

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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"Thou shalt call His name Jesus."—Matt. 1. 21.

Jesus, Name all names above,
Sweet password of eternal love ;
Unfolding to a fallen race
The wealth of God's infinite grace.
What mind can grasp, what tongue proclaim,
The value of that Peerless Name?

Jesus, a note of sweeter sound,
Not even in Heaven itself is found,
It thrills with joy the heart of God,
Adoring angel hosts makes glad.
What mind can grasp, what tongue proclaim,
The sweetness of that Peerless Name?

Jesus, Name that ne'er can fail
To make the Powers of Darkness quail,
To fear-wrung hearts give lasting peace,
Sin-burdened souls complete release.
What mind can grasp, what tongue proclaim,
The prowess of that Peerless Name?

Jesus, Name which can impart
Sweet solace to each sorrowing heart,
Of death subdue the sting and gloom,
With heavenly glory gild the tomb.
What mind can grasp, what tongue proclaim,
The comfort of that Peerless Name?

Jesus, Name through which alone
Redemption flows to fallen man,
Believing ones approach the throne,
To God their heart desires make known.
What mind can grasp, what tongue proclaim,
How precious is that Peerless Name?

The Name in which each knee shall bow,
In heaven, on earth, in depths below,
God glorify with one accord,
Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord.
Thus may I day by day proclaim
The glory of that Peerless Name.

And when I pass to realms above,
See Him who taught me heavenly love,
With ransomed hosts enraptured raise
Triumphant songs of ceaseless praise ;
Unhindered then I shall proclaim
The virtues of that Peerless Name.

ROBT. MURRAY.

NEEDED TRUTH.

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THE GREATNESS OF GOD.

It would appear from the reading of the Psalms and portions of the books of Moses and the Prophets that many men in Old Testament times were possessed of an overawing conception of the greatness and the power of God. The fear of God which this sense of His greatness produced was a potent factor in causing them to eschew evil and to walk in humility before the Eternal One. In the past God spake, and His voice of thunder-tones was heard by men; and when they heard they prayed that such sounds should no more reach their ears. Even to Moses the appearance of God's majesty and greatness was so fearful that he said, "I exceedingly fear and quake." God's acts were also witnessed by men—acts which caused His adversaries to fall before Him like blades of grass before the sickle, and which caused the people whom He favoured to stand in awe and yield all the glory to Him. Men likewise looked above them and beheld the heavens which His hands had made, and, learning their own littleness in the light of God's greatness, perforce exclaimed, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" Yea, what, indeed? for man to-day is, and to-morrow he is cut down and perisheth! Nor was it only the little of what men could find out and know of God's greatness as seen in creation that caused them to fear

before the Eternal One ; it was rather a sense of the magnitude of what they could not see, of the infinitude of what by searching could not be found out. Sublime is the saying:—

“Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth ;
 And the heavens are the work of Thy hands.
 They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure :
 Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ;
 As a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed ;
 But Thou art the same,
 And Thy years shall have no end.”

Moreover, men of old looked at the minutiae of God's work as manifested in their own bodies, and, owning their Maker and the perfection of His work, bowed before Him, saying, “I will praise Thee ; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” The Old Testament contains very many expressions similar to the two we have quoted, showing that men of old were possessed of a marvellous knowledge of God, of His greatness and of His power, and that this knowledge caused them to form a becoming estimate of their own littleness and weakness, so that humility characterized them and the fear of God possessed their hearts.

For well-nigh two thousand years God's voice has been unheard by man as it was of old ; and during that period no events have happened on earth which cannot be attributed to natural causes. Heaven has been silent, and no manifest Divine intervention in the affairs of this world has stayed the downward course of man, or forced him to admit the existence and the greatness of God. Because of this man has waxed bold in sin, and the humility and God-fearing spirit manifested by many men of old is fast dying away. Pride, presumption, rebellion, speaking evil of dignities, and much else are the increasing characteristics of these last days. The blasphemous unbelief which prompts the words, “Where is the promise of His coming ?”

is to-day overwhelmed by the rising tide of daring atheism and blank agnosticism. The former boldly declares that there is no God, and with reckless daring calls upon Him to prove His existence; the latter takes refuge in ignorance, assuming that if there is a God He cannot be known, and that He is such an unimportant Being in the universe that He can be ignored with impunity. Of this, as of much else, the votaries of these heresies are willingly ignorant, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, thereby proving themselves to be the fools that despise wisdom and instruction. Who by searching can find out God? who can find out the Almighty unto perfection? Yet true it is, and shall for ever remain, that He is not far from each one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and are. Albeit that God is not, and vain man is supreme in power and greatness, is fast becoming the faith of the many. That these characteristics must increase and develop until man, with horrid daring, arrays himself in open rebellion against the power and greatness of God, Scripture abundantly declares.

It is well that Christians should be alive to the trend of the times in which their lots are cast. If they are so, the gulf that separates between them and the spirit of the age will be a great one. In infinite grace we have been taught by the Spirit to address the Eternal God who inhabiteth Eternity as our Father; but let us try to understand who it is that we are thus privileged to address. Although no more endearing word than Father could possibly escape our lips—for it is one of the words that the prattling babe is first taught to lisp—yet the remembrance of who our Father is, and why He is our Father, will surely deliver us from undue familiarity, and from the unpardonable lightness and frivolity with which many, alas! address Him. Where is the overawing sense of His greatness, where the powerful fear of God which possessed men of old? Is He

less to be feared than of old? Have His greatness and power diminished in these days? Looking around on Christians in general, this respect for the greatness of God and this fear at the remembrance of His holiness appears to be sadly lacking to-day. We refer to these things so that Christians may be alive to their surroundings, and to the dangers by which they are assailed.

At no time is a due sense of the greatness and the holiness of God to be more coveted than when Christians present themselves before Him in the attitude of worship. Our being before Him is doubtless based upon the blessed truth that by grace He is our Father, and that we are His children; but the thought of this relationship is not conspicuous when we are so met. We come not as children, to worship our Father; therefore the holy familiarity which accompanies this blessed relationship should be dropped for the time being. The words of Revelation 1. 5, 6, and others of a kindred nature, should be well noted: "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins in His blood; and He made us a kingdom, priests unto His GOD AND FATHER." It is the blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ whom we, in our priestly character, worship. It is "*The Father*" who seeketh worshippers—the one supreme, adorable Father, the first great Cause of all things. Well might a man of God of olden times call to his fellows and say:—

"The Lord is a great God,
 And a great King above all gods.
 In His hands are the deep places of the earth;
 The heights of the mountains are His also.
 The sea is His, and He made it;
 And His hands formed the dry land.
 O come, let us worship and bow down;
 Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;
 For He is our God."

That Christians to-day are ill-instructed in this the most

important of all subjects is painfully evident; and it is also to be feared that many think it a matter of minor importance as to how they behave themselves in God's holy presence, or with what form of words they address Him. In no other way can the indifference with which the presentation of the truth touching this sacred subject has been regarded be explained. Too often what professes to be a meeting for worship is characterized by listless gazing and thoughtless ranting of hymns, rather than a bowing down in heart, if not in person, and worshipping before God our Maker—the One before whom the seraphim veil their faces and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." Praise is precious to His ear, and He hath said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me"; nevertheless, let us remember that it is possible to have much singing and little praise.

Ours is liberty indeed—liberty the glory and the greatness of which has never dawned in its fulness on any human heart—liberty to enter with boldness into the holiest of all in the blood of Jesus. But, beloved, let us in the fear of God, with a due sense of His holiness and greatness, seek grace to know how to behave ourselves in His presence, as well as to know with what choice words and few we should present the homage of our hearts to Him who is to-day as ever the High and the Holy One who inhabiteth Eternity, Whose Name is Holy. There is nothing in true reverence and humility which is inconsistent with our fullest liberty, our deepest joy, and our greatest good.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

CHURCH POSITIONS CONSIDERED.

IN the following papers it is our purpose, as we are enabled, to look into the assembly position, first, of those known as exclusive brethren; secondly, of those who are known as open brethren; and lastly, the position of church and churches of God. Whilst seeking to write plainly upon these subjects, we would yet seek to do so in grace and love, avoiding as far as possible that which might wound the feelings of fellow-saints, while yet pointing out where some of those with whom we are not associated in Church fellowship are unscriptural in position and practice. It may be asked, Why not leave these matters alone which have caused so much sorrow and bitterness in the past? But this cannot be, if we are to contend earnestly for the Faith once for all delivered unto the saints. It is our duty to seek to guard the flock from error, and to teach them to hate every false way (Ps. 119. 104). Let us also call to remembrance the solemn words of Luke 11. 23, and remember that if we are not gatherers we are scatterers: there is no middle path, no neutral zone. "He that is not with Me is against Me," says the Lord.

With regard, then, firstly to the exclusive position. Since the writer first came in contact with those brethren, now many years ago, changes have taken place among them. In early days they presented a united front, which, in opposition to the many other sects of Christendom, in itself attracted earnest souls who desired to walk apart from all party names and creeds. Not only so, but in this fellowship were to be found many men of great gift and spiritual power, devoted to the work of carrying the Gospel to sinners and to gathering saints into the Church position that they themselves occupied—namely, that of being gathered on the ground of the One Body. There is great danger, when separating from what we see is evil, of taking up a mere

negative position, on the one hand, or, on the other, of seeking to maintain our separation by formulating a creed and doctrines that are not according to the Word. The former is that which we believe open brethren have fallen into, whilst the latter has been the failure of exclusives. We need to see not only that things are wrong where we are—plenty see, or profess to see, this—but we need to see what is right, what is God's way for a company and companies of saints, not only to be separated from evil, but to be gathered on scriptural principles.

With regard to the doctrine of the one Body, and that of the leaven or defilement theory, in these early days they occupied a very prominent position in the teaching and practice of these Christians. In fact, we would go further, and say that without these two doctrines the exclusive position could never have been established; for in the one there is sufficient of mystery and ambiguity to fascinate the minds of many Christians, while in the other we find teaching which easily enabled their disciples to draw a distinct line of separation between themselves and those in the open position, all of which Assemblies were supposed to be leavened with the worst of evil doctrine.

It is not our object at this time to enter at all fully into this line of reasoning; nor are we taking sides in the sad division which took place between Mr. G. M. and Mr. D.; to many of our readers these would be quite unknown subjects. We would here simply remark that, from all we have seen and heard for over thirty years (and the writer has met and conversed with some of their leading men), we are persuaded that the leaven theory was only taken up to maintain the separation after the separation had taken place. This is a dangerous principle, as we have already said. The doctrine of defilement or the leaven theory has now apparently almost fallen into the background, and yet, if it was ever scriptural teaching, it would be equally so

to-day, and binding on all faithful ones. But, as years went on, it became more and more difficult to teach that every Assembly of open brethren was leavened by "Newton's heresy." The writer well remembers when the Christians whom he had been the means of leading to the Truth in the Shetland Islands were startled by being told that they were associated with blasphemy, and this because they were in association with the writer; and although he had never broken bread in an Assembly where Newton's error was tolerated, yet, according to this theory, he was leavened with evil, and thus leavened those Assemblies in the North. We have nothing but abhorrence of Mr. Newton's line of teaching, and yet this defilement theory would identify us with the doctrine and the sin.

But this reasoning, as time went on, became grotesque, and the practical carrying out of the theory unworkable.

