Baptism during the Lord's life on earth had no special association with the Holy Spirit. From the Day of Pentecost to the conversion of Cornelius it was followed by the reception of the Holy Spirit. Christian baptism is an expression that, as we judge, is only applicable to the baptism in water of those who have already received the Spirit of promise. Nevertheless, baptism of disciples of the Lord Jesus as disciples, by disciples, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, is identical as to its validity, whether performed during the Lord's days on earth, between Pentecost and the full revelation of Christian doctrine, or after the dispensation of the grace of God had been fully declared by the steward thereof—the Apostle Paul.

C. M. L.

## Correspondence.

"Hearken to me,

\* \* \* \*

I also will answer my part.

I also will show my opinion."—*Job* 32. 10, 17.

### OVERSEERS AND THEIR WORK

VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.<sup>1</sup>

IN contributing another to the many references to the subject of overseers and their work, it is almost needless to apologize, so much has already been advanced. That, however, is the real justification for another word. It is because so much—too much, indeed—has been said it is necessary in the interest of the "Truth" to yet say more. It is desirable always to bear in mind that we know nothing yet as we ought to know it, and that however fully we may feel convinced of that being truth which we hold, maturer judgment, formed by deeper research, may bring about a change in our thoughts and belief. There are none of us who have received upon the tables of our hearts the truth only, nothing but the truth, and who need no rubbing out of human additions, or corrections of ill-formed ideas. "Teach me. . . . Lead me. . . . Show me" (*Ps.* 25.) surely should be our constant prayer as we seek after the wisdom of God.

The Scriptures which deal with overseers and their work are the

<sup>1</sup> In inserting this communication from our beloved friend and brother Mr. Charles Morton, it is desirable to explain that we do so from a desire to give him opportunity for God-fearing discussion on a matter upon which he dissents from what we have taught in these pages. It is necessary, therefore, that we should state explicitly that, whilst there is much contained in this present article, especially as to the qualifications and duties of overseers, with which we are in the heartiest agreement (and which will all be found in the pages of this periodical), we do not at all approve of the article as a whole, and do not see any reason to swerve from the line of teaching contained in the articles on the Rule of God by one of our number, which appeared in Volume 8. of *NEEDED TRUTH*. We would earnestly press on our readers the careful reconsideration of the subject of those articles with the Word of God.

The comments on Mr. Morton's paper which we have appended as footnotes are mainly taken from a letter which we sent to him on September 17th, 1897, after reading a manuscript draft of his article, which was returned to him at his request for revision.

[J. A. B., J. B., C. M. L.]

Acts and the Epistles. There we must very specially look for guidance, as they deal with saints in this dispensation.

In saying this we do not overlook the example given us in John 10. of the "Good Shepherd," nor of the care for the lambs and sheep which was to spring out of the appeal to Peter's affection as seen in John 21.; but we repeat, it is in the Acts and Epistles we must look for particular guidance on this subject. And this remark leads me to further add that we must be careful in the application of what is said of elders in a past economy, and of interpretations of the symbolic elders (Rev. 4., 5.) in a coming age.<sup>1</sup> That all Scripture is for our profit, written for our learning and admonition, is thankfully owned, but to attach the principles connected with Old Testament elders to the New Testament overseers is to make (in the writer's judgment) a great mistake: and to lose sight of the differences between the requirements of the law<sup>2</sup> and the later revelations of the "Faith" (Gal. 3. 23).

In what way does Scripture present to us "Overseers" in this dispensation?

As men, made overseers by the *Holy Spirit*.

As men who have *hearts* for the saints.

As those who have *intelligence* to guide.

As those who are *exemplary* in their lives.

Able to *govern themselves*, rule in their *own homes*, take care of the Church of God, doctrinally correct themselves and able to teach others, and last, though not least, men of patience toward all (see 1 Thess. 5.; 1 Tim. 3.; Titus 1.; Heb. 13.). Such is the picture the Holy Spirit draws of those given by God to rule in the assemblies of saints.

Let that picture be studied in the presence of God, and studied fully, even though it lessens the number who presumably are doing oversight work, and humbles all who are truly pastors given to the flock. It will in no wise hinder, though it constrains to lowlier thoughts and less frequent expressions of being overseeing men. The work will not suffer on that account, nor will it frustrate the Spirit's operation in putting desire into hearts to care for fellow-saints like as in case of Titus (2 Cor. 8. 16), and commended in 1 Timothy 3.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> No doubt we must be careful, but when must we not be careful? Does not the writer here practically set aside Romans 15. 4, though verbally quoting it?

<sup>2</sup> The writer here appears to speak as if Moses had originated the idea of elders; whereas the principle of eldership is older by far; at any rate, see Genesis 50. 7 (and see NEEDED TRUTH, Vol. 8. pp. 73, 75).

<sup>3</sup> No exception can surely be taken to this account of what overseers should be and so forth, but this raises at once the question, Are there none specially responsible to say if this one or that one may

Was it absolutely necessary to be sure of the presence of overseers before an assembly could be formed?

In speaking of the formation of an assembly of God, I would, before passing on to consider if the presence of overseers is necessary to its existence, point out the mistaken view some appear to entertain—viz., that a new assembly is formed through the already existing assemblies. Acts 11. shows the exact opposite.<sup>1</sup> The assembly in Antioch began without any such proceedings, just as the first church in Jerusalem began. That, of course, could not be received by another, so Antioch was led by the same Spirit to act in the same way, and saints were together gathered of God, before assemblies heard of it.<sup>2</sup> “When tidings reached,” then came the care of the older church at Jerusalem, and the help of a Barnabas who saw the grace and was glad. So now, as we come to see and know of the work of God in bringing together, apart from any permit or reception by assemblies, we recognise<sup>3</sup> the work of God which has preceded us, and gladly unite with those whom God has gathered.

There is nothing in Scripture to warrant the idea that overseers are necessary to the existence of an assembly. The only presence to be sure of is the Lord's in the midst, and this *is* assured: “Where two or three are gathered together in My name” (Matt. 18.). And there is no requirement that any one of those few should be an overseer.

Then Acts 14. 21, 23 tells us of Paul and Barnabas ordaining—*i.e.* choosing elders in every church; but it has to be noted this took place

be regarded as according to the Divine pattern? Or, May any assume themselves to be called of God to this work?

<sup>1</sup> Does it? Were not Peter and his companions, then, in and of an assembly when they went to Cæsarea, and gave the expression of fellowship they did by eating with Gentiles?

<sup>2</sup> Yes; but was it not through the testimony of those scattered abroad from Jerusalem (Acts 11. 19)? And even so was there no *need* for Barnabas to be sent?

<sup>3</sup> Who recognise? Why and how? and if unable to recognise what then? We long ago published the following:—“They neither asked nor wished for fellowship at the beginning of their assembly existence, but, once begun, they expect, as a matter of course, that their letters of commendation will be received, and their acts of discipline respected, by the churches of God throughout the world. It is easier to sneer at other brethren who are supposed to ‘beg leave before they can meet in a new place’ than to explain by what right men who repudiate all fellowship when they are about to found a meeting can, when they choose, force themselves and their doings upon the assemblies they have ignored.”

on their return journey, when revisiting the disciples they had made on the previous visit.<sup>1</sup> "They returned again . . . confirming" (see verse 21). Therefore churches existed without the elders between those visits, and show churches began ere elders were raised up for them. Further, in Titus 1. 5, we see how Titus was left in Crete to set in order things which were wanting, and ordain elders. So churches began in Crete without the elders, for the appointment of elders was an after act of Titus.<sup>2</sup>

It is well to remember that elders were men who partly by reason of their years were men of experience. The very term elder carries with it that thought; age was an item to be considered in the appointment of men as elders,<sup>3</sup> and further, the appointment of elders was an apostolic act,<sup>4</sup> or one carried out by the apostles' deputies. We have only two instances of such appointment (see Acts 14. and Titus 1.). Where apostles did not reach, or those deputed by them had not come, we have no account of elders being ordained (see Epistle to Rome), and in some churches where apostles had been there is no mention of elders, as, for instance, in Corinth and Thessalonica, yet at Rome among the saints there were those who ruled, hence the exhortation, chap. 12., "He that ruleth with diligence," and the assembly in Thessalonica had men caring for saints, therefore the injunction to the saints to know them who were over them in the Lord, and the exhortation to brethren, not as elders, but simply, "Brethren, warn them . . . comfort . . . support," etc. (1 Thess. 5.).<sup>5</sup>

While, therefore, in the Apostolic Age we have in some churches

<sup>1</sup> Certainly; but the apostles who planted these churches, were they not elders? Did they not shepherd the little flock? 1 Pet. 5. 1.

<sup>2</sup> How can the writer know that no elders had anything to do with planting those assemblies? Of course, none could be chosen out of an assembly as elders till the assembly was formed.

<sup>3</sup> Does the writer mean age in the flesh, or in the faith? How long could those have been converted who were appointed elders in Lystra? See Acts 14. 8, 23.

<sup>4</sup> Yes, the appointment was, certainly. But are there no elders except by appointment? The writer seems to say not. But where is the proof? We do not read of elders being appointed in Rome, Corinth, Thessalonica. Neither do we read that they were not. We do not read that elders were appointed in Ephesus, but we do read that there were elders there; and not only there, but throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia. Why not then in Macedonia, Achaia Italy?

<sup>5</sup> The writer must here surely lose sight of the fact that the first letter to Thessalonians was certainly one of the first, probably the very first letter written by the Apostle Paul; namely, while he was in

elders appointed, in other churches we have none, yet those churches which lacked elders were not without their helping ones. The Holy Spirit made overseers, care was put into the hearts of some for others, and those more in advance helped the rest in the measure of their ability.

If it be contended that assemblies must have elders,<sup>1</sup> then I submit, if the suggestion is correct, that elders must be men of sufficient age to warrant that description that many churches must cease, for they have not the men among them whose age could entitle them being regarded as elders, and in those assemblies which have aged men possessing the qualifications, such as 1 Timothy 3. points out, such ones cannot be elders in the sense of appointment, seeing it would require some one to assume Apostolic power, or the authority of Apostolically deputed ones for the work of appointing.

I submit we have no elderhood now as it formerly existed,<sup>2</sup> that the only way in which the term elder can be rightly used in our day is that of age in contradistinction to younger ones; but we may find our help in similar ways to those churches of Apostolic times, who while lacking the appointed elders had some who laboured among them, and were over them in the Lord, whether as elder or younger ones.

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Corinth (Acts 18. 5; see 1 Thess. 3. 6). So that, according to our friend's showing, one of the earliest assemblies (a typical instance of the new assemblies planted by Paul) had no elderhood just at the very early date, when, according to his view, the elderhood was in vogue. Then what are we to suppose was the time when elders and an elderhood were Divine institutions in the churches? see 1 Timothy 4. 14. Surely, if ever there was a time when there was a definitely formed elderhood in the churches, it was when the apostle wrote to church at Thessalonica, and the writer must prove there were no appointed elders there before there is any force in the argument that they were exhorted "to know them who were over them, . . . not as elders."

<sup>1</sup> We did not know that any one taught that an assembly must of necessity have elders in it. But perhaps the emphasis here is on the word elder? Call them elders or overseers, which you like; if there are none in an assembly, surely that is not to mean that the assembly is not to be ruled and shepherded! or truly we have left Open Brethren in vain, as also read our Bibles in vain.

<sup>2</sup> No proof is given of this. The writer would surely grant at once that Revelation, chapters 1, 2, 3, clearly teach that in each of the seven churches in the remnant times in which that book was written there was a distinct recognisable circle of rule. "To the angel of the church." Wherein then was this circle of rule of those remnant days so different from the elderhood of earlier times that it could not rightly be called elderhood?



What is the work of such who labour among the saints in assemblies? --

The work is indicated by the name given to them. They are spoken of as "overseers" (Acts 20. 28), made such by the Holy Spirit. Therefore the exhortation, "Taking the oversight," etc., and the reason for obedience to them is because "they *watch* for your souls." This suggests a godly acquaintance with each one committed to their care, like unto that of the Good Shepherd, who said, "I know My sheep," and in that knowledge of them ministering to their need, entering into the varied experiences of joy and sorrow, need and trial, weakness and wrong, and helping as help is needed. Again, "the guides," marginal reading in Hebrews 13. for them who rule. Having been guided by God themselves able to guide others. Not to drive, but to go before. Not to act apart from the assembly, but with, and as showing the way. That guidance given by the Scriptures, not a blind adhesion to something men require, but the guides pointing out from the Scriptures what is required and the saints obeying the truth, and therefore following the guides who have spoken unto them the Word of God, thereby giving the guidance. The guides must be men of intelligence, able to teach; if not their blind followers of a blind guide must fall into the ditch. Then their work is definitely stated.<sup>1</sup> Warning the unruly, comforting the feeble-minded, supporting the weak, feeding the flock, etc. They are to be examples to the flock, their lives exhibiting in actions what their lips teach. Their eyes for the saints in taking oversight, their lips speaking the Word, and all this because of saints having their hearts, "Ye were dear unto us." This is not the training and labour of a drill ground, or the discipline of an army trained to do what it is told; but on the one part a service constrained by love to those served for love of the Master Himself, and obedience on the other rendered in the spirit of John 14., "If ye love Me, keep My commandments."

How were the labouring ones known, and how could they be recognised?

They became known by the excellency of their character, and recognised through the efficiency of their work. 1 Thessalonians 5.; 1 Timothy 3.; Titus 1.; Hebrews 13., are plain as to what the character should be. A bishop, then, *must be*, etc., and then follows item after item of what is absolutely needful in one who is to be regarded as a guide. Any Christian may be, and every Christian ought to be, holy, seemly, and good; but an overseer in the Church of God *must be* what is here inculcated (see 1 Tim. 3. 2). He must be able to rule himself, he must be able to rule his family, and so show fitness to

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<sup>1</sup> What are the duties of the elderhood that are not to be carried out by those called guides throughout this paragraph?

take care of the Church of God. If the tests of Scripture are not met satisfactorily, better, far better to refrain from any assumption of place which is not taken rightly as from God.

The guide must show himself to be such by his guidance; the overseer by watchful care. The condition of the flock reflects often the character of those who shepherd them, and the shepherd is seen in their well-being, and the guide in the correctness of their way.

The recognition of labouring ones came through their labours, "Know them who labour among you." Who *labour*, that is the way to get recognition. "A man's gift maketh room for him."

There is no need for any formal act of recognition<sup>1</sup> by the rest of the labouring ones, either in the assembly or beyond, or by the assembly itself, or other assemblies in conjunction. The labour, oversight, speaking the Word, watching for souls, does its own work in making such labouring ones known, and where there is real heart for the work there will be no cause to fear lack of recognition.

Then with regard to some who are considered as overseeing in some little measure in one place, when removing to other spheres being still regarded as overseers, it has to be noted that in this day of small things there are some assemblies which are very feeble, extremely feeble, and that those who seek to locally care for them are not very far in advance of them. It is the circumstance of the assembly's weakness which has given the labouring ones there the place they have. Those thus serving in the measure of their ability are surely to be valued, and the measure of their service thankfully accepted; but if they are encouraged to regard themselves as overseeing men wherever they go, and particularly if induced to believe they belong to an imagined elderhood, surely such will come to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, and if so, who can tell what disaster will follow? No; in the tiny measure of their local service, in the circumstances of the extreme feebleness of the assembly where they happen to live, they find a place, which on change of residence ceases, as they discover themselves among those who, while not presumably doing oversight work, are far more advanced in the knowledge of the truth and abler work.

Did the overseers act separately from the assembly? In matters relating to the assembly overseeing ones met separately to consider them (see Acts 15. 6); but their *action* was with the assembly of

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<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to know what is meant by a formal act of recognition, but if a brother in an assembly who was everything that a bishop should not be, according to 1 Timothy 3., came for the first time to a meeting of overseers, should they not refuse his fellowship in the work of oversight? But if they have no power to receive one into their number, they can have no power to reject.

which they were part.<sup>1</sup> Whatever consultation was necessary for their united guidance of the flock they are always seen as *acting* with the church. This is indicated in Acts 6. 2, "Then the *twelve* called the multitude and said," etc. They went to the assembly as twelve, they were united as to the thing to be done; but *they* do not do it, they gave their advice concerning the mind of the Lord, which was acted upon, and thus overseers and assembly were together in the doing of it.

So in the case of doctrine as dealt with in Acts 15. Apostles and elders considered, but when action was taken the whole church is mentioned. "Then pleased it the apostles and elders with the whole church."

Again, with putting away and also with restoration to fellowship, it is the act of the whole assembly. "Put away from among yourselves." "Ye ought to receive Him." It is altogether a mistake to suppose that church action can be taken by a few acting as overseers,<sup>2</sup> or that such ones are to do what properly belongs to the assembly, and then to expect endorsement by the church, as if the act were its own.

When difficulties arose were they settled by the overseers? If not, how were they met? It was alone by the Word of God in which saints were instructed that difficulties were met and matters settled. Not by the overseers, not by a district or more general assemblage of guiding ones; but by God's Word, and God's Word only, whatever means He in His grace and wisdom deigned to employ in presenting that word. Therefore, when Paul exhorted the bishops of Ephesus, foretelling them of the trials which would come upon them from without and within their own midst, he did not commend them to any circle or circles of overseeing ones for the settlement; but "to God and the Word of His grace," and that is the court of appeal still.<sup>3</sup> That God does use those whom He has raised up as guides to the assembly we have seen in Acts 6. In the majority of cases, where there are God-given guides, such no doubt will be the channels of help; but we are not shut up to this one mode of guidance.

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<sup>1</sup> Is it not rather that the Church acts with the overseers? Certainly it is so in the Scriptures quoted. The Church does what it is directed to do.

<sup>2</sup> Who has ever taught that it can? The contrary has certainly been taught in NEEDED TRUTH.

<sup>3</sup> We are not aware that any one has ever suggested that a circle of overseers was to take the place of God's Word. But did God's Word not come to them through the instrumentality of God's servants? And must not the Word of God be abiding in God's servants to be effectual?

Brethren visiting the churches, and instructed themselves in the way of the Lord, may supply what local brethren lack: see as to this the constant visits of apostles to assemblies and the service of Timothy in Corinth (1 Cor. 4.), Ephesus (1 Tim. 1.), Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3.), and the exhortation to Timothy to preach the Word. Titus, Apollos, and others might also be named in this itinerating work.

Then, further, help was conveyed by letters in answer to written inquiries or otherwise from those more fully instructed in the Word (see 1 Cor. 5. 9; 7. 1). "I wrote unto you, ye wrote unto me. I wrote somewhat unto the Church" (3 John). So that in Scripture we have at least three ways in which difficulties were met.

1st, By means of a local united direction, according to Scripture, by the guides present amongst the assembly, as in Acts 6.

2nd, By the instruction conveyed as to the mind of the Lord by those visiting and confirming the saints.

3rd, By letters.<sup>1</sup>

But it may be asked, "Does not Acts 15. indicate a settlement by apostles and elders convened in Jerusalem?" We submit that what Acts 15. narrates is this, that evil doctrine, having been brought from Judea to Antioch, the church in Antioch sent forth men with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> There is no record of any appeal being made to any of the Syrian churches. No appeal to churches beyond, and which lay between them and Jerusalem, but they go direct to Jerusalem, being the actual locality whence the trouble had come, and because the help they needed would be more likely obtained there. Anyway, there is no mention of any district action to settle the Antioch difficulty, nor the bringing the whole of Syria together to settle it, or the whole of Syria going to the whole of Judea, but two widely distant assemblies deal with the differences over doctrine,<sup>3</sup> aided therein by those from each assembly, from whom guidance was usually given them.

As the Church in Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas and others

<sup>1</sup> Who was it that visited and who wrote the letters?

<sup>2</sup> There are some mistakes in this account of the 15th of Acts matter. The evil doctrine did not concern Antioch only, but Syria and Cilicia, as see verses 1 and 23 side by side. In verse 2, why does the writer read in the church? It does not say the church. Evidently the plan originated amongst the overseers. Very likely Paul or Barnabas proposed it. The church brought them on their way.

<sup>3</sup> Oh, no! it was the apostles and elders who did this; the Scripture is quite plain (see verse 6). We read of none taking part in the discussion, or even being present at a discussion, save only the apostles and elders, and Barnabas and Paul, and those with them from Antioch.

with them to Jerusalem so the Church in Jerusalem received them. It is well to note this to guard against the overlooking the place God gives to assemblies concerned, and to prevent the assumption of any Presbyterian prerogatives, and that the united judgment of apostles and elders was shared by all the saints, and there was sent a message from apostles, elders, and *the whole Church*. The expression, "whole church," showing how completely fellowship was maintained, and the entire assembly in Jerusalem<sup>1</sup> with its multitude of disciples bowed to the will of God.

But would not those far from the scene of disturbance be unable to enter into the trouble sufficiently, by reason of distance or inability to group details in the course of a short visit? and in writing to any is there not a danger of communicating with such as would be thought likely to sympathize in a partial manner?<sup>2</sup>

If Scripture shows the modes of dealing with trouble and difficulty that I have submitted it does—viz., by letter, by visits, or by the coming together of those who guide—then no possibility of failure through partiality can excuse our not availing ourselves of the help God directs us to. It is for us to accept the principles and guard against the failure in carrying them out. In what service and in what circle may we not go wrong, and as we feel this more and more it will cast us upon God that we may do nothing by partiality, but in humility seek counsel from Him to direct us, and that we may be able to guide others; but let us always remember the Word of God must settle whatever question arises, and when that Word is brought to bear upon the circumstances which have arisen it will matter little whether our knowledge of that Word comes through those near at hand or far away, the great thing is to have the heart subdued and prepared to welcome the light of the truth. Then, again, is it not the case that brethren in a locality may be so opposed to each other, and party feeling run so high, that apart from aid outside the neighbourhood, there would be little hope of adjusting matters?

I submit we have no warrant in Scripture to ask brethren anywhere to arbitrate between these and those, or to settle this or that,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The writer assumes that the expression "the whole assembly" in Acts 15. 22 means the whole assembly of God in Jerusalem. Does it not rather mean those who were together—namely, the apostles and elders, and Paul and Barnabas, and those with them from Antioch?

<sup>2</sup> That is not the point at all. Those who brought the evil doctrine came as from the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, and were themselves thereof. Hence the going there with the matter. The words "to whom we gave no commandment" are most significant and plain.

<sup>3</sup> No Scripture is given to support this teaching. What about

or to refer our difficulties to a central meeting, but in seeking and welcoming instruction through any from the Word of God, which alone can enlighten us as to our course, we do well, and according to the usages of Apostolic times.

What is to be understood by the grouping together of churches in localities, as for instance, "The seven churches which be in Asia," "The churches of Galatia," "The church of God in Corinth, with all that are in Achaia," "Church of God in Corinth, with all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord"? Are these groupings together for administrative purposes by means of representative overseers?

These churches are mentioned in this way to express the unity existing at the time they were either addressed or referred to, and as showing the mind of the Lord that in the unity of the Spirit, and the fellowship of His Son, churches of God should be together in the same doctrine and practice. As truly as all within an assembly should speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment, so assemblies within the same country and throughout the habitable earth—one Lord and one law governing throughout. "As I teach everywhere" (1 Cor. 4. 17), "ye received the word" etc. (1 Thess. 2.). So now, as the word is spoken and received, unity results. There is no word whatever in these Scriptures as to representative overseers, nor anywhere else in the New Testament teaching on the subject of overseers given to the churches, as far as the writer's knowledge of it goes.

There were messengers chosen by churches to carry gifts to poorer brethren. Barnabas and Paul were sent on a similar errand, and did deacon work (Acts 11. 29, 30). There is no suggestion of representation in this, it was simply a service in conveying the gift of fellow-saints.

If it be suggested that the choice of brethren to carry the gift of Macedonia and Achaia required some collective act of elders, when together representing churches, 1 Corinthians 16. indicates quite a different and far more convenient method, "Whomsoever ye shall approve by your *letters*, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup>

1 Corinthians 6. 1-7, Revised Version? Should the brethren having a matter not seek to the overseers of the assembly? Should one of them be entitled to hunt far and wide for a partial or an impartial judge? Is there no principle here applicable to a larger matter than a personal quarrel? Besides, Philippians 4. 8 has a bearing here. And it seems like what is called "tempting Providence" to reject all the teaching of the Old Testament on these matters, and then say there is no Scripture justifying this or providing for that.

<sup>1</sup> True, they were to approve a man by letters, but 2 Corinthians

It may be argued in God's dealings with Israel a representative elderhood acted as that of city, congregational, tribal, etc., and that is our guidance now. I submit this was a part of the Jewish economy, it had its place with other arrangements in the governmental dealings of God in those days, and no word from God marks out our liberty to sever that particular procedure from the remainder of the Jewish order and appropriate that without the rest.<sup>1</sup>

If it be said, Are not the overseeing ones the mouth of the assembly and the ears of the assembly through whom communications proceed one way or another, as implied in the expressions "Hear the Church," "Tell it unto the Church" (Matt 18.), I submit this does not necessarily carry with it the representative idea. That guiding ones are channels through whom messages may be conveyed is surely true enough, though not the only channels, but to insist that this means representation, and then to expand this deduction into a district representation, and then further into a national representation, I do not believe to be Scriptural. And if it be urged that this imagined office and duty lies contemplated in the exhortation to elders of Ephesus mentioned in Acts 20., "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock," I suggest it must be proved first from Scripture that such representation forms part of the duty of overseers before this particular Scripture can be applied in that way. The meaning of the verse rather seems to be that in view of evil ones coming into the assembly, described as wolves, and others, from their own circle arising speaking perverse things, the bishops of Ephesus needed very particularly to be very much on the guard over themselves, and very attentive to the church in Ephesus.

Then if 1 Peter 5. is thought to suggest anything like a representative provincial thing, let me simply say the passage does not convey that to my mind. I understand it to be a charge to those who had responsibility to care for the flock to do unselfishly, exemplarily, and willingly their work of feeding, ruling, and taking oversight in the allotted portions where they were.

Nor do the twenty-four elders of Revelation 4. exhibit anything of present responsibility of overseeing ones. In the writer's humble opinion they symbolise the church in the perfectness and maturity of its heavenly glory, that they are symbolical like the most of the

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8. 19 shows one man chosen by several churches, and the inference drawn is that representative men from these churches in Macedonia came together to choose him, unless we are to suppose that all saints in Macedonia came into one place to do the same.

<sup>1</sup> We have already pointed out that the idea of elders forming a definite circle is by no means Jewish or Mosaic. It seems to be almost co-extensive with the human race.

book, and not representative in the sense in which we have been considering it, and have no more to do with Church government now than the elders of the Jews in the time of our Lord as given in the Gospels.

Then as to the frequent coming together of those who guide in assemblies, as far as is practicable, and inclusive of as many within the widest area possible for such conventions, surely it is most helpful that brethren should thus be together for prayer, the interchange of thought, and mutually helping each the other into fuller acquaintance with the mind of God. The spirit of "Bear ye one another's burdens" would surely warrant such assemblings. They who go are at all times together as to principles of truth, distance only keeps them apart at any time, therefore the advantage of as frequent comings together as can be; but when I have said this I have gone as far as my knowledge of the word takes me.<sup>1</sup> Such ones do not come together to administer the affairs of the district. The Scripture, I submit, does not guide to any such arrangement. We have seen the twelve acting together in Jerusalem (Acts 6.); two distant assemblies engaged in ascertaining the will of God as to doctrine (Acts 15.). But an administrative district oversight is outside my apprehension of the teaching of Scripture.

How is information to be gleaned as to churches? how are saints to be informed of circumstances relating to assemblies? how are communications to be made to them, and how are we to know the assemblies with whom we are in fellowship, if there are no district overseers' representative meetings, and if a list of assemblies is not kept?<sup>2</sup>

Our appeal must be to Scripture. There only can we find the guidance which brings rest as well as enlightenment of mind; all else leaves in unrest and confusion. I offer what commends itself to me as the teaching of the Word of God.

First then information came through the men whom God raised up to itinerate. They became living links, contributing to the uniting

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<sup>1</sup> This paragraph falls so far short of what has been commonly taught among us for many years that we can only marvel at our friend so expressing himself. In any given assembly of God who do administer the affairs? Who arrange as to meetings, ordinary and special, and so forth? Is it not to be done by a collective group of overseers? Or are the overseers to act haphazard and as they please?

If the overseers in a town are to act together, and not only talk together, what Scripture teaches that and does not countenance collective action in a larger area?

<sup>2</sup> The answer to this question is:—In the same way that we have known it in the past and Open Brethren know it to-day.



assemblies together as they moved from place to place, and channels of information wherever they went (see Acts 9. 32). Peter going throughout all parts (Acts 15. 36); Paul visiting his brethren to see how they did, gathering together the Church at Antioch and recounting the works of God (Acts 14. 27); Timothy; 1 Corinthians 4. 17; Titus; 2 Corinthians 12. 18; Apostles (1 Cor. 16. 10-12), and others might be mentioned in like connection (see Eph. 6. 21, 22; Phil. 2. 25; Col. 4. 7, 8, 9; 1 Thess. 3. 5, 6).

Secondly, by means of letters (1 Cor. 5., also ch. 7.; 2 Cor. 3.; 3 John), in which there was the fullest and most open intelligence. Itinerating men of God and letters were the methods adopted, and every care taken to impart the most ample and copious instruction that an intelligent understanding was the result, and the fullest fellowship secured.

There was absolutely nothing like an unsupported and mere bald statement of an occurrence, and an expectation that every one would say ditto without knowing to the full what had taken place, and what was determined in the light of Scripture.

When a misunderstanding arose over Peter's visit to Cornelius, Peter rehearsed the matter "From the beginning and by order."<sup>1</sup>

Again Acts 15. shows how openly and fully the error was gone into, and how in the letter sent, and Judas and Silas going with it in company of the Antioch brethren, these in Syria had the most complete communication it was possible to impart,<sup>2</sup> and no room was left for the adversary to get in through any thought of facts being kept back or hesitancy to give the whole account of proceedings and judgment formed. Nothing was suppressed, and therefore the heartiest and fullest fellowship resulted.

Then see how the condition of Corinth was pointed out in the Epistles sent to the church itself in that city; but more, to all Achaia and further still to fellow-saints in every place calling upon the Name.

Is it said, But these Epistles are Scripture giving instruction to any at all times in this dispensation how to act if in such circumstances as Corinth was in? Yes, thank God, true is it God's care for saints through the whole period of Church history, but for all that was it not an open exposure at the time of Corinth's guilty state side by

<sup>1</sup> To whom? Certainly only to those of the assembly of God in which he was, and to none others.

<sup>2</sup> The writer does not seem to understand that these in Syria had the facts in their knowledge prior even to those who sent the afore-said letter.

<sup>3</sup> How inaccurate! since not Acts 15. was sent, but only the letter mentioned in that chapter.

side with teaching as to it openly given to all in every place calling upon the Lord? It was not a merely saying something had occurred and therefore Corinth must be regarded in a certain light. It was telling every church<sup>1</sup> what Corinth had done and was doing to need such instruction and to secure throughout intelligent and fullest fellowship. It was a unity in submission to the Word of God, and not a blind adhesion to a statement nobody could thoroughly understand, a statement giving no reason for or against, and no Scripture for its support.

And yet further, the one scroll circulating throughout Asia, addressed to the seven assemblies, what was it but the unfolding to the eyes of each and all the condition of each other assembly? So the state of Ephesus became known to the other six and so on throughout the seven,<sup>2</sup> together with the requirements of the Word, and the commands of the one in the midst, the clearest statement of the wrong with the giving side by side therewith the claims of the person of the Lord Christ and the written Word of God. And that must always be if real fellowship is to exist, a reality and not a sham, a thing of spiritual fibre and not a mere empty name. As to the keeping of a list of assemblies, I know from Scripture nothing as to it, its existence is not found there. If it were we should then most likely obtain knowledge as to how it would be compiled and who should be the responsible guardians of it.<sup>3</sup>

We are told in Acts 1. 15 approximately of the number of the names, about 120. We are further told of about 3,000 added (chapter 2. 41); then we read of about 5,000 men (chapter 4. 4); then figures are left, and from expressions such as "A great company," "Multitudes," "Myriads" (chapter 11. 7; 21. 20), it looks as if the list, if one were kept, had swollen to such a size as to be beyond calculation; but be this as it may the numbering was purely local and I am not aware of any attempt to collate into a volume the mighty increase

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<sup>1</sup> Giving details is here confounded with telling so-and-so. What proof is given by "telling"? The answer is, None.

<sup>2</sup> And why? Surely because each was responsible, as having an ear to hear.

<sup>3</sup> What is the difference between having a list of those forming an assembly and having a list of the assemblies in a given area?

If Acts tells us of about 5,000 men and so forth in fellowship in Jerusalem, Revelation tells of seven churches being in Asia.

If any brother thinks it wrong to have a written list with the addresses of those in the assembly, let him refrain from having one, but let him not judge those who believe they cannot care for the flock adequately without such a list. The same applies to a list of assemblies.

of churches, as the Holy Spirit in His far-reaching work brought sinners out of darkness and added together disciples of the risen Lord. I repeat, men and letters were the methods in Apostolic times, conveying intelligence as the need arose at the time, and why not now? If something is sought in the way of information, are there not those who are well informed as to localities who could give us the information? The facilities of the post would give us that information up-to-date which an unrevised list never could, and there would always be a taint of suspicion as to reliability of such a book from the circumstances of change which is continually occurring.<sup>1</sup>

When I speak of some who could give us information let it not be supposed the corresponding brother is meant to whom "All communications are to be addressed," some one brother duly appointed to look after the correspondence of the county or city; no, not at all, but some who by common knowledge are men of good report, whose praise is in the churches, and who are widely known and valued for their love and work.

The simpler we are the better, and the less we have of even the appearance of officialism the more likely to see and realize the constraining work of the Holy Spirit. What beautiful simplicity is manifested in 1 Cor. 16. 15-18 and Eph 6. 21, 22, different ones seen as addicting themselves to service to the saints, and they and others spoken of as "Everyone that helpeth and laboureth, Tychicus, a beloved brother sent to make known to those in Ephesus our affairs and to comfort the hearts of saints."

There is the entire absence of the official.<sup>2</sup> In closing let me beseech brethren for the truth's sake and much more for Christ's sake to guard not only against coming short of the requirements of the Scripture, but to be careful not to go beyond the Word of the Lord.

CHARLES MORTON.

<sup>1</sup> Might there not be strong taint of suspicion that the reliable informant acting on his own personal feelings and ideas would colour all his information according to his own views? Was not this the continual history of Open Brethren in the past?

<sup>2</sup> We do not know how this word is meant. It seems like trying to attach a word with a bad odour to that which it is desired to oppose. After all is said, all that any desire is that each may know what is his officium (that is, his duty), and do it, fearing neither friend or foe, neither hard words nor misunderstanding, but only fearing God and fearing himself.

## “OF ONE MIND IN THE LORD.”

THERE is that indicated in the Word of God that goes beyond union. Union may be of a very superficial nature. Herod and Pontius Pilate were made friends, but how long their friendship lasted is another thing. So men of the most opposite opinions are often seen for the time united for some purpose because they find, or suppose they find, their own special ends advanced in the union. But, as we have already said, there is something in the Word of God that goes beyond union. Unity seems to our understanding to imply this something more, and without doubt where the word is employed in the Scriptures, as in Ephesians 4. 3, a very much deeper meaning is attached to it. The unity of the Spirit is a thing accomplished, not anything we have to make, but something we have to endeavour to keep. The very expression, “endeavour to keep,” implies an act of spiritual exercise, for by nature we are all more or less carnal, and too often more inclined to be upholders of what is wrong than of what is right, and this owing to the natural bias of our evil natures. This consideration should make us jealously watchful over our own motives, seeking to know why we are not at one with others. It may be they are wrong and we are right, but it may also be the reverse of this—that we are in the wrong, and that, even without being aware of it ourselves, we are simply seeking to maintain our own opinions.