Then, again, the doctrine of the ground of the one Body seems to be losing its prominence, and we see a decided change of face or ecclesiastical teaching. Nor is this to be wondered at, for while at first, as we have said, exclusives presented a united front to the Christians in the various sects of Christendom, of later years there has been a splitting up of the one testimony, till to-day there are at least three divisions of those who profess to take the ground of the one Body, and each of those divisions equally claims to be on Divine ground, as it is called. For this reason alone, it is little wonder if one of the more modern teachers among these brethren should say that this doctrine no longer is applicable, owing to the divided state of the testimony. But we would again repeat, and press upon the attention of our readers, this point, that if ever these doctrines were of God they must be so to-day, and should, therefore, be taught as fully and earnestly as formerly. To suppose that because of failure truth is to be given up is a disastrous principle. It is the faith once for all delivered to the saints we

are to contend for, not some modernized thing cut and shaped to suit the exigencies of the day. As to the scriptural doctrine of the one Body, as found in the Word of God, we are as firm believers in it as any, we trust; and we also believe it to be a most blessed truth, but not as distorted into a basis of Church position.

The one Body is a fact, and into it all those that are saved through the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God in this dispensation are brought by the operation of the Spirit of God, being baptized into the Body in one Spirit, Christ Himself being the Baptizer (1 Corinthians 12, 13). Out of the Body none is ever put, nor is the Body ever associated in Scripture with discipline or rule. Man has no part in the reception into the Body. It is when we come to church and churches of God and House of God that we find human responsibility coming in both as to reception and putting away. One might imagine this to be so plain and simple that thus to insist on the point would be unnecessary, but it is not so. Only recently a little pamphlet was sent us by post, in which the writer seems hopelessly confused on the subject; and the saddest part of the matter is that this confusion of thought passes as very profound teaching with many simple souls. To us, we confess, it seems but the darkening of counsel by words without knowledge. But there is a love of mystery in human nature, and to this love the line of teaching referred to appeals. Again, there is that in the doctrine of defilement, or leaven theory, which is learned in a few hours by the disciple, and can then be glibly repeated without any right condition of heart, or any real repentance having been wrought in the one who professes henceforth to be upon Divine ground, and can look down on all others not so gathered with a feeling of superiority.

We write thus plainly because many dear saints have been, and still are, sadly perplexed by these doctrines. To

one who is deeply exercised as to the position he should occupy in these last evil days, so that he may be found where his Lord would have him to be, and acting collectively also in accordance with the mind of the Lord, these questions become of the deepest importance, and it is to one thus exercised, and desirous of doing the will of the Lord, that the ground of the one Body position becomes a matter of the greatest perplexity, so that, whilst many enter into this fellowship with little exercise, others again are entangled who are conscientiously seeking the right way.

Let us once more distinctly remind our readers that we are not writing against the truth of the one Body, but against its being the ground of gathering for saints. Were this so, none ever gathered thus could be put away, for none baptized into the Body are ever put out of it for sin of any description by Him who is its Head (Ephes. 5. 23). Saints on earth are only responsible to do that will which has been done in Heaven, so that no matter what moral evil, as 1 Corinthians 5. deals with, or what spiritual iniquity is found, as in 2 Timothy 2., there would be no authority to purge out the evil in the one case, or to purge ourselves out from it in the other; then would that claiming to be House of God be indeed but a den of thieves, robbing God of His glory and the Lord of His place.

Some will refer to 1 Corinthians 12. 27, but this scripture in no way supports this line of teaching. The Corinthian saints were not the Body, they were but part of the Body, or part of a whole. Were one to hold up his finger and say, This is my body, would he be understood to mean that this was the whole of his body? No, manifestly not; it would be untrue. But if one were to say, This is my body, he would be understood to mean that this was a part of his body; the other part might be unseen. So writes the Apostle to the saints in Corinth, "Ye are Body of Christ." The very construction of the passage

would, we believe, without the definite article, bear out what we have said, and the definite article is, we find, omitted in the original, so that it reads, "Ye are Body of Christ."

But more than this, it will be seen that the Apostle is writing to them as part of a whole; he is speaking of the general ministry of that Body of which they form a part. It is not to be supposed that the saints of Corinth could exercise this ministry over the whole Body, but only amongst the saints in a given locality. Thus we see clearly it is a local thing which is here referred to. In the closing verses of this chapter we have another thought brought before us—not the general ministry of the Body, where all have the *same care* one for another (see ver. 25), but a special rule and ministry of those set in the assembly and gifted of God for this work (ver. 28). When speaking lately with a brother who professed to be exercised as to his position among exclusive brethren, when all his other arguments failed, he fell back on the assertion, "We are gathered on Divine ground." But this is mere assertion; and unless gathered as church and churches of God we deny that any can be in a Divine position, or that such are gathered according to the will of God. To speak of Divine ground which is yet not church of God position is, we believe, to be off scriptural ground altogether. We might enlarge on these subjects beyond our space, so must now turn to the mode of receiving saints practised by exclusive brethren, and here we shall find that there is little difference in the mode of reception between exclusives and open brethren. The very fact that some few years ago a little book on "Reception," by the late Mr. J. N. Darby, was reprinted and circulated in the open fellowship, to establish their own position, proves what we say. In this little book we find Mr. Darby thus writing:—

“But supposing a person to be godly and sound in faith who has not left some ecclesiastical system—nay, thinks Scripture favours an ordained ministry, but is glad when occasion occurs; suppose we alone are in the place, or he is not in connection with any other body in the place—staying with a brother or the like; is he to be excluded because he is of some system as to which his conscience is not enlightened; nay, which he may think more right? He is a godly member of the Body; known such, is he to be shut out? If so, the degree of light is title to communion, and the unity of the Body is denied by the assembly which refuses him.”—*Principles of Gathering and Reception of Christians*, J. N. Darby.

In this mode of reception no repentance is sought for in the one desiring to break bread. To say that none would desire to take part in the weekly feast that were not exercised in heart as to a right condition and position before God (for be it remembered that it is ever condition first leading to a right position where there is a godly repentance wrought by the Spirit) has been abundantly proved by past experience to be untrue. We have heard of the going back of men who for years have been leaders, and such men have settled down again in the sects from which they apparently separated, thus building again that which they professed to destroy, and this after having been for years professedly on Divine ground. Besides, we know well that many Christians will go from one denomination to another without principle, and just as it suits their passing fancy, thus giving all their patronage, and think that they show largeness of heart in so doing. Such Christians will enter wherever they find an open door, and may for a greater or less time be held by the teaching of those with whom they come in contact.

There is no such a thought in Scripture as receiving to the table or receiving to an act; it is “Put away from amongst yourselves that wicked person” (1 Cor. 5.). Reception is into fellowship, and in a scripturally-ordered assembly the breaking of the bread is within the divinely-appointed circle, first, of the Apostle’s doctrine, secondly,

the fellowship, and then only comes the breaking the bread and prayers. To bring the breaking of the bread outside of these two circles to meet the requirements of unrepentant Christians is utterly without warrant in Scripture. Even with the Passover we find that one law was alike for the Israelite and the stranger. This subject we hope to treat on more fully in our next paper, and to show that no provision is made in Scripture for occasional fellowship. We believe it to be but a human device to meet the exigencies of an evil day (Exod. 12. 48, 49).

In concluding this paper, we would dwell but briefly on that which concerns the internal working of these brethren—we refer to the London central meeting, at which matters at a distance were dealt with. The results of this unscriptural line of action have proved disastrous, as witness the R— case; and little wonder, for our friends reject the scriptural elderhood, and yet they have set up a sort of apostolic centre without apostolic authority, and at this centre and from this centre various cases of discipline throughout the country have been dealt with. Where in scripture do we find authority for such a line of action? The Irvingites, when they claimed the right for themselves to become church builders, again appointed twelve apostles, and this was consistent with their creed, for if we are to have apostolic authority and an apostolic centre, it is needful to have apostles. But exclusive brethren do not claim to have apostles in this sense, yet they exercised apostolic authority, and dealt with matters in the London Bridge Assembly that should have been dealt with by the elders in their allotted portions (1 Pet. 5. 3) [See Rotherham]. There is no such thought as a Jerusalem centre of authority for to-day; when once the church of God in Jerusalem was established, and the churches of the Gentiles set in order, we find apostles and their delegates passing from the scene, yet their writings remain for our guidance. With the

apostles passed away that special authority to act for God in the assemblies, and to appoint elders in every city, but the elders continued, and would to-day, if things were scripturally organized, be carrying out the rule of God and caring for the little flock in their own localities.

Again we repeat that in thus writing it is not our desire to cast stones at fellow-saints from whom we differ. Necessity calls for us to state as plainly as it is in our power why we occupy the separate position we do, and why we are separate from those, many of whom we love and highly esteem. We fully recognise that a flood of light has flown from these brethren, both by their oral and written ministry throughout this and other lands, in spite of failure, for this is common to us all; yet we cannot forget that the same may be said of Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, and other reformers. But look at the systems that they have organized. The original light has in great measure disappeared, and what is left? Human systems in ever-increasing darkness. Our dear brethren's anchor is dragging, and they, we believe, are drifting, although they know it not. That they are drifting on the current of expediencies, and have been so doing for many years, is our firm conviction. We are not with them, because in the mercy of God we saw this, and were not prepared to take a step in the dark which afterwards we might have found it well-nigh impossible to retrace.

With regard to the unscriptural doctrine of infant and household baptism, we refer our readers to articles already published in these papers as advertised. We would simply now remark that nothing of this teaching was generally accepted in the early days of these brethren, although always held and gradually introduced by the late Mr. Darby.

J. A. BOSWELL,

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.

MORE THAN CONQUERORS.

"WE are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." It may hardly seem so as we survey the year that has passed. We feel that we have come so very far short of all we wanted to be, and accomplished so little of what we set out to do; yet, confessing our failure, we can rejoicingly sing, "The victory is ours"; for He shall confirm us to the end, unreprouable.

At this season, when all the world is making merry, we may seem to be objects of pity to many of our friends; and they may regard as vain the lives that we ourselves feel to be so futile; but you see your calling, brethren—it is into the fellowship of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord; it is to participation in everything that is real, abiding, and eternal. The things that pass us by, the things we lose, what the world calls "the things that make life worth living," are just shadows—the real thing, the substance is ours. Hence the words, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

To be on the Lord's side is something to glory about; to have Christ for our Lord, to be a servant of His, no matter how unworthy or feeble we feel ourselves to be, should fill us with triumph, for it is a thing to exult in. Perhaps we can't get the world to see it; if we could they would be with us. But in the Lord we know what their estimate of us is worth.

The world sees only Christ crucified; we know the Lord of Glory. The world in its wisdom knew not God, and crucified His Anointed, and the world continues to glory in its own things. But it pleased God, through the foolish-

ness of preaching, to save them that believe; and this foolishness is to us the power of God. Yes, we are in the secret of the Lord, and we can glory in the Lord; we know the mystery and can sing, "The victory is ours." Had the rulers of the world known what we know, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. So, if the thing itself is foolishness to the world, more foolish, if anything, will seem our life's devotion to it; and the more devoted we are, the more in all probability shall we be misunderstood, and the more in all certainty shall we lose. But it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." But unto us—the foolish, the weak, the despised—God has revealed them through His Spirit.

Yes, whatever the appearances may be just now, we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us, and we are a year nearer the time when it shall all be manifest. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who begat us unto a living hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

"True-hearted, whole-hearted, faithful and loyal,
 King of our lives, by Thy grace we will be!
 Under the standard exalted and royal,
 Strong in Thy strength we will battle for Thee."

THE LORD'S COMING AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

III.¹

"THE mystery of lawlessness doth already work" (2 Thess. 2. 7). Even in the early days of the present dispensation the enlightened eye of the Apostle Paul could clearly detect

¹ See Volume XI., pages 256, 276.

the inner, subtil workings of the mystery of lawlessness. These were not apparent to all, but the observer in fellowship with God could clearly discern their Satanic workings beneath the surface.

This dark mystery is the purpose that Satan has ever been seeking to accomplish on earth, even to displace the Living God as the only One to Whom belongs the homage and worship of the human heart, and to occupy that place himself. This is the point toward which Satan bends his energies; and that purpose of darkness, the secret workings of which were observable in the days of the Apostle, is ripening toward apparent fruition in these last days. Like the chicken in the egg, the time of hatching has almost arrived, and all that remains to be done is that the thin, brittle shell may be broken—when the moment for so doing is reached—and the purpose of Satan be revealed in actual existence before the gaze of men. From the midst of the lawlessness the man of sin shall come into being.

The stage of earth will be cleared for this Satanic revelation by the coming of the Lord for His Church, when the present purpose of God, which now hinders the revelation of the man of sin and the speedy accomplishment of Satan's purposes, will be finished. We must here protest, however, against the generally accepted assumption that the Holy Spirit will leave the earth with the rapture of the Church. We believe that Scripture teaches the opposite; for though the nature of the Spirit's work will be totally different from what it has been during the present period, yet a mighty work will be done on earth by the Spirit after the Church is with the Lord (Joel 2. 28; Zech. 12. 10; Rev. 7.).

The man of sin, usually spoken of as the Antichrist, is the person whom Satan will use for the accomplishment of his purposes on earth; and the career of this dread person is portrayed in the Scriptures with sufficient accuracy and in such detail as to enable us to arrive at a fairly

definite understanding of the leading events and special characteristics of his reign. The book of Daniel and the Revelation of Jesus Christ will furnish much information regarding these points.

In the twelfth chapter of the latter book Satan is cast out of the heavens and is confined to the earth; and he comes down with great rage, because he knows his time is short. In the first verse of chapter thirteen *he* is seen standing on the sand of the sea. This probably is figurative language—the sea referring to the unrest and turmoil of the nations at that time; and from the midst of that confusion a beast is seen to arise. Its description is given in the following verse, which includes in a very striking manner the characteristics of the various beasts beheld by the prophet Daniel (see Dan. 7.). Since God has declared that the beasts of Daniel 7. are four kings, we are justified in believing that this beast of Revelation 13. 1 is also a king; and in him is doubtless to be seen the rise of the man of sin, the future great ruler of earth. Of this man it is written that the Dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority, so that all the world wondered after the beast and worshipped him.

In association with this man is another that arises out of the earth, called the second beast and the false prophet. He is lamb-like in appearance, but his tongue betrays him, for he speaks like a dragon; and his energies, assisted by appalling Satanic power, are directed to cause all that dwell on the earth to worship the first beast. By the wonders of falsehood and the miracles he performs, even to the giving of life to an image, and causing it to speak and order the death of all who dare to refuse homage to the first beast, he deceives all who dwell on the face of the earth whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Tighter still are Satan's chains drawn around the dupes of

earth who believe "the lie" (2 Thess. 2. 11), and he seals them as his own by causing them to receive a mark on their forehead or in their hand, thus causing them to openly declare their allegiance to him, and none save those who are so marked are allowed to buy or sell. These events assuredly await fulfilment on earth; and the time is nearing when the rejectors of God's Christ shall lay their homage at the feet of the Antichrist.

(To be continued.)

THE CLAIMS OF THE YOUNG.

I.

MANY of us have had cause to thank God since we were saved for the knowledge of the letter of His Word which we acquired in unconverted days. At home, at school, at Sunday-school, we became acquainted with much that is recorded in the Scriptures of God's dealings with men and nations. Certain portions of it in particular interested us, and we read these portions until they became indelibly fixed in our memories.

After we were saved, and when the Word of God became to us the living word that it now is, we benefited greatly from our familiarity with the outstanding incidents therein recorded; so that almost immediately after conversion we could follow a teacher of the Word with a good measure of intelligence when he referred to this or that portion. Moreover, our private study of the Scriptures was greatly facilitated by the knowledgè we had previously gained.

It is an undeniable fact that the young generation which is growing up around us to-day is not possessed of the same knowledge of the Scriptures that many of us had; and, what is more sorrowful still, it has not the same

reverence for the Bible that bygone generations manifested. Indeed, one shudders as one contemplates the future of the youths and children of our land. Every day witnesses afresh to the fact that the Word of God is not now considered, in the homes of the people, the sacred volume it used to be. Consequently the children are not versed in it as they once were.

These matters may appear to some to be of very little moment, yet the Christian indeed short-sighted who cannot perceive what influence they must inevitably have on future generations. Reverence for the Holy Scriptures must surely diminish; knowledge of their contents must fail, and the Christ of whom these Scriptures speak will be unknown, and will speedily be supplanted by a creation of Satan. All of this but tends to the preparation of the stage upon which, in the near future, Satan will display his masterpiece of iniquity, and deceive the mass of the human race with his false christ.

Probably it is not God's will that His servants should be able to stem the flood of scepticism and infidelity which is gaining volume throughout the land. Yet Christians cannot be indifferent to it. Nay, more: it should rouse every one who knows the Lord to endeavour to spread the knowledge of the one living and true God with greater earnestness and zeal than he has ever manifested. Alas! while Satan is bending his energies with increased determination to further the accomplishment of his awful purposes, many Christians are asleep, not only to his doings, but also to their own responsibilities and privileges.

How, then, can we in some measure counteract the evils to which we refer? In the first place—and to this we confine ourselves entirely at present—what is known as the Sunday-school demands our very special attention. If home-teaching of the Word of God is being neglected, let us see to it that the opportunities which are still ours in

the Sunday-school are valued and used as they ought to be.

We have reason to believe that this noble work is being somewhat neglected, if not positively discouraged, in some circles. Can God hold guiltless any who seek to stay His saving hand amongst the young, by causing them to be cast adrift in the world to imbibe the vaunted scepticism which is fast polluting the world? Let us exhort beloved brethren to see to it that there shall not be a single assembly where there is not active and hearty work amongst the young. We know of no nobler work for God. We know of no work that offers greater possibilities of winning souls for Christ. God help us to awake from our lethargy, and to make the Sunday-schools what He would have them to be—namely, the starting-point on the narrow way for hundreds of young souls.

GRACE REIGNS THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE latter part of the 5th chapter of Romans consists of an argument which is rather difficult to follow; but the sum and substance of it is expressed in the last verse, which says, that as sin reigned in death, even so might grace reign through righteousness, unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sin reigned in death. Grace reigns unto life. These are the two great facts which stand over against each other in this verse. Let us consider their import, that we may joy the more in the God of our salvation.

Sin reigned; sin had dominion once. This is literally true as to the power of sin over man. The result, the consequence of sin, is death; and as there is no escape from sin, there is no escape from death. There is no appeal, no reprieve possible where sin reigns, for God is

righteous, and righteousness and judgment are the upholding of His throne.

When sin reigned there was no link between God and man, but a barrier of impenetrable righteousness, which shut man out and fixed his doom. When there emanated from the throne of righteousness a law which was holy and just and good, instead of being unto life, it was found to be unto greater condemnation.

What blank hopelessness is expressed in these words: "Sin reigned in death"! and what an amazing contrast to those immediately following: "Grace reigns unto life."

Grace reigns! What is the use of trying to define the word "grace" here? It is far too big to define. Let us rather ask what are the results of grace—of the reign of grace? We shall not require definitions if we understand what it can do. There are waters to swim in if we go far enough, though we may only get up to the ankles here.

Because grace reigns God can meet the sinner; He can annul the sentence of death pronounced against him by the law; He can justify him from all his offences; and, greatest wonder of all, He can give him eternal life. The Angel of the Lord barred the way to the tree of life, lest sinful Adam should eat, and live for ever in his sin. God in grace can give to sinful man, once and for ever, a life which needs no renewing—even eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We say that God *can* do all this. The word is a right one, because, as we have seen, the time was when His very righteousness made it impossible. It was the barrier which shut the sinner out, and shut grace in. But now grace reigns *through righteousness*.

Through righteousness. This is the secret of it. Grace reigns, and righteousness and judgment are the upholding

of His throne, as they ever were, for grace is reigning *through righteousness*.

Everything that God in grace does for the sinner, or for the saint, is done on a perfectly righteous basis, or He would not do it. So that every blessing, which grace makes possible, is as sure and eternal as the Throne of God itself. If righteousness fixed the sinner's doom, righteousness makes the saint's life sure, because grace reigns through righteousness.

Sin reigned in death once, and the strength of sin was the law. Grace reigns now, and the strength of grace is righteousness; so nothing can touch that which grace accomplishes.

God is love. We who are saved know it better than anybody else; but let us who are saved get hold of and keep hold of the fact that *God is righteous, as well as love*. The righteousness of God is our eternal security, for it is upon the righteous basis of the work of the Cross that grace has done its wonders for us.

If there is a flaw in that, the adversary has a lever by which he could move the universe. But what God has done is established in righteousness, and down the centuries have rung the unanswered challenge, "Who shall condemn? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" For as sin reigned in death once, so grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE ROCK OF AGES.

My feet are firm—I stand upon a rock!

The Rock of Ages is my stable stay;
The billow's roar and earthquake's mighty shock
Can ne'er appal my soul by night or day.

In times of tempest and of storm I stand
And listen to the baffled breakers' roar;
Whilst gazing on the scene so wildly grand,
His name I bless who all my judgment bore.

High is my Rock—no fury-wingèd wave
Can reach my place of safety here on high;
Not e'en the breakers' spray my feet can lave,
Beyond its reach I sing—so safe am I.

Strong is my Rock—though earth in tremor quakes,
Unmoved it stands when all is rent and torn;
Blest Refuge of my soul that nothing shakes,
My triumph song I raise and danger scorn.

Great is my Rock—its shadow seen from far
Invites the weáry to its shelter sweet;
Calm in its shade I rest—for nought can mar
The peace that reigns at Jesu's piercèd feet.

I cannot sink!—my adamantine stay
Like sandbed ne'er my trusting soul shall mock!
He holds my goings up from day to day,
And if I fall, I still am on the Rock!

O mighty Rock!—who but the Lord can be
The Rock of Ages—evermore the same?
My Shield, my Buckler, my Defender He—
Jehovah liveth!—blessed be His name.

THE OPEN POSITION.

IN approaching this subject we find it a most difficult matter to write with anything like sufficient brevity for these pages, so much needs to be carefully looked at. As we have already said, the Open Brethren's position seems to us to be a negative one: they have remained very much in the position the early leaders took up, which was more that of coming out from sects than taking up again the truth as delivered to the early Churches, or the faith *once for all* delivered unto the saints. When the division came between Mr. Müller and Mr. Darby, the Bethesda Meeting seems to have remained much on its old lines and exercised a very considerable influence upon the Open Assemblies throughout the country as to their ecclesiastical formation. Although one of the leading brethren in this association has continually stated that it is not a fellowship, we are not prepared to accept this statement. Accepting the meaning of this term in its general sense, we understand it to be a having in common, or a partnership; and this we must surely find amongst the Open Assemblies, for those from one meeting are received in another, it may be with a letter of commendation or it may be without, but they are received—not as strangers to break bread, but as in the fellowship.