The want of unity that exists among God’s children is often pointed at by the sceptic as a proof that there is nothing in Christianity. Those also who are opposed to the right way and the truth point to it as a proof that the thing to which they are opposed is not of God. By such it is always the want of union that is dwelt upon,

the failure which is pointed out, and the vast amount of real oneness of heart and oneness of purpose that may exist, in spite of some diversity of opinion, is all lost sight of. It will be our object in this paper to examine into the cause which produces division of thought and action, and ask, Why are they so common among the children of God? Turning to 1 Corinthians 3. 3, the answer is at once supplied. Carnality lies at the root of all. Nor do we believe that this expression implies what would be called gross sin necessarily. Far from this, there are numbers of God's own children who lead a moral, upright, and praiseworthy life in many respects, but yet who are utterly unfitted and unable to walk in a divinely formed fellowship because their will and their thoughts are, in great measure, their guides. If men are united in a union that is outside the Divine union, it is more or less evil; there can be but one union that is of God, and any other either keeps out that which God would bring in or brings in that which He would keep out. To further illustrate the matter before us, let us refer our readers to a point in Israel's history. When leaving Egypt and coming out to God no order was kept, so far as we are informed, but no sooner was the Tabernacle set up than each tribe took its place, not by its own will or choice (for then there might have been as many wills at work as there were leaders among the people), but by the one will of Jehovah they were arranged around the Tabernacle. Will our readers carefully consider the subject for themselves (Num. 2.) with regard to this?

There was no room for man's will to come in, but each one would take his place as directed by God. There could have been no such order as this in Egypt; no, not even among them as a redeemed people: for they were this before being delivered out of Egypt. But it was only as a called-out people that they could be in a right associa-

tion with the Tabernacle and around it in godly order. "What is the harm in a sect?" asks one. If we had no other reply this would be more than enough, that in a sect the will of God cannot be carried out and God's order cannot be maintained. If this be truly so it should make every child of God tremblingly ask the question, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22. 10). But again with regard to Israel. We remember a brother once calculated how many different positions the various tribes of Israel might have taken up around the Tabernacle had man's will arranged them instead of the will of God, and he found that they might have taken up over a million.

Think of this, reader. Why, they might have gone on shifting their camps and altering their position to the present hour, no time for anything else, all agitation and uncertainty as to their next arrangement. Had you met an Israelite under such circumstances and said, "Well, are you going on to possess the land of Canaan and manifest there among the nations the rule of God and the glory of the kingdom?" "Oh, no," he would have replied; "that is something beyond us. We are guided by our elder to take up a fresh position, so we shall be fully occupied with this. Besides, we came out of Egypt many years ago, and we can keep the feast where we are; why should we be called on to go further?" How like this is to things to-day. The children of God seem to have scarcely a thought as to what the will of God is concerning their place as His led-out ones, and what they did when first converted, or, as some say, "what we did when we first came out," is all they seem to think of as necessary to the pleasing of God. "Our minister," or "our ruling elder" as he is called often in Scotland (although he may be little more than a lad fresh from the college), "tells us we need not go any further. We have been saved and gathered as Christians into a Church or a meeting,

and we have plenty of work where we are; why should we be called upon to go forward?"

Although gathered round the Tabernacle, had Israel rebelled and carried out the will of their leaders instead of the will of their God, and continued in this rebellion (for God in grace gives space for repentance), the glory of God would, we believe, have forsaken the Tabernacle, as it did later on the Temple (Ezek. 10. 18). Even if saints have been gathered at one time as House of God, this is no proof that they are House of God to-day, for although once gathered to the Name and builded together as House of God, the House of God may become a den of thieves, who rob God of His place and His authority. But whence comes all this confusion and disorder? Let us again turn to the New Testament for an answer. "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. 5. 16). This is God's simple rule to prevent all the evil. One walking in the Spirit is subject to the Spirit, and is led of the Spirit into all truth (John 16. 13). But, alas! who amongst us are led of the Spirit? How much of our lives are spent in fleshly indulgence and seeking to walk in the pathway of our own choosing! And thus comes war and tumult amongst us (Jas. 4. 1). And then, saddest of all, we bring dishonour on the holy Name by which we are called, and the Word of God is too often but a tool in our hands for the advancement of our own selfish ends.

But how can this come about, some may ask, if we are children of God and indwelt by the Holy Spirit? (1 Cor. 6. 19). Alas! beloved brethren, we may be all this and yet the greater part of our life may be misspent, and our crowns lost—"For a man is not crowned unless he strive lawfully" (2 Tim. 2. 5)—and we ourselves cast-aways, or those who have missed the mark; yea, though we have preached to others. If we turn to the Word of God

as delivered to us in Philippians **3. 15**, we shall find a word which will throw a flood of light on our subject. In this chapter the apostle is speaking of attainment, and enjoining on the disciples unity of action and the walking together in the things of God. Will our readers turn to 1 Chronicles **12. 38**? and there notice that those who came to help David were men who could keep rank—that is, men who could walk with their brethren; and better that they should never have professed to come out to David to help him to the kingdom than when with him to be unable to keep rank. But notice this word in the chapter referred to (Phil. **3.**): "If ye be otherwise minded God shall reveal even this unto you." This is most important, for to really understand the Word of God we need a Divine *revelation* of His truth. I may learn from others much that is true, and I may even teach this truth again, and it will be the truth, yet I may never have learned it myself as revealed to me by the Spirit of God; in fact, I may spend the greater part of my life a stranger to the will of God, scarce having had any further revelation from Him by His Spirit than the revelation which I had when as a guilty sinner His infinite grace first revealed Christ and brought me into the peace that passeth understanding. Solemn, sadly solemn, such considerations.

When we use the word revelation, we do not mean that God will reveal anything apart from His mind as expressed in His Word. If our readers will turn to John **16. 13, 14** they will there see that the Spirit's special ministry is to take of the things of God and reveal them unto us. We repeat that it is only as we thus learn even "the faith" that the truth will bring power into our own lives, and we become a power to lead others aright, being ourselves led of the Spirit.

We have often been amazed at the way in which the Word of God is approached, even in what is called a Bible-



reading, but what might be more fitly called a quarrel over the Scriptures, each one seeking to maintain his own opinion. This, among the many contending opinions, may happen to be the right one, but so held and so contended for that instead of being a blessing to the holder, it seems but to wither and embitter against all others who oppose. Again we are asked, "Why is this evil?" Do dear brethren suppose that the Spirit of our Holy God is at our beck and bidding? Are we so blind to heavenly things as to suppose that one who has been walking all day in the flesh—it may be doing business on the world's low level, it may be joining in the frivolities of a godless age, giving way to our natural evil temper, and so forth—that such can come together with fellow-saints for even one short hour and be in such a condition that the ungrieved Spirit of God will lead him into all truth?

We do not for a moment deny that one who has been walking in the flesh may be quickly restored, and thus be in a position to lead others aright when thus restored to fellowship himself. The Apostle Peter's history shows the grace of God in this; but what deep contrition, what humbling there was on the part of the apostle, and none the less will it be needed to-day by us under similar circumstances. Then, indeed, we may be in a condition to shepherd the sheep and lambs (John 21. 15).

With these humbling thoughts before us, we need little wonder at the divisions among the saints, the diversity of thought that surrounds us to-day; it has been so in the past. And to escape the sorrow thus entailed men have made creeds and formed sects, and sought to use even Divine truth to bind together in a mere human confederation. Men commit themselves to some doctrine, it may be a right one, but far oftener it is a wrong one, and then, having once committed themselves to it, pride of heart hinders them from quietly sitting down and searching the Scriptures to

see if they are right or wrong in their opinion. They have said their mind, and for it they will fight, no matter what the result may be to themselves and others. They will try to prove that their brethren are heretics, and persecute such even unto death, as witness some of the early reformers; and this, if they knew the plague of their own hearts, not on account of the truth and the honour of God, as they suppose, but on account of their own honour and their own position.

These statements may seem strong, dear reader, but if so let the writer assure you that they are not made to grieve or wound after an ungodly manner, but under the deep conviction that our want of union is too often a want of real practical godliness, and with some a sad want of power to lose sight of self and selfish ends, and to be willing to be anything or nothing if so be that we may be found doing the will of our God, and doing it in His way. But some may reply, "Such a line of thought would lead to indifference," and men will say, "Better leave the truth alone than seek to walk in it if I am in such danger of losing my reward, even after a life of toil." Again we refer to the solemn words of the apostle, "Lest I myself should be a castaway."

Yet it is quite compatible with the will of our God to be an earnest contender for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3, R.V.) and at the same time to be walking in the light and in the fellowship of the Spirit. Yea, more, nothing less than this is required of us by our God. No lower standard is held up to us to walk by than perfect holiness, and it is when thus walking in fellowship with Him that we are fitted to act for Him. If I am not in fellowship with my God let me see to it that I first get right in soul myself, instead of trying to cast out the mote that is in my brother's eye. In approaching the Word of God may we have grace to do so as Moses ap-

proached the bush, even with unshodden feet, lest we defile the sacred truth with the breath of carnality, and bring upon ourselves the displeasure of Him who dwells in the light that no man can approach unto.

J. A. BOSWELL.

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### BAPTISM.

*"Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."*

BLESSED Lord, we hear Thee saying, "Lo! I come to do Thy will."	Heb. 10. 5-10.
All God's righteousness demanded Graciously Thou didst fulfil.	Rom. 3. 22. ,, 5. 18.
First Thy Servant footsteps trace we To the Jordan's judgment stream ;	Mark 1. 9.
There for us, in all their glory, Love and mercy brightly beam.	Rom. 6. 3, 4. ,, 6. 5.
Telling of the floods of judgment, Soon to pour into Thy soul ;	Psalms 69. 2. ,, 69. 1.
While beneath its dreadful waters Pain and anguish on Thee roll.	,, 22. 1-21.
Righteousness transcendent meeting All that righteousness could claim,	,, 18. 20, 24: ,, 35. 24.
Death, the mighty conqueror, greeting But to crown the Victor's fame.	Heb. 2. 14. 2 Tim. 1. 13.
Though alone in that dread judgment, All our sin He made His own.	Isa. 63. 3. 1 Pet. 2. 24, Ps. 69. 5.
Gave Himself, a spotless Victim, That He might for sin atone.	1 Pet. 1. 19. Rom. 5. 10, 11.
Although nought but sin and helpless, In Him thus to sin we died,	,, 5. 6. ,, 6. 2, 8.
Buried with Him in that judgment, With the Saviour crucified.	,, 6. 4. ,, 6. 6.

Victor over death, God raised Him ;	Rom. 6. 4.
Victor over Satan's might ;	Heb. 1. 3.
Firstfruits of the dead and sleeping,	1 Cor. 15. 20, 23.
See the Victor in the fight.	Psalms 98. 1, 2.
Crowned with honour and with glory,	Heb. 2. 9.
Seated now at God's right hand,	Acts 2. 31, 33.
All His loved ones seated with Him,	Eph. 2. 6.
Now to live at His command.	Acts 2. 36.
His command : Life everlasting ;	John 12. 50.
Life from death and judgment's flood.	Isa. 53.
Live we then, as those redeemed	Col. 2. 12.
From all sin, by precious blood.	Heb. 9. 14.
Life, new life, to sing His praises ;	2 Cor. 9. 15.
His the life, no longer ours—	Gal. 2. 20.
Till He comes, and we shall praise Him,	John 14. 3.
With all New Creation's powers.	1 Cor. 15. 52-58.

W. EDGAR.

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### CAIN, BALAAM, KORAH.

**“Woe unto them ! for they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah.”—JUDE 11.**

In this passage of Scripture we have brought before us a trinity of evil which presents to us the actual counterfeit of a threefold cord of truth, which God would have us fully learn and appreciate. The order in which the Spirit brings them before us here is very important, for in the things of God “the Way of Life” is first presented, the other truths follow.

## "THE WAY OF CAIN"

brings before us the fundamental error of Christendom, which is the outcome and result of a naturally devised and built-up system of corruption which has led, and is still leading, its multitudes of blind-folded professors down to the eternal woe of the Lake of Fire—the "Second Death." The fruit of the earth which God cursed could never bring sinful Cain into relationship with God. Ah, no! it needed the death, the blood of the substitute which Abel brought to bring him nigh to God. Cain acted on the ground of natural choice, which seems very reasonable, but God had no respect to his offering. Abel acted by faith. Thus identifying himself with the victim in death and judgment, he practically announced himself to be a sinner deserving death, unable to merit the favour of God in himself. Him and his offering God respected. Yea, so much so, that when we come down to New Testament times, after Christ by the grace of God tasted death for every man, he is put first in the list of the "cloud of witnesses," all of whom died in faith (Heb. 11.).

The hand of God has plainly written over the very portal of "The Way of Cain" "No Road this Way." Yet, notwithstanding God's judgment (Rom. 4. 4, 5), the multitudes are making it their choice. Thus, one step in the wrong direction leads to another, and soon we find those unsaved religionists like the people of Moab, and Midian with their "elders" buying counsel from those who, in the apostate thing, have set themselves up as spiritual advisers, having run greedily after

## "THE ERROR OF BALAAM."

We learn from Scripture that Balaam had "his place" (Num. 24. 25), and that he loved and received the "wages" of unrighteousness (2 Pet. 2. 15; Num. 22. 7), which were brought to him by "the elders" of Moab and "the elders"

of Midian. Then comes his doctrine (Rev. 2. 14) or counsel (Num. 25. 1, 2; 31. 15, 16). Doubtless in Balaam we see false worship and teaching combined, which so much obtains to-day among those who have made "the Way of Cain" their choice. In Numbers 23. we get the thrice-repeated erection of altars, and the offering up of victims thereon. But the high places of Baal (verse 1), the top of Pisgah (verse 14), and the top of Peor (verse 28) were not the places of God's choice for altars or the death of victims (see Exodus 40. 1-8). Thus his false devotions (for he knew not God, compare Acts 17. 22, 23) became more exhibited through the fruit of his labours among the daughters of Moab, which resulted in judgment among God's people first, for they should not have been influenced (according to God's word) by his deadly counsel through those bewitched subjects held fast by his enchantments (see Neh. 13. 23-27; Ezra 10. 9-11; Deut. 7. 1-5). Following this, judgment comes upon the Midianites (Num. 31.), "Balaam also, the son of Beor, they slew with the sword." Compare the following Scriptures (Ezek. 9. 5, 6; Heb. 10. 30, 31; 1 Pet. 4. 17, 18). Revelation, first three chapters, doubtless a fulfilling of the word through Peter in connection with "House of God." Revelation 19. 11-21, 20. 11-15 we believe to be an answer to the question through Peter, "Where shall the sinner and the ungodly appear?"

While the Error of Balaam sets forth such solemn truths,

#### "THE GAINSAYING OF KORAH"

brings before us equal instruction in a somewhat different line of thought. Korah, in company with Dathan, Abiram, and two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown, gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, etc. (Num. 16. 1-3). Through Moses the Word of God reached the people (Num. 15. 1-31); through Aaron the needs of the people

reached God (Num. 3. 10; 18. 8-10), albeit they acted in a high-handed manner against the choice and purpose of God in Moses and in Aaron, who were a figure of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ in His apostolic and high-priest character (see Heb. 3. 1, 2). "God in these last days hath spoken unto us in His Son" (Heb. 1. 2). "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8. 1), "and no man taketh this honour unto himself but He that is called of God, as also was Aaron" (Heb. 5. 4, 5). Yet Korah and his colleagues presumptuously sought the priesthood, which could only be entered into on the ground of birth and choice of God (Num. 3. 10), and to share in the work of Moses, who was called and fitted by God to be Israel's deliverer and ruler. Just think of it! all because they thought and finally said, "Ye take too much upon you"; thus undervaluing the men of God's choice, and practically saying that God had made a mistake by leaving them out.

As we consider these things in connection with Korah we ask, Is there not on every hand to-day that which answers to this self-gratification and empty pride? Surely the passage of Scripture which we are now considering from Jude's Epistle answers, "Yes." Ah, yes! "Vain man would be wise, though he is born as a wild ass's colt" (Job 11. 12), which obtains its sustenance from earth's level and produce (see Job 39. 5-8). Thus with unbroken will, and never having seen the virtues of the blood of Christ, who is "the Bread of Life, which came down from heaven," but under the death sentence (see Exod. 34. 20), man adopts "the way of Cain" to begin with, runs into "the error of Balaam," false worship and ministry, resulting in that which answers to "the gainsaying of Korah." God's will as revealed in the Son is set on one side, the priesthood of Christ counterfeited to satisfy the pride and passion of those who have made and are making merchandise of the

bodies and souls of men (Rev. 18. 11-13). As we view the whole situation well might we weep.

As for Cain, the founder of the natural devised system of error, there was punishment (Gen. 4. 13, 14). For Balaam there was death and judgment, for he was slain among and with the very ones whom he seduced and bewitched (Num. 31. 1-8). Korah and his company went down alive into the pit, "and they perished" (Num. 16. 31-33). How solemn! and yet to-day multitudes are following in their beaten track, while their death knell is pealing forth from the spires of guilty Christendom, which is fast ripening for judgment. No wonder that the Spirit, through Jude, pronounced the "Woe unto them." To think of the multitudes who are wrapt up in the form of godliness, rocked in the cradle of deception, who betimes are heard to sing—

"Shall we gather at the river?"

not understanding that, if they still refuse God's way, their meeting place in the eternal state will be the "Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20. 15).

"Can we, whose souls are lighted  
With wisdom from on high—  
Can we to men benighted  
The Lamp of Life deny?  
Salvation! O Salvation!  
The joyful sound proclaim,  
Till men of every nation  
Have heard the Saviour's name."

## THE OLD CASTLE.

### AN ALLEGORY.

DOTTED up and down through these British Isles are many places of deep interest, especially amongst its ruins, some of which attract the attention of visitors from far and near, because of historical associations and scenes enacted long ago; others, again, have been made famous by poets.



I wish to write a little as to one such old castle ; not that I know of anything famous about it, nor is it visited by many. It stands alone, unfrequented and comparatively unknown, just outside a country town in Scotland. But there is to me an interest attaching to this that belongs to no other that I know of. I have learned never-to-be-forgotten lessons from its silent walls ; it takes me back to the first chapter of Genesis, and throws a flood of light, and suggests many thoughts, which I pass on to others.

#### THE OLD CASTLE.

There stand the walls, naked and bare, the stillness of death reigns. And of one thing I am sure, that old castle was not so built ; it has a history somewhere in the past. It was built to be inhabited, not as now by owls and bats and spiders ;—and doubtless the object was gained, life and song once filled its spacious walls, scenes of joy and gladness have been known, and methinks sorrow and death were not unknown either. How much could be unfolded to us if those walls could speak ! But its history has been written by an unerring and impartial penman, and much will be made manifest at the judgment-seat of Christ and the great White Throne as to the deeds done through the bodies of those who then lived, whether saints or sinners.

This takes me to a greater and more complete ruin, as in Genesis 1. 2.

#### A RUINED CREATION.

The silence of death reigns, not a vestige of life to be found there ; and sure I am God never made a world like that, as no one ever built a castle like this. The world of verse 2 has known a past oh ! so bright, so grand, so worthy of God, Whose wisdom and power were therein displayed, as seen in verse 1, and so fittingly beautiful, seeing it was for Him Who was the loved one of God from all eternity. Certainly God never made a world answering to verse 2

for His Son. No; that is the ruin accomplished by an enemy of both Father and Son, and, alas! how completely the work of destruction has been carried out, has it not?

Who peopled that creation of Genesis 1. 1? a scene so happy that the sons of God shouted for joy at its birth (Job 38. 7). An Eden, a Paradise, a garden of delight, up and down which the anointed Cherub went (Ezek. 28. 12-18). No foot of Adam's race ever trod there, yet inhabited it was, for in Isaiah 45. 18, "God Himself formed the earth and made it, He established it, He created it not a waste, He formed it to be inhabited" (R.V.). We know nothing of the past of that castle; can we glean anything as to the past of this world we now inhabit? I think so; a ray seems to be cast by way of *contrast*. In Hebrews 2. 5 we read: "For *not unto Angels* did He subject the habitable *world* to come, whereof we speak." As though it would suggest the *world that was* had been so put, but rebellion, pride, iniquity was found in that Mighty one, who fell never to rise, but rather to know a deeper fall, even as Satan to be cast into the Lake of Fire; fell, but not alone in his fall. Angels who kept not their own principality, accomplishing thus the ruin of others as well as that of himself.

Moreover, he is the "Prince of Demons" (Matt. 12. 24, 27), and he has a kingdom of demons (a term never applied to any of human kind), an orderly, undivided kingdom (if his kingdom be divided how shall it stand?), his subjects are loyal to their Prince, by whom and with whom they fell.

Again in the temptation. The Devil said, "To Thee will I give all this authority, and the glory of them, for it *hath been delivered unto me*, and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Luke 4. 6). If there was no truth in this, how bold and daring indeed must he be to lie to the face of the Son of God. Thus, while it is not the purpose of God to instruct us fully as to the long ago past, yet there

are hints made and gleams of light given which without anything of fancy on our part reveal a little of its glory.

After some years had rolled by, being again in that neighbourhood, I was desirous to see the Old Castle once more, but

#### WHAT A CHANGE !

Masons, joiners, slaters, plasterers, all kinds of workmen engaged on the old ruin ; not demolishing it, nor yet restoring it to its former condition, but *reconstructing* it and introducing more modern ideas of comfort.

Its owner,—for there was one who owned it,—a well-known duke, was about to make it a residence for *his steward*, and so wondrous changes were being made. For what answered well the needs of bats and spiders would never do for human kind, especially one who represented such a noble house ; and, strange to say, during the remodelling and cleansing, the workmen came across a little of its former glory : a beam was there which, on being scraped, some brilliant colours were observed, and careful washing brought to view beautiful ornamentation and decoration, all fresh and bright, though how many years ago it was since it was painted none could tell.

This work divided itself into two *distinct parts*, the outer walls and roof, then internal fitting and decoration.

Again come to the first chapter of Genesis—

#### WHAT A BUSY SCENE !

but so quiet and still, as God's work ever is, not the noisy confusion of man's doing. And it yet again is a reconstruction—the old ruin of this world being made habitable for an in-coming tenant, one of human kind, so it is being adapted to the needs of one who is to be God's steward, all to be placed under his hand. What a wondrous change ! and when finished pronounced very good, in every way fulfilling the purpose of the Divine Architect.

This work also is divided into two parts, for the last three days are the completion of the first three days. First day: Let there be light, and there was light. Fourth day: Let there be light in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night. And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night; He made the stars also. It is the completion of the first day. Second day: The firmament or expanse. Fifth day: Flying fowl of every wing, the song of birds, filling that expanse; it is furnished. Third day: Dry land, herb, and grass. Sixth day: Cattle are placed upon it. Thus all is finished, everything ready for the needs of man and beast, and ready to his hand. The waste and void is filled with fruit and every precious thing.

A third visit, in the course of another year or two, and the work at the old

#### CASTLE WAS FINISHED;

completion where there had been ruin, order for confusion, stillness and peace instead of noise of men. And as to the surroundings, the barren fields had been ornamented by the hand of the landscape gardener, the rugged, uneven cart-way became the beautiful carriage drive, and from the grassy borders there arose a variety of foliage tastefully blended, from the lowly creeping *sedums* to the more stately fir and larch, and all this terminating in a neat entrance lodge and gates.

As to the home life within the walls of that house we know nothing; but may they be long spared to enjoy it. May the day be far distant when grim death shall enter, casting a gloom on everything, and nothing can more completely do this than *death*, leaving a void that nothing earthly can ever fill.

Such a disaster visited that scene prepared for Adam and his fair bride, blasting everything. "By *sin* came death;"

for, alas! they sinned, and there lay the beautiful handiwork of God in ruins—a moral ruin—and the Arch-enemy of God, who had laid waste the first Eden, now laid waste the second, turning a garden into a wilderness, the thorn and thistle (Gen. 3. 18), fruit of that curse, a groaning creation, and groaning humanity (Rom. 8. 22, 23). So all are involved in this ruin—even the occupant of the castle, and his noble master the duke, have not escaped this—not a trace of God left. And as we point to Genesis 1. and 2nd verse, and say, “God never made a world like that,” so we may point to the best specimen man can produce, and say, “That is not the man God made; that is Satan’s blasted production.” Let me show you in Adam before the fall all the perfection of God’s work, and say, “That is man as God made him.” Is there in Genesis, first chapter, a *world without*? There is in man a *world within*, the counterpart of the other.

Here, too, death, darkness, chaos reign supreme in man, as it reigned before in creation. How complete the ruin! No *light*, not a ray; it is a darkness *felt*, like that of Egypt, or that of the blind man when clay was put upon his eyes; he FELT it then as never *before*, words could not express it. And so in man we find

#### ANOTHER CASTLE, ANOTHER RUIN,

beyond repair. Reformers may try and mend it, improve it, add to it, but it is man’s folly; they know not God’s thoughts as to man, or else will not accept them. “Oh, no,” say such, “man is not so bad as all that.”

In this case, no patching up. There must be a complete setting aside of the old castle, and a new one—new foundations, a new site, a new design, everything new; and such are to be seen to-day. I know where the old castle stands, alongside the new, utterly forsaken, a monument of the past.

This “new man,” new creation, is of God as much as the

creation of Genesis 1. 1, and the six days' work of chapter 1. was entirely His work.

Untold ages may have rolled between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 1., and had not God moved towards this earth, and His Spirit moved upon it, it had still been the chaos and the ruin, for there was no movement Godward on its part. And if God move not by the same Spirit upon man, and begin a new creation, and make him to become an habitation for Himself, he must and will lie for all time and throughout a coming eternity under the dominion of Satan, for man can no more save himself than the creation could restore itself, or the old castle bring about the completion, beauty and comfort now to be seen.

This present work of God, however, is such that Satan will never blast it, will never pollute it; it is based upon the redemptive work of Calvary's Cross. Sin there judged not as man estimates it, but according to God's estimate, and poor lost, guilty man so completely delivered from every sin that he shall not come into judgment. How good and gracious of God not to give man up to his own deserts, but to move so gently and patiently, dealing with him as to his guilt and sin; but the resistance and opposition on man's part to God only shows how complete that sin is, and how completely Satan is master of him. How passive that was in Genesis 1. upon which His Spirit moved. No resistance, God unhindered had His own way. "Very good" was the result. Again, how passive lay the material for the reconstructing of the old castle under the tool and will of the workman. And again, "Very good" is what can be said in truth.

"To him that worketh not." Salvation is not to the diligent seeker as such—the one who has sought long and laboured hard; it is to him that believeth. Another has finished the work; and He again says—so complete is the salvation in Christ Jesus—that it is not in the

power of Satan ever again to bring about his ruin. The coming eternity will manifest His handiwork; the mind and hand of a Master has been here, and will be seen in the coming ages through the Church (Eph. 2. 7). An eternal youth; no ravages of time will touch it, no decay ever reach it. It will last as long as God lasts, to the praise of His glory.

The new heavens and the new earth, always *new*, will never be old, like that which is ready to vanish away (Heb. 8. 13); will indeed be the outward accompaniments, and fitting surroundings, all made meet for

#### THE CENTRAL OBJECT

of all the purpose and plan of the Divine Artificer, Christ and the Church. Ah! will you, reader, be in that more than excellent glory, all so worthy of God and Christ, the outcome of Calvary's dark hour and unutterable woe? How great the cost! No cost was spared in connection with the old castle: ample means were at their disposal; there was no stint, but the cost of rebuilding the old castle can be estimated, the sum total arrived at. But the value of Christ to God can never be measured, the depth of that woe, of that wrath that lay hard on Him can never be fathomed,—

“But none of the ransomed ever knew  
How deep were the waters crossed.”

None but Himself will ever know that—His Church, His Bride, will share His glory, but not His Cross.

A worthy bride may be brought into the castle home, but that cost her nothing. Another exchequer was drawn upon for that. So, poor lost, guilty son of Adam, at another's cost, all this may be yours for eternity as a free, unmerited gift. But what if you reject it? What if it is not yours? What, then, *will be yours*? How terrible to contemplate! for the Word of God declares it: “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the Lake of Fire” (Rev. 20. 15).

G. R. GEDDES.

## WHO WILL BE RAISED FROM THE DEAD WHEN THE LORD COMES TO MID-AIR?

SATAN has ever assailed those precious truths of God's Word which God intended should be to His own glory, and likewise to rejoice the heart of the believer in Christ, who continues with His Word, by which he was born again (1 Pet. 1. 23), and can say like David, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and light unto my path" (Ps. 119. 105, R.V.).

The truth of the resurrection was attacked in the early days of the apostles, for we read in 1 Corinthians 15. 12 that some were saying in Corinth there was no resurrection of the dead, which was nothing less than the doctrine of the Sadducees, and was in danger of being introduced into the Church in Corinth by some, if not already in.

In 2 Timothy 2. 17, 18 we find two men, Hymenæus and Philetus, were saying that the resurrection was past, and overthrowing the faith of some. Alas! too well has Satan succeeded in turning believers away from the plain and simple Word of God unto profane and vain babblings (2 Tim. 2. 16) even unto this our day.

In the Gospel according to the Apostle John, 14. 3, the Lord Jesus before He leaves His disciples would comfort them by His promise: "If I go I will come again and receive you unto Myself"; a promise which indeed to those who have hearing ears is like the "wine that maketh glad the heart of man" (Ps. 104. 15). Long since the disciples to whom this promise was made, and many others as well, have fallen asleep, which is the language of Scripture of those who have died (Acts 7. 60; 2 Pet. 3. 4; John 11. 11), and the promise is yet unfulfilled, but we know that God is true (2 Cor. 1. 18).

What a ray of Divine light and purpose is revealed in



1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18, which was written to comfort the believers concerning those who had fallen asleep; and in verse 16 it reads, "The dead in Christ shall be raised first." How plain!—only the dead in Christ; how simple!—all who are dead in Christ. No question how far they were faithful to God when in the body, or whether they were babes in Christ (1 Cor. 3. 1) or fathers in the truth (1 Cor. 4. 15; see also 1 John 2. 13), but if in Christ then they shall be raised; and God would emphasize this by verse 15, R.V.: "For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, That we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in nowise precede them that are fallen asleep"; and in the "Englishman's Bible" Mr. Newberry's note in the margin reads, "By no means go before them which are asleep" (ver. 17, R.V.). "And we that are alive, and are left, will be caught up together with them" (namely, the sleeping ones raised) "to meet the Lord in the air."

The poor lost world hath no part in this resurrection, but their position is stated in verse 13, "as others," or as it reads in the Revised Version—"the rest which have no hope."

Should any unsaved ones read these words, may they take to heart indeed the sad position and condition they are in, "without God," "without Christ," "without hope" (Eph. 2.), and without further delay "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and they shall be saved" (Acts 16. 30, 31). We have read in John 14. 3 the simple promise of the Lord Jesus, "I will come again, I will receive you unto Myself," and this promise more fully unfolded in 1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18, where it is revealed that every believer in Christ, whether waking or sleeping (see same Epistle, 5. 10), shall live together with Him, like the going out of Egypt of the Lord's people (Exod. 12.); for every Israelite went forth, even unto the bones of Joseph, which they carried with them (Exod. 13. 19).

Now let us turn to 1 Corinthians 15., where we get the order of the resurrection, and in verse 20, R.V., it reads, "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep." Verse 23, "Christ the firstfruits, then they that are Christ's at His coming." Verses 51-53, "We shall *not all* sleep, but we *shall all* be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: the dead shall be raised incorruptible."

Let human wisdom stand and wonder as these words of the living God are read, which only faith can lay hold of, which shall be accomplished by the mighty power of our God.

"For this corruptible" (namely, the sleeping ones) "must put on incorruption, and this mortal" (namely, living ones) "must put on immortality" (ver. 53).

Many sorrowful journeys have been taken to the grave with the remains of dear brethren and sisters in Christ, but may we remember the day, nay, the hour, will soon arrive, and may be much nearer than we have any idea of, when the voice of the Lord Jesus will shout those sleeping ones forth, as of old He called forth Lazarus from the tomb (John 11.), and we together with them will be for ever with the Lord.

May we say from our hearts, like the Apostle John in the Isle of Patmos, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22. 20).

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### 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 120.—*Does Jeremiah 33. 15 answer the latter clause of 14th verse of the same chapter?*

Yes, we believe it does. Verse 17 should be also noted. Those who see the King in His beauty will see Him as the beloved disciple John did—not in weakness, but in power; not in suffering, but in glory.

For we shall be presented spotless in the presence of His glory with exceeding joy (Jude 24).

J. A. B.

QUESTION 121.—*Is it against Matt. 5. 33, 37 and James 5. 12 to take the oath in a public court?*

It is unnecessary for any one to take an oath if they have conscientious objections, as the law makes provision for such. The writer has frequently been in the position where he has asked to be allowed to give his affirmation, both as a jurymen and in other cases, and this request has been complied with. With regard, however, to the passages referred to, we are inclined to think they refer to profane swearing, or lightly taking an oath. This we say in the light of Heb. 6. 16-18. Also it is to be noticed that when our blessed Lord was before the Council, He answered nothing to His accusers until adjured by the living God so to do, then we find He at once replied (Matt. 26. 63, 64).

J. A. B.

QUESTION 122.—*Who is the pastor spoken of by the apostle in Eph. 4. 11? Is he the overseer of 1 Tim. 3.? Were there in those days men who shepherded the flock and yet were not overseers? Is an overseer a gift from God, as the evangelist and teacher?*

We do not understand that Ephesians 4. refers to any different order of men from those mentioned in other scriptures. We have here the apostle, the prophet, the evangelist. Pastor and teacher seems to point to the same truth that we have in 1 Timothy 5. 17, from which we gather that a man may be an elder, or an overseer (which is the same thing; see Tit. 1. 5, 2. 7), or pastor, without being a teacher; but in measure as one is a pastor so is he an overseer. The pastor is the one who cares for and tends, as he has ability, the little flock. This may be done by one who is not in the recognised circle of the elderhood, but who is stretching out to the work of the bishop (1 Tim. 3. 1); for gift is not obtained by being in a position, but a position is rightly gained by a godly exercise of gift. Gifts in their special sense have passed away (1 Cor. 13. 8); but one who exercises himself to live before God, and then to serve the saints, is a gift from God in this sense. Oversight expresses a work, not a person; shepherd care may be, and often is, in the hearts of younger ones.

J. A. B.

## ICHABOD AND EBENEZER.

THE opening chapters of 1 Samuel present to us a lamentable condition of things in Israel, "Every man doing that which was right in his own eyes," for the book is a continuation of Judges, the book of Ruth, though, in our Bibles intervening, occurring historically in the time of the Judges. See also Acts 13.: "He gave them Judges until the time of Samuel." Amid all the darkness, however, a glimmer of light is seen (just as the darkest hour is before the dawn of morning), which is destined to reach a climax in what was the noonday glory of Israel's past history—namely, the reign of Solomon. There are few of our readers, we judge, who have not been stirred in soul when reading the inspired account of the faithful handmaid Hannah, and her long-desired and prayed-for child Samuel, whom she with deepest gratitude, in fulfilment of her vow, presents to the Lord for ever, knowing from heart experience the import of the words expressed in a later day: "For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chron. 29. 14).

We pass on to chapter 4., which gives a sad picture of ignominious defeat, but, worse still, the cause—the deplorable condition into which the people of God had lapsed. We would seek to draw a few contrasts between this and chapter 7. In chapter 4. verse 2 we read that Israel was defeated before their enemies the Philistines, causing the enquiry, "Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before our enemies?" giving rise to the suggestion of verse 3, which was no sooner given than followed: "Let *us* fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto *us*, that it may come among *us*, and save *us* out of the hand of our enemies." As one reads he cannot fail to notice how often the word *us* occurs in the course of these

few words; it would appear to suggest the utterly selfish condition of the people, a complete forgetfulness of God: this thought is confirmed by referring to Genesis 11. 4, where we again read the word *us* no less than five times in the matter of a few words, in a scene where the prominent thought is seeking to prosper independently of God. A reference to Matthew 15. 23 completes a threefold cord that is not quickly broken. We see it was a human device from start to finish: there is not the merest hint of asking the counsel of God. This thought is further evidenced in the words, "that it may save us." True, the same word *it* occurs in Joshua 3. at a very interesting point in Israel's history, and probably these self-seekers remembered the words that were spoken by the officers as Israel was crossing the Jordan, as well as the accompanying victories of that period. But then Israel was cast upon "the Living God" (Josh. 3. 10), and walking in His ways was blessed, until indeed sin came in, and eventuated in ignominious defeat at Ai. Now, however, the case is very different, for is not the mention of Hophni and Phineas as being with the ark of the covenant (verse 4, compare chapter 2. 17) indicative of the awful condition of Israel in the sight of God? and also the righteous judgment of God in allowing Israel to be defeated before their enemies? for God had said, "*If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments, and do them, . . . ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword*" (Lev. 26. 3, 7, 8).