While we say this much, yet on attempting to define the fellowship we find it a most difficult matter for various reasons. At the one end of the chain we find mission halls, the manager a paid agent supported perhaps by some wealthy man; or again, such a one supporting his mission by sending out begging letters to Christians in the various denominations. In such assemblies, of which we have known many instances, the will of the paid manager is absolute: he can keep out all

truth that would touch his position, he can control the ministry at pleasure, and have men to teach from all denominations. With such a meeting as this the breaking of bread is associated, where again Christians from the denominations and from other missions can come and go at their pleasure. We have spoken of this being one end of the chain; but we are conscious that after all it can hardly in fairness be called such, for at this end there is an indefinite shading away into missions of every description; and we know of no point at which a definite line can be drawn between these missions and the so-called Church of Rome. If this be as we have stated, and we once stated it publicly before a large company of overseeing men in L—— without any attempt being made to refute it that we can recall to mind, it is indeed a solemn consideration for those who are in such a position. Why have any care as to who breaks bread? Why not let all partake, whether converted or not, as in some sects? We would be told in reply to this that the table is only for converted persons.

But is not an assembly, if truly a God-gathered one, as much brought about by the operation of the Spirit of God through the word, in other words, as truly a divine creation as an individual Christian? And if we are to be careful as to the reception of individuals, why should there be apparent complete indifference with so many as to the assemblies with which they are in association? Not only are the characteristics of these assemblies without the smallest resemblance to the divine pattern, but in many cases their very origin was evil. There has been a quarrel, for instance, a separation has ensued, and another meeting has started a short distance off from the old one, without fellowship with others previously gathered in their neighbourhood; or, in another case, some are put away for evil doctrine or living—such commence a meeting. For a time these meetings are not recognised

as *in* the fellowship, but they grow in numbers, and by degrees the fresh element finds its isolated position from the assemblies close at hand irksome. An arrangement is come to with some brethren that the past should be forgotten; the assembly is then published as in the fellowship, very probably only a few, or even one, taking action in the matter. Can anything be sadder than that such a state of things can possibly exist? They might exist through failure, but this is not failure, for it is a recognised practice.

In many meetings that we have known in the South, and we wish it to be understood that we are now writing chiefly concerning the South, we have seen men as regularly fill their place when leaving for a holiday or any other object as a minister will get a supply when he is on leave; in fact, the meeting could not go on without the *leading brother* to conduct it. On another occasion we remember where a lady very much arranged all matters of the meeting and gospel work, her husband regularly going to look after another meeting at a distance, where there was a paid missionary. Another case which came under our observation,—an assembly numbering some hundreds without any meeting for teaching the truth; the only meeting through the week was a young men's Bible reading. On the occasion when we were present it numbered five. And what was the explanation for this state of things? Simply that the Christians who met to break bread in the morning would be found scattered through the denominations for the rest of the day and through the week. When asked in Switzerland their reason for so acting, a similar state of things existing in this place, the reply was, Because the Christians preferred it. But a more intelligent reply than this would be given by some. They would say, The gifts are for the Body, and we must go where the gifts are to be edified. Others would say that as the gifts are for the Body they go into the various denominations to exercise their

gifts. Thus the sheep are scattered amidst all the evil associations of sectarianism, and the shepherds are professedly shepherding the sheep in the same associations. Where, then, is the assembly? Practically it only exists in name, or for a couple of hours, when gathered to break bread.

If a sect is a thing so evil that we are called to separate from it, where is the consistency of thus going back and building again that we profess to have destroyed? But the fact is that many Open Brethren have simply gone back to the position taken up at the commencement of the movement.

Christians from various denominations commenced to break bread together, but for a time they remained associated with these various denominations. We have previously given extracts in these pages from an interesting description by an eyewitness of these early days, which is in our possession. But this state of things was only temporary, and with it we find the appointment of a president, and who should minister and break the bread, so that the brethren of whom we have spoken above now practise that which was given up by many of those gathered out in early days; we say many because we find here a divergence of practice and doctrine. The writer has heard the late Mr. Henry Dyer say that he had not set his foot inside a chapel for thirty years; while we find the late Mr. George Müller going in and out amongst the sects as one of themselves, and even passing by the assembly in the town when preaching in the denominations.

We are perfectly aware that many brethren associated with the Open Meetings strongly disapproved of this condition of things, and raised a protest against it. We can hardly imagine any really exercised souls who desire to walk in the old paths being able to rest in a condition of things that they must see is so utterly contrary to the will of God. But, as we have already said, this is not a condi-

tion of failure, but that which has arisen out of the definite teaching and practice of many in the Open Fellowship.

The late Mr. Lincoln deplored this state of matters, and made great efforts to establish Scriptural fellowship. We well remember a conference in Beresford Chapel, about the year 1867, when an effort was made to exclude some unorthodox ones from unaccredited meetings from entering, and brethren were placed at the door for this purpose. If we remember rightly, only those having received tickets were allowed to enter. We mention these circumstances to show that at that day, and since that day, there have been some, at least, who desired a more Scriptural fellowship. Whether all efforts in this direction are given up now as hopeless, we know not, but it may well be so.

Beresford Chapel brethren might decide that such and such mission halls could not be looked upon as assemblies with which they could have fellowship; but then, again, W— Street, one of the leading assemblies in London, would have fellowship with these meetings; and Beresford was in direct fellowship with W— Street, so that after all it would be simply a three-cornered fellowship; that is, A would not receive from B; and yet A would be in full fellowship with C, and C and B would be in full fellowship, so that those going from A to C would sit down there with those they refuse from B themselves. How hopelessly inconsistent! Little wonder if all effort to set such a condition of things right is ultimately given up in despair.

And this is not a condition of the past, but one that exists to-day. Only recently the writer was in a town in Scotland where there were two open assemblies not in fellowship; the second one was commenced by an individual who should have been dealt with for thus making division; but, on the contrary, he is now one of the leading men in another part of the country; and some time ago one bringing a letter of commendation signed with his name

alone sought to break bread in the assembly with which the writer was then identified. Again, even worse, if possible, those who have been put away for sin in one assembly are received in another. The writer, on one occasion in Switzerland, was heartily invited to take his place at the breaking of bread, and yet he was known at that very time to be one prominently concerned in the division that had taken place. The dear brother's plea for so acting was that they had nothing to do with what had taken place on the other side of the British Channel! As though a few miles of water, and a few hundred miles by land, could set aside the divine injunction to mark those that cause division (Rom. 16. 17). This text would, according to their views, surely be applicable to the writer, as the division was contrary to the doctrine as held by them.

This occurred in Switzerland, but we much question whether, at the commencement of the movement, these things were on the same footing as they are to-day. The influence of brethren from England has had much the same effect there as it has had in Scotland; but this subject we shall consider further on.

It was our privilege to meet in Switzerland, many years ago, some of the men who were leaders in the movement when Christians separated from the sects—men who suffered for the truth even to imprisonment; but this generation has now well nigh, if not wholly, passed away.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued.)

THRONE AND ALTAR.

THIS expression—the Holy One of Israel—is almost peculiar to Isaiah. It occurs some thirty-two times, whilst in Jeremiah and Ezekiel it occurs some three times or so in all.

This bespeaks the moral condition of Israel as a nation.

Chapter 1. 4: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity gone away backward" from the Holy One of Israel. Chapter 12. tells of restoration and nearness. Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee. Their future millennial position nationally.

Little do we know the depth into which the sinful one had gone, and as little do we know the height of the Holy One—the Holy One of Eternity. Holy, Holy, Holy—past, present, future; the One before whom the seraphim veil their faces and their feet, while they cry one to another, Holy, Holy, Holy. This is in marked contrast to Uzziah, who with unveiled face and feet dared to go into that presence, but with a face veiled in very shame and with unveiled feet, hastened to be gone as the leprosy rose up in his forehead. He went out to learn the Holiness of the Holy One to his cost—he a poor worm of a man, lower and less than the angels (2 Pet. 2. 11).

In the year that King Uzziah died—an empty throne—I saw the Lord sitting upon His Throne. A filled throne, which speaks of government, as, alas! the vacant throne is proof, and which the king knew to his cost. Sin dealt with according to the holiness of that throne. Sin estimated by that Holy One. A standard lofty in the extreme, but the only true measurement, by the which Isaiah judged himself, and cried "Woe is me!" He stood self-judged—the light of that throne shone upon his past, and it all came back upon himself—it was his past. Woe is *me!* How long he had been in learning! How patiently God had waited for him! *Then*, said I. Never before that eventful day had such confession been his. Woe to others, if you like, as you see in chapter 5. verses 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, 22, but not "me." I never was any of these characters. In the light of his fellow-men he stood to advantage and could glory, but shame and confusion of face as he saw himself and his past in the light of the throne, when he saw His

glory—a glory to which he had been a stranger as much as those of chapter 5. Hence “no difference.”

In John 11. and 12., that glory, so absent in the life of the prophet until he cried “Woe is me!” was the one only object of the Lord Jesus, and figured most prominently in the scene before us. The chapter begins with the Mary who wiped the Lord’s feet *with her hair*. That which is the glory of the woman was laid at His feet, even as the Man Christ Jesus had also laid His glory at another’s feet. And this sickness shall contribute not a little to the glory of the one whom he serves. The glory of God. Never was Satan more busy than here to thwart the purpose and defeat the end in view, even taking proper and legitimate things. He loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Has that love cooled in any measure? He is slow to come, though He knows our brother is sick. So might these two sisters have thought at a moment of deep trial; and when he died how they missed the comfort He only could give! But He knows all about it. The glory of God is before Him, and these dear ones must not come in between, nor yet the real but mistaken love of disciples—“Master, goest Thou thither again?”—nor yet the open and avowed enmity of men, for “they sought to stone Him.” None of these, nor all put together, turned Him aside for a moment. Misunderstood—as He delayed for the two days. Misrepresented by all—motive judged—love questioned—power limited. Could not this Man who opened the blind eyes have caused that this man should not die? Alone in His aim—alone in a crowd—never more isolated than then, and in His loneliness groans out into the ear of God, Father, I know Thou hearest Me always—the only one who knows. Lazarus is raised. The glory of God seen in resurrection. Said I not unto thee, If thou wouldest believe thou shouldst see the Glory of God? That which Isaiah saw, and cried, “Woe is me!” the Pharisees saw, and took counsel to “put Him

to death." They said, *Woe be to Him!* (John 11. 53). Others there were who, though they believed, did not confess Him, for they loved the *glory of men* more than the *glory of God*.

But what as to the past of those seraphim? A long past, not the brief shadow of Isaiah's past. Does that light make manifest any iniquity? not with them. There are angels of whom we read, they kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation (Jude 6). These are kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day. Peter also says, Angels when they sinned, but *cast them down* to Tartarus (2 Pet. 2. 4, marg.). The nature of this sin is veiled—a deep mystery—a sin for which there seems to be no sacrifice—a sinner for whom there seems to be no Saviour.

Not so for man the lesser, for there is an altar as well as a throne, grace as well as government, and for the one who has judged himself according to the standard of the throne there is a provision for him in the altar, not measured by his need as a sinner, but by the holy claims of the throne, with its thrice Holy One.

The slow, tardy "Then said I, Woe is me," was answered by the swiftly-flying messenger, for "Then flew an angel." God had waited long for Isaiah's *then*, but he did not wait long for God's. Hence no sinner need ever wait. God waits. Nothing more blessed for a saint than to say, "I waited patiently."

The seraphim had no right to the altar's provision. What he in innocence could only take with tongs, the *unclean lips* could kiss. Wonderful provision for the Holiness of the throne and the guilt of the sinner! Only one altar. A common guilt not measured so much by what man is as by what he is not. The presence of sin in its manifold forms differs in each person, but the absence of that glory is alike with them all. No measurement given as to

altar; but, being big enough, for God, was ample for man. Iniquity taken away; sin purged instantaneously; the efficacy is in the sacrifice.

The throne speaks of the glory of the Lord Jesus, the altar of His shame. His exaltation the throne, His humiliation the altar. It is the downward path of Phil. 2. He humbled Himself. Great indeed had been that humbling, had He ranked Himself with the seraphim. But no, formed in fashion as a man, the lower than angels, and as a man He humbled Himself. Was He "an Emperor"? No, "a carpenter." And as in life so in death. "The death of the cross." From the equal with the one on the Throne to a cross that never had an equal; from the height that only another ever knew to the depth that none other ever knew. This is in sharp contrast to Satan's Christ, the Anti-Christ, who, only a man, will sit as God by-and-by, and will not allow an equal. "Above all that is called God." God has an equal in His Son. Not so this awful being of Satan's creation. No equal. He that humbleth himself shall be exalted. True of Christ, "far above all heavens." Awfully true of Anti-Christ, he that exalteth himself shall be humbled. "Cast into the lake of fire."

The same throne and altar, with its grace, government, and glory, have to do with the saint as well as the sinner. The altar's *provision* for the sinner, its *purchase* for the saint, bought with a price not my own. Hence the claims of the throne. These are paramount, mandatory, towering away beyond all other claims, for such there are. The varied relationships of life each have their claim—family, husbands, wives, children, parents, masters, servants, mankind everywhere. "Do good to all men," but, like the one of John 11., each must be kept in their proper sphere, and not come between that which now fills the eye, "His glory," the entire absence of which characterized our past life,

Who will go for us? "Then," said I, "Send me." Not the laggard, tardy, slow *then* of the sinner, but an immediate, glad, whole-hearted, uncompromising *then* of the saint. From the lips He has touched and purged, but also which the live coal has set on fire for God, to speak His message—and what a message!

Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; a people who heard continually, and saw continually, but never cried Woe is me. This word had a fulfilment in the men of John 12, a people who eventually stopped their ears and rushed upon Stephen, who saw the glory of God amid a shower of stones, and fell asleep. The voices of the prophets are still read in their synagogues, but the voice falls upon deaf ears—a warning to sinner and saint of to-day, for the same principle obtains: rejected light, followed by complete blindness.

Let us cultivate rather the attentive ear, quick to discern His voice—"See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh,"—speaking as He does from Heaven, who once spake on earth, speaking now in His Son. Heb. 1. and 12. 25, 27. Hence the greater condemnation. Who, when they heard, did provoke? Did not all they who came out of Egypt by Moses, and *with whom* was He displeased forty years? Was it not with them that *sinned*, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And *to whom* sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that *were disobedient*? Interesting questions, "with whom" and "to whom." They were the young men who had been numbered *for war*. They did not go in and possess the land; they rebelled. *These* died, and *their bones* lay along the desert road, a *warning to us* (Num. 14. 28-31, also 26. 63). They entered not into rest. And if Moses did not bring them into rest, neither did Joshua (Heb. 4. 6, 8). No, he brought them into the *land, but not into the rest*, for they were *disobedient*

to *the voice in the land*. They drove not out their foes (Judg. 2. 2). "Ye have not hearkened unto *My voice*." So still tradition and not Scripture. Ye have made void the Word of God by your tradition (Matt. 15. 6); and again, "the people were instant with *loud voice*, asking that He might be crucified." And *their voices prevailed*. "Who is deaf as my servant?" An ear for the Master, the only Lord. He *upon the Throne*. Do you own Him as Lord? Then do you do the things that He says? Tradition and the people may clamour; let us as those who own His Lordship be deaf and blind to all else, eyes and ears open to His Word, which is His voice to us.

G. R. GEDDES.

A CHEERFUL GIVER.

(2 COR. 9.)

THE Church in Jerusalem had suffered grievously at the hands of their enemies. Bitter persecution prevailed at the time of Stephen's death, and, since the government was then unsettled both in Rome and in Judea, the Jewish faction reigned supreme. We can picture to ourselves night visits to Christian homes, men and women thrust into vile prisons, then brought before the elders in the synagogue, who tried to force them to deny their Master. On their refusal some were put to death (Acts 22. 4, 26. 10); others were beaten, and all suffered wanton outrage, which resulted in the Church being scattered throughout Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles, who still remained in Jerusalem.

Doubtless these Christians would have to leave nearly all their earthly possessions behind them when they fled for their lives; and, in addition to this, soon after a great famine prevailed throughout all the world, so that they

became extremely poor and were reduced almost to starvation. Accordingly, an appeal for help was made to Christians in Gentile cities, of which Corinth was one; for from Judea the disciples of the Lord Jesus had gone to the countries around, carrying the glad tidings of a Saviour to the nations.

At the time when this epistle was written Paul was in Macedonia. He was holding up the liberality of the saints in Achaia, and, not without good result, exhorting those of the way in Macedonia to follow their example. Because the need was great, he was doing his best to interest the Gentile Christians in the welfare of their brethren in Jerusalem and Judea. Now, lest the saints in Corinth should be unprepared, and his glorying, because of their zeal, should become void, he writes to them beforehand of his coming, and explains his errand, so that their contributions may be ready, "as a matter of *bounty*, and not of extortion." Observe that word and compare it with the injunction a little further on: "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." The Apostle does not wish them to give because it is their duty to give, and because he is coming to receive a collection. He rather assumes that they are quite willing to give, because of their goodwill towards the brethren. He wishes each one to have ready his contribution in plenty of time, so that there may not be any bustle or special effort on the part of any to get ready what he would like to give. Have it ready in good time, so that it may indeed be, and appear to be, the spontaneous outcome of a cheerful giver, for "the Lord loveth a cheerful giver." The important word is "cheerful." Another word which expresses the thought well is "hilarious." It sets forth the cheerfulness, the gladness, the lightheartedness of true giving. Give not grudgingly, like a wheezing pump, from which every drop must

be wrung by weary toil, but freely, like a bubbling, overflowing spring, which supplies lavishly the wants of all around.

At this point let us contrast the position of the Christian believer, as here set forth by Paul, with that of an ancient Israelite.

The latter had his contributions to the Lord, for the most part, regulated by law, which thus made the offerings of the nature of a tax, not of a freewill offering: "And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. And concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." So the least the Lord would receive as a due offering to Himself from His people was a fair and full tenth part of all they possessed. Only after he had satisfied the demands of the law could an Israelite, if he wished, make a freewill offering to the Lord. And that they took advantage of this happy privilege we have records not a few. The Christian in this, as in everything else, has been brought outside the bondage of law, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. He has no specified amount to give to God. Out of his abundance or poverty, freely he gives, for he has received freely. Not only so in the matter of money, but also in that other higher service which God looks for from His servants—the devotional heart-service of loving children.

The Apostle too has mentioned here some of the reasons why the Christians should give freely. The help that they are about to give not only satisfies the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God; for those saints in Jerusalem, when they see that you have obeyed the Gospel of Christ, and have ministered liberally unto them and unto all, will glorify God because

of you, and their hearts shall be knit to yours in brotherly love, while they bear you up before the throne of grace.

Now, taking a broader view of the subject, we find "God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work." God the Father gives us all the blessings that we have. The breath of our nostrils, food and raiment, home and happiness, are from Him; but His goodwill towards us reaches its highest expression in grace. "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift." It is impossible for us to estimate what it cost the Father to send forth His only-begotten and well-beloved Son to suffer and die for us. Yet He gave Him of deliberate purpose, willingly and gladly. Nor did Christ our Saviour give Himself reluctantly for our salvation. "Ye know," says Paul in another place, "ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich." This is matchless generosity, yet this is the pattern of our giving to God.

Further, "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." He is a foolish farmer that stints his seed-corn, for in the time of reaping, when he looks for a return, he shall find a light harvest. This is exactly what the grudging giver does. He loses the benefit of this great promise: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6. 38).

Give, and "He that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the fruits of your righteousness."

Christ's rule for giving is, "Freely ye have received; freely give." What have we received? does some one ask?

“Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich”; and again: “The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.” And Christ has given us a more definite rule still; He told His disciples, “This is My commandment, that ye love one another *as I have loved you.*”

How much that was the Lord tells us in the next breath. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” “Hereby perceive ye the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

W. McRAE, JUNR.

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.

THE LORD'S COMING AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

IV.

It is computed that there are at present in the land of Palestine a greater number of Jews than the aggregate of the companies that returned from the Babylonish captivity with Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. They have been gathering in thousands from all parts of the world to the land of their fathers, but they are returning as they departed, *in unbelief*; although the fact that “the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth by the Jewish people and their rulers was a judicial murder of God's Anointed,” is fully acknowledged by many of them. But they continue with the veil on their hearts still.

It is idle to speculate as to what importance should be

attached to their presence in such numbers in Palestine; it may have importance or it may not, no one can say. We think, however, that it is impossible for Christians to be indifferent to their movements in view of the fact that ere the future purposes of God with that people can be accomplished a large number of them must be in the land of their fathers. That a temple shall again stand in Jerusalem, where sacrifices shall presumably be offered to God, is also a matter of clear revelation (2 Thess. 2. 4).

Moreover, the Jew is forcing himself upon the attention of Christians to-day in a very marked manner, and schemes are being set on foot, with undoubted sincere design, to enable them to cultivate and live happily in their own land, and so to encourage them to return in greater numbers. In such movements, however, the Christian, who is taught of God, can have no part, for the Word of God instructs us that although man may gather God will cause them to be scattered; and any attempt to gather them is a waste of energy until God's time arrives, and until He comes whom God has appointed to be their Deliverer and Gatherer (Matt. 24. 16-20; Rom. 11. 26).

When the Anti-Christ arises as the great political leader of earth, strengthened by the ten kings who receive power with the beast, and with one mind give their power and strength to him (Rev. 17. 12, 13), it will readily be perceived that the Jewish people, ever increasing in number and prosperity in Palestine, cannot be ignored by him; and probably he will see in them and their land what will help him to gain the object he has in view if by any means he can gain their friendship and alliance. It is clear from the Scriptures that he will find it necessary to enter into a seven years' covenant with them, evidently allowing them liberty to offer sacrifices to the God of their fathers (Dan. 9. 27). For three and a half years all appears to go well; but at that time he will fearlessly violate the

covenant, and perforce cause the daily sacrifice to cease, and shall place the abomination that maketh desolate (Dan. 9. 27 ; 11. 31).