This miserable human expediency expressed by "it" would never compensate for a right condition before God. Not that the order and forms as given by God are not right in their own place, nay, we cannot be right apart from anything that has been given by the Lord for His pleasure and for our good, but it is a fatal mistake to suppose that these in themselves can take the place of a right condition of heart before Him. How easy it is for us to fall into a like

mistake! How often a deplorably sad condition of things is cloaked over by a fair show in the flesh—a spurious spirituality got up to do service for the occasion! nay, more, is it not the case that where departure from God has taken place, there is often more outward activity and apparent zeal? How true this is (alas! too often) of the individual. Perhaps an emergency arises, some service for the Lord needs to be done, when the condition of heart before the Lord is anything but right. Happy he who at such a time owns his unfitness for any service whatever for God, for the omniscient eye of the living God sees through all the shams of men. Power *for* God can only come from power *with* God; it cannot be *worked up* for any occasion, but must *come down*, and that only as our ways are ordered before the Lord our God. (See 2 Chron. 27. 6.)

Verse 5: “And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.” Does this not show that there may be much enthusiasm accompanying a wrong condition which some, mistaking for real power from God, are terrified at? the which when the Philistines heard they were afraid, “for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us!” (verse 7). There may be that which for a time appears to be power from God, even to the very alarm of the enemy, which soon, however, proves to be that which is (the enemy being unaware) only to their advantage. This gives rise on the part of the Philistines to wise counsel after the manner of men: “Be strong, and quit yourselves like men” (verse 9), words which bring to mind 1 Corinthians 16. 13, 14, but with this marked difference, that the natural man cannot rise above the things of time and sense, for the words in 1 Corinthians are set, as it were, in a setting of *faith* and *love*. Please see. If Israel had been right with God, the Philistines, doing all they did, would no more have given them the victory than

did the ark of the covenant "it" in the midst of Israel, "for victory is of the Lord." Power lies not in numbers. A reference to 2 Chronicles 14. 8, 15 will convince any reader of this fact; compare also Leviticus 26. 7, 8.

It is in this chapter, in connection with the narrative before us, that we read the awful expression "Ichabod," saying, "The glory is departed from Israel" (verse 21). Let us take heed, therefore, that such an expression or the like may never be true of us.

We would now ask the attention of our readers to chapter 7., which is as cold waters to a thirsty soul after the sad, sad narrative of chapter 4., and to carefully read and compare both chapters, noting the striking contrasts between them.

In verse 2, chapter 7., we read for the first time of lamentation *after the Lord*,—a contrast to the *us* of chapter 4. "And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your *heart*, then put away the strange gods and the Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your *hearts* unto the Lord, and serve Him only, and *He* will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." These words are in striking contrast to the words of chapter 4.: "*It* will save us out of the hand of the Philistines," and, it would appear, were spoken in order to convict them of their past sin and folly expressed in those words, on the same principle as the Lord reminds Peter of his thrice denial in the thrice-repeated question, "Lovest thou Me?" (John 21.) How often mention is made of the heart! For the hearts of the people were wrong, and must be restored before victory could come. We do well to keep in mind those searching words of the Spirit of God: "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4. 23); and "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an *evil heart of unbelief* in falling away from the living God" (Heb. 3. 12). But com-

pare 1 Peter **3. 15**, R.V. "Then the children of Israel did put away the Baalim and the Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only." "Baalim" means "lords." Here there was prompt action evidencing whole-heartedness in returning to the Lord. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well." The words "we have sinned" further attest to this fact; just as, again, we read the same words in the returning of the Prodigal Son, "I have sinned" (Luke **15.**), words in these instances showing that true repentant condition and entire dependence on the mercy of God. "And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto the Lord" (verse 5). "Mizpah" means "watch tower." "In the morning will I order my prayer unto Thee, and will keep watch"—look out for answers—(Ps. **5. 3**). "I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye Me in vain" (Isa. **45. 19**).

"And Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah" (verse 6)—a contrast truly to "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judg. **21. 25**). To a superficial thinker it might appear strange that judging was necessary at such a time; but if there is that upon the earth which is *of* God and *for* God, it is characterized by everything which is not according to His will being brought to the light and judged in His presence. Consequently before the glorious personal reign of Christ upon the earth for a thousand years there shall be gathered out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity (Matt. **13. 41**). There is a possibility of rule according to God now, for there is a heart returning to Him. It is no namby-pamby conglomerate coming together; indeed, it is godly rule at such a time that tests whether the outward profession is of the heart or not; if not, the weakness is brought to light, and there is a running away from the discipline according to God. On the other hand, a truly repentant condition will bend to all discipline as found in the Scriptures of truth.



What a contrast is verse 7 to verse 5, chapter 4., where we read, "The lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines." Here the latter show no alarm. On the one hand, the children of Israel are terribly afraid; and having learnt somewhat of their own weakness and insufficiency, are cast upon their God. On the other hand, they have learnt somewhat of the omnipotence of Jehovah, and His willingness to save those who seek Him with a whole heart (verse 8). "And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us; that *He* will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." Notice how they now take up the language of Samuel, for they have learnt that it is "*He*," not "*it*." It is well not to under-estimate the enemy's power. I think we often do. To be forewarned is to be fore-armed. Knowing his power, we well may tremble and exclaim, "Who is sufficient?" but only in order that we may be more and more cast upon our God, learning the utter folly of depending on any arm of flesh. There was little or no enthusiasm now—a striking contrast to chapter 4. Little did the Philistines think that such an ignominious defeat was so close upon them, "for the battle is the Lord's." "I returned, and saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong" (Eccles. 9. 11). Verse 9: "And Samuel took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt offering unto the Lord." The sucking lamb would suggest the thought of weakness, reminding us of the following Scriptures—a sample of many: "Christ was crucified through weakness" (2 Cor. 13. 4); "For the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness, but unto us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1. 18).

"God chose the weak things of the world, that He might put to shame the things that are strong, . . . yea, and the things that are not that He might bring to nought the

things that are: that no flesh should glory before God" (1 Cor. 1. 27, 28).

The apostle could say, "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12. 10). In Exodus 29. 38 we find that two lambs of the *first year* were to be offered day by day continually—a continual burnt offering, a sweet savour, an offering made by fire unto Jehovah. What is this but Christ offering Himself to God, "an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell"? (Eph. 5. 2). The lamb being of the first year would typify weakness. A striking contrast this to "IT" of chapter 4.; there they are occupied with *things*, here with the *Person*. "As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel" (verse 10). "Not by might (an army, R.V. margin), nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Zech. 4. 6).

Here is just another instance of the preciousness of Christ to God, because of what He has done and is. God hears and answers the cries of those who call upon Him out of a pure heart.

See a somewhat parallel instance to this in Genesis 8. 20, 21. Let us ever bear in mind that it is only through what Christ is to God in all the value of His person and His work that victory can be assured to us. God has no blessing for man apart from Him; and if saints are forgetful of this fact (whether as in the past, as here shown forth, or in the present), God may take the rod in hand, and teach His saints the lesson by severe and unpleasant means (see Lev. 26. 27, 28; compare Ps. 32. 8, 9). Oh that we ourselves, as expressed in "us," may be made so little of, and Christ made so much of, that with us there may be no need for any such dealing.

Verse 12, "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between

Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it *Ebenezer*, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." But only as His people were in a right condition before Him could this be recorded; otherwise it is "Ichabod," as expressed in chapter 4.

Let us then express the gratitude of our hearts unto God for the past in "Ebenezer," while for the future "Jehovah Jireh" will suffice.

"O God, our help in ages past,  
Our hope for time to come,  
Our shelter from the stormy blast,  
And our eternal home."

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

### ABRAM SAVED.

ABRAHAM, whom God calls "My friend," had first to experience what it is to cry from the heart "My God." So with us, if we would know ourselves the friends of the Christ we must know ourselves saved by the Christ from sin's penalty, which is "eternal wrath." We live in a day when a large number of persons profess to believe. When, however, you become personal and say, "When did you first believe?" you are told, "I always believed." Now, while one is prepared to waive the point of time as to when you believed, for many truly saved people could not say when (and here let me say this should not in any way discourage them), yet they will never say, "I always believed," but will confess, "I was once ungodly." As Murray McCheyne so beautifully puts it—

"I once was a stranger to grace and to God."

Abram, like all mankind descending from Adam, sinned in him and fell with him. *He did not always believe.*

God draws aside the curtain and allows us to see Abram

in all the darkness, alienation, and delusion of a nature which is flesh,<sup>1</sup> and as such desperately wicked and enmity against God. We find him down in Mesopotamia in his father's home, a vile sinner yet a worshipper, not of God, but of demons.<sup>2</sup> Can any picture, looked at from God's standpoint, be more depraved — a perishing soul worshipping demons? In Abram this is not only the fruit of a nature shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, which will take any bent the Devil may see fit to give it, but also the result of his home training, for his father and relatives were idolators, and he was cradled in it. To find in him anything different must not only come from One greater than himself, but also greater than the Devil who held him with such a strong grip. He needed, as every man needs, "the Greater than he," even the blessed Christ of God.

If Abram had been left alone to work out his own salvation he would have lived and died a lost soul, but being the object of God's love and the recipient of His grace, we find him saved, not only from the penalty of his sins, but also from the religion of a world that hated God. How blessed such an experience is some of us who believe can testify.

Yes, one day, in the midst of the darkness and sin of his Mesopotamia life and home, the God of Glory appeared unto him, for we read, "The God of Glory appeared unto our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia."<sup>3</sup> From this we find that he had personal dealings with the God of Glory. I would here say that the God of Glory who appeared unto Abraham was none other than the Christ of God; for in Old Covenant times every appearance of God to man was in the person of Him whom we know as the Christ. Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple.<sup>4</sup> We

<sup>1</sup> Josh. 24. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 10. 20.

<sup>3</sup> Acts 7. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Isa. 6. 1.

are not left in any doubt as to who the One was whom Isaiah saw, for God says, "These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spake of Him."<sup>1</sup> Again we read, "And they saw the God of Israel."<sup>2</sup> Alongside of this I would quote, "No one hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He told Him out,"<sup>3</sup> to prove that the God of Israel spoken of in Exodus 24. is the Christ of God. Convinced I am, and precious to me is the fact, that He, whose rejoicings were in the habitable parts of God's earth, and whose delights were with the sons of men, was the One in whom and through whom God revealed Himself from time to time in Old Covenant days to men.

We have seen Abram in the darkness and sin of a nature incurably wicked, sought out, found, and saved by the Christ of God in His character of the God of Glory. He appeared unto him. Thus Abram had personal dealings with the Christ. We who are saved have known a similar experience; we have to speak of personal dealings with a Person, even the Christ of God. God speaking in Son<sup>4</sup> is the characteristic of this dispensation when here on earth. He said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live."<sup>5</sup> Saul of Tarsus when saved heard the same voice, and had dealings with the same One. Of those that were with him on that Damascus road, he says, "And they that were with me indeed saw the light, but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me."<sup>6</sup> Again we read, "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by a saying of the Christ."<sup>7</sup>

In all our Gospel testimony let us ever seek to make it plain that the "Salvation of Jehovah" is a Person, even the One who, in the form of a babe, filled the aged Simeon's

<sup>1</sup> John 12. 41.    <sup>2</sup> Exod. 24. 10.    <sup>3</sup> John 1. 18.    <sup>4</sup> Heb. 1. 2.

<sup>5</sup> John 5. 25.    <sup>6</sup> Acts 22. 9.    <sup>7</sup> Rom. 10. 17, R.V.

arms, and led him to cry, "Let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation."<sup>1</sup> Yes, a living, omnipotent, omniscient Christ for a guilty, lost soul. No depth too deep for Him to stoop; no surroundings too filthy in the which He cannot seek and save the lost. Convinced I am that His brightest gems, His greatest trophies, like an Abram, have been found in the lowest strata of sin and shame. They love much, for they have been forgiven much.

J. CHARLETON STEEN.

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CONFERENCE NOTES.

EDINBURGH. APRIL, 1898.

Mr. F. VERNAL referred to Acts 12. 24: "The Word of God grew and multiplied," and said: This chapter seems to contain very much cheer and encouragement for God's people to-day. Two things are very prominent here; one is earthly glory in the climax of its power and splendour, the other weakness in the extreme of its helplessness. Peter lying between the soldiers in the prison, to be brought forth next day, points to a scene of weakness and hopelessness; then Herod is seen in the zenith of his glory and power making an oration to the people and taking glory to himself, instead of giving it to God. He had reached the top of his ambition, and at that point God stepped in. He stepped in to exterminate, not, as in the case of His servant, to help. Herod set himself to oppose the preaching of the Gospel, and when he was at the height of his glory, God, with one solitary blow, brought him down. There is sometimes so much opposition to the preaching of the Gospel that Christians get faint-hearted; but God, who in the past was sufficient for the prison scene and the throne scene, is still the same. Therefore let us in earnest labour on. Acts 19. 20: "So mightily grew the Word of the Lord and prevailed" (R.V). In Acts 12. it seems to point to the progress which the Gospel is making; but in Acts 19. the thought appears to be the effects of the Word of the Lord upon those who were saved. This is beautifully seen in them bringing their books and the things they had before been occupied with and made their living by, and burning

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 2, 29, 30.

them before all the people. When the Word of the Lord grows and increases in the power and strength of the Spirit in men's hearts, it has an outward effect that every one can see. The burning of the books was not done secretly, nor did they do that which Jacob did when going up to Bethel; he hid the strange gods, instead of destroying them, and therein he failed. There is such a thing as Christians getting to know the mind of God from His Word, and, Jacob-like, they put their strange gods away where they can easily find them again at a future time when they get out of fellowship with their God. Let it be remembered that the Word of the Lord has not only got to do with curious arts, but with everything in our lives contrary to this blessed Book, and it's all hypocrisy to say "Lord, Lord," and do not the things which He commands. The growing of the Word of the Lord causes men to exterminate everything in their lives that is not of God. There is no one we have any right to obey but the Lord Jesus Christ. "Ah!" says some one, "I know what you are driving at: it all means come and join us." May the Lord keep you for ever from joining us unless the Word of the Lord worketh mightily in you, and your coming is the result of the operation of God in you through His Word. 1 Peter 2. This is a growing of another aspect. It is the growing of the individual by the Word of God. A Christian may read the Word of God and yet not grow thereby unto salvation; for unless the things spoken of in verse 1 are put away, there can be no growth. These things are like worms, which do their deadly work in the dark, down beneath, out of sight; but the result of their work can be seen in the fading leaf and the drooping flower. God wishes that we should always be like the child as to its longing for the sincere milk of the Word. Eph. 2. 20, 21 presents a growing of a still different nature, for here we believe it has reference to assemblies of God. Verse 20 refers to a building once built, which stands fast for eternity and can never be repeated, of which Christ is not only the foundation, but the chief corner-stone. There is, in verse 21, a fitly framing together of each individual assembly in itself, which shows the responsibility devolving upon each one in the assembly to see that they are filling up worthily the place for which God has fitted them. Holy temple in the Lord embraces the Fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mr. J. A. BOSWELL followed with some general remarks of a very searching nature, and in referring to the words "the wind bloweth where it listeth," pictured the effects of a miniature whirlwind as seen in our streets before a storm. As the wind eddies and sweeps along, it picks up sticks, straws, etc., and these various atoms are shaped together and carried along by a power which is not their own. Referring to what is called "individual testimony" as taught by

some, he said that there is no guidance in the Word of God for Christians as individuals apart from collective responsibility. The leaves at this moment are bursting into life on the trees around us, but the leaf is not there sunning itself in the sun as an individual; no, leaves are but Nature's laboratory for the growth and health of the tree. A time comes though—the only time of individuality for the leaf—when it becomes the plaything of the blast—dry, shrivelled, withered; and many Christians, with all their vaunted individual testimony, are only in this condition. Oh, I can worship God at home, they say, and get on alone amid the ruin of to-day. Let such and each one of us remember that, whilst some sticks and straws are laid aside as the wind sweeps on, it has, nevertheless, lost nothing, for it gathers up fresh materials and bears them forward. So, beloved child of God, the work of God has not failed, although you are not in it. No, no; a work for eternity is sweeping along without you, and God is being glorified in it. The Devil has not gone to sleep, the powers of Hell are not stilled, therefore we may expect conflict and fighting to the end of the journey.

Mr. JOHN BROWN referred to, and read with us, the 3rd Epistle by John, and asked that careful note be taken of the name the apostle gives to himself in writing this letter. There is reason for his writing as "the elder." He writes also to Gaius as his well-beloved. "I pray concerning everything that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." Whether the worms are present or are absent, whether the leaf is withered, or is green and full of sap, is made very evident by the prosperity of the soul, manifested by the manner of life in which Gaius comported himself. This kind of prosperity, how it is got, maintained, and manifested, may be learned from the opening words of the Book of Joshua. God's word to Joshua will lead one into His way for maintaining prosperity of this sort. Joshua was told to meditate in the word of the Lord day and night. There is Divine wisdom displayed in the order of the words day and night, for he who does this in the daytime won't go wrong when the night cometh. Daniel, in the circumstances in which he was placed (see Dan. 6.), just did as he was wont to do aforetime. Let us ask ourselves what we would do in similar circumstances. "Thou walkest in truth." The truth is so knowable, concrete, definite, absolute that he who walketh therein can be known, recognised and described. Than this there was no greater joy to this elder. He who has learned of God to conduct himself becomingly to the stranger is not likely to misbehave himself at home. This is spoken to a man who does whatever he does in a *faithful* manner. The principle of faithfulness requires that a man needs to take care of the little things of God. "I wrote somewhat unto the Church," etc.: "Diotrephes receiveth us not."



Let us learn how closely are identified the writer and his writings. In rejecting the writings he rejected the writer, and cast out of the Church those who would receive both. This receiving is a standing difficulty and snare to not a few at this time. There are those who are so deceived that they teach that some are received if they are permitted to share in the breaking of bread; and charge others who disallow such as "rejecting the brethren." Be not deceived, those in no sense receive the brethren; these do not reject them. To receive in entails so much that when in, one can be cast out. How different of the Body. 1 Corinthians 12.: "If the hand shall say, I am not of the Body, nevertheless it is not therefore not of the Body" (see R.V.). A man may say he is not of the Body, but his saying so does not affect the matter at all. Once in, for ever in; even he himself cannot put himself without, if baptized in one Spirit into the one Body. In the church of God where Gaius was there was a man cast out therefrom such as he would. Don't imitate the evil, but imitate the good.

In the evening, Mr. DAVID SMITH referred to Ezekiel 37. 1, and said that God has expectations in each one of us who are His, individually and collectively. This is clearly seen in Ephesians 1., where the prayer of the apostle shows what God's desire and hope in us are. He has called us as individuals, and brought us together in order that the hope of His heart might be realized. The "hope of His calling" is different from our hope, the coming of the Lord Jesus to receive us to Himself. Have our hearts been exercised in any measure to know what the hope of His calling is? God never asks from us impossibilities; therefore the exceeding greatness of His power is at our disposal in order to bring about the realization of His hope in calling us. Ezekiel knew, in his experience, the strengthening of Jehovah, as seen in the verse referred to. "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord." "None shall pluck them out of My hand" speaks of safety and security; but "the hand of the Lord upon me" refers to something different, even the individual under the entire control of that hand as the stars in the right hand of Him who walks in the midst of the golden lampstands (Rev. 1.). He "carried me out in the Spirit" speaks not only of control, but also of the energy of the Spirit, for Ezekiel was borne along in the energy of the Spirit. "Ye shall receive power" was said to the disciples at the time of which Acts 1. speaks, and this is the strengthening of Jehovah to His people to-day in connection with the carrying out of His purposes and the doing of His will. The hand upon us is associated with His authority over us. There is "One Lord," and all authority is in His hand. We shall surely fail, in giving effect to His purposes, unless there is the laying hold of God's power in the energy of the Holy Spirit ungrieved and unquenched. Is there not a

possibility of putting our hand, in the energy of the flesh, to keep God's ark firm? "Guard in the Holy Spirit." Let us guard every precious atom of truth which God has revived and taught us, but let us be careful to do so in the Holy Spirit.

Mr. J. C. RADCLIFFE referred to the transient scene of earth, where everything is marked by change and decay, and the varied experiences and vicissitudes through which the testimony for God on earth must pass. In the midst of such a changing scene, how blessed it is to be ever reminded that our God changes not. He then referred to the twice numbering of the fighting men of Israel, as given in the Book of Numbers, and pointed out that, instead of their numbers increasing, as we would naturally expect, they diminished considerably. Some tribes increased, but others decreased.

Mr. JOHN HOPKINS, from Melbourne, followed with some stirring words to young men, and exhorted such to discharge their responsibility to the Lord in the spread of the Gospel. There is, he said, a danger of listening to blessed truths at Conferences, and going away and thinking that this is all that is needed. But if we are to be strong men for God, we will require to feed upon His Word for ourselves day by day. The sum of Israel given in Numbers 1. is of those who were able to go forth to war, and each one may well ask themselves the question, "Am I fit to be numbered?" Unless one in the assembly is a power for God, he is a positive hindrance to the work. Of Israel it is recorded that when brought out of Egypt there was not one feeble person amongst their tribes, and this is what ought to be true of each assembly in the Fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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## GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

IN the perusal of Old Testament Scriptures the young believer will do well to keep in memory the New Testament doctrine concerning such—namely, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15. 4).

With this thought let us consider the first chapter of the Book of Ruth. Here we find a family of four persons dwelling in Bethlehem. The head of the family was

Elimelech ; his wife's name was Naomi. Their names, as well as the place of their dwelling, are significant—Elimelech means "My God is King"; Naomi means "My pleasant one"; and Bethlehem, the place of their home, signifies "House of Bread." Possibly gleams of Israel's prosperity and peace, when faithful to God, shine out here. A happy family indeed, dwelling in the home of plenty, under the rule and authority of God.

Soon, however, a cloud comes over this fair abode. A famine arises. By this means God tests them as to whether they are resting on circumstances or upon Himself. The famine discovers the undercurrent of their lives.

Let us pause here a moment, beloved fellow-saint. You know full well when the first gush of Divine joy and peace filled your soul. Has that bright experience been dimmed with clouds of trial and perplexity? If so, remember God deals with His saints for their profit; even Eliphaz the Temanite could say to Job, "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty" (Job 5. 17).

How often individuals as well as families lightly esteem God's dealings even as did this family in Bethlehem-Judah. Elimelech makes up his mind to go to Moab, and thus, in part at least, evade God's hand. Surely there was in him a heart of unbelief in departing from the Living God; even his children's names seem to give an index of his spiritual state, for Mahlon means "sick," and Chillon, "pining."

The family were not long in Moab before Elimelech died. Thus does God's chastening hand fall. Famine is bad, but to lose the bread-winner is worse. The two sons take two wives—Orpah and Ruth. They dwell in Moab ten years. The number "ten" seems to be connected with trial and testing. At the close of this period God takes away Naomi's two sons.

Thus heavily indeed does God's hand fall on Naomi, and

all with a view to her restoration to Himself and return to the land of Judah. Even in judgment God remembers mercy, and although Elimelech had grievously failed in going down to Moab, and his two sons had followed further in that downward path and married women of Moab, yet out of this succession of failure God remembers Naomi, and makes Ruth a true-hearted one to follow her into the land of Judah. How God can bring meat out of the eater, and life out of death!

We are reminded of Peter's failure in the denial of his Lord and Master, and yet when restored he becomes a witness for God, and one through whom the tide of God's grace and salvation flows to such as had reviled and rejected the Lord Jesus.

When the time has come for Naomi's return, Orpah goes back to her people and her gods, but Ruth cleaves to Naomi. Possibly in Naomi's words to Ruth, "Return thou after thy sister-in-law," she was testing her. Ruth replied, "Entreat me not to leave thee or return from following after thee, for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (1. 16). This testing brought out the purpose of her heart, and Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfastly minded to follow her. God desires steadfastness and purpose of heart in us, as the following verses show—Daniel 1. 8; Acts 2. 42; 1 Corinthians 15. 58.

Naomi and Ruth journey until they come to Bethlehem; and when they came into the city, the city was moved, and they said, "Is this Naomi?" She replies, "I went out full, and the Lord brought me home again empty."

How like the young man of Luke 15.! He was tired of parental authority and care, so he went out full and returned home empty, in rags and tatters. Not less a backslider when he stood with high hopes on his father's

threshold than when he was by the swine trough. We should all do well to remember Proverbs 14. 14 and Hebrews 3. 12. Read and ponder these passages.

They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest. Naomi had departed from the place God had appointed her in the time of trial in the famine, but God had brought her back in the time of plenty.

In Hebrews 12. 5-11 we learn of our Father's hand. Some despise His dealings, some faint, some are exercised thereby. May writer and reader be amongst the latter ones, that we may know the fruit such dealings and discipline bring about. Better to remain where the will of God would have us, though there be a famine, than turn our back upon God and His ways, to better our circumstances and find an easy path. Full soon will it be discovered at what a cost the coveted ease has been purchased. "He who dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Ps. 91.).

A. LIVINGSTONE.

## 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 123.—*Is it lawful for a Christian to serve in the army?*

We know of no Scripture that bears directly on this subject. Happily in these lands, no man is *compelled* to enter the army under present regulations, but how long this state of things may last no one knows. Among the nations of the Continent it is far otherwise. There every able-bodied man is called upon to serve so many years of his life in the service of his country as a soldier. Every year, no matter what a man's occupation, he is obliged to leave it during his time of service, and all the machinery of business is arranged to suit this condition of things. The question then is, Did the same condition exist in these lands, would a Christian be

justified in complying with the law of the land and becoming a soldier? In refusing so to do, imprisonment, and even worse, might be entailed. If we refer to Israel's history, there is no question that the soldiers of Israel fought against God's enemies and by His direction, also under His direct control and guidance; sometimes, also, they fought against their brethren (2 Chron. 13.). But this is quite a different thing to fighting under a Government that may in great measure be controlled and directed by the god of this world, the Prince of the power of the air, in wars of mere ambition, or even worse, in unjust oppression of the weak, it may be in opposing what is of God. This makes the question to our mind a weighty one. Men may be converted in the army, and that such, by the teaching of 1 Cor. 7. 24, would be justified in remaining in the position in which they were called we are inclined to believe; but this is far different from voluntarily entering a false position as a Christian with one's eyes open. These considerations would lead us to say that it is not lawful for a Christian to enlist. One so called to act would need to leave himself in the hands of his God, and willingly suffer loss for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake.

J. A. B.

*QUESTION 124.—Is it according to Scripture to receive into the Fellowship a believer who has been immersed by one in the sects? Would such a baptism be scriptural, or would they need to be re-baptized by one in an Assembly of God?*

In replying to this question we must bear in mind that in some cases baptism has to be carried out by an individual, that is, when there is no Assembly where the work of God is going on. If there be an Assembly the fellowship of the guides should be sought in a godly manner. In order to baptism being valid we believe it is necessary that the baptizer and the baptized should both be disciples, for one who is not such would have no authority from God to perform the ordinance, neither would an unconverted one be called upon to submit to that which in their case would be an untruth, for baptism to-day points to an accomplished salvation in the past. One denying the fundamental truths of Christianity, such as Christadelphians, could not perform a baptism in accordance with the mind of God, neither do we believe that the baptism of those known as Campbellites would be valid, as they baptize unto repentance for the remission of sins. Though we have mentioned Campbellites, there are other sects whose baptism we should look upon as equally void. Also for baptism to be carried out in a scriptural manner the baptized one would need to be immersed. Pouring or sprinkling is not baptism at all, and, indeed, in no way signifies death and resurrection. It is necessary to be put

under the water and raised up out of it in order to show forth the truth—in fact, to be dipped.

We may add that in an Assembly with which the writer was associated for some years a young woman applied for fellowship who had been baptized among the Christadelphians. She was found to be truly converted, but had been ensnared unknowingly, and brethren felt that such a baptism could not be looked upon as scriptural. Mr. R. C. Chapman, of Barnstaple, was asked his opinion upon the matter, and his reply was, "Let her arise and be baptized."

J. A. B.

QUESTION 125.—*Could spreading the table for the feast, opening the hall door, and arranging the hall for the saints, come under the category of deacon work for a sister?*

Yes, if done for the Lord we think it could.

C. M. L.

### "HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

It is this Person, "whom the King delighteth to honour," and that Name, which is so full and precious, that God has made the centre unto which, and around whom, He wills saints should be gathered to-day.

When the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray, there was one thing in that prayer I would like to draw your attention to. It is that expression, "Hallowed be Thy Name." Have you, dear fellow-saints, learned what is meant by the words, "Hallowed be Thy Name"?

The word itself is almost always translated "Sanctify," and means to set apart as sacred, or holy; to regard it with the love, and fear, and reverence it deserves.

Do you wonder that the Psalmist cried, "Unite my heart to fear Thy Name," as he grasped somewhat of the greatness and sweetness of the Name of his God? A united heart would be a whole heart.

Have you said in your heart, "Hallowed be that precious Name"? Have you set it apart as sacred? Is it to you, as a Christian, the centre of all authority? Are you gathered unto it? If you have sanctified it, it will sanctify you, in setting you apart all for God.—*From God's Centre of Gathering for His Saints in these Last Days*, by Frank Vernal.

## GOD HATH SPOKEN.

“YEA, hath God said?” Such words do truly express and characterize the Devil’s creed. Adopted and uttered by him in the early stage of man’s history, with such satanic skill and subtlety, and with such successful issues in effecting his purposes, it has since been, and yet is, his most commonly used instrument in accomplishing the wreck and ruin of mankind as to the purposes of God concerning them. It is his yea and nay; for while he saith yea, he insinuates nay. His object has surely and truly ever been to detract from the authority and place God’s word was to have and should have over the understanding, affection, and ways of man, the creature of His hand; while this, again, was but the preparatory stage for the truth being given up and the lie accepted and believed, unto the condemnation of all such who so do. The answer, as well as antidote to the lie, is the truth expressed in the words, “God hath said!” God hath spoken! Spoken, indeed, once and again. Spoken in creation; spoken in incarnation; and spoken in revelation. That God hath spoken creation reveals and expresses. “The worlds having been formed by the (spoken) word of God” (Heb. 11. 3). He spake, and it came to pass. His word went forth, and hath not returned to Him void. “By the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; . . . but the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men” (2 Peter 3. 5-7). In these God’s voice is still heard. In these God’s witness may yet be found to His eternal power and Godhead, so that man is without excuse. The silent, yet none the less convincing, testimony in creation declares that God is “The only living and true God.” “God over all blessed for ever.”



“He that cometh to God must believe that He is.” Believest thou this? “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God!”

The further and fuller speaking of God is heard and witnessed in Incarnation.

The Word, who was in the beginning, who was with God, and who was God, became flesh, and tabernacled with us (amongst men). “He who was manifest in the flesh.” “Lo, I come!” “A body hast Thou prepared Me.” “And the angel answered and said unto her (Mary, the Virgin), The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also that which is to be born of thee shall be called Holy, the Son of God” (Luke 1. 35). “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal. 4. 4). Can the truth these words declare be denied? Can the facts they attest be disproved? Can it be proved that Jesus never lived, or can it be shown He was only an impostor? No, indeed! Accredited witnesses, who have heard, and seen, and handled, have witnessed concerning Him, and even His enemies themselves have been unable to disprove their testimony, which, undoubtedly, they would have done if they could.

Then again, we have the testimony of God to Him, proclaiming who He was and is: “Lo! a voice out of the heavens saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3. 17); “And there came a cloud overshadowing them, and there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear ye Him” (Mark 9. 7). Again: “Father, glorify Thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. Jesus answered and said, This voice hath not come for My sake, but for your sakes” (John 12. 28-30).

Further, we have the testimony of man: “The officers

answered, "Never man so spake" (John 7. 46). "Nicodemus said unto Him, Thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him" (John 3. 2). The woman of Samaria: "Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did; can this be the Christ?" (John 4. 29). The centurion said, "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mark 15. 39).

As in creation God hath revealed His majesty and power, so in Incarnation He hath revealed His heart purposes. The Son, from the bosom of the Father, makes these known. God is light, God is love. His character, as well as His purpose, hath been expressed in Him whom He hath sent. God hath spoken in His Son; He, the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3. 16). Inconceivable as is that purpose to human mind, and incomprehensible as is that love to human heart, yet none the less surely has it been revealed and displayed. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The value of that life gave value to His death—the death of the Cross. He gave Himself a ransom. In His death the fullest claims of God have found their answer, and the deepest need of man has been met, as attested in that God hath raised Him from the dead. Grace can now and doth now reign through righteousness unto eternal life, and "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6. 23). "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life" (John 3. 36).

"Dost *thou* believe on the Son of God?"

Again, God has spoken in Revelation. "All Scripture is God breathed." "Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." "The Scriptures . . . they are they which testify of Me." The Scriptures, indeed, express that which

God hath spoken. The Scriptures in their entirety and fulness, their sufficiency and power; not the word of man, but the spoken word of God. "The Word is nigh thee." "So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by a saying of Christ." "Let God be true!" is the claim of Scripture. Therein He testifies as to the ruin and need of mankind. A ruin so great, and a need so deep, that all human efforts could never avail to undo the one or meet the other. Man, utterly and irreparably lost! "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." "There is none righteous, no, not one." Therein He also testifies concerning His righteousness, His grace and His salvation, for guilty, ruined man, associated with the person and work of Christ as a Saviour. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1. 15). "*These are written* that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that *believing* ye may have life in His name" (John 20. 31). "*These things have I written* that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5. 13). "He that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." "He that believeth not is condemned already."

DAVID SMITH.

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## "THINGS NEW AND OLD."

SOME one has said, "In the Old Testament the New lies hid; in the New Testament the Old lies open." This is true; and bearing in mind the Scripture in Romans **15. 4**, "For whatsoever things were written beforehand, were written for our learning," etc., with 1 Corinthians **10. 6, 11**, we may often, and with increasing pleasure and profit, ponder over the marvellous unfoldings in a past dispensation in the light of what God has spoken to us in these last days in His Son (Heb. **1. 1**). Nor can we afford to part with, or even overlook, one jot or tittle of what has been written beforehand; for hear the Spirit through Paul to Timothy: "And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures (sacred or temple Scriptures), which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. **3. 15, 16**). And what is the commandment, the statute, or the judgment which God enjoined on Israel that has not a voice for us to-day? Let us be careful lest we be found picking and choosing in God's Word, casting aside that which does not suit our palate; or, it may be, refusing the Word because it seems too deep and dark. Rather let us remember that we may be like the two on the way to Emmaus, "slow of heart to believe"; or, like the Hebrews, "our ears dull of hearing"; or it may be, alas! that there exists decided dislike to the plain and positive claims of the Lord as to the path of holiness in which He would have us walk. For if He associates Glory with Grace in Ephesians **1.**, He associates Holiness with Truth in chapter **4**.

We would like to look at a few things written beforehand to Israel, and note the lessons and admonitions con-

tained therein for us. First, then, as to their bondage and degradation. Jehovah, speaking of that out of which they had been delivered, calls it, "The iron furnace," "The house of bondmen." Fully under the dominion of Pharaoh, afflicted with their burdens, no power in themselves to effect their deliverance; neither did Jehovah set His love upon them or choose them because they were better than other people, but because He loved them. How utterly lost and doomed were the people of Israel apart from the living God!

Faint type of the deeper degradation, the sorer bondage in and under which man by nature is to sin and Satan.

"Sold under sin" (Rom. 7. 14). "Foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another" (Titus 3. 3). "Lost, with minds blinded by the god of this age" (2 Cor. 4. 3, 4). "Walking according to the course of this age, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2. 2). "Servants of sin" (Rom. 6. 17). Alive in sin manward, dead in sins Godward. "Without strength. Ungodly" (Rom. 5. 6). Sad condition! None knows the awful depths of ruin and woe into which sin has plunged fallen man save He who went under the waves and billows of Divine judgment against it on Calvary's cross, whose darkness and grief outgloomed the night.

Who dares to plead that there is something left in man which, if educated and refined, would bring him into God's holy presence with acceptance? The heart—"Deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." The moral character—a mass of corruption from head to foot (Isa. 1. 5, 6). And over this sad state of things man wraps the filthy rags of his fancied self-righteousness. Can aught yielded by this state of sin and death please God? Can man by his natural attainments, by his natural or mental

wealth, secure his deliverance from sin's consequences or gain peace with God? Can man, by anything in him or by him, satisfy the righteous claims of Holiness or arrest the scathing ire of inflexible Justice?