This event marks a point of the greatest importance in the future history of God's earthly people, and many of them who will be conversant with the Prophecy of Daniel will clearly discern the fulfilment of that part of it that refers to the breaking of the covenant in the midst of the week. With this will commence a powerful testimony on earth for God by the faithful remnant of His people, which will be directed against the ungodly assumptions of the Anti-Christ. This testimony will be strengthened by the appearance of two special witnesses in their midst who will speak for God ; and they that understand shall instruct many, and by their instrumentality many shall be turned to righteousness (Rev. 11. ; Dan. 11. 33). This leads to "the great tribulation," regarding which more anon.

THE CLAIMS OF THE YOUNG.

II.

WE have no doubt but that the majority of Christian parents endeavour to do all in their power to instruct in the ways of the Lord the children whom God has given them. They seek to familiarize them with the Holy Scriptures, and to win their hearts for the Lord Jesus Christ of Whom the Scriptures speak. They also try to impress upon them the value of the sacred volume which we call the Bible, and to cause them to handle it, and to talk of its contents with reverence. Because of this some Christians might be inclined to think that there is little or no need for Sunday schools, reasoning that by sending their children there they are handing over to others the instruction of their offspring, which God most solemnly imposes upon the parents themselves.

This line of reasoning would be so far good if all parents were Christians, and if they were discharging in the fear of God the obligations toward their children which God holds them responsible to do. The facts, however, are that there is grave reason to fear that the teaching in the homes of many Christians is not quite what it might be; and, further, we know that the parents of the majority of the children who come to Sunday school are unregenerate, and their children receive no home instruction in the things of God. This being so, the necessity for Sunday school work on behalf of these children, as well as for any where home instruction by Christian parents is at least doubtful, becomes at once apparent. We venture also to assert that Christian parents who are in fellowship with God about the training and conversion of their children will not despise any extra opportunities that a well-regulated Sunday school offers.

Having thus briefly established the necessity for Sunday-school work let us think of the good results which may, with God's blessing, accrue therefrom. It will readily be acceded that youth is the period of life when in great measure character is formed. The training of youth, the impressions made in early days, will develop and bear fruit in after years. This being so, how vitally important it becomes that the minds of children should be stored with the truth of God! Where reverence for God and for His Word have been inculcated in early days it will, in many cases, deliver such children from being carried away when they grow a little older with the light scepticism which is ruining the youths of our day.

One object before the heart of the Sunday-school teacher will ever be to lead the children to see their need of God's salvation, and to definitely accept the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. This, however, is not the first object in Sunday-school work. It should ever be to cause the children to

know the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 3. 15). Teachers, then, need not be discouraged, although the desire of their hearts to see the children saved is not gratified, for if they have faithfully placed God's truth before the young, and taught them to reverence holy things, the good seed sown will, in many cases, spring up and bear fruit in after years, resulting in conversion to God, and what else—who can tell? Many who are Christians to-day can testify how in their unconverted days, when they sought to forget God and eternal things, portions of the Word which they learned in the Sunday school spoke loudly to their hearts and warned them of the folly of their ways. Thus much, very much, may be attained for God and for the lasting good of the children, although there may appear to be few cases of definite conversion in the school.

We fear that the value of this work has been grossly under estimated by Christians, and that the work amongst the young is often considered of little or no importance. "The day" alone can declare its value; but even now we rejoice to know that very many are being saved in the Sunday schools, while many more are deciding for Christ in their youth at other meetings as the result of seed sown in the schools. The presence of a great number of young people who have been saved and added to the Lord in various assemblies is quickly detected. Where, we ask, have they come from? They can be counted by dozens in some parts who are the fruits of Sunday school effort!

Therefore we confidently urge fellow saints to give renewed attention to this important branch of the Lord's work. On all hands the difficulty of reaching grown-up people with the gospel is acknowledged. The gospel meeting is too often only such in name, for few but Christians are ever present to hear the truth declared. Probably Christians are themselves to blame for this condition of things, but the fact remains that it is so. It is different,

however, with the children. The difficulty has not been to get children to come to the school, but to get capable teachers to take an interest in them.

It has been well said that the pulse of an assembly can be felt in the prayer meeting. We would add that with equal certainty it can be felt in the Sunday school. We cannot conceive of a healthy assembly where there is no heart for God's work amongst the young. It would unquestionably do a number of Christians good if they would leave controversial matters, over which they are puzzling their heads and starving their souls, to others who are more competent to deal with them, and devote their energies instead to teaching a class of children to know and to reverence the Word of God.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

X.

AROUND the tabernacle of old—Jehovah's dwelling-place—did each and all find their place within and without the camp. One authority controlled all and arranged their several places. "Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house: over against the tabernacle shall they pitch" (Num.-2. 2). Each and all thus find their place; and in the acceptance thereof, and in the endeavour to fulfil all the obligations thereof, would there be the dwelling together such as God desired.

Like unto such dwelling together will be that of those whom God has called and brought together, being found in the churches of God in the fellowship of His Son, where the one will of the one Lord, the one Spirit and the one Word, regulate and stimulate all in their endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The way to attain to such a desirable object as the dwelling together of those

gathered into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is further shown in the beseechings through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that all "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." One mind in the Lord results in one mouth and one judgment, which are the practical manifestations of the principles of the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let us look again at Israel and their journeyings, for they are still a journeying people—no settling down, no standing still: forward is yet the command! But God is not the author of confusion; and as there is an order for pitching, so is there an order for marching. The will of Him who controls the one regulates the other. In subjection to that one will all find their place in the order of marching as well as in the order of pitching. No quarrelling about who is to lead; no contention as to who is to go first. Jehovah is their Leader, and His will settles the place for each. The cloud rises! This is the signal for marching, as the resting of the cloud is the signal for pitching. All is stir and activity; but activity does not necessarily mean confusion. Each camp has learned its place: Judah first, Reuben next, then the tabernacle; Ephraim follows, and Dan brings up the rear. "And the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moses: so they pitched by their standards, and so they set forward" (Num. 2. 34). What beautiful order! What worthy subjection to the will of Jehovah! They are of one way, they keep rank, they walk together.

This further illustrates the principles of the fellowship of God's Son. Not only does God desire that His people should be brought together, and that they should dwell together, but also that they should walk together. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." "I have no greater joy than to hear

that my children walk in truth." "Brethren, be followers together of Me, and mark them that walk as ye have us for an ensample." Thus, indeed, will there be the keeping of rank—one will marking the course and guiding the footsteps of the flock.

Further: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may minister unto him.

And they shall keep all the instruments of the tabernacle, to do the service of the tabernacle" (Num. 3. 5-8). Why the tribe of Levi? Exodus 32. 29 explains this. There the call is heard, "Consecrate yourselves to-day to the Lord." Who responds? The sons of Levi. Into their hands the sword is put; and at the bidding of Jehovah they execute His judgment against the sin of Israel by slaying their kith and kin. For the honour of Jehovah, which was dearer to them than aught else, they do what they do, and now He honours them who thus honoured Him by entrusting to their hands the stewardship of the sanctuary. God has proved them faithful, and therefore He permits them to serve. Here again Jehovah apportions to each their work—Kohathites, Gershonites, Merarites. One will give to each their place, and in the acceptance thereof they become workers together.

"If any man serve Me, let him follow Me." "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." "Let these also first be proved; then let them serve." These scriptures, in addition to the things which were written aforetime for our learning, make clear to us principles of God for our guidance to-day in the fellowship of His Son, and are applicable to all service for Him of whatever character and of whatever measure. Varied indeed may such service be—by hand, or lip, or pen—yet in it will be found ample place and abundant opportunity for the exercise and development of gift when each and all seek to learn their

place and know their work ; and, guided by the right hand of Him who walks in the midst of the churches, they fill that place and do that work, thus contributing their part for the good of the whole as workers together of God.

DAVID SMITH.

(*To be continued.*)

THE GLORY OF GOD.

THY works, O God, Thy praises sing,
 And day and night Thy wisdom show ;
 The earth to light Thy glories bring,
 The heavens instruct vain man below.
 For earth's foundations Thou hast laid ;
 The heavens were fashioned by Thy hands ;
 The vast expanse of space Thou'st made,
 And bound Thy works with wisdom's bands.
 A whisper of Thy glory steals
 Upon our wondering ears below ;
 Our heart Thy Godhead mystery feels :
 We pant Thy Greater Self to know !
 A portion of Thy ways we learn
 And fall before the eternal throne ;
 Taught by infinitude, discern
 That Thou art God, yea, Thou alone !
 For all Thy works Thy hand provides,
 The circling planets guides with skill ;
 Who dwells in light, yet darkness hides,
 And with Thy fulness all things fill.
 Invisible, yet near art Thou—
 In Thee we live, and move, and are ;
 At Thy rebuke the mountains bow,
 Thy hands the sea's proud billows bar.
 O God ! Thy glory who can learn ?
 By searching who the Almighty find ?
 Thy Godhead greatness we discern
 By far transcends our finite mind.

THE OPEN POSITION,

(Continued from page 30.)

RECEPTION INTO FELLOWSHIP.

IN this matter we shall find as great diversity of thought and practice as in the matter of inter-communion. At the one end of the chain, again, we find reception wholly in the hands of the paid agent or the leading brother—the bringing in of friends who may happen to be staying with those belonging to the meeting, although such at home may be bitter enemies of the truth. They come to the meeting when they are at a distance, and there is no cross to be borne, just in the same principle as those who go to a meeting when it is convenient, but when they are staying with their friends in the denominations, they can go with them where they go without apparently the slightest exercise of conscience. The excuse often given is that the preacher is a converted man. We cannot help asking ourselves this question, Were Christians who can thus act ever really delivered of God from sectarianism? Did they ever learn to hate every false way? (Ps. 119. 104). Have they ever ceased to do evil and learnt to do well? (Isa. 1. 16, 17). Or are they where they are simply through circumstances and their surroundings?

The minister, they say, is converted, but what about the hundreds of unconverted men—men who would ignore if not ridicule conversion, men who gather in the unsaved by thousands to swell their congregation? So many houses are built, so many public-houses, and so many churches, so called, or chapels in a given locality, and so many men will be found to preach for hire in those buildings, blind leaders of the blind. But those selfish Christians who seem to live in these things only to please themselves and who go where they like—not where God would have them—can shut their eyes to this appalling condition of things on

every hand, and so long as they can get their itching ears tickled by the teachers that they heap to themselves the mass of darkness and ignorance that surrounds them gives them apparently little trouble or concern.

But with regard to reception, we may well ask to what or into what? when the state of matters we have already described exists. Where is the assembly, and what is the assembly?

Some teach that they receive all Christians to the Father's table, others that they receive on the ground of the blood, others on the ground of life. It would take too long to go into these points fully, but it is easy to see the results of such teaching. It is not the Father's table, but the Lord's table; it is into the Lord's hands that authority has been given to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. The discipline that surrounds the table is by the Lord's authority; the assembly, guided by their overseers, have but to carry out the binding on earth of that which has been bound or loosed in the heavens (Matt. 18. 18). We do not gather on the ground of the blood or of life, although only those who have life, and who are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1. 19), are to be gathered into assembly position; but to have life and to be redeemed is not sufficient. One who is in this position may yet be a backslider from God and the truth, an open sinner, morally defiled, as the man in Corinth, or spiritually defiled with evil doctrine, as those dealt with in 1 Timothy 1.

Based upon one of those false assertions we find what is called a hearty invitation given to all Christians to break bread, some going so far as even to press those at the back to come forward. Rom. 14. 1 is quoted, but it is no matter of one being received who is weak in the faith; knowledge is *never* to be made the condition of reception. God's way is ever condition leading to position. But, as we have said, Christians who are received to the breaking of bread are not

those with whom any heart separation from sectarianism has been wrought by the Spirit in the great majority of cases.

But again, two modes of reception are practised. As we have shown, both in the exclusive and open assemblies Christians are received to the breaking of bread. How our exclusive friends have carried on this practice for years without, according to their own theory, being thoroughly leavened with evil is beyond our comprehension; for if reception from an open assembly, where no evil doctrine is held, will leaven another assembly, how is it that Christians from the sects, where every species of evil doctrine is held, can be received to the breaking of bread without this leavening process? "Open Brethren" here are far more consistent. They do not hold the leaven theory. They receive all Christians personally sound, whether from a non-eternity meeting or an independent chapel, where the minister, and perhaps the larger part of the congregation, hold this doctrine so subversive to the very foundations of the Faith.

When we seek, if the Lord will, to set forth the position and responsibilities of church and churches of God, we shall hope to deal more particularly with this subject, only here remarking that there is no such a thing in Scripture as reception to the breaking of bread. We find the breaking of bread encircled by the apostles' doctrine and the fellowship, and there is no such thought in Scripture as the bringing it outside of these circles for the accommodation or convenience of Christians living in disobedience to the truth.

But not only are there with "Open Brethren" two modes of reception, but two utterly different modes of action. In the one case the person is met at the door, and, on professing to be a Christian, is allowed to take his place at the table. That very morning one may be sitting at the back not allowed to break bread until some of the leading brethren are satisfied

that he is a Christian and sound in the Faith. Such a one will then be mentioned to the assembly and received into the fellowship. But why all this trouble and care? We are quite aware that in many cases it would not be taken; and surely this is the most consistent position: for if Christians from the sects can be received to the breaking of bread every Lord's day, why should one desiring fellowship be kept, it may be, for weeks sitting at the back? The one received to the breaking of bread may fall into any sin, and none in the assembly are responsible to deal with such a one; but the one who has been received into fellowship, falling into sin, is dealt with, and, it may be, put away; although, after all, this putting away is very like putting out at the front door to be taken in at the back: for, as we have said, those who are put away from one assembly are often received in another.

Another evil that arises out of this mode of reception is that in some meetings we find a privileged class of men who assume the right to receive to the breaking of bread Christians from the denominations; but what Scripture confers such a privilege on any special men? In another case we have known a young Christian who had only lately been received stand up and mention the name of some friend who would break bread that morning.

Now if we look into the gifts given of God, we shall find that one is the discerning of spirits (1 Cor. 12. 10). And we believe that if an assembly is gathered of God we shall always find that there are those more or less gifted thus to act in the matter of reception. Many Christians who may be very earnest and godly in their lives, yet have little or no discernment with regard to the work of conversion in others; what is to hinder such bringing in whom they will to the meeting?

But perhaps of all the disastrous practices, the bringing in of his converts by the evangelist to the meeting before

he leaves the place is the worst. There is a great parade made of the numbers converted and joined to the meeting, and this is spread broadcast through the agency of some religious paper. It is essential to the evangelist's position that he should have conversions, for if he could not write and speak of so many being added to the meeting, he would soon lose his popularity, and in many cases his support: How nearly this resembles a minister in the sects, gathering in members converted or unconverted to support his Church, it is easy to see; and yet this shocking state of matters is continually tolerated. Were we to examine a year or two later into the condition of the meeting that had thus been enlarged, we should often find that the greater part of these converts, if not all, had shown by their lives that they were unconverted, and had never been joined to the Lord. They have left the meeting and gone back to the world; or worse, they may have remained in as troublers until they have either been put away or have themselves got to a place of power, where they can do as they will.

What a Babylon of confusion! How utterly hopeless to carry out the will of God in such an association! For, be it remembered, this condition of things is that argued for by many as being the right one. The idea of any authority, or such a thing as oversight, is scouted with contempt, and in some assemblies a state of complete democracy exists, the leaders doing as they like, and going where they like, and teaching the Christians to act in the same manner.

One excuse often given for this is, that the apostles went into the synagogues. Yes, they went there, but for what? To bring God's people out. And be it remembered, that a synagogue was connected with a divinely appointed worship (Ps. 74. 8). Most sects never began with God, but are the outcome of the wilfulness of the flesh and the subtlety of the Devil.

We would especially wish it to be understood that that

of which we have been speaking is not the result of failure. Were it so, we should only exhibit the weakness of our position in pointing it out, for failure there will always be. There was failure in the early churches apostolically set in order,—moral sin, as in Corinth; doctrinal sin, as in Ephesus,—but this did not prevent their being churches of God. And the very fact of this, as we shall hope to show in a future paper, enabled them to act for God in the dealing with sin in accordance with His will.

Again, we wish it to be clearly understood that the condition described of many assemblies is not that which would be approved by some others even in the same town; yet, as we have said, all these assemblies are either directly or indirectly linked together.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued.)

AT JESUS' FEET.

WHAT a blessed place to be in—at Jesus' feet; and it is a privilege every child of God may enjoy, a pleasure every one may know, until “at His right hand we enjoy the pleasures for evermore.” May we find—

“Our highest joy in lying low
At our Redeemer's feet.”

This was Mary's habitual place, the height of her ambition to be at the Lord's feet. Three times we read of her being there; under varied circumstances, at all times, and at any place where she finds the Lord, she finds her place at His feet.

In Luke 10. 39 she is there to hear His words; the first time we read of her is as a disciple learning at the feet of her Lord. How good it would be for the new-born soul to be found at the Lord's feet, having taken the whole of that invitation contained in Matthew 11.: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you

rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart : and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Learn of Me is the word addressed by the Lord Himself to all who would be His disciples ; none is too young, none is too old to learn, and the way to learn is to sit at the Lord's feet and hear His word.

We may learn much from those who speak to us about Jesus and the things pertaining to the kingdom, or from that which others have written, who have been fitted by God for that service, but how blessed to get to the fountain of all wisdom and receive from Himself "the milk of the word, that we may grow thereby unto salvation"!

And this blessing is only for born-again ones. The Lord Jesus is not a teacher to unsaved men—they must first know Him as Saviour. They must hear about Him—"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"—and *believe on Him*, before they can *abide in Him*, or learn of Him. May we then, like Mary, highly prize this privilege, and constantly sit at the Lord's feet and hear His words ; neither let us be moved from that place of blessing by any fleshly anxiety about much serving. Satan will ever seek to rob the child of God of his place at the Lord's feet, for the secret of power is in the presence of the Lord—

"I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know ;
I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go."

Then how blessed for Mary to hear the Lord's words, "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her"! None can tell what Mary heard as she sat at the Lord's feet ; only those who in like manner

have heard His voice. "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught." "Never man spake like this man." "He taught with authority."

We can just fancy Martha looking with longing eyes to the spot where Mary sits, and listening now and again to some precious words, as she makes a pause in her busy preparations. But she is mistress of the house, and she must be busy preparing for the entertainment of her Guest! There must be a fine spread for Him; so many extra dishes to prepare to do honour to that welcome Guest. She has no time to sit down quietly and calmly, and listen to the loving words which He is pouring into Mary's opened ear; her mind is distracted, being cumbered about much serving. Oh! that we may early learn the lesson Jesus taught in Matthew 6. 25-34—"Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" And besides all this, how it cheered the Lord Jesus to have Mary listening so intently to His words, drinking them in and feeding upon them, thinking more of them than of her necessary food! What a rare opportunity! She had the Lord there in the house, and she makes the most of His presence. We are here reminded of the Lord's words at the Sychar well, "I have meat to eat that ye know not." So while Mary was getting from the Lord the spiritual food, feeding her soul upon His words, the Lord Himself was getting from her that which was more to Him than all else besides.

Now let us look at the second place where she is found at Jesus' feet. In the verses we have been looking at she went to Jesus in her ignorance to receive wisdom from His lips, and she got a full supply. Now in John 11. 32 she

goes to Jesus in her sorrow—"Mary therefore, when she came where Jesus was, and saw Him, fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died"; and there at Jesus' feet she wept out all her sorrow. "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled. He asked, Where have ye laid him. They say, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept." How fully the Lord Jesus enters into her sorrow! what sympathy is here displayed! "Behold how He loved him!" are the words of those who stood by. The Lord Jesus wept with those who wept and rejoiced with those who rejoiced. He who was satisfied with Mary's listening ear is now about to be glorified through that which is Mary's sorrow, but in the meantime He fully sympathised with them in their trial. How blessed for us to remember, "We have not a High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, without sin"; "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." But all this sorrow is but the prelude to the coming joy. The deeper the sorrow now the greater the joy by and bye—

"The Father's love will never cause
His child a needless tear."

"Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts, through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us"; "The sufferings of this little while are not to be compared to the eternal weight of glory"; May we run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down on the right hand of the majesty in the heavens.

Mary lays her sorrow at Jesus' feet, and leaves it there.

She speaks no word, after that one word of confidence in her Lord, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." So she follows in silent submission to the will of God. Not so Martha! She had been distracted over much serving, and knew nothing of rest in the Lord, so now she cannot enter into the mind of the Lord. Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone"; Martha said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." But Jesus gently rebukes her: Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone. And Jesus, when He had given thanks, cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth. That voice, which was so gentle in His sympathy with the bereaved ones, is now so full of power that the dead hears His voice, and comes forth. What joy in the hearts of the sisters when their beloved brother is restored to them! This was blessing far beyond even Mary's expectations; and we here learn that He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. We look forward to the day when the sleeping ones shall hear His resurrection voice and come forth, and the living ones be changed in a moment; re-united, we shall be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord.

The third time Mary is found at the Lord's feet is in John 12. 3. Jesus is again at Bethany, and they make Him a supper. Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with Him. Mary, therefore, took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

What blessings had Mary received at her Lord's feet! She had taken the lowly place, and had there been filled

with the "blessing of the Lord which maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it." She had found wisdom, comfort, and satisfaction at His feet. And now, seeing Lazarus, her beloved brother, sitting with Jesus at the feast, "Mary, therefore," filled to overflowing with joy unspeakable and full of the glory, "took a pound of ointment"—no mean quantity, but all she had treasured up she lavishes with unstinting hand upon her Lord. Having received much, she gives much. "It was of spikenard—very precious." Its value was great in itself, but it had a value much beyond its actual worth to the Lord, as it told out all her heart's love for Himself. He had her heart, and with it all she possessed. Mary had all along been the receiver; now she becomes the giver. Here is something she can do to show her gratitude, and spontaneously, liberally, and heartily she gives.

"What can I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord" (Ps. 116. 12, 13). Then she laid her glory at His feet, for she anointed the Lord's feet with the ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair. What a beautiful picture is this of true worship! Mary has learned the mind of the Lord, and being in communion with Him, she knows what will give Him pleasure. And no sacrifice is too great and no place too low for her if she can but tell out thereby all the love she has for Him, Who so loved her.

Now for the result of all this. "The house was filled with the odour of the ointment," testifying to the fact that Mary and her offering was accepted. "While the king sat at his table my spikenard sent forth its fragrance" (Song 1. 12).

Through the mercy of God, we have been called to a feast, brought into fellowship—in resurrection—with Jesus Christ our Lord.

“Faith eats the bread of life,
 And drinks the living wine;
 Thus we, in love together knit,
 On Jesus’ breast recline!”