But again, God saw and knew the sad condition of Israel, and came down to deliver them. The lamb slain and his blood sprinkled was God's way of salvation for them, in their utter hopelessness, from impending judgment, completely and for ever; for their deliverance meant nothing less than the entire overthrow of their enemies. But that lamb in Egypt slain pointed down the ages to God's Lamb which bore the sin of the world (Jno. 1. 29). "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5. 7). "Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19). "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1. 7). "Redemption through His blood." "Eternal redemption." Israel sadly failed in testimony, yet they were His people. Though they provoked Him, yet He loved them, and showed His love in correcting them.

In Jeremiah 2. He seems to turn His eye away from the scene of rebellion and apostasy around, into which His loved Israel had fallen, and to think of the time of her first love.

"I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown." Listen to His words of compassion in Hosea 11.: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I set thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within Me, My repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee." Who can estimate the dishonour done to the Lord by such as either knowingly or ignorantly assert that a soul that has shel-

tered beneath the blood of the Lamb of Calvary can by any means perish? Failure there is, indeed, grievous and much; but the work of the Cross can never fail. As God spake to Moses in Exodus 19., "Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself," so to us is the word, "Christ died for our sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." We have been made nigh. And Ecclesiastes 3. 14 assures us that "whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever." Thus we may bow our heads in deepest thankfulness that He has hidden our life with Christ in Himself; and, despite all the crookedness and self-will that mars our way down here, we are destined to be with the Lord Who bought us, in His glory for ever.

But again, while there was that done for Israel which God alone could do, and having been done was unalterable, He desired them to be and do something for Him. Exodus 19.: "Now therefore, if ye will hearken to My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine: and ye shall be a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Their redemption was unconditional; not so their testimony as a peculiar treasure, as a kingdom of priests, as an holy nation. Their obedience to His voice and their keeping His covenant was necessary for a manner of life in all they did for Him in strict accordance with His revealed will. "Let them make Me a sanctuary; that I may dwell in the midst of them. According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (Exod. 25.). In the keeping of the feasts also they had to do all things according to His Word concerning them. God had a purpose in all He bade them do for Him, and falling short of His instructions, or adding thereto, would have been equally offensive to Him, and

inimical to the object He had in view. In all their service there was no room for the working of the imaginations of their own heart, no margin for human invention, no allowance for self-will. And be it remembered that all His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments were not written only for them who came out of Egypt by Moses, but for all their posterity.

"To hear such discipline aright, they needed  
Far more humility than they possessed;  
More self-abandonment and more devotion,  
A will surrendered and a heart at rest."

Let their exile among all nations and their untold sufferings tell how complete has been their failure, and how deeply they have grieved and provoked their Redeemer.

Concerning the feasts they had to observe, especially the Passover, we have been told by some that after the first keeping of it, it was not necessary that they should continue to do strictly as they had begun. Now this, to say the least of it, is questionable, for we read in Numbers 9. 2: "Let the children of Israel also keep the Passover at his appointed season. In the fourteenth day of the month, at even, ye shall keep it in his appointed season: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof shall ye keep it." When they came into the land we know they soon forgot, and did after their own ways. But in the times of revival, as in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah, when their hearts were exercised in the law, to do according to its commands, God had pleasure in recording the way the Passover was kept; surely telling us how deeply He felt their disobedience, and the joy He had in their readiness to do His will. Moreover, the importance He attached to this feast is seen in the provisions of His grace meeting the need of the defiled, and waiting until there was fitness to keep it, and in the solemn claims of His holiness, in that he who was clean, and not in a



journey, and forbore to keep it, would be cut off from among his people.

Let us apply these things to ourselves. Being, as we believe we are, in the Fellowship of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord, in House of God according to the Divine pattern, the weekly feast is at once our privilege and responsibility. In Israel, three times in the year all the males had to appear before the Lord—namely, in the Feast of the Passover, in the Feast of Weeks, and in the Feast of Tabernacles. The first in the time of green ears, the second when the first fruit was reaped, and the third when the harvest was gathered home. The first pointing back to the night of their deliverance out of Egypt, the second dealing with their ability to give to God with rejoicing of all the good things of which He had made them the glad possessors, the third looking forward to the time of Israel's fulness (Deut. 16.). We have all this in the feast we are keeping on the first day of the week. "For even Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast" (1 Cor. 5. 7, 8). And that unto the remembrance of Him. Moreover, that remembrance of His dying love, of all that He was to God when He passed through death and judgment alone in His unsullied holiness, in His intrinsic worth, of all that He is as the exalted sin-purger, opens the fountains of thanksgiving and praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, this feast has to be kept till He come, thus pointing us to the hour of our fulness and triumph, when we shall dispense with the memorials, for we shall have Himself, when these sweet seasons in His presence by faith shall be behind us, and we shall be with Him in "companionship complete," and that for ever.

We are under grace, not law. Shall we then be less careful how we keep this feast, and when, than Israel? But, say some, there is no direct command how to keep it

and how often. Why then do we keep it on the first day of the week? Because the disciples did so, and they had the Divine approval. Nor have we any right to cavil at or alter the time and its frequency. The example of the early church in that which was the will of God should be sufficient for us. Departure from this only results in human expediency.

How sad that some can make this most precious feast a convenience, neglecting to keep it week after week, robbing God of His due, and their own selves of a privilege which can never be recalled. Oh, lukewarm saint, beware! lest some canker-worm has already gnawed out your spirituality, and your occasional appearance among your brethren be but a cloak to cover a condition within which is abhorrent to God; and unless soon yours is that Godly sorrow which worketh repentance not to be repented of, your heartlessness may break out in open rebellion, and you be found without to swell the number of God-dishonouring wrecks that strew the wilderness.

Oh, for wholeheartedness to Him whom we call Lord, that will take us into the paths of righteousness to do what He has requested, and in a way that will give Him joy.

In closing this paper, we might notice briefly the care the Lord exercised over His people Israel, and how He took into confidence with Himself men of like passions with the people, to care for them and to instruct them in the way they should go. The Book of Deuteronomy abounds in testimony as to this. Judges and elders were raised up among them, to bear burdens, to undertake the cause between man and man, to go in and out before the people in everything for God. What a grave and sacred responsibility rested on these men! what wisdom, what Divine discernment, what patience they needed to watch and tend that people for God!

What need that they take heed to themselves, to be in

closest touch with each other, to be at His call, to be together to hear His will, in order to communicate it to the people. Ay, and to-day in churches of God He raises up such as guide and shepherd the little flock. It was so in early church days; it is so now. And do such need less to be in touch with God, to be less able to know His will, less careful to discriminate both good and evil, less patient? Is there less need now for overseers to be together than in Israel or in the early days of the church? Together, firstly in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel; together to ponder over, and strive to stand complete in, God's perfect will, not only locally, but as far-reaching as there are guides and saints to guide. And what need there is! Oh, that we had eyes to see it, to see the sad lack of Godly overseeing! Oh, that we had ears to hear the cry of the flock for pasture! Oh, that we could understand better the Great Shepherd's heart! We could then spend and be spent for His sake in service to the saints without a grudge, but with joy. Nor would we vainly fold our arms and say, He has given us no special command, therefore we will forbear. Ah, fellow-saints! there was need in early days that such men should be together, and their conferences had the approval of God; the Holy Spirit was with them. There was need for careful watching and feeding the flock. Is there no need now? Is the enemy less vigilant? Are evil men and seducers not waxing worse and worse? Let all who seek to guide hear the word in Acts 20.: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the little flock." How much need, for full often it is leading men who first head off into rebellion against the will of God, drawing others with them. But rather let us be found ensamples to the flock, exercising the jealous care of God over it, watching for souls as those who have to give account, that this may be done with joy, and not with grief.

T. C. O'NEILL.

## 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 126.—*Is it right for a believer when reading or quoting 1 Peter 2. 24 to put in the word “ON His body” in place of “IN His body,” and to say that if it was in His body then there was sin in Him, seeing that we read in Hebrews 4. 15 that He was without sin? In what sense did He bear our sins in His body on the tree? See Psalm 11. 3. If the foundation be destroyed what can the righteous do?*

This scripture inculcates subjection of a servant to his master under circumstances of great provocation, and this because suffering for righteousness is the very thing to which a Christian is called as a follower in the footsteps of Christ. No sin was done by Him, no guile was found in His mouth; when reviled He reviled not again, nor threatened when He suffered, but committed all to the Righteous Judge. Then Peter proceeds to dwell on the climax of all the suffering—a manner of suffering not possible to any sinner who has tasted that the Lord is gracious. Suffering not for righteousness, but for sins, yet suffering borne not by the sinner, but by the Righteous One, “Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree.” How in such a connection any one can possibly suppose that this sentence shows that there was sin in Him passes comprehension! The whole context shows that the suffering of a righteous one is the subject.

On the other hand, the words “in His body” are deeply significant, and we cannot regard it as admissible to say “on His body.” For the whole force of the phrase lies in the reality of the suffering of the Sinless One. He who suffered was a man “of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting,” and it was in His body that He felt the pangs

of woe, and woe so deep, suffering so unutterable, that the heart of this Man of Sorrows was broken.

“Deep were those sorrows, deeper still  
The love that brought Thee low,  
That bade the streams of life from Thee  
A lifeless victim flow.”

One indeed sometimes explains the bearing of sin or of sins by the Lord Jesus Christ as meaning that He bore the penalty of sin, but I think it meant much more than that. One hears His sufferings spoken of as sufferings at the hands of men and sufferings at the hand of God. But beside all this there must have been a bitter anguish to the Holy One arising from the infinite repugnance of His spotless nature to the sins He bore—the lies told by Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; the adultery and murder of David in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, with the countless multitude of other hateful sins done by us whom He had set Himself to save, all these were laid upon Him, and in all their horrible characteristics as well known to Him in whose eyes all things are naked and opened were borne by Him in that dread hour of suffering and woe. Ezekiel (see chapter 4.) seems to give us some faint idea of this manner of suffering to which we now direct attention. We must not forget that though none of these things could defile the Holy One, the suffering from association therewith was not less on that account, but greater. The pang of horror, the shudder of disgust with which one reads some account of unaccustomed degradation gives but the faintest idea of what all this must have meant to Him.

A somewhat similar use of the phrase *ἐν τῷ σώματι*, *ēn tō sōmati*, “in the body,” is to be found in Galatians 6. 17, where the Revisers have, as it seems to us, quite needlessly translated “on my body.” But if the Apostle Paul thought it worth while to refer to the stripes he had received, we

need not suppose that they were merely superficial. Little doubt they cut *into* his flesh.

We take this opportunity to offer a few comments on the marginal reading of the Revised Version, "carried up our sins in His body to the tree," which we believe to be serious misrepresentation of the original. The verb *ἀναφέρω* (*anaphērō*, or *anafērō*), I bear or carry up (from *ἀνα*, *ana*, up, and *φέρω*, *phērō*, or *fērō*, I bear), occurs in the New Testament about ten times, but in very different connection and associated with various prepositions. Thus in Matthew 17. 1 and Mark 9. 2 the Lord is said to *bring up* three disciples into a mountain, and this is the verb used, and we note that it is into (*εἰς*, *ěis*) a mountain. So in Luke 24. 51 we read of the Lord Himself being *carried up* into heaven (*εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν*, *ěis tōn ouranōn*). Then the word is used in reference to sacrifices, as in Hebrews 7. 27, twice—"to *offer up* sacrifices first for his own sins," whereas Christ *offered up* Himself; again in Hebrews 13. 15, "Let us *offer up* a sacrifice of praise," and in 1 Peter 2. 5, "to *offer up* spiritual sacrifices." In each of these four instances, and also in James 2. 21, the word translated "*offer up*" is this same verb *ἀναφέρω* (*anaphērō*, or *anafērō*, I bear or carry up). In Hebrews 9. 28 the word translated *bear* in both the Authorised and Revised Versions is the verb under consideration, "to *bear* the sins of many"; and we judge that this verse is the one most strictly parallel to the one under consideration in 1 Peter 2. 24, as in both cases we read of the bearing of sins.

It does not seem to us that the verb in itself conveys the thought of taking from one place to another. In the three occurrences in the Gospels where this thought is present we have the use of the preposition *εἰς* (*ěis*, into) after the verb, which makes the sense of motion clear. A man with a heavy load on his back may be said to bear the load, or to bear up the load, though he may not

carry it up from one place to a higher one, for he has to support it from falling, and it is an upward force he has to exert. Perhaps this is the thought in the case of offering up sacrifices, especially as the priests, according to the Levitical law, frequently had to bear up the sacrifices—that is, to hold them up. In some cases certainly they “heaved them,” but we maintain that this word does not contain in itself the thought of removing from one place to another. In 1 Peter 2. 24 it is associated with the preposition *ἐπί* (epi, upon): “He bare up our sins (in His body) upon the tree,” or does this preposition *ἐπί* (epi, upon), introduce the thought of removal, so that we should read, as in R.V. margin, “carried up to the tree”? We think not, for we have the same preposition in James 2. 21. Surely “upon the altar” shows the place where Isaac was offered, not a place unto which Abraham carried him. So in 1 Peter 2. 24 the tree was the place where the sins were borne, not a place unto which they were carried. We forbear to comment on what we believe to be the serious consequences that might accrue from accepting the R.V. margin, and content ourselves with giving reasons for dissenting therefrom. We note that in Liddell and Scott’s Lexicon Hebrews 9. 28 and the Septuagint of Isaiah 53. 12 are given amongst the instances of the verb *ἀναφέρω* (anaphērō or anafērō), being used with the meaning to uphold, take upon one = Latin *sustinere*.

C. M. L.

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### JONAH IN TWOFOLD TYPE.

JONAH was a prophet of Jehovah, but we have no written record of any prophecy of his nor other than what is involved in the reference in 2 Kings 14. 25, when he spake the word of the Lord to Israel (the revolted and meantime rejected portion of God’s elect people), a word of grace in

response to their distressful cry (2 Kings **13. 4** and **14. 26, 27**). How marvellous is that grace which is extended to even the persistently rebellious, and which, moreover, will use for the message of mercy a servant who even himself was dwelling and finding his rest in the place where God's authority was disowned.

He dwelt at Gath Hopher, that portion of Palestine which afterwards was known as Galilee of the Gentiles (Matt. **4. 15, 16**), the portion where the revolted tribes of Israel had set up their own place of worship and mingled idolatrous service with it, discarding the place which was the appointed one of God. Is not this why no word of the Lord is on record as by the mouth of Jonah? Like the old prophet at Bethel, he was in the place of the disobedient. Yet whilst his voice had no permanent effect on the rebellious people, so far as bringing them back to Jehovah's place of worship, nevertheless the Lord would use him to speak to those who were "not a people," even to the Gentiles; and we have here the first faint shadow of that wondrous grace which was to bring the glad tidings of salvation to those who were "without," even us Gentiles.

Jonah was sent on a mission to one of the nations outside Israel, and in this respect he occupies a special place. The intense conservatism innate in every one of the Jewish nation as to their exclusive privileged place with God may have largely accounted for Jonah's reluctance to go on the errand commanded him, but we may reasonably assume there was also some consciousness of spiritual unfitness for the mission, and, moreover, it was repugnant to his mind that mercy in any measure should be extended to Gentiles. We see that spirit manifest itself in his petulant reproach of God in chapter **4. 2**, showing how even in his restored condition he was not secure from failure, thus supplying a note of warning to even the most established believer and an injunction to constant watchfulness.



Jonah could not brook the thought of any good being vouchsafed to a Gentile dog, and so his carnal mind, which was not in fellowship with the mind of God, prompted him to flee from the presence of Jehovah. We must not imagine that he entertained any such idea as that he could reach a place where God was not. That is not conceivable, especially on the part of one who certainly knew Jehovah as revealed to Israel, and at the least must have read the Psalmist's reflections on Him as expressed in Psalm **139. 7-12**. No, he, with the rest of his people, considered that the prophetic spirit had its only sphere of operation within the bounds of the land of the nation's heritage, and therefore, for the reasons already shown, he sought to evade the spiritual impulse now pressing on him by getting out of the range of its inspiring influence into a region where it would not operate, and thus imagined he would escape responsibility by getting out of reach of the call.

Are there no Christians who, Jonah like, seek to avoid unpleasant duties and evade obligations by quenching the Spirit and silencing the inward monitor? In the condition Jonah was in his mission would have been a failure. He needed fitting for it, and this God brought about in the exercise of the marvellous wisdom His dealings with Jonah manifested, effecting at one and the same time chastisement for Jonah's rebellion, the needed consecration for the service appointed, and a work of mercy and salvation to the Gentile idolaters who were Jonah's fellow-voyagers (Psalm **76. 10**).

We have not room to dwell on the incidents of the narrative, replete as it is with suggestive counsel and caution to the believer, and descriptive of the experience of numberless Christians away from God: a condition insidiously downward, and a stumbling-block to the world, the which God ofttimes uses for the rebuke of His disobedient people, as in Jonah's case.

The purpose of the present article is rather to indicate

the parallel which the record presents of the position of things now, and for a long time past. Being one of the Lord's people, Jonah, as in the first chapter, typifies what we so sorrowfully find almost universally prevalent in the present day—a ministry subject to human authority only. The parallel in this instance is more suggestive than actual, but as regards that portion of the nation amid which Jonah dwelt we have an apt picture of present-day things: Christians involved in a Christendom which has disowned the authority of the Lord. God's children truly, yet being identified with that which is away from the appointed place; they are in a position where the Lordship of Christ is not owned, and which cannot be acknowledged by Him. Unfitted for testimony, going down for satisfaction to "Joppa"—"pleasant" (the type of pleasures which are not of God, and which will end in "Tarshish"—"breaking"), the satisfaction which is found in devices that minister to carnal cravings and human inventions, and that do duty for spiritual worship, refusing the truth and stifling the convictions which submission to the word of God would arouse. Such, like Jonah, require experimentally to pass through that which will awaken in them if not a new, at least an intensified sense of their new-born position and resultant separation, as dead, buried and risen, the world and the world's religion left behind. So long as they are involved in that which is actuated by the god of this world, the religious idolatry—however great the similarity may be to the true—if it is not under His rule and direction there neither is nor can be power for witness. These need to be brought down into the deeps, to the bottoms of the mountains.

Not till Jonah came up again in the power of the resurrection life was he fit for the appointed work. That done, what a mighty result ensued. Then by a simple, unadorned message, devoid of all rhetoric, yet eloquent

in its rugged simplicity, all the inhabitants of a mighty city are stricken down in abject conviction and self-abhorrence and godly fear of judgment. A city sunk in idolatry, a most unpromising sphere for such a proclamation, yet in the almighty power of the Spirit, by the hand of one who could now be used, spiritual strongholds are pulled down and the inhabitants of the Assyrian city (as was already in the case of the Phenician mariners) become monuments of God's mercy. Oh, if Christians saw their place of separation, and became disentangled from that which is not of God, what a mighty power they might be. For the most part they are found in the proscribed place, and are, therefore, viewed by God as literally at enmity with Him (2 Chron. 19. 2). What scathing language to be used of those who, though really God's chosen Israel, were nevertheless in actual antagonism to Him because they had substituted their own created authorities for His. In that we have a most striking parallel in the Christendom of today, and which God can only estimate with a like aversion. How solemn! Albeit, as in Jonah's case, we perceive the sovereignty of God in choosing for His messenger one who was found in the midst of the surrounding evil. So from time to time He has raised up messengers from the midst of the religious Babylon around, and mightily used them, as Luther, Wycliffe, Knox, Spurgeon and the rest, whose anointing for heralding the Gospel has been manifest. And may this not be to humble those who, Pharisee like, are pluming themselves on their correct ecclesiastical position, their claim to be the "true children of Abraham," but are, nevertheless, wanting in that which should characterize such? God will be glorified, even though it may mean the bringing down to the dust His own people.

Thus far we have the parallel in its direct application, but we see besides in the narrative of Jonah by analogy the service of the unsaved, the service of the religious

*world*, religion made popular—a religion characterized by a humanly created ministry and priesthood, numbers even of whom are without the knowledge of salvation themselves, who have never gone down and come up out of the waters of death and judgment with the Christ, but are occupying the Balaam position, with the possible Balaam's end; which besides is seen by the dead in sin professing worship and a service of God, lulling themselves into a fatal satisfaction and security therein under the idea that by reason of their religious performances and routine observances they are growing into life. How much is the sectarian chaos around us, with its ever-changing appeals to the satisfying of man's carnal nature, responsible for this. There can be no worship, neither service, until the judgment is passed upon sin and the person has, like Jonah, emerged from the waters of death and come up in newness of life with the confession that "salvation is of the Lord." The Lord's people well know this, but it is, nevertheless, salutary to be reminded of its truth, if only that such may be the more furnished and ready to declare it to the sin-blinded around.

In conclusion, just a word of admonition to those of the Lord's people who have gone off (as we are all prone to do) into by-paths, and from the one He has appointed. So long as there is a refusal to go where He has indicated, when that way has been pointed out, and because Joppa in the shape of things more agreeable to the natural man are preferred, the ears being purposely closed to the counsels of truth and the claims of God's name and honour, then assuredly will thwartings come to such; and if God should in His grace recover them, it will be at the cost of experiences akin to those of Jonah; whereas all God's ways are mercy and truth "to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them" (Psalm 103. 18).

H. W. DAVIDSON.

## THE HOUSE OF GOD.

CONFERENCE NOTES, FALKIRK, APRIL, 1898.

MR. FRANK VERNAL referred to Genesis 1. in order to present to the mind a line of things which would not only enable us to grasp but to appreciate the truth relative to the House of God. In verse 1 God is seen creating the heavens and the earth, and we learn from the book of Isaiah that He created it not waste and void, but to be inhabited. In verse 2 the earth is depicted as a mass of confusion—an unadorned, invisible earth shrouded in darkness. This dark, shapeless mass, through the operation of God, is recovered from the waters and re-beautified, and upon it appears, in the person of Adam, the image of the triune God. He placed the man to rule for Him in Eden, but he who may have been the cause of the desolation referred to in Genesis 1. 2 came again upon the scene and caused the man to revolt from beneath the hand of God, thus becoming Satan's servant. From that moment the beautiful scene which God had made became one of unrest, and appears as a great rebel camp, in which Satan's will is done and God's will rejected; and ultimately God had to sweep from the face of the earth, in judgment by a flood, the race He had created. Man again began to multiply, and again his history is characterized by departure from God, who then takes up an individual, Abraham, with whom He walked, for He loves fellowship with His creature. He afterward went down to Egypt, and brought out, with a mighty arm, a people, whom He had redeemed, and brought them into the wilderness to be with Himself, and in the 25th chapter of Exodus He makes known His desire to have a dwelling-place amongst them. Up to this time God had never had, on earth, a dwelling-place amongst men, but when the tabernacle was built according to the

pattern He took up His abode there. This is the house referred to in Hebrews **3.**, in which Moses, as a servant, was faithful in carrying out every detail of the will of God as he had seen it on the Mount. Presently the tabernacle gave place to the temple, which, in the land, served the same purpose as the tabernacle did in the wilderness—viz., a dwelling-place for God.

But let it be well borne in mind that, because of the apostasy of His people, He was forced reluctantly to leave His dwelling-place, for "He forsook Shiloh." He left the temple afterwards and scattered His people to Babylon. He left again the re-built temple when the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh went out of the house and said, "Your house is left unto you desolate." Since that time God has had no material house on earth, for "the Most High dwelleth not in temples hand-made." In Hebrews **3. 6** a house is referred to which is neither tabernacle nor temple, but made altogether of different materials, though serving the same purpose as they—namely, a dwelling-place for God. This is clearly seen from Ephesians **2. 22**—"A habitation of God in (the) Spirit"—with which please link 1 Peter **2. 4** and **5**, where living stones are seen coming to the elect, precious, living centre-stone, and are thus builded together a spiritual house. This house to-day is God's only dwelling-place on earth. In the past the tabernacle was reared and dissolved, the temple was built and became a charred ruin, and God had no dwelling-place on earth. In the New Testament living stones, in contrast to material stones, are seen coming to Him, the centre of gathering, without the camp, and again a dwelling-place for God is found on earth, and if there is no House of God to-day, then, we ask, what right have Christians to be together at all?

When we turn to 1 Timothy **3. 15** we learn further what House of God is; moreover, that, as in the past, at one time, there was only one tabernacle and one temple, so is there

only one House of God to-day. The several curtains, each complete in itself, were joined together that the tabernacle might be one; so the House of God is the one Church of Living God, formed of the gatherings of His people into the Name all the world over. Though there be lords many and gods many, yet there is but one Living God and one House of His. The world is still a huge rebel camp; for, though men may differ in many ways, one thing they are all joined in—namely, rebellion against God, the sovereign who sits on heaven's eternal throne. God looks down upon that scene, as He did in the past, and yearns for a dwelling-place, a spot where His feet can rest, for He wants a resting-place on earth. House of God is that firm foundation of the truth on which His dwelling-place can be built; and that pillar on which, standing aloft in this rebel scene of earth, the will of God can be read—men and women on whom God has written His own character, mind, etc. In Ezekiel 40. to 43. we have the measurements of the House of God, which many believe to be the house which is yet to be built on a coming day, but ere the prophet could grasp the same, eye, ear, and heart had all to be in exercise. "Behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I will shew thee" (40. 4). This, alas! is what is lacking amongst God's people to-day, for when the eye is fixed upon Christ, the ear open alone to the voice of God, and the heart set diligently to understand, the form and measurements of the house are quickly learned.

Notice in these chapters the minute details of God's measurements; no chamber too small, nothing too insignificant to measure carefully. House of God must be the expression of the mind of God in heaven, or He won't have it; there is no room left for man's thoughts, and no liberty for men to alter God's measurements. Everything without, within, and round about is definitely legislated for by God

and he who would seek to treat lightly the House of God dishonours the God of the House. "The place of My throne and the place of the soles of My feet" (Ezek. 43. 7). This is what House of God is to-day, for there His throne rests, which speaks of His rule, and there only can His authority be known and owned. Many Christians appear to think that the House of God is a place for liberty to do what they like ; but, alas ! how different and solemn is that place ! for everything there must be done in the full blaze of the light of that centre throne. Christ is Son over God's House, and His authority alone must be obeyed, even as Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Without thee shall not a man lift hand or foot in Egypt." The raven sent from the ark might find a resting-place on some floating carcass, but not so the dove ; she found no place for the soles of her feet, and came back to her rest in the ark. So God looks down to-day and finds no resting-place for the soles of His feet, save where saints are gathered together into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His resting-place is only in the House of God, and here alone can the hearts of His people be satisfied, as they know themselves in very truth forming "a habitation for God in the Spirit." This absorbing theme is surely enough to enrapture the heart of the child of God in fellowship with Him.

MR. JOHN BROWN said that he knew of no subject more touching than the one they were called upon to consider together, for it raises again the question, "Shall we have, or shall we not have, a house in which our God can dwell amongst us?" It is solemnizing and instructive to follow God in seeking companionship with man, as seen in Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and others ; for at that time He had no house in which to dwell, but walked with them as a pilgrim, a houseless God. Yet God yearned for a dwelling amongst those who loved Him, because they had learned that He first loved them ; and



not only a house where He might dwell, but where His loved ones could dwell with Him. House of God is absolutely conditional, and to be such the truth of God in its entirety must be accepted by His people and no part of it willingly rejected. If it exists to-day it does so according to the same principles of holy truth as it did at any time. It could not be built by any one who liked, nor of any material, nor at any time, nor of any shape. He chose the builders, indicated the materials, determined the time, and gave the pattern. So elective and selective has the will of God been in this matter that, although David had set his heart and affections upon the House of God, and gathered much gold for it, "You may not build it" was said by God to David. God used and blessed David as He did few others, and he was the man after God's own heart, yet he was not permitted to build the House of God. Nor will God accept of Davids to-day. Why did God not tell His will to Enoch, the man who walked so habitually with Him that one night He took him home with Him without death? Why not to Abraham, the friend of God, of whom He could say, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?"? In all this we see demonstrated the solemn fact that God will not have a house for Himself built by anybody, of any material, anyhow, or at any time.

There were again seventy years when His people were in Babylon, during which He would not allow a house to be built for Him, and at that time you see national religion in the image of gold set up on Shinar's plain, and all nations commanded to bow down to it; but God overthrew that power, and in the days of Zerubbabel there is liberty of conscience given to go up and build the house *if they would*. "Who is there among you of all His people --his God be with him and let him go up . . . and build the house of the Lord God of Israel." Some, whose spirits God had raised, went up, others chose to remain,

and the building of the house was ultimately accomplished. There were many enemies to the work who first offered co-operation, which was refused, and then they slandered and wrote pamphlets regarding the work in which God had given them no part. God said to Moses, "Let them build Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them," and it needed on the part of the people the willing-hearted to give, and the wise-hearted to build. The willing heart is got by His love being learned and appreciated, the wise heart by the learning of His will in the word. Here suffer a word of warning against a common delusion. "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus" is said of that in which there is neither male nor female, bond or free, and of something which is as different from House of God as heaven is from hell, as light is from darkness, as God is from Satan. Unbuilt materials in no sense whatever form a house, for God hath said that "every house is builded by some one." Saints are fit materials for the building of the House of God, yet have they no claim whatever to be regarded as such until builded together for a habitation of God in Spirit. To talk of unbuilt saints as the House of God is to deceive one's self and to play into the hands of the adversary. How misleading, what a farce it is to talk of ungathered saints as the church of God in any place! So unbuilt Churches in no way make the House of God.

In John 14. we read of "My Father's house," which is not the House of God; the House of God never was in heaven, but always on earth. "You have gone out," has sometimes been said to us, and forsooth because of that, "what you left ceases to be the house." Look at the Lord Jesus Christ. With a scourge of small cords He sought to cleanse that house, but ultimately He came out and left it desolate, because it had ceased to be God's house, for man's will and God's co-mingled was graven deeply on the pillar there, so He in fellowship with His God outpurged Himself. "The Most High dwelleth not in temples hand-made," was said to Jews in Acts 7. and to Pagans in Acts 17. The First Epistle to Timothy was written to enable men to know how they ought to behave themselves in the House of God; therefore God expects us to be in His house and nowhere else.

Mr. DAVID SMITH referred to Exodus 15.: "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto Jehovah." The cause and occasion of their song was when they saw

His work they sang His praise. This told out their appreciation of what He had done for them in delivering from Pharaoh's power and Egypt's bondage. God's message to Pharaoh told out His purpose, "Let My people go, that they may *serve Me*." They served Pharaoh in Egypt, and their service found its expression in the cities, etc., built. The Red Sea crossed tells of a separated people, dead to Egypt and all the past, and now on resurrection ground they accept Moses as their ruler, and heard him who spoke from God. Gratitude to the Lord for His deliverance was not only expressed in the words of their lips, but also by them preparing that for Him which He desired to find amongst them—a dwelling-place, a sanctuary for Himself. "I brought you unto *Myself*" in order that ye may "*serve Me*"; unto a place where He could tell out the secrets of His heart and make known His will. "Let them build Me a sanctuary" (Exod. 25. 8). This is the service He desires. It was not what they liked, but what He asked. Distinct, minute, detailed legislation was given regarding the building, and nothing was left for them to surmise. It was theirs implicitly to accept the plan given, and carry it out in its minutest details. "See that ye make all things according to the pattern." He tested the devotedness of the people in their bringing the materials, and wise-hearted ones wrought with that which willing-hearted ones brought.

A wise, skilful hand is required to deal with the things of God. He desired a dwelling-place for Himself in the midst of that called-out and gathered-together people, and when the tabernacle was reared according to the pattern, He approved of the work by filling it with His presence and glory. Is there a divine pattern to-day for House of God? If so, He expects us to carry it out, and will acknowledge nothing else. Saved ones, baptized ones, added together, builded together for an habitation of God in Spirit, such is the pattern, and to those so built He says, "Ye are God's building." As with the individual, only that which is creation of God in Christ Jesus will He dwell in, no matter how like the reality a counterfeit may be, so with the collective testimony to the truth, only that which is House of God, Church of Living God, pillar and ground of the truth, will God accept as His dwelling-place. In 1 Timothy 3. we learn God's will for us—first, to be in the House of God; second, to learn how to behave therein.

*Communicated by* L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

## MISUNDERSTOOD.

MARVELLOUS indeed are the way and revelation which God has been pleased to give of Himself. Happy is His child, who, by grace sufficient, becomes an imitator of God in these, and thus though

“Misunderstood by all, yet dares  
To do what His own heart will prize.”

Perhaps there is little that more taxes the loyally devoted heart than to be misunderstood—the bitter contrast to all which surely is, when one is misunderstood by another to the latter's own emboldenment in evils and wrong-doing. They are neither few nor idle who suffer from this malignity to-day. Many, Christians too, alas! are vigorous and content to be as God Himself complains to and of the lawless one in Psalm 50.

“Thou givest thy mouth to evil,  
And thy tongue frameth deceit.  
Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother:  
Thou slanderest<sup>1</sup> thine own mother's son.  
These things hast thou done, and I kept silence:  
Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself;  
But I will reprove<sup>2</sup> thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.  
Now consider this, ye that forget God,  
Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.”

Woe is me! what a sight! a silent God taken to be an approving endorser of high-handed evils. All this, moreover, because He kept silent. Why did He not cry out? Why did He not remonstrate? Was all this nothing to Him? Cared He not for any of these things? Ah yes! Why be silent? Is there not here the foreshadowing of His way manifested in His perfect servant, whose reproach lay in stinging sarcasm, as witnesseth:—

<sup>1</sup> See marginal reading of verse 20.

<sup>2</sup> That is, convict.

“Have any of the rulers (that is, the leaders) or of the Pharisees believed on Him?”

He Who answered not a word to the false witnesses who spoke so vehemently in His very sight and hearing. This, *as man judges*, is *prima facie*<sup>1</sup> evidence of guilt. But, as God judges, and instructs, and acts, “There is a time to keep silence.” This time but prepares the fittingness of

“The time to speak.”

Oh! the calamity that is theirs who are destroyed by the prosperity of fools, the asseverations of whom have not to be answered according to their folly; and again, must needs be answered according thereto for their own sake!<sup>2</sup> What surprisingly strange and strong slanders are spoken, written, and even published by some, from whom, if but time and place and person and verification were sought, they would stand convicted of being willing liars with their sins set out in order before them.

Convicted, though unconvinced,

the wish oftentimes being the father to the thought, and the slander so useful to the end that justifies the means. For yet is wisdom justified of her children. True also is it that,—

“Convince a man against his will,  
He’s of the same opinion still.”

Then, forsooth that, the slandered keep silent, answering not, but rather, “by manifestation of the truth, seek to commend themselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” Thus bidding the “time to speak”—meanwhile possessing their souls in patience; when reviled, reviling not again; when suffering, threatening not, but, on the contrary, committing themselves in well-doing to Him who

<sup>1</sup> That is, on the face or first look of the matter.

<sup>2</sup> See Proverbs 26. 4, 5.

judgeth righteously and who also is a "Faithful Creator" as well as a "Faithful God." They are therefore misunderstood by some as though thereby proved guilty! Wherefore, though those Shimei-like ones imagine they shall go on for ever in their pernicious ways, the truth is, despite their affirmations that their judgment is just,<sup>1</sup> and slumbereth not. For He will arise whose eyes run to and fro throughout all the earth to show Himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him. Thus shall a "Solomon" find righteous occasion to end the "Shimeisinner's" career, who, misunderstanding the boundary that grace may grant, causes righteousness to come forth in manifestation that "Shimei" has but brought about his own death.<sup>2</sup> All which goes to show how fatal an error misunderstanding may be.

JOHN BROWN,

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## A JUST GOD AND A SAVIOUR.

It is the claim of Him who created the heavens and the earth that He alone is God, and beside Him there is none else (Isa. 45. 18). In the thoughts, as well as in the works of man, there are doubtless gods many, and lords many, yet is there only "one true and living God." Inasmuch as it is declared that *eternal life* is associated with knowing Him (John 17. 3), it surely becomes a matter of deep and solemn import, because of the issues it involves, that each and all should thus know Him. To know a person involves more than hearing of him or knowing *about* him; it means becoming acquainted with him. "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace."

<sup>1</sup> See Romans 3. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Please read diligently 1 Kings 2. 1-11 with 36-46, remembering Romans 15. 4.

He who is unknown to the natural understanding, and unappreciated by the natural heart, who cannot be found out by searching, nor become known through man's wisdom, has yet been pleased to reveal Himself to *faith*; "for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him."

Faith, again, is the evidence of things hoped for, the conviction of facts not seen. "No man hath *seen* God at any time," yet that He is His word declares and His works display. For instance and example of faith, we read that through faith Noah, concerning things *not seen* as yet, nevertheless being convicted of the fact of coming judgment by believing God's word, was warned thereof and escaped therefrom. Conviction is wrought by the Spirit through the word of God. He who has come and is now in the world "convicteth the world of sin, righteousness and judgment" (John 16. 8).

That man is a sinner God hath declared and proved, as seen in his history and evidenced in his thoughts, words, actions, and ways. All these, in each and all of the children of Adam's race, give evidence of the fact that "ALL *have* sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3. 23). Have you believed yourself to be, and owned yourself as, a convicted sinner in the presence of a just and holy God? Yes! God is a just God. Just in His thoughts and estimate of sin; not covering it nor excusing it, but dealing with it in judgment.

Just, too, in the exactings of His character. There can be no shirking of His requirements nor compromising of His claims; fullest, completest fulfilment of each and every obligation and demand will alone satisfy Him. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3. 10).

Further, "true and righteous are His judgments." Justice must have its course, judgment must do its work; and He

whose justice demanded the putting out of man from Eden, and whose holiness demanded the putting out of the leper from the camp, doth still demand the shutting out from His presence, eternally, of every sinner who is in his sins (John 8. 21, 24). "True and righteous are His judgments," and "because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness, by the man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance, in that He hath raised Him from the dead, He now commandeth all men everywhere to repent"; and through His messengers is testified "repentance towards God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." This again but declares His character to be not only a just God, but also

#### A SAVIOUR.

"God our Saviour" (1 Tim. 2. 3). "God; *who hath saved us*" (2 Tim. 1. 9). "It pleases God . . . to save *them that believe*" (1 Cor. 1. 21). What a character this reveals. What mercy it declares. The Judge become the Saviour. The holy, righteous, sin-hating God, Himself, become the justifier. Is it possible? Can it be true? And, if so, how comes it to be so? The answer to this question is alone to be found in the Gospel. The message of and from God, for and to guilty man, to a world in rebellion, to enemies. "God was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, *Be ye reconciled to God*"; for reason whereof we find the wondrous fact declared of the still more wondrous substitutionary work accomplished—namely, "that He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made *the righteousness of God in Him*" (2 Cor. 5. 20, 21). The death of the cross has thus become the basis upon which, as well as the channel through which, "the grace of God hath



appeared to all men, bringing salvation." "Grace thus reigns through righteousness unto eternal life."

In that God hath raised up Jesus and seated Him at His own right hand, we have the declaration of His infinite satisfaction with, as well as appreciation of, all that He hath been and done; and now "through *Him*," and through Him *alone*, "is preached the forgiveness of sins," and "there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." "Be it known therefore unto you that *the salvation of God* is sent unto the Gentiles." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and *believe in thine heart* that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10. 9, 10). Dost thou yet enquire, "What must I do to be saved?"?

The only true answer is in that divinely uttered sentence, "Believe *on* (not *about*) the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16. 31).

DAVID SMITH.

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### "YOUR LACK OF SERVICE."

WE read these words in Philippians 2. 30. What must those to whom they were addressed have felt? It is true the words that followed from the Apostle's pen (chap. 4. 10) explain the reason for their APPARENT neglect. Yet we doubt not those early saints must have deeply regretted their inability to minister to the Apostle, and to know that he had been in need and they had apparently neglected him in those circumstances. Happy would it have been indeed had others as good an excuse as this; but, by some expressions used by the Apostle, it would appear that some

were negligent of their responsibilities, and thereby losing the opportunity of being fellow-labourers with the Apostle unto the kingdom. There are one or two points in this fourth chapter which call for special attention. Verse 15 shows that the church had not always been remiss in communicating with the Apostle's need, and also that he plainly tells them that this their service will in no wise lose its reward. Beloved fellow-saints, suffer a word of exhortation. Let us see that there is no lack of fellowship amongst ourselves to-day with the labourers in the harvest-field, and, what is more than this, let us see that we have not gone far beyond these Philippian saints in that we are excusing ourselves for our lack of service, not on account of needing an opportunity, but on account of a lack of heart and interest in the work of God.

We would fully recognise that in the unscriptural unions around us there are many, yea, very many, dear fellow-saints seeking faithfully, according to their light, to carry out their responsibilities to God and His labourers. Why they are where they are, and why they have not the light that we have, is not for us to judge; this we must leave in the hands of Him who searcheth the reins and the heart. But responsibility increases with the light we have, and if, as we believe, we have in the exceeding grace of God been brought into a position of much light, much, yea, very much, will be required of us. Let none misunderstand us. We are not advocating association with those dear labourers; far from this. Let us seek, as opportunity presents itself, to instruct them in the way of the Lord more fully, so that they receive a full recompense of reward. But again, let us not be so occupied with the failures of others that we settle down with folded arms in self-righteous satisfaction with a right position while our hearts are not right with Him.

The work of Christ, how little we seem to enter into the

force of those words. In Acts 1. 1, we read He began to do and to teach. That blessed life of activity on earth was closed by the cross, but He has left us an example that we should follow in His steps—a life of activity, of unceasing service. Notice in the Gospel according to Mark the expression straightway, or immediately—how often the word occurs; what a long lifetime was crowded into those brief years, and what a privilege for those who followed Him and ministered to His needs of their substance (Luke 8. 2, 3), for even He in His grace, while doing the Father's work on earth, allowed poor sinning, failing humanity to minister to Him. But let us again return to our text, "Lack of service." Why is it that with increase of light we often find little increase of activity and earnestness in the work of the Lord? This is sad in the extreme, but it is often only too true. One of the causes, we doubt not, is that many of the Lord's children, when brought to know the way of God more fully, look back on their past life of activity with a feeling akin to disgust. They remember the day when they yoked themselves with the ungodly to build up the system with which they were associated. They remember the endless appeals made by their ministers for charitable objects, without their being once reminded that the sacrifices of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord (Prov. 21. 27). And there is a danger of reaction from all this wickedness that may drive us to another extreme, and one well-nigh as bad in itself, a condition into which we settle down in satisfaction with the position to which we have attained, while He whose eyes are as a flame of fire would arouse the sleeping conscience with words such as those addressed to the church in Ephesus (Rev. 2. 4) if we have but the ear to hear Him. But this state of spiritual sloth may have gone so far that we begin to excuse ourselves and seek for some way to escape our responsibilities, by trying to persuade ourselves that those who labour in

the Word and doctrine should support themselves, and thus show a good example to others!

Alas, the depths of selfishness that are in these hearts of ours! Is it possible we can deceive ourselves thus? We fear that it is even so with some, and this with a mass of Scripture—besides those that are immediately before us—pointing out our responsibility to forward the work of God, not only at our own door (for there is room here even for much of selfishness; we may like to see the assembly we are in grow in numbers), but the work of God in its broader aspect. It may be far from our own door, or that which does not come under our personal knowledge, except as we know the labourers and esteem them very highly for their work's sake. We would remark here in passing that we believe many an assembly would find new life and vigour come into its midst if it had more heart to help forward the labourers in the harvest field, for it is His work—the Lord of the harvest—and He is interested in it. May we be saved in the infinite mercy of God from becoming mere theorists. God works by means, and condescends to use failing men to accomplish His mighty purposes on earth. Let us see that we are doing what is in our power to help on His work. But some may say, "How do I know it is His work?" Let us thank God that we are found to-day in a fellowship that, in some measure, resembles the Divine model, and associated with labourers who are seeking to labour according to His will. There may be failure; there is failure, and ever will be failure; but let us see that we are seeking to help such labourers as He has prospered us, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver, and He does not call upon us to do what we are unable. "She hath done what she could."

And now, in closing, suffer a few practical hints. "We have so little to send to labourers," some say, "and how shall we send it?" In one shire at least that we know of,

the name of a worker is brought before all the assemblies each month, and the united offerings from that shire are forwarded to this labourer. Thus the one is known to the saints that is to receive the monthly offering, and their fellowship and interest in such a one can be manifested. Not one box for all contributions, so that those who give know not the exact purpose to which their offerings may be devoted. Some may call this method; this often is but an excuse, we fear, to do little or nothing. God is a God of order, and when He tells us to do something for Him, He does not always tell us the exact way in which to accomplish this; but let us see that we do it in the best and most practical manner. In the way that we have suggested, there need be no feeling on the part of the poorest saint that what they are able to give is not worth sending to a labourer—it will form part of the united offering of the shire or the city, and His eye will see if it is but the mite given according to the ability.

But yet one other point before closing. We fear that some still practise the unscriptural habit of giving on the spur of the moment; rather let there be the regular laying aside of a certain amount—no matter how small this may be if it is all that we are able to give, for it is “according as a man hath” that God expects us to give—and then the bringing of this our offering devoted to the Lord at some convenient time and presenting it to Him. Let us also remember that when thus devoted, it is no longer our own, but His, and one of the grave sins of Israel was that they took from God His portion and appropriated to themselves the devoted thing (Josh. 6. 18). Let us look at God’s dealings with us. If He has blessed us in the family, and there has been freedom from sickness, let us bring to Him our thankoffering, and we shall find that our God is a God that takes notice even of such small matters. If unable to attend the assembling of the saints through any cause, or if for a

time we are where there is no assembly, let this in no wise lessen our offerings, but may we seek grace to lay up for ourselves treasures in the heavens, that we come not under the condemnation of Luke 12. 21: "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God." Beloved brethren, let us be in earnest, not so much to obtain a reward as to help on His work, and the reward will be ours.

J. A. BOSWELL.

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### GOOD WORKS.

HAVE they any efficacy in obtaining the benefits of Christ's atoning work or in securing a man against the danger of falling away? If not, what good are they?

The first thing that comes before our notice is good works. Now we want to see what we understand good works are in the sight of God, and to know that we shall have to come to the Scriptures of truth. In Isa. 64. 6 we have a people who saw themselves in their true condition before God, saying, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Now, what was true of this people is true of the people of our days: their righteousnesses or good works were in God's sight as filthy rags; this shows us that the works of an unregenerate man are as filthy rags in the sight of God. Now, in Rom. 3. 9 we get, "the Jews and the Gentiles all under sin"; verse 12, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Rom. 6. 23 we get, "the wages of sin is death." Remembering the words in Rom. 3., "all have sinned," we see from this that death is the doom of the sinner—that is, being in separation from God, in the Lake of Fire for eternity.

Now seeing this, that death is what stares the sinner in the face, if he is to be delivered from such a death it must

be a work outside of himself; and God seeing the sinner in such a condition, has provided a Mighty Deliverer at His own expense, and that one His well-beloved Son, whom He gave up to die, that the sinner might be delivered from death. The sinner cannot do anything to help in that work: if he is to be delivered it must be through what Christ has done—Eph. 2. 8, 9 (R.V.), “For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, that no one should glory.” This clearly shows that the sinner is not delivered by his own works, but by the grace of God. We get in Rom. 3. 24 that God is just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Here we see God is just, and He could not connive at sin; no, He must judge it righteously to maintain His holy and just character, and the very judgment the sinner deserved to bear on account of his sin God has poured out on His well-beloved Son when on Calvary’s Cross, and now God can be just, and the justifier of the ungodly. Can the sinner be justified by his own works? No; we see in that verse that God justified the sinner who believeth in Jesus (not merely believes about, but believes in his heart that Jesus bore in His own body the very judgment that he deserved).

Do good works secure a man against the danger of falling away?

No; the sinner that puts his faith in the finished work of Christ is a child of God, according to Gal. 3. 26. He is born into the family of God, and that one never can put himself outside; he may be a disobedient child, but his evil works never can put him outside, any more than his good works could put him in, for he can never cease from being a child; and the obedient child is no more secure than the disobedient one, for in 1 Peter 1. 5 we see that the saved one is “kept by the power of God”; and as it took the power of God to save the sinner, it takes the same power to keep the saved

one, and his security is as much outside of himself as his salvation was. It is unconditional.

What good are good works?

Let us turn to Eph. 2. 10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God before ordained that we should walk in them." God never asked the sinner for anything while he was in his sins, but now he is saved God desires good works—that is God's will concerning him. Now, faith is that through which a man is justified God-ward, but good works follow faith, that by which a man is justified man-ward; for if he told others that he had faith and was void of good works they would not believe him. How very needful, then, are good works! Turn to Titus 3. 8: "These things are good and profitable unto man"; Matt. 7. 20: "By their fruits ye shall know them"; Phil. 2. 12-15 (R. V.), "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to *work*, for His good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." We see in these verses that those who are written to here are children of God. How necessary are good works in the life of a saved one, that he may be blameless and harmless and without blemish, to be seen as a light in the world, holding forth the word of life!

C. B.

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## DECLENSION,

OR JEHOSHAPHAT AND SAMSON GOING DOWN.

SAD it is, indeed, to hear of or see any once godly Christians going down, or, in other words, departing from the living God. Our hearts are ever prone to wander from Him. Look where we will, if it be amongst saints or in the sacred writings of Divine inspiration, we see declension from the righteous claims of Jehovah. Well may we tremble in godly fear as we muse on the downfall of the many holy men who departed from God in their last days.

Jehoshaphat, at one time, walked in the ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim, but sought the Lord God of his father and walked in His commandments, and not after the doings of Israel (2 Chron. 17. 3, 4). And moreover his heart was lifted up in the ways of the Lord; Jehovah was his precious portion. But how quickly the fine gold became dim. Blessed by the loving kindness of God with riches and honour, surely that ought to have made him grateful, and energized him to walk in separation from the worldly Ahab. Alas! his prosperity only cankered his heart. He lived at that time with a name and honour amongst the people, but, oh, how spiritually poor before God! Step by step he declines from God and goes down to make affinity with Ahab. Poor Jehoshaphat is next seen sitting on his throne, with the man who sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord (1 Kings 21. 25), while the godly separated Micaiah is carried away to prison, and fed on the bread of affliction. Thus it has always been, and is now. The man of God who seeks to walk humbly before his Lord, contending earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3, R.V.), knowing that holiness

becometh the Lord's house, is called bigoted and narrow-minded by worldly Christians.

It was similar with the Apostle Paul, who warned the saints night and day with tears. Carnal Christians at Corinth doubted his apostleship, saying also his bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible (2 Cor. 10. 10). They reigned as kings, while he was made as the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things (1 Cor. 4. 13). Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing all things. The more abundantly he loved, the less he was loved.

Ah, what godly sorrow must have filled that lonely servant of God's heart when he wrote his last letter to his son in the faith Timothy! What touching sadness seems to pervade it! Saints on every hand were departing from the truth. Demas had forsaken him, and all Asia turned from him. His heart was refreshed in Asia at seeing many embracing Christ as their Saviour (Acts 19. 18). He shunned not to declare unto them all the counsel of God (Acts 20. 27), and after commending them to God and the word of His grace, he kneeled down and prayed with them all. They wept and fell on his neck and kissed him before he went to Jerusalem. But they heeded not his solemn warning, as in Acts 20. 28, 29, 31. And not long after the assemblies in Asia turned their backs and shut their doors against the man that loved them more than himself, to go on with sin in their midst until the churches were well-nigh leavened (Rev. 2. 3). It is a sad fact that Christians, away from God, will be satisfied to allow the standard of God's truth to be lowered in their midst. We see it characterized in Jude and Malachi.

What a heartrending scene is brought before us in the closing days of Israel. The Tribe of Levi, whom Jehovah graciously blessed in giving them the nearest place to

Himself out of the twelve tribes to officiate in the Tabernacle and Temple, showed their gratitude by outpurging themselves from the sin and defilement of the camp, when Moses called, "Who is on the Lord's side?" Levi said unto his mother and father, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they observed the Word of God, and kept His covenant (Deut. 33. 9). Levi had then learned that they must obey God rather than men; they conferred not with their own flesh and blood. Happy people! The law of truth was in his lips, he walked with God in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity (Mal. 2. 6). Levi acted for God with zeal and courage. But, alas! that such words should be written of them in their last days: "But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of Hosts" (ver. 8). They profaned the table of the Lord, and robbed Jehovah of His tithes and offerings; His rule and order became wearisome to them. And subsequently God had no pleasure in them. It is beautiful to see shining out from the lawless apostasy of Israel some who feared the Lord and thought upon His name (Mal. 3. 16). Their hearts were one, and out of the abundance of their heart they spoke often one to another. Blessed fact! the Lord hearkened and heard them. They were Jehovah's precious jewels written before Himself in this book of remembrance.

We are persuaded that our Lord Christ looks down from His throne with joy and compassion upon the few feeble ones who are trying to carry out His will in the house of God. All will be made manifest at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The many godly Christians who have laid aside worldly ambition, and who have left home, parents, friends, and relatives, to follow in the footsteps of a rejected Lord, will be fully recompensed by Him at His return. The

book of Malachi brings before us the lukewarmness of God's chosen people in their last days. The Epistle of Jude portrays to us Satan's counterfeit shams in these last days of this dispensation of grace. Cain, Balaam, and Korah are brought vividly before us. "Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain-saying of Korah" (Jude 11). The way of Cain is seen everywhere through men assailing the divinity of Christ; being led on by the Devil, saying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace, deceiving many, and being deceived, carried on by Satanic deceptions to the blackness of darkness for ever. And, alas! Balaam's reward is earned by many whom we believe to be God's people; instead of looking to the living God for their food and raiment, they ask for their hire from an unregenerate world. Korah's sin, as seen in Numbers 16., is also rampant, under the cloak of religion, by men who love prominence, causing jealousies, heresies, envyings and divisions. As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do they resist the truth.

Well may we agonize in prayer before the Throne of Grace, asking God to raise up men in our midst who will teach the whole counsel of God; so that young ones might be warned of the artful devices of Satan, and learn how to behave themselves in the house of God.

We learn a solemn lesson in the book of Judges, 14., from the fall of Samson. He was raised up by Jehovah to begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines (Judg. 13. 5). He failed, and became sport for the Philistines. But Jehovah vindicated His majesty and holiness at his death. The men whom he slew at his death were more than they whom he slew in his life (chap. 16. 30). The gifts and the callings of God are without repentance (Rom. 11. 29).

And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a

woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, "I have seen a woman in Timnath, of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife." Then his father and his mother said unto him: "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?" And Samson said unto his father, "Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well." Yes, she pleased Samson well. He had no thought if the Lord God was pleased; in fact, Jehovah is not in his thoughts. Blessed be God, we can look away from the dark catalogue of failure concerning God's servants, and delight ourselves in the lowly Nazarene, Jesus. He could say without assumption, "I do always those things that please Him" (John 8, 29). God through the opened heavens corroborated His statement, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3, 17). Jehovah had borne with the unfaithfulness of man for more than four thousand years. All were unprofitable. "In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said He, Lo, I come (In the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10, 6, 7). For over thirty-three years He lived to please Him who had sent Him. Pilate had to acknowledge he could find no fault in Him (Luke 23, 4). And the centurion had to exclaim, "Truly this was the Son of God." And the demons had to confess Him to be the Christ, the Son of God (Luke 4, 41). But to Israel as a nation He was the carpenter's son, and as a root out of a dry ground. But the Lord God delighted in Him as His fellow, and He, being in the form of God, counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God (Phil. 2, 6, R.V.). He lived as he was, holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. And thus He calls each saint to a path of separation outside the camp, to live as Nazarites, abstaining

from all fleshy lusts which war against the soul. Again and again Samson plays with sin, and, alas! once too often. He is found asleep in the lap of an harlot, with his seven locks shorn. He awoke, and said, "I will go out as at other times before and shake myself," and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him. Such is man without God, helpless and powerless, a prey to the devices of Satan, and sport for an unregenerate world. The devil's snares are not set in vain. Think of the young men who grasped the two-edged sword as with might and main, and for years they stood against the fiery darts of the Devil. But the flattering words of a strange woman did their deadly work. They lie to-day amongst her wounded. Let us heed the words of the wise man given to us by the Spirit of God.

"Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths.

"For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her.

"Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death" (Prov. 7. 25, 26, 27).

A. L.

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## 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.*

An unaccountable error occurred in Question 120 in May NEEDED TRUTH. The verses referred to were Isaiah 33. 14, 15, not Jeremiah 33. 14, 15. Those who walk uprightly, and so forth, as described in verse 15, are those who will dwell with our God, who is a consuming fire. J. A. B.

QUESTION 127.—*Is it the work of elders alone to examine those who desire to enter the fellowship, or are any in the assembly at liberty to go and visit them? If objections are raised, should the objector go and visit the one him or herself, or should the objection be brought before the elders, that they may consider and deal with it?*

In replying to this question, we think it well to remind our readers that the title "elder" and "overseer" are used in Scripture for the same persons (see Titus 1. 5, 7). Elders of the church are here seen as overseers, which latter title points to their work. To suppose that two separate classes are referred to in these two verses because two names are employed would be quite contrary to Scripture. One illustration of this may suffice. There are some three hundred and fifty names and titles given to our Lord in Scripture. Would any one argue that each of these names refers to a different person? No; but the answer would be that those many titles are all needed to express the many characteristics of our Lord. So elders, guides, pastors, teachers, overseers, chief men among the brethren, may and do often refer to the same class of persons. And this does not affect the question that some who are not in the recognised circle of the elderhood are stretching forth to the work (1 Tim. 3. 1). Space forbids more on this latter point here.

The question then is, Are any but those fitted of God to

rule in the assembly called upon to exercise the work of oversight on their own responsibility? Be it remembered, then, as we have before said in these pages, that where things are ordered in an assembly according to the mind of God, *all* He has fitted for rule and placed over the saints will be found in the known circle of the overseeing men or elders or guides, only disqualified ones being excluded—those who do not correspond with the Divine requirements as seen in 1 Timothy 3.; surely it is plain that these latter are not called upon to act in matters for which they are disqualified. Women, again, are never called upon to take upon themselves this work. Who then are left to act apart from the overseers? Those stretching forth to the work? Such, if truly seeking to act for God, will be the very last to desire to act on their own responsibility, or have such confidence in their own judgment that they would desire to act without the fellowship of their brethren. We think, then, that if we are correct, what we have said answers these two questions. It is not for “any one in the assembly” to visit those seeking for fellowship. Any who have a true heart for the Lord’s work, and are desiring to lead others into the truth, will act as did those in Acts 9. 27, and bring them to the guides. We have known cases where the help of a godly and elderly sister would be of great importance in visiting in fellowship with the guides.

With regard to the latter part of question, we believe that objections should be stated before the overseers, and it will be for them to advise what course should be taken, whether the objector should visit the one objected to personally or how. Some objections may be little worthy of notice. We have answered these questions somewhat fully because we believe the subject to be an important one for the welfare of an assembly. We have known much mischief arise from unfit persons seeking to do a work to which God never called them.

J. A. B.



QUESTION 128.—*What do you judge should be the form of words according to the Scriptures for a servant of God to use when baptizing a believer? And what is the meaning of Acts 19. 5 (R.V.): "When they heard this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus"?*

The formula given in Matthew 28. 19 is that which is to be used, we believe, in the present day when one is baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus and by His authority. When we find the expression, "Into the name of the Lord Jesus," as above, used in Scripture, we do not understand it to refer to any form of words, but that it was done by His authority. Whatsoever we do is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus (see Col. 3. 17). "Into the name of the Lord Jesus" would imply not merely as "in the name," by His authority, but that the baptized disciple was himself within the circle of the control or authority of the Lord Jesus. That is, baptism in the name means authority to baptize; baptism into the name means authority completely controlling the baptized one.

In the case of re-baptizing of the converts in Acts 19. 5, we understand that they had been baptized not by John the Baptist, but by Apollos, between Paul's two visits, and it is evident that they were not baptized into the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (see R.V., Acts 19. 2). Apollos had himself to be instructed. John's baptism pointed on to something yet in the future to be accomplished. The commission in Matthew was given after the Cross, and connected thus with the kingdom after the resurrection. In baptism, Father and Son and Holy Spirit are associated, for we read He was quickened by the Spirit and raised up of the Father. With regard to baptism, we recognise no material difference between Peter's preaching of the kingdom and that of Paul, although in some respects the kingdom may have altered its aspect. J. A. B.

QUESTION 129.—*Are the teachers of this day the same as the prophets spoken of in 1 Corinthians 14.? And is teaching and prophesying the same thing?*

Teachers and prophets are not the same. A man may be a teacher without being a prophet, but all prophets were teachers. The distinction between prophet and teacher is clearly made in 1 Corinthians 12. 28. Prophesying in its widest sense we understand to mean speaking for God. A prophet might speak to edification, exhortation, and comfort (1 Cor. 14. 3), and this a teacher can and should do to-day. But a prophet, as spoken of in 1 Corinthians 14., could do more than this. He could speak by the direct guidance of the Spirit (John 16. 13), without that which we now have, the written Word of God, which contains a full revelation of the will of God for the present age, and which at that time had not been fully revealed. Moreover, he could foretell events (Acts 21. 10, 11). A God-given teacher to-day cannot go beyond that which is written in the Word of God in his teaching—that is, he is not taught by the Spirit beyond what is written, but the Spirit reveals to him the truth as contained in the written Word. So while the prophet and the teacher both speak for God, yet their ministry differs in that the prophet spoke by the direct guidance of the Spirit apart from the written Word, while the teacher to-day is guided by the same Spirit to unfold the truth as already revealed. For one to profess to prophesy to-day would be to add to the Word of God. We believe that all that God has to say with regard to the future He has said; therefore there is no room for further prophecy.

J. A. B.

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God is a faithful God,  
 O'er all His watch He keeps ;  
 He careth for us, day and night,  
 He slumbers not nor sleeps.

God is an all-wise God  
 In all He undertakes,  
 He knows both *how* and *when* to act,  
 He never makes mistakes.

God is a gracious God,  
 Merciful, kind and good,  
 He sends the sunshine and the rain,  
 He gives us daily food.

God is a God of truth,  
 Who will not, cannot lie ;  
 The Bible is the word of God,  
 On which we may rely.

Pure, just and right is He,  
 Perfect in holiness ;  
 He will not do iniquity,  
 He loveth righteousness.

Consider well God's works ;  
 And search the Scriptures too :  
 Repent, believe, and turn to God,  
 Then seek His will to do.

From *Songs of the Gospel*, by ALBERT FOSTER.

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## SAMUEL.

IN the opening chapters of 1st Samuel, two things are very noticeable in contrast—(1) The Word of the Lord; (2) The Hand of the Lord.

In chapter 3, 1 we read: "And

## THE WORD OF THE LORD

was rare in those days, there was no open vision" (R.V.). Further on we see how scarce that word was, and that all that was spoken by the Lord was through the young child Samuel.

In the preceding chapter a man of God came unto Eli the Priest (who occupied the nearest place to God before the people) with a foretelling of judgment, because of his own sin and that of his sons, whom he honoured above God. Doubtless the cause of this dearth of the Word of the Lord was, that Eli having heard this message from God and heeded it not (chap. 3, 13), there was nothing more for God to say to him; so we see His Hand about to be laid heavily upon him for the iniquity that he knew.

How solemn a position the child of God is in, who, having heard the voice of the Lord speaking in warning and knowing the iniquity, gives no heed to His voice; "for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven.

How forcible the words are, "*turn away from Him*"! How different with the young child Samuel! From his birth, set apart for God, he was early taught by Eli to know Him (1 Sam. 3, 9, 10). Surrounded by evil influences in the persons of Eli's sons—who brought the Priest's Office down to shame before the people—he was preserved by God (to whose charge he was entrusted by his mother) and

kept for Him. God would see to it that what was left in His care by a mother in Israel, would be carefully tended, and that by His own Hand. Therefore the child is untainted by the evils prevalent at the time. Are we not taught here that, had Eli so done as Hannah did, and trained up his sons in the fear of the Lord, they too would have walked in His ways, pleasing to Him (see Prov. 22. 6)?

God is ever faithful to whatever trust is committed to Him. Thus we find the boy early knows the Lord. He receives a particular revelation of God to Himself. Having an ear for God in the night-time, and a heart to receive His sayings, in verse 19 we read: "Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him." First, intercourse with God alone, and then as the result, growth; and, as in verses 20 and 21: All Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord, and the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, for the Lord revealed Himself in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord. He was used at a time of much departure from God on the part of the people—nay, more, he had revealed to him such a tale of God's future judgment for sin committed as would cause "both the ears of every one that heareth it to tingle." One would think that such a young lad would not be able to receive such a solemn unfolding from God Himself. But we are reminded by Isaiah 57. 15 and 66. 2 that the High and Lofty One dwelleth with the contrite and humble spirit, that trembleth at His Word.

During the time of Israel's discomfiture at the hand of Philistia, the Lord seemed inactive and Samuel out of sight. One thing is manifested and felt by the people, and also by the nations outside—namely, that

#### THE HAND OF THE LORD

is heavy when falling in judgment, whether on His own people or on strangers,

They learn that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God, before Whom false gods as Dagon have to fall down.

We get the fulfilment of the prediction, given by the man of God to Eli, and also through Samuel, in chapter 4. when the two young men, Hophni and Phinehas, are slain, and when Eli himself meets his fate, because of the hand of the Lord being heavy upon him.

In this 4th chapter Israel is heard at the hour of battle clamouring for the Ark, saying, "It shall save us," forgetting, or not knowing, all the while, that the first step toward their deliverance in a God-given manner was by the way of defeat; showing us as it did them in the end, that the presence of the Lord unto deliverance cannot be had, except as sin is judged (compare chapter 7. 6).

Not only does Israel feel the hand of the Lord upon them at this time, but the Philistines also confess (chap. 5. 7) "His hand is sore upon us," and verse 9, "The hand of the Lord was against the city," and so forth. In verse 11 also we read, "The hand of God was very heavy there." We are reminded of men in this day, who, like the Philistines, know not God, unregenerate men, who meddle with the precious things of God, given for His own people, and use them for their own ends. Shall not the hand of the Lord be heavy upon such?

No sooner do the Philistines give over the Ark into the care of the men of Beth-Shemesh than many of the latter are smitten, evidently because of their irreverence, and because they neglected the warning word of Jehovah, regarding the Levites, "They shall not go in to see, . . . lest they die" (Numbers 4. 20. Read also Exodus 19. 21).

Israel had many lessons to learn before they were prepared to seek the Lord, but chapter 7. shows us all the House of Israel lamenting after the Lord. Not until after

a long time had passed (for the time was long) do they begin to see that what they needed was the presence of a Person, and that, the Lord God of Israel—without this they could not prosper.

Not now is the cry raised, "Let us fetch the Ark that it may save us," but instead they lament after Jehovah. They are taught by Samuel the Man of God, that they must put away the iniquity, and prepare their hearts unto the Lord; and He would deliver them from the Philistines (verse 3).

Up to this time Samuel seemed in the background in the mind of the Lord, and he is prepared by Him at the moment to answer for the Lord the cry of the people after Him. Samuel knew what they needed, and in verse 5 he says, "I will pray for you unto Jehovah." As already seen judgment takes place at the first (verse 6). Immediately the enemy hears of their whereabouts, in the confidence gained by past success, they rush on to meet them, to their own ruin. For the enemy never can gain the victory against the people of God when they are leaning in dependence upon *Himself*. Now the man who stands between Israel and God intervenes as advocate on their behalf, in virtue of the fact that the claims of God's judgments have been met. He cried unto the Lord for Israel, and the Lord heard him. And as Samuel offered up the burnt offering, the Lord brought about their deliverance. The climax of it all was, that the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel (chapter 7. 13).

What a blessed thing to remember that He who is the High and Lofty One dwelleth with such as are of a contrite heart and that trembles at His words.

This was the experience of Samuel in his early days. This trembling at the word of the Lord, like the fear of Israel (who had learned their own weakness) will not bring

failure; but with the presence of the Lord, we shall see His Hand helping us against our enemies, enabling us to keep *the Flesh* under, and keep *the World* and *Satan* at a distance.

C. DUNBAR.

## GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS.

It is written, "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was *refreshed*" (Exod. 31. 17). "I and My Father are one" (John 10. 30). "At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you" (14. 20). Jehovah is refreshed with the knowledge that everything has obeyed His voice, animate or inanimate, above or below; and so great was His satisfaction with all He had created and made that "when he saw *everything* which He had made, behold it was very good" (Gen. 1. 31). Seeing then that we are *in* Him (Acts 17. 28; Col. 1. 15-18, 2. 10, 3. 3; Heb. 2. 11-13; John 5. 20), we rest in His rest. Again, at the Cross, He sees an eternally finished work. His satisfaction and refreshment is ours also. "It is finished," says Christ. So say we, thank you. In that Lamb we rest, feast, and grow (Heb. 4. 3, 10; 1 Cor. 5. 7, last part 8; first part 1 Peter 2. 2-4).

Having rested, feasted, and learned in His presence, let us go out (John 10. 9) to gather in others also (not forgetting Isa. 49. 5, 6; John 1. 10, 11, 6. 66). But *how* shall we do it? As the sons of Levi (Exod. 32. 25-28), or His servant Moses with "ye rebels," or with the sword of Peter (John 18. 10)? Nay, but as He came, in grace and truth (John 1. 17), though it be with a sword that sets at variance a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, etc. (Matt. 10. 35). So let us take up the



same sword; viz., the Word of God, which proceedeth out of the mouth of God (chap. 4. 4, Eph. 6. 17, Rev. 1. 16). For the Word of God is living, and active, and sharper than *any* two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4. 12).

Like as He came so let us go, with no will of our own, but delighting to do the will of another, delighting to honour Him at all cost: by unfeigned subjection to His will, by going in the spirit He has commanded us (2 Tim. 2. 24, 25; Titus 1. 9, 2. 7, 8); striking him that holds them (not them) with the Word of God (Matt. 4. 4, 7, 10), putting forth at the same time the hand of pure brotherly love, seeking their deliverance out of his snare (2 Tim. 2. 6), and thus gather fruit for eternity (Jas. 3. 18; Prov. 11. 13) that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together, thus confirming the testimony of our God, "A (faithful) true witness delivereth souls" (Prov. 14. 25, Jas. 5. 19, 20). Remembering the words of Christ (John 5. 19, 30, 31, 41) and of the chiefest of the Apostles: "For to *me*" (the religious Saul of Tarsus) "to die is gain," according to the *I* of 2 Corinthians 12. 10, even the gaining of that strength which is everlasting (Isa. 40. 29-31).

This is but a little fragment, but it may refresh some thirsty soul.

J. M.

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## BASIS OF CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

CHURCH fellowship set upon a basis of anything else than that laid down by the unerring word of truth must be wrong, and a fellowship resting upon a wrong basis the God of truth cannot be identified with, nor can the internal

order of an assembly or its outward appearance, however much it seemeth to be right, atone for a basis not according to the truth; such will be simply an imitation, which may satisfy some, but God, who dwelleth in the light, will be outside of it all.

Our God has not left us in darkness concerning His will, but has given us His own precious Word, which is both a lamp for the feet and light for the path (Psalms 119. 105), and this, through the Holy Spirit, will guide us into all truth.

Let us turn to the 2nd chapter of the Acts, where the Apostles are found on the Day of Pentecost, in obedience to the Lord's command (Matt. 28. 19; Luke 24. 49), preaching Christ to the people of Israel with such Divine power that about 3,000 receive the inspired word, thus passing out of death into life (John 5. 24).

But nowhere in the Word of God do we read that the possession of eternal life is sufficient in itself for the basis of Church fellowship.

The 3,000 saved on the Day of Pentecost became the living stones (2 Pet. 2.) which were to be built together, and brought into fellowship; and this was to be brought about through the Apostles' teaching, as we read in Acts 2. 42, "They continued stedfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers."

This is the Divine order laid down in the Word of God, and, though reversed by many in this present evil day, the apprehension of, and obedience to, the will of the Lord must ever be the only and true basis. This is confirmed by the word of the Lord in Matthew 18. 20, as we read, "Where two or three are gathered together into My name, there am I in the midst of them." Thus He only honours with His presence in the midst the company, however few in number, who are found together in response to His call.

In closing, the reader's attention is called to the command of the Lord (2 Cor. 6. 14-18; 7. 1), which will, when practically given heed to, bring the believer into a path of glory to the Lord and blessing to himself.

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### FOREORDAINED.

THERE are three thoughts connected with this word which show forth the purposes of God concerning those whom He has saved by His grace from sin's penalty, and redeemed unto Himself.

First. "Foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself" (Eph. 1. 5).

Second. "In whom we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph. 1. 11).

Third. "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Rom. 8. 29).

God who foreknew us in Christ, in the past eternity, in the fulness of times sent forth His Son to redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and being sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Therefore we are no more bond-servants, but sons (Gal. 4. 4-7).

God has thus manifested His grace towards us, who were enemies to Himself.

In foreknowledge we are made acquainted with God's eternal grace toward us as sinners. In being foreordained, we are made to know what are His purposes concerning us as saints.

Whom He foreknew, He foreordained.

First, to the position of sons. Not merely children born into the Father's family, to be cared for, fed, and clothed, and watched over in love, although this is blessedly true; and most precious it is for us to know that even the youngest child has a place of privilege in the Father's house, and can address his Father with all the confidence that love begets. But God's purpose does not stop at this. He wants grown sons—men who can take responsibility in the "house of God"; who can, having learned of Him, impart the same to others; who can understand His counsels, and undertake His service. The son who thus enters into the place of responsibility unto which he was fore-ordained becomes a friend, to know all the counsels of God's heart concerning him.

How blessed for those who thus enter into the purposes of God, and thereby gladden the Father's heart by responding to His will, whereby He has called us to the position of sons unto Himself through Jesus Christ, to the praise of the glory of His grace, that we might render to Him, not the forced obedience of slaves, but the willing obedience and loving service of sons.

The means of growing up into this position is by laying aside all that characterized us as sons of men, and children of wrath, "and as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby unto salvation" (1 Pet. 2. 1, 2). Nothing can promote our growth like the pure Word of God. Let us see to it then that we gather up for ourselves, not depending entirely upon teachers, but let the Holy Spirit apply to our own hearts and consciences that which we read, that it may sink down into our ears (Luke 9. 44), and cause us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Babes in Christ need to partake of the milk of the Word, being without experience in the word of righteousness, but solid food is for full-grown men, those who by reason of

use have their senses exercised to know good and evil (Heb. 5. 13, 14). Young believer, begin at the beginning, drink the milk, learn thoroughly the "first principles," then go on unto full growth; do not strive after the responsibility of a son, until you have learned obedience as a child, laying down a good foundation, that you may build thereupon a life which shall be to the praise of His glory, and be the means of abundant blessing to fellow-saints.

Alas for us if when come to years we are not able to fill the position to which He has called us, and when we ought to be teachers we need to be taught over again the first principles of the doctrines of God, and become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. May we each be pressing on, and apprehending that for which we have been apprehended of Christ Jesus.

Second, "We are made a heritage, having been fore-ordained according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1. 11). "That we may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (verse 18). "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light, which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God" (1 Pet. 2. 9, 10).

Israel was God's earthly heritage, a peculiar treasure, "unto Me above all nations, for all the earth is Mine" (Exod. 19. 5, 6). Chosen to represent Him on the earth, and to be a channel of blessing to the whole earth. But Israel did not fulfil the purposes of God concerning them—departing from Him until God said of them, "Ye are not My people, and I will not be your God" (Hosea 1. 9). So that now God's earthly people are set aside, that God, who in His grace said, "All the earth is Mine," may

gather out of all the earth a people for His own possession, that they may show forth the excellences of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. We are then a redeemed people, a purchased possession, foreordained to be a heritage for God, through whom He can speak and act on the earth, and in whom He can fulfil all His will.

God's heritage must be cultivated, "a tilled field" (1 Cor. 3. 9) that will bring forth fruit for Him.

"A building," which shall witness to the stability of God's truth (ver. 9).

"A temple," in which God can dwell (ver. 16).

Satan has again marred God's heritage; discord and strife have wrought division, and again the earthly testimony has been broken, and the unity of John 17. is not now fully expressed; "but God abideth faithful, He cannot deny Himself," and what remains for us is to strengthen that which remains, to hold fast that which we have, and "giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace." The faith once delivered unto the saints should govern all those who seek to walk in obedience to Him who purchased and foreordained them to be a heritage for Himself.

Then we have God's purposes further revealed in that we have been "Foreordained to be conformed to the Image of His Son."

Looking back we learn that "God created man in His own Image. In the Image of God created He him" (Gen. 1. 27). Thus man came from the hand of the Creator perfect; but, alas! how soon he fell from that perfect state, through disobedience, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image (Gen. 5. 3), so that from Adam's fall to Christ's birth there was no man to bear the Image of God on the earth. None who could reflect the Divine character, and none who could satisfy God's claims or meet

His requirements—all fell short, and have been proved to be a complete failure. But in the fulness of time the Lord Jesus Christ came, the Heavenly Man, who is the effulgence of God's glory, and very Image of His substance (Heb. 1. 3). "Who is the Image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature" (Col. 1. 15). "Who, being in the form of God, . . . was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2. 8).

Thus the God-man, the Man Christ Jesus, is the first one to bear the Image of God on earth. He came to unfold God, to make known His character, and to tell out what was in His heart for man, to do His will, and open up a way by which God could bring back His banished, and establish a people on the earth to bear the Image of His Son.

The Father expects to find a family likeness in all His children. The question is, How are we to become like Him and to bear His Image? We find the answer in 2 Corinthians 3. 18: "But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same Image, from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." It is only by becoming intimately acquainted with the Lord Jesus, as revealed to us in the words of God, that we can become anything like Him.

We get an example of this in Acts 4. 13: "Now, when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

The rulers recognised in them the likeness to the Lord Jesus whom they had crucified. The likeness to the Lord Jesus is not manifest until Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was given from an ascended Christ, to take of the things of Christ and show unto them, and to bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever He said unto them (John 14. 26,

and 16. 13, 14). There can be no likeness to the Lord Jesus, only as it is begotten in us by the Holy Spirit, it must be from the Lord the Spirit. Thus in order to read the Scriptures we must have our minds and hearts subject to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and be ready to receive any impression He may have to make, as He reveals to us through the written Word the glories of the person of the Lord Jesus, the beauty of His character, and the Divine power and grace that was manifest in all His ways and words. "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2. 5). Before there can be a reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ out from us, there must be the inward likeness of mind and heart to Him. "Humility" and "obedience" are mentioned as characterizing Him who was "found in fashion as a man," and if He who emptied Himself, and came down from heaven's highest glory to earth's sin and shame, was so lowly and obedient in all His ways, surely we, who have been raised out of earth's sin and shame to heaven's glory by the work of the Lord Jesus, should be characterized by that same lowliness of mind and obedience of heart to all His will.

May we then be "not fashioned according to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." Oh, that we may be using the little while, not to quibble about words to no profit, but redeeming the time, by growing unto His Likeness, that the world and fellow-saints may take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus, and looking for the time when He shall be manifested, and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Then we shall be where we would be,  
 Then we shall be what we should be,  
 Things which are not now, nor could be,  
 Then shall be our own.

G. T. REEVE.



## YEARS OF THE PATRIARCHS.

Patriarch's Name.	Age at Son's birth.	Lived after Son's birth.	Age at death.	Years after Adam's Creation.		Years before Enoch's Translation.		Years before the Flood.		Died before Abram left Haran.
				Born.	Died.	Born.	Died.	Born.	Died.	
1. ADAM <sup>c</sup>	130	800	930	—	930	<sup>c</sup> 987	57 after	<sup>c</sup> 1656	726	1153
2. Seth	105	807	912	130	1042	857	55	1526	614	1041
3. Enos	90	815	905	235	1140	752	153	1421	516	943
4. Cainan	70	840	910	325	1235	662	248	1331	421	848
5. Mahalaleel	65	830	895	395	1290	592	303	1261	366	793
6. Jared	162	800	962	460	1422	527	435	1196	234	561
7. ENOCH <sup>t</sup>	65	300	<sup>t</sup> 365	622	<sup>t</sup> 987	865		1034	<sup>t</sup> 669	<sup>t</sup> 1096
8. Methuselah	187	782	969	687	1656	200	669	969	0	427
9. Lamech	182	595	777	874	1651	113 after	664	782	5 after	432
10. NOAH	502	448	950	1056	2006	69	1019	600	850	77 after
1. Shem	100	500	600	1558	2158	571	1171	98 after	502	75
2. Arphaxad	35	403	438	1658	2096	671	1109	2	440	13
3. Salah	30	403	433	1693	2126	706	1139	37	470	43
4. Eber	34	430	464	1723	2187	736	1200	67	531	104 before
5. Peleg	30	209	239	1757	1996	770	1009	101	340	87
6. Reu	32	207	239	1787	2026	800	1039	131	370	57
7. Serug	30	200	230	1819	2049	832	1062	163	393	34
8. Nahor	29	119	148	1849	1997	862	1010	193	341	86
9. Terah	130	75	205	1873	2083	891	1096	222	427	0 after
10. ABRAHAM	100	75	175	2008	2183	1021	1196	352	527	100
Isaac	60	120	180	2108	2288	1121	1301	452	632	205
Jacob			147	2168	2315	1181	1328	512	659	332

Years.

From when Abraham left Haran (at 75) till Jacob (at 130) left Canaan for Egypt (to Joseph)	215
The Children of Israel sojourned in Egypt	430
From the crossing of the Red Sea till 4th year of Solomon's reign	480
From 4th year of Solomon's reign until the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar	429
From its Destruction till its Restoration by Nehemiah	142
From its Restoration till the Death of Christ	483

<sup>c</sup> Created, not born.<sup>t</sup> Translated, not died.

Years after Adam's Creation.	Important Epochs.	Patriarchs Living at the time.
622	Birth of Enoch . . .	Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared.
930	Death of Adam . . .	Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech.
987	Translation of Enoch	Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech.
1042	Death of Seth . . .	Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Methuselah, Lamech.
1056	Birth of Noah . . .	Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Methuselah, Lamech.
1656	The Flood . . .	Noah, Shem (Ham, Japheth).
2006	Death of Noah . . .	Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Reu, Serug, Terah.
2008	Birth of Abram . . .	Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Reu, Serug, Terah.
2083	Abram leaves Haran	Shem, Arphaxad, Salah, Eber, Abram.

D. WHITTET.

*Editors' Note.*—In inserting the interesting table on the opposite page, it seems proper for us to point out that there is a little uncertainty attached to some of the figures. Our friend takes Japheth to be the eldest of Noah's sons (see margin of Revised Version), and supposes that Noah was 502 years old at Shem's birth; this cannot be said to be improbable. Then again, in the case of Terah's sons, it seems unlikely that they were all of one age, and the dates assigned in this table seem fairly probable; but we must not suppose that all the figures have the same certainty as attaches to such as are directly taken from the inspired record.

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## LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF GIDEON.

THE altar that Gideon built unto Jehovah, in verse 24, seems to tell us that the "Peace be unto thee from Jehovah" in verse 23 indeed possessed Gideon, inasmuch as he names it Jehovah-shalom, which means "Jehovah send peace." Surely he desired that others should share with him the enjoyment of that same peace. It may be he had on his heart the hosts of Israel. This might remind us of the heart-sustaining words found in Philippians 4. 6-7, wherein we are exhorted to be careful for nothing and prayerful for everything. Not careful for everything and prayerful for nothing, be it noted, which, alas! is too often our practice, instead of that which tells of confidence in God, which again tells of our being at ease in His presence, resulting in the peace of God possessing us and doubtless the desire that others should participate with us in the same shall not be lacking. Yes, and evidence as unmistakable as was a Gideon's altar, as really present, and yet even more abiding, there shall surely be. Let the young amongst us know, and let not the old forget that which they already know, that the conditions must be complied with if we would know the promise fulfilled in our individual experience, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep (as with a garrison, in margin) your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus," and that which is from God, even the peace of God, shall be reciprocated God-ward, and shall also find expression man-ward.

Verse 25: "And it came to pass the same night, that Jehovah said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it." Please notice how promptly Jehovah expects actions of an aggressive nature against existing

evils (the same night). And there shall surely be no delay on the part of the one whose heart and mind is thus kept in bringing to bear the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, against whatever idol may seek to usurp that place in the heart that belongs alone to Him who bought us for Himself.<sup>1</sup> And how intimately acquainted Jehovah is with the bullocks of Gideon's father! He knows the second, and its age. How precious this may be to the one who would not seek to keep back from Jehovah that which is His, viz., the best! But how solemn and searching to the one who would offer the torn, the lame, or the sick, as in Malachi 1. 13-14.

Now we note that the bullock is to be taken, and then the altar of Baal thrown down. It is not the altar thrown down, and the bullock taken, for the bullock speaks of whole-heartedness as the burnt-offering, and it is because of what it speaks of that Baal's altar is thrown down, for Baal has no place with the man who is all for God. And has it not been for lack of that which the burnt-offering speaks of that efforts have been made, and still are not wanting, to have Baal's altar and Jehovah's altar side by side, notwithstanding that He has said that He will not share His glory with graven images?

We fear that idolatry in the form of covetousness is more common than at first sight may appear, and how much there is of that half-heartedness in dealing with idolatry, as in the case of Manasseh King of Judah,<sup>2</sup> who removed the idols simply outside the city walls, instead of destroying them, from whence again they were taken by his son and successor and reinstated in their former place, as indeed our half-heartedness will be but an encouragement and aid to those coming on after us, and who may thus be helped by us unto being all for Baal, instead of all for God. An

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 6. 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. 33. 16-22.

Elijah on Mount Carmel, as see 1 Kings 18. 30-32, repaired the altar of Jehovah; Baal's altar he entirely ignored. Indeed, his whole desire is to prove conclusively that it cannot be both Jehovah and Baal. A choice must be made; no go-between. And did not Paul write, and that with tears, in his Epistle to the Philippians (3. 18-19) "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things"? And so there must be no compromise with idolatry in any of the many phases it assumes. We note that Gideon is to begin at home; thus nature is tested in its tenderest and strongest points. Yes, indeed; Gideon had need to be all that the burnt-offering speaks of; otherwise, like some of us, we fear, he would have preferred beginning elsewhere. It is so much easier wielding the Sword of the Spirit against the evil practices of others than against our own. Yet how unfit we are to do the former unless we first do the latter!

In verse 27 we read: "Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as Jehovah had said unto him." Yes, did as Jehovah had said unto him. We can have little conception what that meant to Gideon. Going in the teeth of all around him, incurring the displeasure of his neighbours, humanly speaking taking his life in his hand. Do we not shrink sometimes from some definite act, or from taking a decisive stand for our God in the midst of ungodliness, when there is nothing more to fear than the frown of fellow-creatures? Have we not Gideon revealed as he is, in that he could not do it by day, and that he did it by night, for fear of his father's household and the men of the city? for fleshly boldness will never enable one to accomplish such work. It may lead to the more ostentatious work of speaking on a platform, or such like, but not to

dealing with our individual selves. And as the morning light broke in on that scene, what a contrast met the gaze of the men of the city!—Baal's altar had disappeared, Jehovah's altar had been built, and the second bullock had been offered thereon; and thus religion, as represented by Baal's altar, has the axe laid at the root of it, showing, on the one hand, that Baal could neither protect, defend, or plead for himself, far less protect, defend, or plead for his worshippers; and, on the other hand, that the natural passions of the worshippers are utterly unsubdued, as witness the rage of the men of the city!

And see how this night's work has stirred up the enemy outside! So soon as there is something real for God, we find the enemy active. And who among us has not seen it, yes, and would see it still, had our work for God but the stamp of reality? But we might ask the question of ourselves, What does it all mean? what has all this to do with Israel's deliverance? And let us learn in the light of it that the man who knows what it is to be dealt with in the secret presence of Jehovah, unto the conquering of his own evil propensities, knows what it is to reach forth unto others, even to his father's house, is he whom Jehovah may be expected to bring forth even for the great work of the deliverance of his people. If any of us are ever tempted to wonder why nothing great is given us to do, let us ask ourselves if the reason and explanation may not be found here.

I would also suggest for consideration the fourfold picture of the Lord Jesus as seen first in the grace Gideon found, which is the outcome of the sin-offering apprehended, then the meat-offering he offered, and in the altar he built, which might speak of the peace-offering, as also the burnt-offering he offered, for none who would be men of and for God can afford to neglect; nay, more, there must, and that in the most intelligent manner, be a laying-hold of Christ, as thus pre-

sented to our gaze in shadow and in substance; and thus have we Jehovah preparing Gideon for the work which lies before him, that it may be accomplished to His glory, and to the well-being of His people and the safety of a Gideon.

In verse 33 we read: "Then were all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel." So that it is not only the men of the city, but the threefold foe without—Midian meaning strife, Amalek speaking of the flesh; the sons of the east may speak of the serpent. It was eastward in Eden where he is first seen as the active foe of man, and thus have we what may speak of the world, the flesh, and the Devil; and God's people, instead of subduing and keeping them under, are subdued and kept under by them. But Jehovah has heard the cry of His people, as in verses 6, 7, and is about to assert His omnipotence on their behalf. And so in verse 34: "But the Spirit of Jehovah clothed Gideon (in margin) and He blew a trumpet." May we indeed know somewhat of this being possessed by the spirit for God, until self is lost to view in the greatness of the Spirit's Power.

In Luke 24. 49 the Lórd, before leaving His few timid disciples, once said: "And, behold, I send the promise of My Father: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be clothed (in margin) with power." Hence do we find that it was the Lord Jesus that was the burden of their ministry, their constant theme. It is not only that we are all indwelt by the Spirit, as seen from 1 Corinthians 6. 19, blessed as that assuredly is: but we need to be, and therefore should earnestly desire to be, filled by the Spirit, even as we are exhorted to be in Ephesians 5. 18. We find an Old Testament illustration in 2 Kings 4. in the case of the poor widow who was delivered from the distress and trouble that had come upon her by giving heed to the prophet's word to her. She borrowed empty vessels not a few, and

though she had only a pot of oil, yet the oil ran and filled the empty vessels before it stayed. May we learn, and that practically, that the Spirit will fill us only in proportion as we are emptied of self, and then stop. And surely as we remember that, like the widow's vessels, we are not our own, we may well, like them, be also empty, and as such find ourselves giving heed to Matthew 6. 6. Then we may know what it is to be vessels meet for the Master's use; and we are persuaded we will have discovered the secret of deliverance from personal family business and Assembly troubles. And, be it noted, that it was when Gideon was thus clothed that he blew a trumpet. Oh, beloved, let us see to the Spirit's power in and with us before we seek to sound the trumpet, whether it be the declaring of the Gospel message, or the message for the gathering together of God's people. Alas, for the aimless, useless sounds that proceed from us for lack of that same; for if the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? And the love that will cause us to be other than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal will not be absent if the Spirit fills us.

Thus, amid the discordant sounds around us, it may be ours to hear and obey His voice, as found in 1 Corinthians 1. 10 and Ephesians 4. 6. When to blow and how to blow were and are matters of great moment to God's people (as see, and please also read, Numbers 10. 1-10). And does not the longsuffering and patience of God cause us to marvel as we behold Gideon, notwithstanding all that has been done before him, for him, and through him, saying, in verse 36, 'If Thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as Thou hast said?' He has not forgotten what God had said, and whence then that "if"? Truly it tells out what and where Gideon is; and, fellow-saints, is it not the case that we know of something that God has said, and yet with regard to which we would be inclined to put in an "if," like Gideon? and may



there not be in the two tests which follow to end of chapter a shadowing forth of God's power, when He will beget from Jew and Gentile fruit for Himself: the fleece of wool on which the dew is seen when all around is dry, Israel; and then the fleece dry when the dew is seen on all the ground, the Gentile; and yet, meanwhile, is sufficient to dispel the last "if" of a Gideon.

WM. ROBERTSON.

## OBEDIENCE.

### TO THE YOUNG IN CHRIST.

WE, whom God hath delivered from wrath to come (1 Thess. 1. 10), know in some measure the self-will which is in our heart; but He who saved us would have the expression of our life to be, "No will but Thine."

The joy our God obtains now from our obedience to Himself eternity will reveal.

However much it may cost us to bow to His will, we should remember it is written, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the love which ye showed toward His name" (Heb. 6. 10, R.V.).

The Apostle Paul, writing to Timothy—2 Tim. 2. 3, 4—exhorts him to be a good soldier of Christ Jesus, adding, "No soldier on service entangleth himself in the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who enrolled him as a soldier."

From these verses we learn that the object of the serving one should be to give pleasure unto the Lord, whom he desires to serve, and this desirable end can only be obtained by rendering obedience from the heart, as expressed in Hebrews 10. 7 concerning the Lord Jesus: "I come to do Thy will, O God."

And the Father ever points to His Son as the perfect

Example of entire subjection to His will, and the testimony He bore unto Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 17. 5), makes known to us the joy He found in the Lord Jesus.

In the 1st Book of Samuel we have much of God's mind concerning lawlessness, commencing as it does at one of the darkest periods of Israel's history, for we read in the last verse of the Book of Judges every man did that which was right in his own eyes, and this is followed in 1 Samuel 2. 17 by the abhorring of the offerings of the Lord, through the sin of Eli's sons, the priests whose lips should have kept knowledge, and from whom the law should have been sought (Mal. 2. 7); and concerning Eli it is written, "He restrained them not" (1 Sam. 3. 13).

In the midst of all this confusion we read of the boy Samuel ministering unto the Lord before Eli (1 Sam. 3. 1). Little notice would be taken of him as he carried out his daily duties; few, indeed, would know anything about him. But the Lord saw in the boy one who would perform His bidding. And we learn from the incident recorded in chapter 3. the obedient character of Samuel; for, as we judge from verse 3, it is very early in the morning, and long before the usual time of rising. Yet we find the boy, at the first call of his name, willingly rising from his couch, and hastening to his master's side to carry out whatsoever he is bid to do. And though this takes place three times, no murmur is heard from him; no self-will, but ready to serve with a willing mind. For a similar character of willing service we may turn to Isaiah 6. 8, where the voice of the Lord is heard saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

As we read the sad record of Israel's departure from the Lord we realize in measure the ruin self-will has wrought. But while the nation has departed, we see Samuel standing

faithfully for the Lord, and in the words of rebuke administered to the king, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15. 22), we learn the secret of Samuel's favour with the Lord. As the day draws near when each man's work shall be made manifest (1 Cor. 3. 13), may each of us be able to sing with truth:—

"I bow me to Thy will, O God,  
And all Thy ways adore;  
And every day I live I'd seek  
To please Thee more and more."

W. H. B.

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## THE WORD BECAME FLESH.

It is interesting and instructive to contrast words like those of the Psalmist David<sup>1</sup>—

“ Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit ?  
 Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence ?  
 If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there :  
 If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there.  
 If I take the wings of the morning,  
 And dwell in the uttermost part of the sea ;  
 Even there shall Thy hand lead me,  
 And Thy right hand shall hold me.  
 If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me,  
 And the light about me shall be night ;  
 Even the darkness hideth not from Thee,  
 But the night shineth as the day :  
 The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee ”—

with the account given us in the Gospels of the going about of the Lord Jesus Christ as a man amongst men upon earth.

So truly had the Word, who in the beginning was with God, and who was God—so truly had the Word become flesh, that when, for instance, He left Judæa and departed again into Galilee, He must needs pass through Samaria. As the eternal God He knew no limitation of place or of time. The presence of God everywhere at all times is beautifully expressed in the words of the Psalmist that we have quoted, and the Word was God, co-equal with the Father, yea, the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance, the everywhere-present One. But He became flesh. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, and, as a helpless babe in the manger at Bethlehem, He lay, who was the equal of the Father ; for, having counted that equality not a prize to be grasped at, He

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of younger Christians, we have omitted all references in this article, in order that they may have the opportunity of hunting up those that are not familiar.

emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made (or becoming) in the likeness of a man.

Our present purpose is to ask why the One, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, thus became a little babe, grew up slowly through boyhood and youthhood into manhood, went from one place to another, often with weariness of body? We reply, with a purpose, a purpose born of that delight that He ever had in the sons of men. For till the Incarnation man had but been feeling after God, though He is not far from each one of us. But now attention was directed to One whom the eye could see, and the transcendent powers of the Godhead were in a measure veiled that the softer beauties of the Divine character might shine more clearly and distinctly, tabernacling in a human frame. Futile was the endeavour of man to find out God by searching, but to supersede all this, since man could not and cannot rise to God, God came down to man.

It is important to observe that the Incarnation was a reality. It was not merely an appearance of God in a human form. The Mediator was Himself a man—a real man, spirit, and soul, and body. A real body, wearied with His journey He sat by Jacob's well; thirsty, He asked for water. But not only a real body; He was a man: and as He stood by the grave of Lazarus Jesus wept. Why? He groaned in the spirit. Though free from every trace and taint of sin, He was touched with a feeling of our infirmity. He was a man, spirit, and soul, and body, and, therefore, He wept—wept to see the havoc wrought by sin, wept at the shame and degradation brought upon man by Adam's transgression. "Behold, how He loved him," said the Jews; and methinks they were indeed right. For whilst the words, "Lazarus, come forth," proclaimed that the Man who spake them with such effect was the Son of God in power, the tears which He shed from the tender sympathy of His heart told out that the Divine Being had become Son of Man.

Again, to give but a brief glance at the dread hour of His death, we note that He dismissed His spirit, commending it to Him to whom the spirits of all men return at death; His body was laid in Joseph's tomb, whilst His soul went down into Sheol, or Hades. When God raised Him from the dead, the risen and glorified Christ Jesus, who, as to His humanity, consisted of spirit, and soul, and body, was seen during forty days of His disciples on earth. But never in two places at once. He ascended up to the right hand of God, and there sat down. There Stephen saw Him, and there He was seen by Paul, and there He is till He shall come again. A man, though a glorified man; a man, spirit, and soul, and body, though very God indeed. Ever in Scripture, consistently with the reality of His Incarnation, is He presented to us as in one place or in another, that where He is we may look upon Him.

How utterly contrary to the reality of the humanity of the Christ is the false doctrine of the real presence of the body of the Lord in the Eucharist. As the prayer-book of the so-called Church of England truthfully says, "The natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one." We not only agree to this, but add that, spirit, and soul, and body, the blessed Lord Jesus Christ is in Heaven as to His manhood; though as to His divinity He is here, and there, and everywhere, the omnipresent One. And, moreover, He is present in another sense altogether, of which we will not now speak, where two or three are gathered into His name.

When He was upon earth and the natural eyes could see Him, happy they who followed Him, who heard, who saw with their eyes, who beheld, whose hands handled Him who was the Word of Life. Now He is in Heaven, the Man of Sorrows upon the Throne of God, happy they

whose eyes are directed thitherward, the eyes of the heart, to see Him who is invisible. But not only should we look upward, we should look backward—

“And in the Bible we may see  
How very good He used to be.

He went about, He was so kind,  
To cure poor people who were blind,  
And many who were sick and lame,  
He pitied them, and did the same.

And more than that, He told them too  
The things that God would have them do ;  
He was so gentle and so mild,  
He would have listened to a child.”

Whilst we look backward to see Him on earth, and upward to see Him in the glory, we look forward to the time when He shall come again. But whether backward, upward, or forward we look, we behold Him who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even JESUS.

We see Him in this place or in that place where the eye of faith can gaze upon Him ; not even as the lightning coming forth from the East is seen even unto the West ; this swiftness of motion is possible to Him even in His coming as the Son of Man, and is altogether and infinitely short of the Omnipresence of His Divine character of which David speaks. But because of us, still in the flesh, feeble with its weakness, for our sakes He trod this earth in weakness, going here and there, eating and drinking, hungering and thirsting, weeping and anon rejoicing ; in all things like unto His brethren, save only sin, which He knew not. And yet in Him, in the Man of Sorrows, dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. What a miracle ! What avails it to question the possibility of this or of that sign which He did ? The fact that He became a man transcends all else. We cannot fathom it. It is only equalled by that other mystery, that He should die.

Neither of these two have we seen with our eyes. They who saw have borne witness. Happy for us if we who have not seen yet have believed—for this is life. The just shall live by faith. It is only by faith we can see Him, but it is faith in Him as the Incarnate Son of God that enables us in the weakness and febleness of our nature to consider Him, to trace His life as a man on earth; and in His doing of those things which He did as a man, yea, more, in His sufferings as a man in His life, we may in all He did and suffered see His Godhead shine. Yea, behold His glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father. This will fix our eyes, the eyes of our heart, fix our eyes on a living Person, centre them on Him. Yea, we may learn to say with Paul, "I know Him." Yea, to say, "I love Him," and with exceeding longing to cry, "Come, Lord Jesus."

C. M. LUXMOORE.

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WE saw Thee not, when Thou didst tread,  
O Saviour, this our sinful earth;  
Nor heard Thy voice restore the dead,  
And wake them to a second birth:  
But we believe that Thou didst come,  
And quit for us Thy glorious home.

We were not with the faithful few  
Who stood Thy bitter cross around,  
Nor heard Thy prayer for those who slew,  
Nor felt that earthquake rock the ground,  
We saw no spear wound pierce Thy side:  
Yet we believe that Thou hast died.

No angel's message met our ear,  
On that first glorious Lordly Day,



“The Lord is risen, He is not here;  
 Come, see the place where Jesus lay!”  
 But we believe that Thou didst quell  
 The banded powers of Death and Hell.

We saw Thee not return on high;  
 And now, our longing sight to bless,  
 No ray of glory from the sky  
 Shines down upon our wilderness:  
 Yet we believe that Thou art there,  
 And seek Thee, Lord, in praise and prayer.

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“AND THERE HE PROVED THEM.”

SUCH has ever been characteristic of the way of God with His people, which we are instructed to know and believe is “perfect” (Psalm 18. 30) and “right” (Psalm 107. 7); albeit the same may be difficult to understand and hard to explain, except as “through faith, it is understood” (Heb. 11. 3), and by wisdom, that observeth therein—

“ . . . the hand that guided,  
 . . . the heart that planned ”;

“even *these* shall *understand* the lovingkindness of the Lord” (Psalm 107. 43).

Then, again, “the way of the *wilderness*” (Exod. 13. 18) reveals that way, in contrast to “the way of the land,” which latter, because of the advantages it affords of a “near” way, and the “usual” way, is oftentimes, indeed, mistakenly thought to be, and wrongly accepted as, the right way. The way of the wilderness, too, as the way of God, can never be discerned by the natural eye, nor appreciated by the natural heart. Such will only and ever say thereof, as a Pharaoh of old, “The wilderness hath shut them in.” Yet, as led by God thereinto, and *walking with Him*

*therein*, do they know the greatest of all possibilities, and enjoy the most blessed of all privileges, which is also the first and greatest of the expectations and desires of God concerning His people, affording them the opportunity of expressing their subjection and devotion to Himself, so appreciatively and approvingly spoken of in the words of Jeremiah 2. 3. Graphically descriptive, too, of the *purpose* of God in the way of the wilderness do these words of the poet speak:—

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

Here, indeed, is to be found the school of God, whereby, in all the variedness of its circumstances and need, will cause and occasion arise for us *to prove Him*, in all the exceeding tenderness and graciousness of His heart, and sufficiency and power of His arm; causing us *to know Him* in a fuller measure and a more perfect manner, and because thus known, to be trusted, loved, honoured and obeyed. All this, while revealing one purpose of His way, is not the only one; and to this we would now desire to direct attention.

The words at the head of this paper, “And there *He proved them*” (Exod. 15. 25), declare another purpose which He had, as well as another object which He sought. Marah’s circumstance and experience is the occasion and means of His so doing. Doubtless it was an altogether unexpected as well as unappreciated experience. They are evidently disappointed; and disappointment here, as, alas! it so often does, finds expression in the murmuring spirit and in the murmuring word.

Again, as is so oftentimes the case, the leader is blamed. What shortsightedness indeed! What walking by sight and occupation with the circumstances, instead of occupa-

tion with God; discerning therein His perfect way, His wise permitting, as well as His manner of training. "And there He *proved* them." Alas! what a proving! The first trial, the first difficulty, and there is a break-down. The song of triumph so quickly ceases, and the murmur takes its place. And what are we? Are we any better than they? No, in no wise, as, alas! so often our behaviour in similar circumstances proves. The first trial it may be—an unexpected circumstance; or it may be disappointment in some one or another, and the result murmuring, complaining, and fault-finding with persons and things, which oftentimes but indicate "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God"; and is but the beginning of an end so exceedingly sad and solemn. Marah's trial and Marah's experience but gives opportunity for another display of God's power, and a further unfolding of His character, even as Jehovah-Ropheka, Jehovah thy Healer; in association with "*diligently* hearkening to His voice, and obediently *doing* that which was right in His sight."

A further circumstance and occasion of Jehovah's proving of His people is presented in Exod. 16. 4, "that I may *prove* them, whether they will walk in My law or no." Connected with this, we find in Deut. 8. 3, "He *suffered* them to hunger." He could easily have done otherwise; there was no limit to His sources, no end to His supplies, as He afterwards proved; yet He suffered them to hunger. Again, it is "His perfect way"; again, is it "His wise permitting," thus to act, or rather, this time, to delay in acting, in order that He might prove them. True, their circumstances appear dark and dreadful. As far as eye can see and mind can conceive there seemed no possibility nor probability of their needs being met. To die in the wilderness is indeed a terrible calamity; yet the many, whose carcasses did strew the wilderness, did not die for lack of bread, but because of disobedience. His way was in the

wilderness. Could they not trust Him in the way of His choice? If they depart from Him and go out of His way, then might they well be afraid, but not otherwise. He who called them and brought them there is "faithful," and "able," too, as well as faithful. "I will rain bread from heaven for you." "At evening ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God" (Exod. 16. 12). Yet that solemn word remains, "I have heard your murmurings." Was there any cause for such, after all? Was it not but the heart away from God, and the longing after Egypt; and "the remembrance of the fish, the cucumber and melons," etc., instead of "remembering all the way that the Lord God had led them"? We would yet desire to trace this subject further, and look at another circumstance which was occasion for Jehovah's proving of His people.

The very solemn and oft-repeated warnings from Jehovah to His people against idolatry reveal the terrible sin thereof in His sight. Jealous of His place and portion in the affection and appreciation of His people—to allow any one or anything to usurp that place, or receive that portion, caused His sore displeasure, and drew forth His sore judgments. "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deut. 6. 5) revealed the portion He considered His due, and which He claimed, even the undivided affection of an undivided heart.

"Let us go after other gods, . . . and let us serve them" (Deut. 13. 2). Who says so? A prophet! at least, one who pretends to be a prophet, and who seems able to give some evidence in support of his claim, such at least as is sufficient to mislead and entrap the simple, who believe every word (Prov. 14. 15), and such as may be guided by *circumstances*. If the words and the sign are accepted, as, alas! they often are right off, unquestioningly,

such become but easily ensnared in the snare of the Devil. But is there no call to "try the spirits"; no responsibility to test both persons and things, however great and godly their pretensions, or however venerable the things, and to test them by the alone safe and unerring test of the Word of the Lord?

Surely! surely! Has Jehovah spoken? then let His voice be heard, let His word be appealed to. "Thou shalt have none other gods before Me." "Ye shall not go after other gods" (Deut. 5. 7, 6. 14). This should surely be sufficient, which proved effective enough to repulse the arch enemy, the Devil, in Matt. 4. 10. Sufficient indeed for the one whose heart is true and devoted to Jehovah, and who has an ear to hear, and only to hear *Him*. Then again, "Thou shalt *not* hearken unto *the words of that* prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God PROVETH you, *to know whether* ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul" (Deut. 13. 3).

Once more His perfect way is seen, in the permitting of His wisdom, to test the people. Herein was the manner of His proving them as to the reality of their love, and the measure of their love. All very well to speak and sing of our love in loud tones and endearing expressions, but when the test comes, what about it then? It may be in the words of the false prophet, or now rather the false teacher (see 2 Peter 2. 1-3 compared with Acts 20. 29, 30), or in the words of the near and dear friend (see Deut. 13. 6); yet such may be but after all Jehovah's instrument and means for the proving of His people, and of testing their condition.

Does not the hearkening to the words of such but betoken the ear turned from the Word of the Lord, and the easily and readily turning aside out of the way but evidence the fact of the heart already away, yea, far away, from the living God, or the going back to that from which, with loud voice and seeming sincerity in the past, they pro-

claimed God had delivered them, cause us to wonder if after all there was any reality in it? "Wherefore (as the Holy Spirit saith, To-day if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. So I swear in My wrath they shall not enter into My rest), take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3. 7-11).

DAVID SMITH.

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## THE WAY OF HOLINESS.

THERE are seven things said of the "Way of Holiness" (Isaiah 35, 8-10), which should commend it to all who are born of God. No doubt literally the way will be trodden by God's earthly people in their return to Zion, but the statements regarding it are highly profitable for consideration on our journey homeward.

### IT IS A HIGHWAY

open to all the redeemed. Nevertheless, he who would tread that way must be prepared to face many difficulties, and press onward at all costs, yea, to deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Christ.

### A WAY OF HOLINESS.

Holiness is beautiful; God Himself speaks of "The Beauty of Holiness." Holiness is God-likeness, and what, in all this world of varied beauties, is more beautiful than the life spent in communion with God, and which is consequently God-like—beautiful at home, beautiful in the world, beautiful in the assembly?

## A WAY OF CLEANNESS.

"The unclean shall not pass over it." Perhaps one of the deepest notes in the suffering of our Lord was struck when He exclaimed, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing." The mire of our sin and self-pleasing! What is more unbecoming than one who has been bought by Precious Blood continuing to seek delight in that which caused His soul so much pain?

## A WAY OF COMPANIONSHIP.

"And He shall be with them walking in the way" (Newberry Margin). "And Enoch walked with God!" How delightfully refreshing these words ring out across the ages. A man subject to like passions as we are, and yet in the midst of darkness and confusion he walked with God. And it is gloriously possible that the remainder (at least) of *our* lives might be summed up in the words, "He or she walked with God."

In this companionship lies the secret of being at all able to tread the way of Holiness. Doctrines, past experiences, or anything else apart from Christ, are utterly unable to maintain us in the path of separation. But in *Him* is abundant provision for every step of the journey.

## IT IS A PLAIN WAY.

"The wayfaring man, yea, fools shall not err therein." Amid the din and confusion of tongues around, he who is in this way will be able to retire into the presence of the Great Teacher, and there, sitting at His feet, learn from His own lips, through the Word, the secrets of His Will; and thus waiting on the Lord the way will be made plain, when the self-chooser is in doubt and uncertainty, or perhaps out of the way altogether.

## A SAFE WAY.

"No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast go up thereon." How often is the word through Peter sadly,

practically demonstrated, "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." And how many we have seen devoured. How cheering then are the words, "No lion shall be there." Truly sometimes, in looking forward, we, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, imagine there is a lion in the way. But when we reach the dreaded point we find the way is clear, for the lion is chained and cannot reach the "Safe Path."

IT IS A HAPPY WAY ;

for "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." So in this path we may even now take up the song of joy and victory, which shall roll from our ransomed lips through all eternity.

Beloved fellow-saint, are you counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, and thus seeking to walk this path, with and for Him, day by day? If not you may start even now, and if you do so you will find ere long that you, who hitherto may have been a deadweight in the things of God, will be a power for Him, in your home, in the world, and in the assembly, and, above all, He will receive His portion, for "ye are not your own."

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LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF GIDEON.

II.

IN Judges 7. 2 we read, "And the Lord said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against Me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." Here, then, is a definite reason why Jehovah could not, with the 32,000, give deliverance to Israel. His own glory and



the good of His people are at stake. Would it not be well that we should question ourselves if our God is not kept from using us sometimes for a similar reason? For He knows the pride of our hearts as we do not. Otherwise we would assuredly know that the need for weakening was great, and we are persuaded that if the oft-repeated cry that goes up to God from us—viz., that He would work through us—were answered, it would certainly be often detrimental to God's glory and our own good; and we might well ask ourselves the question as to the motive that causes us to be one amongst the many who profess to be ready to fight the battles of the Lord. Oh, have we counted the cost? Have we entered into His thoughts of the disgrace to His Name, because of the condition His people are in? May God indeed find us to be such as He can work through unto His people's deliverance, having cleansed ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord; and as we see the battle is against the foe that has brought into and keeps His people in bondage, let us seek to discriminate between His born-again ones around us, their need of deliverance and the enemy that is within, around, and against them; that, while we cry to God mightily against these, that He may be pleased to wage war through us against them, that our efforts be not directed thus against that which is of God in them. Remembering, meanwhile, that our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds.

Now in verse 3 we get the first test: "Whosoever is fearful and afraid, let him return early from Mount Gilead." Fearful and afraid; yes, for some might peradventure vaunt themselves against Jehovah, and say, "Mine own hand saved me." And does it not tell us that 22,000 are there in their own strength, instead of in the strength of Jehovah, and therefore in the hour of victory would assuredly glory

in self? Courage that is natural will not avail. Moses in his day, after slaying an Egyptian, looked this way and that way, but not up, and the day following, when he would act as peacemaker, the words, "Wouldst thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" were sufficient to cause Moses to fly in terror. But forty years after he fears not to stand before Pharaoh, because now God is with him. And is not the Apostle Paul heard saying, in 2 Timothy 4. 16, 17, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me. I pray God it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood by me"? And who amongst us has ever seen a work of and for God that had not more or less of this in it? The many soon became the few, as the novelty wore off. When the stern realities began to dawn on them and profession is put to the test, it is then seen to be just what it is, as distinguished from that which is the outcome of God working in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

Yes, what is superficial God's test will reveal, and so 22,000 returned, and one wonders what the thoughts of such must have been. Not such as God can use. How solemn! how humbling! Doubtless there would be those who excused, as well as those who accused, themselves amongst them. Ah, me! for the many who excuse themselves in these days, who, having put their hand to the plough, look, and then turn back. It may have been because they were not honoured as they expected, did not get their own way, or had not found in the brethren what they would have found in their Lord, if they had been engrossed with Him as such. But, after all, these and the many other reasons may have been but the tests that revealed the underlying motive, and that told out that God had not brought them there, and was not, therefore, with them in it. These are as valiant now in opposing the truth as for a brief hour they were in supporting it.

Verse 4: "Jehovah said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many." Startling indeed this must have been to Gideon, so contrary to reason, especially when amongst the remaining 10,000 there are none who are fearful and afraid. But Jehovah has yet to test these, for it is not enough that they are prepared and willing to face the foe. But God's test will reveal those who are truly eager to do so, and those who are not. Yes, beloved, for it is without doubt that many are at the Gospel meeting, and other meetings as well, whose being at such meetings must not be mistaken for any great desire or eagerness to support the work. And what of those who are at home? who, of course, have an excuse; but the shallowness of it tells beyond doubt of the absence of desire. Indeed, have we not sometimes been ashamed for their sakes, as we listened to these excuses? And the very few who are to be seen at the open-air meeting surely speaks loudly; and yet even amongst these few there may be found such as are willing, yet really not in earnest. Even an earthly master wants willing and earnest service.

In obedience to Jehovah, we read in verse 5: Gideon brought them down to the water: and Jehovah said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set aside by himself; likewise every one that boweth down on his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped putting their hand to their mouth was 300 men. And in verse 7: The Lord said unto Gideon, By the 300 men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man to his own place. No doubt the 300 desired to face the foe, as seen in that they had no time for preliminaries, such as getting down on their knees, but simply lapped the water with their hands. Their thoughts are not of themselves and their comfort, but of the work before them,

and thus they tell out what they are engrossed with, and that they have so really laid hold on Jehovah, and suffered Jehovah to lay hold on them, that they are not only not afraid, but eager to be about His business; and we feel no doubt that others with a little spiritual discernment observe the indifference that we seek to hide and cover by excuses, and did we but live in all the solemnity of the thought that the omniscient eye of Jehovah sees the motive, we would become such as would accuse ourselves, instead of excusing, and the test as applied to Gideon's 10,000 would cause us to be set aside as unfit. May we, therefore, learn before it is too late that no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him that has chosen him to be a soldier, strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, and, moreover, realizing that there is no time to waste. In verse 8 we read: So the people, even the 300, took victuals and their trumpets; a feeble company in themselves, with nothing about them but what was in keeping therewith. The victuals speaking of the need of sustenance, for surely those who know that in themselves they are nothing will be the last to neglect taking with them His word. The ability to fight will be little unless we feed on that in the apprehension of the great need. Would there was more of this before using the trumpet.

Verse 9: It came to pass that same night Jehovah said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand. But if thou fear, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host; and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterwards shall thy hands be strengthened. Here then in wondrous grace Jehovah allays the last lingering doubt in Gideon's heart, unsolicited by him, that which he perhaps was ashamed

to express, but which was seen by Jehovah. Verse 13: And when Gideon was come down, behold there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And so we see Jehovah already working with the enemy, revealing to themselves the judgment that is about to overtake them, and using them unto strengthening the hands of Gideon against them.

Now if the first of these three tests deals with and expels the fearful from amongst them, and the second reveals the purpose of heart and consecration, separating from them all who lack that, the third is towards the enemy unto causing fear to possess them, on the one hand, and unto causing confidence to possess Gideon on the other. For that cake of barley bread may speak also of God's word, that which speaks of judgment to all who are in opposition to God, and yet is the very means of sustaining and encouraging His own, who would seek to be obedient to Him. It is, therefore, no wonder that Gideon returns unto the host, and says, "Arise, for Jehovah hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian." Now that is what Jehovah had said to Gideon before he went down, as in verse 9, telling us that at last we have Gideon in the very mind of Jehovah, regarding what he is about to do, able to use the very words because he has taken in the mind of Jehovah contained in the words. Not handing on to others that which has not first stimulated himself. But, like the Apostle Paul, he believed, and therefore spoke; and in verse 16 we learn he divided them into three companies, and into each one's hand he put a trumpet and an empty pitcher. Surely not to speak of what they were, but of what Jehovah was; and yet so equipped they are prepared to meet the enemy. For, beloved, let us one

and all know that if we poor earthen vessels were only like Gideon's pitchers, empty and then broken—empty that we might be filled by His Spirit and Word, broken that out of us these might shine—we might then also listen to the exhortation to Isaiah, "Lift up thy voice like a trumpet; cry aloud and spare not."

Thus would our words be to more purpose. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled, cast down, perplexed, persecuted, always bearing about in the body the putting to death of the Lord Jesus. The earthen vessel is thus ever and anon broken that the light may shine forth, even as the life of Jesus is lived by us, as it is also written of Him, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." For the light that was in Him was so lived out by Him that it became the light of men. But, ah me! what a humbling on His part as is set forth in Phil. 2. 8! May we aspire to be imitators thereof, as indeed we must be if, like Gideon, we would know what it is to stand with our emptied, broken selves, the light within so shining out from us that others cannot fail to see it. Accompanying this there shall also be that which they shall hear, as we bear testimony through lip, as well as life. The Lord will, as in the case of Gideon and his 300, do the rest. May we really be found such servants, so that we may also have many such victories, and the glory shall be His unto the ages of the ages. Amen.

W. ROBERTSON.

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## ISAIAH 21. 11, 12.

“WATCHMAN, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?”

We hear the call resounding through the darkness  
Like clarion note, striking the midnight air,  
Waking the slumbering echoes all around us,  
And reaching now the waking watchman's ear.

“What of the night?” the question is repeated;  
And still we hear it sounding through the gloam,  
While many a saint is weary with long watching,  
Yet patient waiting, till the Master come.

All through the long, dark night of sin and sorrow  
We hear the whole Creation's waiting groan,  
Until 'tis freed from death's dark cloudy shadow,  
When the redeemed of God are gathered home.

Oh, joy! we hear the watchman's answering message,  
“The morning cometh!” Morning bright and clear,  
Without one cloud to mar the glorious brightness  
Of our glad Morning Star, when He'll appear.

“‘A little while,’ and ye shall not behold Me,  
Again a little while and I'll return;  
I'm only going home a while before you,  
And where I go, there ye shall quickly come;  
Within My Father's home are many mansions,  
More glorious far than this world's best abode;  
And while I am away I shall prepare you  
A place of rest, after earth's weary load.”

Then, through the night of Christ, our Lord's rejection,  
'Midst sin and death, neglected and despised,  
We'll wait and watch to do His Will unshaken,  
Counting but loss what once we dearly prized.

“The morning cometh,” when we'll meet our Saviour,  
Whom, seeing not, yet now we dearly love;  
So through the night we seek to please the Master,  
Who bought us with His own most precious blood.

“The morning cometh,” and the night comes also :  
 A solemn word to those who have withstood,  
 Who have despised, till now, the gracious message  
 Of sins forgiven, through faith in Jesus’ blood.  
 Peace hath been made, and pardon is procured  
 And offered free to all who do believe.

So now “enquire, return,” and come to Jesus,  
 That now the life He gives you may receive.

The day of grace will very soon be over,  
 The night of judgment now is drawing on,  
 When those who will not have Him as their Saviour  
 Shall stand before Him at the great White Throne.  
 No mercy then, no pardon will be offered,  
 No peace, no joy, no rest to be obtained,  
 No words of love, no gracious message proffered :  
 Nothing but judgment now for those ordained.

“What of the night?” Brethren in Christ, awaken  
 And sound the warning message all around ;  
 Let sinners be aroused, from death to hasten,  
 And fly to Christ, where life alone is found.

G. T. REEVE.

### 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.*

QUESTION 130.—*How should a child of God act if he finds that which is recognised as church of God rejecting or putting aside the Truth? Should he withdraw himself from it, or what?*

This question involves matters of much importance to the welfare of the assemblies ; we have, therefore, sought to answer it at some length, and as the Lord has given light on the subject.

First, we would say, we are never called upon to separate from a church of God. If that with which we have been



associated as church of God has so failed that it is not possible longer to recognise it as such, then the principle we find in 2 Tim. 2. 21 comes in, and those seeking to do the will of God will withdraw from the place and association where His will cannot be carried out. But how and when is such a solemn step to be taken?

This touches another question which we have received:—

*How and by whom is a new assembly constituted?*

Let us bear in mind that a church of God is as much a divine creation as is a child of God. The instrumentality used for the gathering of saints, and that which is used for the conversion of a sinner, may be similar, but yet we can never make a sinner a saint nor yet an assembly of people an assembly or church of God. A church of God is Temple of God (1 Cor. 3. 16), whilst a child of God is Temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6. 19). Grace makes a sinner a child of God through faith and a temple of the Holy Spirit. Failure on the part of a Christian will not alter his position as a child, nor the fact of his being Temple of the Holy Spirit, for such a one is sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption. That Spirit may be grieved in us, and His witnessing with our spirit to our sonship hindered, yet our individual standing before God in His infinite grace and mercy remains unaltered.

The disowning of one who has been received into an assembly—that is, their being put out of the fellowship—will be carried out, we believe, on the same principle that they were received in; we are not aware of any case in Scripture where an individual is called upon to act on his own responsibility in this solemn matter. How, we would ask, was such a one brought into the fellowship? Was it not by the assembly acting with and through its overseers? How would one then be put out of a church of God? Surely in the same manner, unless we find some very clear

teaching in the Word of God to the contrary. What then applies to the smaller applies to the larger; but there is this difference between the child of God and the church of God,—although put away and no longer owned as such, the former, as we have said, continues a child of God, but the latter, when judged and separated from, is so acted towards because it has ceased to be a church of God and is no longer Temple of God nor of the House of God, for the latter is spoken of as a conditional thing (Heb. 3. 6). House of God and church of living God we find connected in 1 Tim. 3. 15 as the place where the truth of God abides.

If then the solemn step of disowning a company of saints has to be taken, we would ask the question, By whom and in what way was it first received, as gathered of God in accordance with His will? or, in the words of our second question, “How and by whom is a new assembly constituted?” We cannot for a moment imagine that any less careful and prayerful attention should be ours in the reception of the larger thing than is called for in the reception of the smaller, and if the church acting with and through its guides receives an individual, and also puts such a one away when called upon so to do by the Word of God, surely it will be the churches of God that will receive an assembly, acting again with those who guide, and it will be the churches acting in a like manner that will separate from an assembly that has ceased to be “Pillar and ground of the truth,” and ceased, therefore, to be church of God.

If an individual is not called upon to gather an assembly together on his own responsibility, surely an individual will never be called upon to judge and put away a whole assembly upon his individual responsibility. An assembly, we understand, is formed by the power of God working through those who are gifted in the gospel in fellowship with the guides of the nearest already formed assemblies,

and an assembly that can be no longer recognised as church of God, and has ceased to be Temple of God, will be dealt with in like manner—that is, it will be separated from by the united action of the assemblies in its locality.

The past may well have taught us some of the terrible evils that arise out of individual action. However well meaning it may be, our action as individuals is too often affected by our personal feelings, and we believe that the man who is best acquainted with himself will be the last to act upon his own individual judgment, but will seek the godly fellowship and guidance of others. But some may say, What Scripture do you base your teaching upon? “Let all things be done decently and in order” (1 Cor. 14. 40). Where is the decency or order, or where is the authority for one on his own responsibility to gather together saints without ever seeking the fellowship of those with whom they will expect shortly to be associated? Or, again, where is the authority for an individual to put one out of an assembly, or to reject and disown that which has been recognised as church of God? Another scripture that bears on this subject we find in 1 Peter 5. 2. Here we see the joint responsibility placed upon the elders, not of an assembly, but of many assemblies. Also notice, in 1 Cor. 1. 2, the responsibility rests not upon Corinth alone, but upon all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both theirs and ours; so that the putting away of chap. 5. was a united action of Corinth first, then of others. So, surely, will it be with the disowning of an assembly: one will not act alone, but will act with the fellowship and in conjunction with others; so that the judgment may be of weight and the purposes of God in it fulfilled, not in the hastiness of the flesh or through personal feeling, remembering that “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

J. A. B.

## “ BRING THEM TO ME.”

THE Blessed Master had just heard of the death and burial of John the Baptist, and, turning to the Twelve, who had returned from their mission, He said, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile.” Thus He took them to the place where they might learn lessons they never could have learned in the city. It was necessary they should get to know Him in the wilderness, in order that they might be fitted for the pathway their feet had to tread.

The people, somehow or other, got to know of His purpose, and flocked in thousands from the cities and villages around to that lonely spot, in search of Him. When the Lord Jesus arrived at the place, He beheld the multitudes, like sheep having no shepherd. His heart was moved with compassion, and He healed their sick ones one by one. At the touch of His hand or the word of His mouth sickness, disease, and infirmity fled. Gladness filled many hearts in that throng: lame ones that may never have walked danced in the joy of their hearts; eyes that had never gazed upon Nature’s wondrous beauties were filled, for the first time, with the glories of that scene; ears upon which the sweet tones of loved ones’ voices had never fallen were listening with full hearts to Him who spake as never man spake. The power of God was manifested in healing them, and the love of God in teaching them.

The sinking sun reminds the disciples that the day is far advanced, and, the place they were in being a desert, they came to Him, and said, “Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals.” But He said, “They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat.” They look at their little store—

five barley loaves and two small fishes—then at the hungry crowds—five thousand men and, it may be, as many women and children. What are they amongst so many? Looking at it from a human standpoint, it seemed like mockery to ask the hungry thousands to sit down to such a store. They were at their wits' end, when He said, "Bring them to Me." He took the five loaves and two small fishes into His hands, blessed, and brake, and gave them to the disciples to give to the sitting crowds. Oh, how fully the omnipotent power of His Godhead shines out here, as the loaves and fishes go on multiplying, until every soul is fully satisfied, and twelve baskets gathered up from the green grass of the remaining fragments. Only five loaves and two fishes, carried on the head of a lad, to begin with; now twelve baskets full, and, it may be, almost ten thousand persons fed.

Surely that desert scene proclaimed Him to be God manifest in flesh. Here the inwrought gold in the High Priest's garments shines out. No law in Nature could account for that wondrous miracle. No power of man could have brought it about. It took the omnipotent power of God to do it. Little is much when in His hands, and weakness is strength when it leans upon Him.

May we not draw some helpful lessons from such a scene?—lessons that will cheer and encourage us, as we find ourselves in a desert in very deed, with need deep and real on every hand. See the teeming thousands of hungry men and women all around us, led on, by the masterly skill of Satan, to a never-ending eternity of misery and woe. Who will cause them to sit down on the green grass, and fill their hands with the bread of life? Our hearts are moved as we see the surging crowds move on to the brink of that awful abyss. But, looking at our little store of time, and talent, and means, our hearts may well fail us, as we say, "What can we do to meet such infinite need?" Hear that

voice, coming down from the very presence of God, "Bring them to Me." So, bring our all, and lay it at His feet. But it must be our all. The disciples gave every loaf they had into His hands. It matters not how little we have, but it must be all we have.

The same hands of omnipotent power will take it up; and who can tell what wondrous things He will do with it? Careless ones convicted, weary ones rested, hungry ones fed, and abundance left for us when others are full. We measure the need by His power, and not by our store, and our hearts are cheered.

HIS POWER, that is not limited by the laws of Nature, but as in a day gone by, so to-day. He works wondrous miracles with the most unlikely means. Not now only in meeting the need of the body, but in meeting the need of the soul, which, according to His own word, is of far more value than the body.

The evening's sun of this world's long day of grace sheds light upon a scene more wonderfully great than that we have just been contemplating, for Jehovah Jesus, from His throne of grace and glory, feeds the perishing multitudes with the Bread of Life, using the most feeble instruments to accomplish His glorious work.

F. VERNAL.

*("Bring Him to Me," in continuation of this subject, to appear, God permitting, in December.)*

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## WE ARE THE LORD'S.

(Rom. 14. 8.)

It is of the first importance that we should know of whom these words are spoken; if we turn to the beginning of the epistle, we shall see to whom it was written. Chapter 1. verse 7 says, "To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints": that is, to all the saints at Rome, not to all that be in Rome, but to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called saints: it is to all whom God has called, to all whom the Father has sanctified (Rom. 9. 24, John 17. 17). To such, and only such, this is addressed.

The first thing we notice is, that if we are the Lord's we are not our own: that is the first conclusion which we come to. So we are told ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price (1 Cor. 6. 20). Yet, alas! how often do we act as though we were our own, and deny the claims of Him who bought us with His own precious blood.

The next thing we notice is, if we are the Lord's, and not our own, all we have also belongs to the Lord: so it is written, "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price. Glorify God, *therefore*, in your body."

"Not my own, but saved by Jesus,  
Who redeemed me with His blood;  
Gladly I accept the message,  
I belong to Christ my Lord.

"Not my own, oh! not my own,  
Jesus, I belong to Thee!  
All I have, and all I hope for,  
Thine for all Eternity.

"Not my own; my time, my talents,  
Freely all to Christ I bring,  
To be used in joyful service  
For the glory of the King."

“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom. 12.). Though we belong to God, yet God wants our service to be of love and freewill. “I beseech you . . . *present* your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” “My son, *give* Me thine heart.” He only asks for His own, for that which we have no right to withhold. For the law saith, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Deut. 6. 5). And again He says, “*Present* yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6. 13). It is “the love of Christ” which “constraineth us” to live, not unto ourselves, but unto God, and unto Him that died for us and rose again. Oh that God’s people would own and recognise the Lordship of Christ; but while this truth is assented to and recognised as a doctrine, yet how few regulate their lives by it, to how few is it a living truth, to how many is it a doctrine only! Beloved, if we know these things, happy are we if we do them.

While we see and know this truth, does not God hold us responsible to do it? For he that knoweth to do the will of God, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God”; by the mercies of God—oh! how great are His mercies towards them that fear Him! As far as the East is from the West, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us. As the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy towards them that fear Him. “By the mercies of God”; the mercy of God is too deep for us to fathom, too high for us to reach the top, and too broad and wide for us to measure, and too great for us to know; for it passes knowledge. We know that we are what we are



through the grace of God alone, and by His mercy towards us in Christ Jesus.

“We love Him because He first loved us.” Our love towards Him is the outcome of His love towards us, and what love to Him we owe! Truly it is but a small thing if we give Him of His own, a heart subdued by the cross of Christ Jesus as a thank-offering; especially as it is but our reasonable service, and as He entreats it of us, saying, “My son, give Me thine heart.”

But whilst we see here that which ought to be with every redeemed one, how do matters really stand? Let us ask ourselves the question, how do we carry out the will of God in this matter? Alas! His claims are almost entirely ignored by many professing Christians of to-day. Where is that giving of the heart, that yielding of the members, and that presenting of our bodies to Him? “*If ye love Me keep My commandments,*” says our Lord and Saviour. “He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings”; “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2. 4).

Next we will observe how we belong to the Lord. We belong to Him by right of purchase—“Ye are *bought.*” “Ye are bought with a price” (1 Cor. 7. 23). We belong to Him also by His calling us and our calling in Christ Jesus; because He has also chosen us in Him, from before the foundations of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1. 4). He says, “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain” (John 15. 16). “Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.”

Another reason why we should yield our all to God is, without it we cannot serve Him aright, and without it we

cannot do His will; for this is the will of God concerning us, "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love"; this is the will of God concerning us, even our sanctification (1 Thess. 4. 3). God has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. What for? With what object? That we should show forth the excellencies and the virtues of our Lord and Saviour, and manifest His name to the world, and live to His praise (1 Peter 2. 9). God called one man of all men upon the face of the earth; by faith Abraham obeyed the call and went out from his home, and kindred, and country, unto a place which he should after receive as an inheritance. He went out not knowing whither he went. God chose him, and of his seed He chose a nation to be His own peculiar people, that He might be their God, and that they might be His people, and bring forth fruit to the praise of His great and holy name.

But we know that they failed to bring forth the fruit of that kingdom; wherefore the Kingdom of God was taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof (Matt. 21. 43), even to that "holy nation" spoken of in 1 Peter 2. 9. For God hath . . . called us unto holiness (1 Thess. 4. 7). Beloved, it is now high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance: but as He that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy. And pass the time of your *sojourning* here in fear. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be

sober and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. I have put God's word before you, brethren, not because you know it not, but because you know, and because I know, how needful it is for us to be constantly reminded of these things, and to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, and in hope that God our Father would speak to you through these His words to the further carrying out of His holy will and the extension of His kingdom, and the glorifying of His holy name; and let us remember, brethren, that, as one has said, when we give Him our all, we are at the best but unprofitable servants.

“If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him?  
Or what receiveth He of thine hand?  
Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art,  
And thy righteousness may profit a son of man.”

Seeing then, brethren, that it is only to our own profit to walk in the paths of righteousness, for all her paths are peace, let us give diligent heed to these things, that, when our Lord cometh, He may find us watching; and blessed is the man whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing. Let us also seek with earnest care to keep in the narrow way, to gather in the lost ones for whom our Lord has died, and ever acknowledge Him in all our ways, and remember Whose we are and Whom we serve, that we are in very deed the Lord's; lest, because iniquity abounds, our love may wax cold. While here our service must necessarily be imperfect: but when we see Him as He is, we will serve as we ought, for “His servants shall serve Him” (Rev. 22. 3).

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## CONFERENCE NOTES.

EDINBURGH. SEPTEMBER, 1898.

MR. DAVID SMITH, Lanark, referred to Isaiah 40. 28-31, and said that, when one considers the solemnity of opening the lips to speak the Lord's message, one is slow to rise; nevertheless one feels bound to give expression to the thoughts which have been passing through one's mind in waiting in the presence of God. It is important in all things to begin right, and we can never do better at meetings such as these than to begin with God Himself.

The opening words in the book of Genesis that speak of the beginning bring us at once face to face with God. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." This brings us to the Great Worker in connection with His work, and since that time it has ever been God's desire to make *Himself* known. In measure He is known by each one of us who by grace are His, for "this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send—Jesus Christ"; but it is His desire that we should know Him increasingly.

That life which has come to us from God by the operation of His Spirit through the Word can be satisfied with nothing short of God Himself, even as we hear the Psalmist saying, "My soul thirsteth for God." Nothing short of this will satisfy, or can satisfy, the life that He has given. It must be Himself, Himself, Himself.

In the light of this it is very interesting to look back on the record of God's dealings with His people in the past, and to note the object and purpose of all His dealings with them. All His actings toward them were clearly to bring them to Himself, and to cause them to know Him in a better and fuller manner. When Israel was in Egypt,

under the galling yoke of Pharaoh, the cry arose from their hearts to Jehovah for deliverance; and while in that condition of servitude and need, He most blessedly answered to their cry, and proved Himself a Saviour-God. In all the sufficiency of His almighty power, He made Himself known as their Deliverer and rid them of their bondage and brought them to Himself. We find, on tracing the history of this people stage by stage, that other circumstances arose which they little anticipated, and each new circumstance enabled Jehovah to reveal Himself further to them. They had not walked many days in the wilderness when new needs arose, and the cry unto the Lord is not now for deliverance from Egypt, but, "Who will give us bread to eat, who will give us water to drink?" Again in all His sufficiency He came to their aid: "I will rain you bread from heaven," and so forth; and these very circumstances became another opportunity to reveal Himself in a different character, and to make Himself more fully known, for now they know Him, not only as the Deliverer, but also as the Provider in the wilderness. Great indeed was their need, but it only gave Jehovah opportunity to display the exceeding greatness of His power and sufficiency, and by so doing He would teach them to know Him in a fuller measure.

"Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" His arm is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is His eye blind that He cannot see, nor His ear deaf that He cannot hear; there is no insufficiency with Him. Ofttimes, however, it is to be feared, His people fail through limiting the Holy One of Israel, and the circumstances and difficulties of the pathway are viewed in the light of our own insufficiency and our ever-failing resources, instead of taking God into the circumstances and laying hold of Him to prove the sufficiency of His power. "Hast thou not known? hast

thou not heard . . . that God fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding." If His people break down, it is not because He has failed, nor because He is not able; nay, verily, "God is willing": "God is able." We must not lay the blame at His door, but rather get down on our faces before Him and confess our weakness and failure, and own the dishonour and reproach we have brought upon His name. Take heed lest there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, for if the heart gets away from Him, it only needs circumstances to arise to turn the feet from the pathway of His pleasure; and all such breakdowns prove too clearly that long ago the heart was away from the living God.

In Isaiah 40. 29 we read that "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength." Power not to the self-sufficient, not to the self-confident, but to the faint. The one who realizes his own helplessness, and is conscious of his own insufficiency, is in the very condition to prove the sufficiency of Jehovah's power and strength! He maketh perfect His strength in weakness, and it has ever been the weak things and weak people—weak in their own estimation—that God has taken up and wrought His purposes through. He gives power to the faint, and to the weak He increaseth strength, thus making Himself and His sufficiency known; but those who trust to their natural strength must learn their weakness through sorrowful failure: while they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Turn now to Mal. 3. 6: "I am Jehovah, I change not." We have been looking at the early days of the history of this people, when God took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt and brought them unto Himself. In those

days we find Him revealing Himself unto them by His new name Jehovah, which speaks of relationship between His people and Himself, and also making known His will to them and giving them His ordinances to keep. In the book of Malachi we see the closing days of the history of His people. Great were the changes which had taken place in their condition and circumstances: God's will had been set aside and His ordinances departed from, and all around was blight and barrenness, but still Jehovah remained the same—"I change not." Here also would He reach the hearts of His erring people and call for a return. A return to what? To His ordinances? Nay, to *Himself*. Return *unto Me*, and I will return unto you, said the Lord of Hosts. A return unto His ordinances can only be accomplished so as to please Him by first returning unto Himself. The heart away from the living God caused His people to forsake His ordinances, and before they could return to these the heart must be right with Himself.

To-day Christians are heard to say that the times are altered, the circumstances are different from what they were at the first; yes, we freely own it: but Jehovah changeth not. You may blame the altered circumstances, and the changed days, if you will, but there is no reason why you should, for He saith, "I am Jehovah, I change not"; there is no alteration or change with Him. He is the same as He was during the first days, and He still calls those whose hearts are right with Himself to contend earnestly for the Faith once for all delivered to the saints.

There is much in the book of Lamentations to cause the eye to weep and the heart to break as we take our stand with God's prophet and behold the desolations of Israel, caused by departure in heart and ways from Jehovah: but in the midst of the failure and break-down of His people, as a testimony for Him there is one abiding cause for encouragement, praise, and rejoicing which our hearts should

grasp and treasure increasingly in these days when departure from God and His ordinances marks all around. It is found in these words, "LORD, THOU REMAINEST."

MR. FRANK VERNAL referred to Acts 22. 14, and said that the Apostle was here recounting what took place between himself and Ananias, and therein is shown the purpose for which the Lord laid hold of him in the midst of his persecution of the people of God. "The God of our Fathers hath appointed thee to know His will, and to see the Righteous One." This is also true concerning every Christian; God's purpose is that they should "know His will" in a greater or lesser degree. It is likewise part of God's purpose in saving us that we shall see the face of Him who loved us unto death in glory soon; but for the present His purpose is clearly shown to us in 1 Timothy 2. 3, 4, where we read: "God our Saviour, who willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth."

God, in saving Paul, had a purpose, and let us be assured that He has also a purpose in saving us.

Let us pause and stand still for a moment, and look back to the Cross and on to the glory, and as we appreciate a little of the constraining power of the love of Christ, let us respond to His appointment and value His purpose—even that we should *know His will*.

In order that we might know this in practical experience, He has given us His Word and Spirit, that we might thereby be led into all truth.

In Philippians 3. 10 the Apostle reveals to us a purpose which was always before his heart: "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." God made known His ways to Moses, and His acts to the children of Israel; thus learning God's acts, the Israelites got to know God when He manifested His omnipotent power, but Moses learned God in a way that they did not know Him. It is



one thing for us to learn the Lord's will in a degree at least, but another thing altogether to know HIM. Oh! fellow-saints, it may be our feet have trod the pathway of obedience to the Lord as we passed through the waters of baptism; that we gather on the first day of the week to break bread and drink wine with the Lord in our midst, and yet we may not be in close touch with Him. Paul desired not only to know His will and to do it, but he desired also to know Him; and nothing could satisfy the heart of that servant of God but a deep personal acquaintance with the Blessed Lord Himself.

There are many persons of whom we have read, but whom we do not know personally. To know a person we must walk with him, talk with him, come in personal contact with him, be in constant companionship with him. In like manner, if you are to know the Son of God, you must walk in constant fellowship with Him, in the busy street, by the quiet roadside, and, above all, in the closet; you must always have Him with you and before you. It is impossible to know Him in any other way; you may read and study the Word of God, and become acquainted with the letter of His will, and yet not know Him, and, therefore, never be in touch with the Master.

In 2 Timothy we have depicted greatly altered days from what we find in Acts 22., and that epistle brings us to the closing days of Paul. As he looks back on his life's work—that work into which his whole heart and energy had been thrown—on the right hand and on the left he observes the marks of Satan's power. "All that are in Asia," he cried, "turned away from me." Asia, that land in which in days gone by he had witnessed the power of God in saving and adding to the Lord, had now turned its back on the servant of the Lord, and rejected the truth, and as he thought on such failure, his heart burned within him. Surely that word we were reading just now should

come home with power to our hearts, "Jehovah changeth not," as we behold in this our day the sad evidences of the failure of God's beloved people, and their little desire to know His will and perhaps less to do it.

The Apostle had trod the pathway, as we have seen in Philippians 3., in constant touch with the Master; he had known God in the administration of His power in saving him through days of darkness and difficulty; he had learned to know Him, and to have constant fellowship with Him, and though seeing on all hands the marks of Satan's work, he could trust his God still, and cried in triumph, "Yet I am not ashamed; for I know Him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Tim. 1. 12). In the days of sunshine he learned to know his God, so that when the days of difficulty and testing came, his confidence in God was unaffected, although everything around him seemed to fail. He knew Whom he had believed, and, like him, we must also know and trust our God, alike in the days of difficulty as of sunshine.

Rome now has no power to stamp those who confess faith in Christ beneath her iron heel as she once did; such difficulties in the mercy of God are unknown to us: but there is much in the present day that panders to the flesh, much in this age to misdirect you from holding on a straight course in the word of truth. Therefore the deep, deep need of individually knowing Him, for there is no possibility of wavering or turning from the once-delivered faith so long as He fills the eye and heart.

No doubt it will cost us much to walk in abiding fellowship with the Lord Himself in these days, for there is much to intercept and hinder around us from so doing, but I do not know any person or thing we have to guard against more than *ourselves*. Paul kept his own ungodly flesh under, from the beginning to the end of his pathway, and

apart from so doing, he could never have known the over-comer's triumph which was his; and that through a pathway of trials and temptations such as we will never be called upon to tread.

Let us therefore hold fast the form of sound words, and guard the good deposit through the Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us.

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## For Young Believers.

“As new-born babes, desire the milk of the Word, which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.”—1 *Peter* 2. 2.

### ABIDING PEACE.

“THEREFORE being justified,” or “having been justified, by faith, let us have peace with God” (*Rom.* 5. 1).

How many there are who have been justified, who have been saved, but who do not know in daily experience “peace with God.”

For some time after they were saved the joy of their new-found treasure and the wonder of it all filled their hearts, and there was no room for disquieting thoughts or doubt of any kind. Jesus had died, and His death on the Cross had put away their sin. They had known of His death for sin, they had known about a Saviour; but never before had they known that the Lord Jesus had died for their sin, that the Lord Jesus was their Saviour, till that little act of faith had brought it home to them and they had joyfully accepted the precious “gift of God.”

Oh, the glory of it! What a future of rest and peace was theirs! What a shining pathway stretched before them now! Would they ever have one dark hour? Could one little minute’s gloom ever overshadow their life again? At that time it seemed as though it were not possible.

But time has passed on, and difficulties, unexpected difficulties, have cropped up. It seemed that it would be so easy to live for the Lord who had died and brought them so much; but experience has brought knowledge of a warfare to be waged and of a conflict to be endured; bitter and unhappy failure has proved that their pathway was, after all, not to be one of unalloyed brightness. They had gone to God and told Him about it; but then they had to go

back again and again with the same disheartening story of failure and sin, till they were almost ashamed to seek the face of the Lord at all. Instead of the peace that filled their hearts when they believed, they now had only unrest and misery, and the burden of it was growing daily; there seemed to be no rest, no peace for them. The worst of it was nobody else seemed to be this way. Every one was happy enough. Every one else seemed to be enjoying constantly these things that had now become only bitterness to their hearts, because they could no longer be enjoyed; and to hear others talking it would seem that no one else ever experienced this kind of unhappiness.

Now, dear young brother or sister, if this has been anything like your experience, have you not also found that at this point doubts begin to arise? You begin to wonder if you really are a child of God, if you really have been saved, or if you ever have believed in the right way. Ah! this is just the point we wish to arrest you at. Open the Word of God at the fifth chapter of Romans, and read again the verse quoted at the beginning of this paper.

When at the first the message of God's love was brought home to you, you believed it unquestioningly, and it brought the peace and joy that you have lost. See now what this verse says: "*Having been justified by faith*, let us have peace with God." Now do you not think that, instead of not having believed in the right way at first, what is really the matter is that you are not believing God to be a faithful God? "*Having been justified by faith*," that is what happened when you accepted God's message at first—you were justified by faith. Perhaps you did not understand it. Perhaps you do not understand it now. That does not matter; your justification was God's work and not yours. All that you did was to believe. "It is God that justifieth," and the counsels of hell cannot prevail against that, even though doubts do arise in your heart.

But the rest of the verse says, "Let us have peace with God," and peace is just what you cannot attain to. The reason is that you are trying to attain to it by your own efforts, and losing sight of the fact that peace has been made. Where would you have been to-day had you tried to attain to justification? As far from it as you are now from peace, and for the same reason. In Col. 1. 20 God says that Christ has made peace by the blood of His Cross: "Therefore having been justified by faith, let us have peace with God" *by faith also*. Do you not see that this peace depends upon Christ's work, and not upon your conduct or attainments after you are justified; your peace is of Christ's making, as your justification is God's doing. And if your justification is an abiding thing, so your peace is an abiding thing also. God has made both, and God keeps both. You believed unto justification once; can you not believe unto peace now? It is really a question of belief: not a question of understanding about it; not a question of your behaviour, or your feelings consequent upon your behaviour; but altogether a question of faith on your part. So, "having been justified by faith, *let us have peace with God.*"

But what about your failure? What about your repeated sin? 1 John 1. 9 is the place for that, and the one who hears there the story of your failure, your endeavour, and your failure again, is the faithful God—faithful to forgive and faithful to cleanse if we confess. He has made peace at the Cross as to the great question of *sin*, and He speaks peace here to His penitent child on the question of *sins*. "How often shall I forgive my brother?" Peter asked. "Till seven times?" And the Lord who hears you replied, "Not until seven times, but until seventy times seven." So your faith is called into exercise here again, and when you have confessed your sin, believe also that the faithful God has forgiven. The just shall live by faith. Not one

act of faith exercised long ago, but faith going on day by day and hour by hour, and affecting every part of the life; faith in every word that God has spoken touching any part of our life. Your faith at the first brought you into the peace which God has made and which God keeps; your daily faith will keep you in the enjoyment of the abiding peace of God which passeth all understanding. Away with doubt, then; away with these disquieting fears. They are the weakness which leads to fresh failure and deeper darkness. "Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared; for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

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### FORGIVENESS.

Who amongst the Lord's people does not experience from time to time the humbling and the chastening which are ours in the conscious forgiveness of our many sins and failures by God? Even the grace which reached and saved us for ever from the doom and judgment of our sins, and caused us to rejoice in the precious knowledge of sins forgiven, does not appear more wonderful and captivating than that which bears with us from day to day as His erring children, and, in spite of our constant unworthiness, blesses us still. Who has not known their hearts to fill and their eyes to overflow, as in the presence of their God they have poured into His listening ear the continuous tale of their wanderings and waywardnesses, and there have been made to know and rejoice in the fulness and freeness of His forgiveness? He desires to have us near Himself without a cloud between us and the enjoyment of His love; and if this place of infinite blessedness is to be enjoyed, unjudged sin cannot be tolerated, and the light of that love very

quickly reveals the faintest departure in heart or the smallest contraction of defilement in us. And how lovingly He yearns over us when our hearts wander from their sure anchorage in the enjoyment of the love of Christ; and how tenderly He deals with us in order to beget in us the desire to return and spread out the entire tale of wandering in His presence, so that He may have the joy of forgiving!

Some indication of His yearning desire toward His wandering saints may be learned from His tender pleadings with Israel in Hosea 14., where Jehovah is heard calling: "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." This is what He waits and longs for in His backsliding people, and this is the object of all His strange dealings with them, that they may learn the utter barrenness of a life spent at a distance from Him; and no sooner do they take into His presence words of contrition and confession than He is heard quickly to reply: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; for Mine anger is turned away." Well may we sing:—

"Who is a pardoning God like Thee?  
And who has grace so rich and free?"

Say, dear reader, are you conscious of being to-day at a distance from the Lord, conscious that the first love has waxed cold, and that the world has been stealing your heart away from the enjoyment of your portion in Christ, that you are consequently joyless and powerless, with a dark cloud like a dismal pall hanging gloomily over your spiritual life: scarcely knowing what is wrong, you are dissatisfied with everything, discontented with every one? Something is sadly wrong if this is your experience, and it is not difficult to discern what it is: clearly Christ is not



the altogether Lovely One to your soul. Other gods have been ruling over your heart, which God would have to be undividedly occupied with, and finding its every joy and satisfying portion in, the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen! "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1. 9).

Therefore get you into the presence of God and have it out with Him at once. Make no reserve—tell Him all, for He knows all, and yearns to flood thy soul with the enjoyment of His knowledge-surpassing love until, like Israel, your rejoicing heart is heard to exclaim, "What have I to do any more with idols?"

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### SERVICE.

"LORD, what wilt Thou have me to do?" is often the prayer that arises from our hearts, inspired by the constraining power of the love of Christ, but, perhaps, we sometimes err in not listening to and discerning His reply. Has He not spoken to one and all? Indeed, He has. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might" (Eccles. 9. 10). "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand" (11. 6). There are many Christians who seem to spend the greater part of their short lives on earth looking for something to do for the Lord, but who never appear to see the work which lies to their hand on every side as they walk through life. God's work may be a very mean thing in the eyes of man, and that which will bring us no praise or honour from the world or our brethren; indeed, it is often something which no eye sees, and no heart can rightly appreciate, but His. Yet work for Him can surely be done by all, and that in a thousand ways in

the circumstances of life in which He has been pleased to place us.

This is really what makes the Christian's life one long, sunny day of song, when we take the Lord into everything; and do every act, however little it may be, for Him, and enjoying thus the sunshine of His love and presence in our souls, it may be without speaking a word, our influence for Him is felt, for He is there dwelling in our hearts by faith, and shines through us.

Do we not sometimes merit the rebuke which Naaman received from his servant? "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some *great thing*, wouldst thou not have done it?" (2 Kings 5. 13). Oh yes, it is so grand and so noble to do great things. If we could all do great things we would doubtless be all busily engaged. Could we only astound our brethren with our knowledge or eloquence, and cause all eyes to be fixed on us with expectancy, work under such circumstances would be delightful, but there might be very little for the *Lord's heart* in it all. Alas! it is to be feared that it is because we know Him so little that we know also the service which glorifies Him so little! To labour on in faithfulness to Him in obscurity and loneliness, without a word of cheer or encouragement from human lips, asking no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face, and no approbation but His own "well done," is the kind of service He desires, and for which, in some measure, He has fitted each one. Little deeds of kindness can be done *for Him*; little words of love can be spoken *for Him* by each one; a ray of light from His own shining presence can reach, through us, to some poor, dark, sinner-souls, and dispel for aye the gloom of nature's darkness, and cause them to bask in the same sunshine as ourselves, and in turn be light-givers to others. Then look upon His beloved people! See the feeble knees, the hanging hands, the disconsolate hearts, the grief-bowed heads; hear the

sighs and groans ; witness some whose faith seems wavering, and they are on the verge of giving all up ; dark clouds have long swept in fury across their sky, and loud and long the unpitying storm of trouble and adversity has thundered over their heads. Can we speak no strengthening, comforting word to such ? Can we cause no ray of sunshine to pierce through some rift in those dark clouds to dispel their gloom, and in some measure alleviate their sorrow and woe ? Is there a child of God who finds nothing to do for the Lord Jesus in such a blighted, needy scene as this ? Then with all our heart we pity such, for theirs is a blasted, withered, wasted life, and they know nothing of real fellowship with the Lord. What would He say to each of us ? “ Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ” (Isa. 60. 1). It requires no great effort, only *let* the light shine. Begin where you are with the little things around you, and the people among whom you move ; call nothing drudgery that you can do for and with the Lord ; take Him for your example who made Himself of no reputation, took the servant’s form and humbled Himself, and went about *doing good*, and instead of finding nothing to do, you will find your days too short, and your strength too feeble to touch the fringe of all the needs around, withal, while consecrating every energy and ability to Him, you will hear His own gladdening voice gently saying, “ She hath done what she could.” For He never under-estimates our efforts to serve Him.

“ Oh, the good we all may do while the days are going by ! ”

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## LOVE.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY JOHN BROWN.

IN the 13th chapter of the Gospel of Christ according to John the Lord Jesus is heard to say, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." Of the spirit, the value and importance of that commandment the Apostle Paul had doubtless learned when he bowed the knee unto the Father, praying "that He would grant you . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Eph. 3. 14-19). And again in Philippians 1. 9, 10: "And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all sense," in order that ye may approve things which are excellent, which, nevertheless, are different. In that same appreciative spirit surely did he address to the Thessalonians the words in the second epistle, chapter 3., ver. 5: "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ."

These quotations are sufficient for our present purpose, and in these words is the love of God commanded and commended, but in none of them is His love *defined*.

By such commandment and commendation it may be that the excellencies of love perceived and understood by us shall more and more cause us to call upon our soul and all that is within us to be stirred up to bless Jehovah's holy name, as with some of whom we read, some in the Psalms (Psa. 126.): when God delivered those captives out of Babylon, they were as men in a dream, their mouths were filled with laughter, and their tongues with singing,

in hearty confession of what God had done for them; and, further, prayed that He would do it again and again.

The excellencies of love are also set forth in language sympathetic and plain in 1 Corinthians 13. Let us read it till our God writes them upon our hearts and minds; and when we have read it to learn what love *does*, let us read it again to see what love *does not*: and yet in our reading again and again we shall fail to find there what love *is*. We shall find there what it does and what it does not, but what it is we shall not find.

Misdemeanour or neglect of love we shall get for ourselves in Luke 11. 42, where it is written, "Ye tithe mint and rue, . . . and pass over judgment, and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone," for there, though occupied rightly with other things, the love of God was passed over.

Laying this alongside the message to the Church in Ephesus, as given in Revelation 2. 1-7, where a similar condition prevailed, we shall learn what the Lord wanted to accomplish when He spoke of the "first love" and the "first works" being left.

In John 14. 15 we may hear our blessed Lord Himself, in words few and simple, yet weighty and searching, put to our consciences and hearts the *test of love*, in that He there has given that by which one may test himself and learn whether or not he loves the Lord with all his heart, and soul, and strength. This fourteenth of John is explicit, simple, and plain, even that the wayfaring man, though a fool, might not err therein.

We witness the exemplification of love in His own dear Son, which is the true test.

Still, people have not a true definition of what love is. It is common in the sentiments of the children of God, and, for that part, the people of the world; yes, as common as the air we breathe: yet in reality it is not known in the

intelligence and hearts of men. It is unknown, as the infinitude of space is unknown to mortal man. Why? Because God's definition of love is unread, or, if read, is deliberately disregarded.

In the first epistle by John we have twice over a definition of what it is: what it is as from God to man, and, secondly, what it is as from man to God and from man to man.

For the definition of love as from God to man I submit for our attention 1 John 4. 10: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Thus He Himself became the atonement-victim for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.

Propitiation in this sense is different from that spoken of in Romans 3. and Hebrews 9.

Then, for the definition of love as from the child of God to God and to the children of God, we have the terse yet easy-to-be-understood words of 1 John 5. 1-3, even, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of God. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous."

This defining of love is repeated in the second epistle by John under the intimation of not being something new. "And now, I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee: but that which we had from the beginning, that we should love one another. And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it."

Let us, therefore, seek grace to return unto our God and

the Word of His grace, since this principle abides, "Who-soever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the reign of the heavens; but whosoever shall do and teach (them), the same shall be called great in the reign of the heavens. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the reign of the heavens. For they say and do not. But happy are ye if ye know and do those things."

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### ABRAM SEPARATED.

WHEN the God of Glory called Abram unto salvation, He found him in religious associations which were a denial of the Living and true God. Yet He reached him there. If Abram lived to-day, the mere fact that he had been brought to a knowledge of Jehovah in Mesopotamia would be urged with all force as a godly reason why he should remain there. How many of God's children in sectarian darkness and sin satisfy themselves as to its being right by the fact that they and others have been saved there. Beloved, this is no proof that any religious association is of God. Abram, saved in Mesopotamia, heard the "Get thee out" of Him who saved him. Israel, though redeemed in Egypt, had to go a three days' journey therefrom to be found where they could worship and serve their God, unhindered by Egypt's abominations, on the one hand, or her restrictions, on the other, free to hear and obey in *all* things Him who had redeemed them.

The responsibility of every child of God is to be found where His Word can be taught and obeyed, and where God can have him for Himself. The claims of the Lord are little understood or appreciated in our day by the

many who profess His name. Saved from wrath is the extent of their grasp of God's salvation. Not so with him whom God called "My friend." In Acts 7., where we are told of his being reached and saved from wrath by the God of Glory, we have also the claims of the Lord clearly put before him in these words, "Get thee out from thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into a land which I will show you." What a separation! so far-reaching and so thorough; yet nothing short of this would satisfy the one who had saved him.

In Genesis 12., verse 1, you will find the separation three-fold in its character: "Thy country," severe enough, "thy kindred," severer still, "thy father's house," the acme of self-denial and surrender. Here, then, was the Divine test of Abram's love and faithfulness to his God. You see, God claims all of him in separation unto Himself. Let me pause here, dear reader, in order to interrogate my own soul and yours as to what we know of this being set apart for Him. We may speak of our all being on the altar, but do we know what this implies? Surely nothing short of spirit, and soul, and body sanctified in the truth (John 17. 19), Christ-possessed and Christ-controlled; seen not only in my talk, but in my walk of submission to His will. In Isaiah 50. 4-7 we have the blessed Lord Himself in His perfect manhood, the perfect pattern for all the household of faith, the tongue of the disciple, the opened ear of the disciple, the surrendered life told out in those words, "I was not rebellious."

In God's calling out of an Abram from land, and kindred, and father's house into Canaan we see the why—namely, that in him and his seed God's will might be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Not come out to do his own pleasure, but called out by God that to him and his He might unfold His will and purposes, that through them they might be done.



The fulfilment of such mighty purposes, depending as they did on the obedience of the creature, was opposed by the Devil. The doing of God's will on earth calls forth his special enmity and opposition. By a careful comparison of Acts 7. with Genesis 11. 27-32 you will see that instead of Abram leaving his father's house in obedience to the God of Glory, he allows them to have their way, and they take him out from Mesopotamia about 300 miles, and when they get that distance they settle down in Haran. Now, if you will carefully study a good map of these parts, you'll find Haran to be the most northern town of Babylon, just on its northern border. There the man of God settled down in disobedience, short of God's will, and there he remained until God by death removed the hindrance and freed Abram to do His will.

There is no influence so subtle in hindering us from being where and doing what God would have than the ties of nature. How many one has known of whom you could say a father, a mother, a relative or friend, a husband or wife, a young man or woman, has come between them and the will of their God. Then, again, to be His disciple we are called upon to deny self, take up our cross and follow Him. How many shrink from what this entails! Business ties, monetary gains, old associations, and love of place and pre-eminence all bulk largely in keeping many of God's saints from the light. Again, Satan has no greater decoy in keeping saints in sectarian darkness than a converted minister who does preach the Gospel. Dear child of God, many and varied are the causes which militate against the Kingdom of God being found in our hearts. Terahs abound, and the knowledge of this ought to keep us daily living in the condition of which we have often sung,—

“ Whatever idol I have known,  
 Whate'er that idol be,  
 Help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
 And worship only Thee.”

The 12th of Genesis begins with a very telling word—"Now the LORD had said." This takes Abram back to the appearance of the God of Glory. How many years had rolled between that and the death of Terah we know not, but one thing God's Word makes plain, that Abram's stay at Haran was in disobedience, and therefore there was no fresh appearing or revealing of his God. No; at Terah's death Abram goes back over years of declension to what the God of Glory had spoken, and assays to fulfil it. How much did his disobedience cost him? No fellowship, no growth, no progress in the will and purpose of his God; wasted time. Not only for time, but for eternity. Alas! who can tell what Haran cost Abram—that half-way house, that going so far, and then stopping short and settling down. Are there no Harans to-day seen in the saints going so far, and then stopping short of all the way of our God? Abram had gone fully 300 miles. That was a long way, yet it fell short of the will of God.

Many saints to-day have been aroused to a sense of their responsibilities, and have started to give effect to His will. Some have gone a short way, others a much longer way, and there settled down. Child of God, this is Haran, and we are all liable to abide there; and as it was with Abram so it may be with us. The keeping of His commands insures a love and an abiding which only the faithful know (John 14. 23). The Psalmist says, "Thy Word is a lamp to my feet" (Psa. 119. 105); hence we get light as we walk in light. May it ever be yours and mine, reader, to know a deliverance from a Terah influence and a Haran place, and to be found going all the way our God may mark out.

J. CHARLETON STEEN.

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## ENOCH.

IN the midst of the most beautiful scenery, under the most perfect atmospheric conditions, it is possible for one to feel utterly dejected and lonely, not having a fitting companion to share with him the enjoyment of the beauties of Nature. On the other hand, have we not all experienced times when a veritable desert seemed to burst forth into bloom as we trod it with one whose heart was in touch with our own? Enoch's long walk through the "Valley of the Shadow of Death" must have indeed been very pleasant; for he had the Only Companion who could perfectly meet and satisfy all the longings of the soul.

Enoch has been at rest now for thousands of years, but we still have Enoch's God, who desires, yea, requires, that *we* should walk with Him. In the heart of every born-again one is implanted the same desire, and our hearts can be satisfied with nothing less. Now if this desire is mutual, what hinders us from realizing and enjoying the fruition of it? Perhaps a consideration of the little that is said of Enoch may help the answering of this question, and remove some of the hindrances, or, at least, stimulate the desire for a closer walk with God.

It does not appear that Enoch had any special advantages which we do not enjoy. He "begat sons and daughters," and would, consequently, be under the necessity of providing for them; but neither business worries nor family cares seem to have interfered with his "long, close, lonely walk with God." How often we try to find an excuse in our circumstances, and reason that if they were different we could lead a better life. Every trial of our life has been carefully poised on the finger of our Father before it was allowed to reach us; consequently can never be intended to retard our walk with Him. Furthermore, to the one with weaknesses, necessities, and

such like, has He not said, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My power is made perfect in weakness"?

We are sometimes inclined to make an excuse of the confusion, declension, and coldness of our times as a reason why we are not walking the path of faith as we should do. Enoch lived in days of dense darkness and sin—sin so palpable and flagrant that his anointed eye saw the black cloud of Divine judgment sweeping onward at such a rate that he knew it would burst in all its vengeance as soon as his child died; for he called his son Methuselah, which means "When he is dead it shall be sent"—that is, the deluge (Newberry Margin). Yet Enoch walked calmly on with his God, no doubt sorely tried and deeply grieved by what he saw around him. Is there not cheer and comfort for us in these last days as we look at his "foot-prints in the sands of time"?

Methuselah was the oldest man that ever lived. Does not this fact magnify the grace of our loving God, who doubtless in deep compassion lengthened out his days and thus put off his "strange work" of judgment for 969 years, not willing that any should perish? He did not allow his servant's word to fall to the ground, however, for swift, sure, relentless judgment came upon all who were not sheltered by the ark the year after Methuselah died.

"All the days of Enoch were 365 years," or a day for a year. This is surely recorded by our God to remind us that it is possible, yea, the very desire of God, that we should walk 365 days in the year with Himself. And if God is for us in this matter, who can be against us?

"He had this testimony, that he pleased God." The confidence and joy of an obedient child looking up into his father's face, yea, nestling in his very bosom with unspeakable delight. Alas! how often—Absalom-like—we can exist for days, weeks, and even years, without seeing the King's face. How very much to be preferred is the former condition; and it may be ours.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God;” and herein lies the secret of Enoch’s walk. Evidently early in his career he had found out his own sinfulness and helplessness, and in childlike simplicity had found in God “all his utmost need required.” Alas! how we, of later days, limit the Holy One of Israel! Surely He “who created the heavenly orbs, who calleth them all by names, by the greatness of His might, and for that He is great in power not one is missing when called for” (Is. 40. 26, Newberry Margin), surely He is able to keep us moving in our little sphere, in such a way that He can lay His hand on us at any moment He requires us for His use.

“The secret of the Lord was with him.” He foresaw the deluge and the coming of the Lord with ten thousand of His saints (Jude 14). God would not hide His secrets from His friend. And if we desire to be in the mind of God, this is the royal road, the quiet walking on with Himself day by day. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. What an honour to be in the secret counsels of the Most High! This honour God offers, in measure, to the weakest of those for whom Christ died. May we have grace to fulfil the conditions by humbly walking with God.

Enoch was translated that he should not see death. The hope of the Lord’s coming, above all other truths, is calculated to purify our lives, and bring us into agreement with Him who is longing for our companionship. It may be, ere this day is over, our Beloved shall burst the clouds and call us home to be for ever with Himself.

“Oh! the blessed joy of meeting,  
 All the desert past!  
 Oh! the wondrous words of greeting  
 He shall speak at last!  
 He and I together entering  
 Those bright courts above,  
 He and I together sharing  
 All the Father’s love.”

“BRING HIM TO ME.”<sup>1</sup>

JESUS had gone up to the Mount of Transfiguration, and the eyes of the three privileged disciples beheld a glimpse of the coming kingdom—glory. His face shone as the sun, and His raiment glistened as the light. Whilst they thus were beholding His glory, and listening to His voice, down in the plain below a very different scene is being enacted.

A poor father has brought his lunatic son to the disciples, very likely as a last resource, after having tried everything he could think of. The disciples had cast out many demons. They had often spoken in the name of the Lord Jesus, and demons and unclean spirits had come out at their word of command. But, do as they liked, they could not cast out this one. The unclean spirit baffled all their wisdom and power, and defied their every effort. They were utterly unable to loose the poor lad from Satan's grasp. They were at an end of themselves, and the father's heart may have sunk within him as he saw how fruitless every effort of the disciples was to cure his boy.

It was at this point, when the helplessness of the disciples was apparent to all, that four forms are seen coming down the mountain-side. It is Jesus! It is the Prophet! And the crowd gathers round Him. The father, kneeling at His feet, beseeches Him to heal his son, telling how the disciples could not cast out the demon. Jesus said, “Bring him to Me.”

As the lunatic is brought into the presence of the Son of God, the demon cast him on the ground, wallowing and foaming. One word from His blessed lips and what the disciples could not do was done—the demon was cast out, Satan's power was broken.

What a halo of glory surrounded the Lord Jesus in all

<sup>1</sup> A continuation of the subject, “Bring Them to Me,” page 249.

His life below ! He never was in circumstances in which He was at a loss how to act, nor lacked power to do it. No captive of Satan ever stood in His presence that He was not able to free ; no disease but what He could cure ; not even death could hold its prey when He willed to release it, whether on the bed, or on the way to the tomb, or after it had been four days in the tomb. Omnipotent is His power.

Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ has gone higher than the Mount of Transfiguration to-day. He sits upon the throne of uncreated glory—His Father's throne. His face is like the sun ; yea, brighter than the sun, as Saul saw the sheen of it outside the gate of Damascus. His garments are whiter than heaven's unsullied light. He sits in the place of glory and power.

Down here in the valley we are left for a little, to live for Him, and to bring the captives of sin and Satan into liberty (see Acts 26.). But ofttimes we are at our wits' end, for, no matter what we do or say to cause men and women to know the grace of God in salvation power, they remain hardened in their sins. At times we get disheartened and sad. Let us once more hear that voice coming from the Throne of Glory : "Bring him to Me." There the young man's heart has been broken, his bonds loosed, and himself saved. There the aged sinner, on the brink of eternal woe, has been snatched from Satan's grasp. "Bring him to Me." We can no more do anything to help the sinner, apart from bringing him by faith to the Lord Jesus, than we could have fed the multitudes without bringing the loaves to Him. "Bring them to Me ;" and we lay our all at His feet. "Bring him to Me ;" and we bring, in the arms of believing prayer, the sinner to Him. Then souls are saved, captives freed, and God is glorified.

F. VERNAL.

## For Young Believers.

“As new-born babes desire the milk of the Word, which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.”—1 *Peter* 2. 2.

### “THIS GRACE WHEREIN WE STAND.”

“There is a land, a sunny land,  
Whose skies are ever bright.”

As children we learned to sing these lines, and, by them, were taught to look for the sunny land and the bright skies somewhere in the vague “by-and-by.” As children of God we seem to have taken over and retained these early impressions, for we are too prone to relegate all brightness and sunshine to the “sweet by-and-by,” and to be content to dwell in an atmosphere of dismalness and gloom when God has made the opposite possible, and Scripture teems with assurances of it.

In *Romans* 5. 1 it is written, “Being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: through whom also we have had our access by faith into *this grace wherein we stand*, and let us rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” The Apostle does not put these three blessings—peace, grace, and glory—away into the far future. One of them, “the glory of God,” does stand there in all its brilliancy and magnificence: the heritage of the saints: what God in His infinite grace has made us heirs to in a joint-heirship with Christ (*Rom.* 8. 17, 18); but the two others are not future, they belong to the present, and there is sunshine and brightness enough in each to keep us from drooping till we lift up our heads in the full blaze of the “glory of God.”

Peace and grace, then, are ours now, for the “grace wherein we stand” includes peace, or the fault is our own.

This grace wherein we stand, this position of favour which we occupy in our standing in Christ the Lord, could



it be any but one of sunshine and brightness and gladness? We shall see.

In all the records that we have of the dealings of God with man in days gone by, His great desire seems to have been that He might bless; His great sorrow that man would not come to, nor remain in, the place where he might be blessed; and how wondrous were the outpourings of His love on those made meet to be its recipients! Yet never in the past has God been able to bless as He may now. The veil ever existed, intercepting in measure the effulgence of the glory of His love; but that is gone now, for the veil was rent in the flesh of our Lord, by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand: this place where the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of God may find its freest expression, and where God may pour out the treasures of His love, and make known His fatherly heart in all its tender care for His needy children. This is the grace wherein we stand—the place that every one of the redeemed occupies.

Into this light and love, this brightness and glory, we have been brought by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is God's desire that we should enjoy it in all its fulness now. There is nothing future in it all. The coming glory holds something infinitely more complete for us, no doubt. Let us rejoice in that, by all means; but let us also lay hold on what we have in the present, and enjoy it to its full. Truly, when we think of what we let slip, we may say that the children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. They make sure of the present with what little it has for them, and at the same time endeavour to provide for the possibilities of the future; while we too often neglect the possibilities of the present in vaguely reaching forward to the things that are before.

Is there not too much talk and singing about "sandy deserts" and "wildernesses wide," and too much of our

energy wasted in being sorry for ourselves? There is, blessed be God, a green spot in the desert all the greener for the barren waste around, and wells of water all the cooler for the parching drought.

It is in such an oasis we are standing—this place that God has made green. Here are spread out to the hungering soul, in all their inviting beauty, the pastures of tender grass; here in all their gushing fulness flow the rivers of His pleasure. Yes, beloved, the blessings which are ours at present are limitless: let us, therefore, seek increasingly to glorify God by having eyes to see and hearts to appreciate them. Let us get into the light that is shining *now*, so that it may be ours to experience our souls satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and our mouths praising the Lord with joyful lips (Psa. 63. 5).

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### THE SECRET OF JOY.

“My soul with joy uleapeth,  
 Grief cannot linger there;  
 She singeth high in glory,  
 Amid the sunshine fair.  
 The Sun that shines upon me  
 Is Jesus and His love;  
 The fountain of my singing  
 Is deep in heaven above.”

So sang Gerhardt some centuries ago in the midst of dark surroundings and in troublous times, and to-day his song strikes a respondent chord in the heart of every Christian who truly loves the Lord and waits for His return.

A soul uleaping with heavenly joy can only be maintained by heart occupation with the risen and glorified Lord Jesus Christ, who sits on the right hand of the throne of the majesty on high; for He makes us to drink of living waters which are in us a well of water springing up into eternal life.

These living waters never fail, these heavenly joys never

fade, like the waters and joys of earth, because the fountain from which they flow knows no diminishing, knows no change. Yes, blessed be God, He desires us to "rejoice in the Lord alway," to "rejoice evermore," and has made this blessedly possible by giving us an object in heavenly glory to fill our entire vision and captivate our hearts, so that He may fill and flood them from the living overflow of His own eternal love. This lifts us for ever above earthly circumstances, and places us in a sphere far above the din and turmoil of earth, for though tossed to and fro upon the ever-raging billows of earthly conflict, our joy comes from a source far, far above their reach, "our joy is in the Lord," and the soul is possessed of an inestimably blessed portion that can truly say, "All my springs are in Thee."

It is easy to appear bright and happy—

"When the sky above is glowing,  
And around thee all is bright,  
Pleasure, like a river flowing,  
All things tending to delight";

but those who, in the midst of darkness and desolation, surrounded by adverse circumstances, and oppressed by crushing care, can rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of their salvation, whose faces shine with heavenly joy, and in perfect peace and calm confidence in the Almighty God find in Him an unchanging and unfailing spring of joy, have found the secret of real happiness, which can never be affected by circumstances or marred by earthly adversity. How one longs to know and enjoy more and more the reality of such a blessed experience, which is not only so infinitely precious to us, but is also so glorifying to God; and how one longs to be enabled in some little measure to turn the eyes and the hearts of God's beloved people away from the mists and shadows of earth, away from everything beneath the sun, with its deadening and numbing influence upon the spiritual life, to that radiant,

glorified man upon heaven's eternal throne: for from that face, once marred more than any man's, streams forth the light and glory of the eternal God! Who, then, would shut themselves in darkness, and glory in the flickering rays of a fading candle-light, when the sun, in all its meridian power, bathes in its bright and cheering rays all around? "A great light," "a light above the brightness of the sun," was that which shone around Paul on his way to Damascus; and the glory of that light caused every earthly thing to recede and vanish away, so that he could say, "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3, 7, 8). Oh! to know, like him, the attracting and captivating power of the love of Christ, so that with undivided heart we may yield ourselves as those who are alive from the dead "unto Him," and bask continually in the undimmed splendour of the radiant sunlight of His presence.

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### THE SHINING OF HIS FACE.

NOTHING can dim the glory of that light "above the brightness of the sun" which shines in the face of the exalted and glorified Lord Jesus Christ; nevermore shall anything arise to hinder that light from shining in all its unclouded splendour, but many things may arise in our lives as Christians which may affect our enjoyment of the sunshine of His face, and lead us, in some measure, to darkness of soul.

The clouds which intervene to hide "the glory in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4. 6) are ever earth-born clouds; and when these arise, our enjoyment and interest in eternal things and our triumph in the power of a present

salvation very soon vanish from us; and well it is if our joyless souls are led to cry to Him for deliverance, and our dissatisfied hearts are prompted to utter the prayer of Israel of old: "Turn us again, *O God*, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Psa. 80. 3).

They remembered the Shepherd of Israel, He who led Joseph like a flock; they remembered His guiding and shining in the pillar of cloud and fire in days gone by, and conscious that as the days were past and gone, so also was the enjoyment of His presence, their joyless hearts are led to cry to Him, "Shine forth!" But the enjoyment of His shining is not got at once, and, instead, they are heard to further bewail their unhappy lot and say, "Thou feedest us with the bread of tears, and givest us tears to drink in great measure"; and thus does God bring home to their hearts the utter emptiness and joylessness of a life without the conscious enjoyment of His presence, and beget in them the repetition in intensified language of their former prayer: "Turn us again, *O God of Hosts*, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Psa. 80. 7).

But not yet does the lost joy return; they further consider their past, and recount the faithfulness and wonderful doings of their God, while owning their condition as hopeless, and from themselves they turn and plead the name of another, pointing to Him as a reason why God should be merciful to them in the words, "Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man, whom Thou madest strong for Thyself"; and in the presence of the Man of God's choice and provision the prayer, with increased earnestness and intensity of longing, is repeated for the last time: "Turn us again, *O Jehovah, God of Hosts*, cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved" (Psa. 80. 19). The next words which their lips utter are, "Sing aloud unto God, our strength!"

What a wonderful change is depicted between the words,

“Thou givest us tears to drink in great measure,” as they yearned after the face of their God, and “Sing aloud unto God our strength,” as they enjoyed that face in grace shining upon them!

So is it with us: there is no enjoyment of practical salvation for us save in the shining of that face; and we should not rest satisfied with any cloud between our souls and Him, or the enjoyment of His love dimmed by any thing of earth.

Is there not a need to-day for God's beloved people to bestir themselves to look where they are, and in what condition they are—to let the light of God's Word enter and search their hearts, and expose everything there which is contrary to His will? For, apart from such searching of themselves, they may very easily become well pleased with the places they occupy and the condition of their souls, while God is displeased with both, and has little pleasure in them. There is, indeed, a need for a decided arousing from the lethargy and dulness which evidently has overpowered many of the Lord's people, for it is all too manifest that the sunshine of heavenly joy is fast setting in many hearts, and there is light and glory enough in the shining face of the Lord Jesus Christ to dispel all gloom and ravish the heart that is fixed on Him.

All who are ambitious to be well-pleasing to the Lord will watch with jealous care that nothing is allowed to hinder their enjoyment of His countenance; and, distrustful of their own imperfect judgment as to their condition, they will oft invite the searching of Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and in whose sight everything is naked and bare; and the language of their hearts will ever be, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psa. 139. 23, 24).

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## FEELINGS.

ONE cause of much unhappiness to a young Christian is the changeable state of his feelings. They swing to and fro between the highest elation and the most utter despondency. What makes him unhappy is that he looks upon them as a sort of index of the state of his soul, and thinks that there is something wrong with him if he is not continually in a state of elation. The fact of the matter is, that his feelings more often indicate the state of his body, and could he but learn this once for all it would save him from a great deal of honest misery about himself.

For instance, how easy it is to be happy and cheery, and to have the heart full of song, on a bright, sunny day; and if the following day be raw, dull, and rainy, how difficult even to look happy, let alone feel it.

We are very often told to rise above circumstances, but it is necessary to be able to know circumstances when they come. Well, feelings are just circumstances, and should be treated as such; for they come and go, and they change from this to that, and we have little control over their coming or their going, or their changeableness. We can control their effect upon us, however. We can keep them from making us unduly miserable, and from deceiving us in other directions.

It is faith that grasps the promises of God, and faith that brings them home to us, be our feelings what they may.

"Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee." Isaiah learned this after many trials. We have to learn it through many trials also. The unhappy thing is that our feelings cripple our faith, and we imagine all is wrong when all is right; for we look to our feelings to find an answer to our prayer, instead of *staying* our mind on our faithful God. So, also, when we have confessed our failure and sin, we shall not find an answer in our feelings, but in God.

Don't look to feelings, then. They are as changing and fleeting as the clouds of the sky, and they but obscure to us the shining of the face of our blessed Lord, who is the "yea" and "amen" to the promises of the ever-faithful God.