And as we look back upon what we were, “dead through our trespasses and sins,” like Lazarus, “by this time he stinketh,” we have had to confess, “My wounds stink and are corrupt” (Ps. 38. 4, 5) because of my foolishness. Lost and guilty sinners, we were unfit for the presence of a holy God; but now, what a change! Cleansed from all things through the blood, raised together and seated together with Christ in the heavenlies. We are called into the fellowship of God’s Son, to offer unto Him spiritual sacrifices, even the sacrifices of praise, continually confessing His name; also “to do good and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” He gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell, and we, presenting His name to God, become a sweet savour of Christ. The spikenard told out, 1st, the preciousness of His person; 2nd, the value of His sacrifice; and, 3rd, the sweet savour of His obedience even unto death; and all this, the preciousness of His person, the value of the sacrifice, and sweet savour of His obedience, are reckoned to us. “For you, therefore, which believe is the preciousness” (1 Pet. 2. 7).

So gathering together into His name we pour out our hearts before Him. Spontaneous praises should ascend from every heart: “Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion.” There is often a lot of waiting for one another in our assemblies, or turning over of leaves in hymn-book or Bible to find suitable hymns or portions of Scripture, showing our poverty in real heart worship; but this should not be. May Psalm 45. be true of us—“My heart overfloweth with a goodly matter. I speak the things which I have made touching the King. My tongue is the pen of a ready

writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into Thy lips." If our hearts are filled with His love towards us, when together we shall have

"Hearts exulting, songs outbursting,
Put to shame the joys of earth,"

God will get His portion: "Thanksgiving abounding through the many." And we shall get our portion of increased joy in the knowledge that we are well-pleasing unto Him.

Now let us remind our hearts that at the feet of the Lord is our place of blessing. It is there we may learn to follow Him, it is there we may cast all our cares and tell out all our sorrows, it is there that we can get strength for His service, it is there that we shall cast our crowns before the throne, for He is worthy.

May we each choose that good part that shall not be taken away.

G. T. REEVE.

"Bride of the Lamb, there is for thee
One only safe retreat;
Where Jesus is thy heart should be,
Thy home at His dear feet.

When Satan tracks thy lonely way,
There his temptation meet;
In Jesus' presence watch and pray,
Yea, conquer at His feet.

Since thou hast much to learn, e'en though
Thou art in Christ complete,
In grace and knowledge seek to grow
By sitting at His feet.

Through tribulation hasten on,
With Christ the cross is sweet;
The 'little while' will soon be gone;
Keep only at His feet.

Bride of the Lamb, forget the past,
Prepare the Lord to greet;
'Tis thine to share His throne, and cast
Thy wreath before His feet."

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.

THE LORD'S COMING AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

V.

“WHEN ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand :) then let them that be in Judæa flee. . . For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24. 15-21).

This event marks the beginning of the time of Israel's trouble, spoken of as *the great tribulation* (Rev. 7. 14, R.V.). The time of favour known by the Jews from the hands of the Antichrist then comes to an end, and he appears as the great persecutor of God's people, causing them to flee for their lives from Judæa, and to seek refuge from his fury and hate in other parts of the earth.

All on whom he can lay his hands who are faithful to God he shall cause to be slain, and many shall be betrayed by their unfaithful brethren, influenced by the flatteries of the man of sin, and shall be delivered up to death (Dan. 11. 32-35). Thus shall God allow the people who returned to their land in unbelief to be scattered before the fury of the Antichrist, in order to accomplish His deep purposes with them and to work repentance in their hearts.

It were impossible to describe the unparalleled horror of that time of Jacob's trouble, for it will totally eclipse all the woe and tribulation that any people had endured before; and all the power and ingenuity of the dragon in the fury of his wrath will be directed against God's faithful witnesses, in order to clear them from the earth. So great

indeed will "the great tribulation" be, that unless God shortens the time no flesh would survive it, and for the elect's sake it will be shortened (Matt. 24. 22).

Let it be carefully noted that the great tribulation has no reference whatever to the judgments poured out *by God* upon the earth during the time of the Antichrist's reign and persecution, but is altogether and only occasioned *by the Antichrist*, and is directed against the testimony that will be on earth for God at that time. It is against the people of God, and especially the faithful of Israel, although many Gentiles faithful to God will then be found on earth who will suffer from the great tribulation (Rev. 7. 9, etc.); for the man of sin will sit in the temple showing himself to be God, and will brook the acknowledgment of no god but himself.

While the faithful are thus being done to death, all who bow to the Antichrist and acknowledge him as God, having believed the lie and being sealed as his own, shall dwell in rest and luxury, which shall only be disturbed by the judgments which God shall pour out upon them; and when, by the power of the beast, death shall overtake the two special witnesses who will testify for God on earth at that time, and while their unburied bodies lie on the streets of Jerusalem, they that dwell on the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and send gifts to one another (Rev. 11. 3-12).

Thus shall the climax of Jacob's trouble be reached, and the eyes of every faithful one will be turned to the Lord, and the birth-pangs of anguish and woe shall take hold on them as they yearn after deliverance from God; for none but He can deliver from the great tribulation (Zech. 12. 11-14). Thus, also, at length, will Satan almost behold the fruition of his dark design to erase the last trace of allegiance to God from earth and to gain for himself and his false christ the homage of the human heart. Dark is

the picture, and men by choice shall be made to taste on earth the reign of hell. But hark! an angel is heard to declare that *delay* shall be no longer (Rev. 10. 6), and the Almighty God raises His omnipotent arm to crush with one fell stroke the impious hosts of darkness. Satan's apparent triumph shall be short-lived, and man's vain dream of earthly bliss in defiance of God shall vanish "as a dream when one awaketh."

(*To be continued.*)

THE CLAIMS OF THE YOUNG.

III.

THERE are some people who seem to have been born to be Sunday-school teachers; they have a natural gift for working among children, and they seem to be able to do anything they please with them. But they are very few, and the number of children who come to the Sunday school is great. The difficulty is not to get children, but to get teachers for them.

"Oh, I have not the gift for managing children," is the most common excuse when any one is asked to take a class. Perhaps not; but have you tried very hard to learn how to manage them? Here is work waiting to be done, and you are going about looking for something to do. The importance of this work can not be over-stated, and you might accomplish much for God by devoting a small part of your time to half a dozen boys or girls. You would very soon learn to manage and to interest them, and you would very soon become interested in them yourself.

There is one thing worthy of notice in thinking about work among the young, and that is the decline of home-teaching, through the growing indifference and scepticism of the mass of so-called Protestants. The want of teaching of this kind will have an influence upon this and successive

generations; it is very apparent at the present time to those who work in Sunday schools, and the absence of it surely makes more apparent and more pressing the need of the children and the necessity for more active work among them.

Now then, whether you have a gift for it or not, here is work to be done and a cry for workers. There are a few born to be masters of every art and craft, but all have to be trained to their labour. We have said that there are some who seem born Sunday-school teachers; but they, with all others, will have to learn the work.

Are you willing to do this for God? Are you willing to get half a dozen boys or girls and devote yourself to them—to fill their minds with the Holy Scriptures, to teach them to reverence holy things, to keep before them the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, to make to them a living thing the love that begets love? The Lord has said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Rome has proved this, as her methods to-day show; and it remains for us to prove it to a far greater extent than we have hitherto done.

"And your children shall ask, and ye shall say." "And your children shall ask, and ye shall say." How often did God tell His people this!

But the children ask by coming in crowds, and there is nobody there to answer them as they want to be answered. They are not like grown-up people, who like best to stand at a distance and listen, for the little ones like to be round the knee, and the Master said, "Suffer them"; but the two or three devoted workers can't answer a hallful in this way. Oh! where are the reapers?

“CAST THY BREAD UPON THE WATERS.”

“CAST thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.”

These words from the book of Ecclesiastes offer young Christians healthy counsel. All will readily admit that young believers should be actively engaged in service for the Master. Youth is the time to begin to show one's colours and to manifest the truth of the words, “I'm not ashamed to own my Lord.”

The vital question, however, is, What kind of service can young believers most becomingly engage in? Mistakes are often made here. They desire to make known their Saviour's love. The story of the Cross of Christ is dear to their hearts. But a few days or weeks ago God spake peace to their troubled souls as by faith they beheld Christ uplifted on the tree. They were there and then delivered from eternal burnings. How can they best make known to all around what a Saviour they have found? Proclaim His love they fain would, for their hearts are full of it.

It is very improbable and undesirable that young Christians will at once be able to preach the Gospel in a public manner. Some we gladly own are manifestly gifted by Christ, and such should not neglect the gift which has been given to them. Others who attempt public preaching in the open air and elsewhere had better give up the attempt, for it is manifest to all that such service is not theirs. What, then, remains for the majority of young Christians to engage in, so that they may make known the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God? One means lies to the

hand of all, whether brethren or sisters. We refer to tract-distributing.

We fear that there are some who would like to be preachers who would not care to sally forth with a few hundred printed Gospel messages to distribute amongst the perishing. What the excuses are which may be advanced to justify such actions we are not minded to inquire. The flesh can very easily find an excuse for neglecting any duty which, to it, is irksome. Here, then, is one way of spreading the knowledge of God, the value of which can scarcely be over-estimated. A tract handed to any individual in a courteous manner often opens up the way to personal conversation. Personal conversation often leads to conversion.

Let us, therefore, brethren and sisters, awake to our privileges and embrace the opportunities God gives us by sowing broadcast the seed of the Gospel in printed form. Let us press into the country, where the Gospel-preacher's voice is probably never heard, and leave in the lonely homes of the people the story of God's wondrous love, to be read and thought over alone with God. Let us visit every door in, at least, some of the streets of our cities, and place the Gospel in the hands of the perishing thousands who dwell there. By the wayside, on board the steamer, in the railway-carriage—everywhere let us lose no opportunity of pointing weary souls to the Lamb of God.

Tract-distributing is a humble service that may be taken very little notice of by our fellows. The tract-distributor will probably pass through life almost unknown as a servant of the Lord. The public preacher comes more prominently before the notice of his fellows, and is readily recognised as one who essays to serve the Lord. Probably this is why the latter service is so much sought after, and the former so sorrowfully neglected. The day is nearing, however, when the unknown toilers in the Master's vineyard will be publicly rewarded by Him. It will then be a

very small matter whether we had the praise of men on earth or not, provided our service merits His approval in that day.

A SONG OF WORSHIP.

O BLESSED God! we bow before Thy throne
 And lay our homage at Thy feet alone;
 With hearts uplifted and with souls set free,
 Within the veil, O God, we worship Thee.

Remembering Thou art holy, thus we tread
 Thy courts with fear, whilst by the Spirit led;
 We prize the blood that makes the way so free,
 And humbly bow, O God, and worship Thee.

Rests on the Sacrifice our wondering gaze—
 The spring of all our praises—now we raise
 Our triumph song of victory, full and free,
 And bow with joy, O God, and worship Thee.

Now there ascends a cloud of incense sweet;
 What but our Great Priest's hands could make it
 meet?

His work and worth adoringly we see;
 Constrained by grace, O God, we worship Thee.

What shall we yield in adoration deep?
 Since fruit of Calvary's toil in joy we reap!
 Thine is our all—our heart, our strength we see,
 And meekly bow, O God, and worship Thee.

Yet we can give—our well-filled hands we raise
 And burnt-offering yield, Jehovah praise!
 Who but our Lord our offering sweet could be?
 Constrained by love, O God, we worship Thee.

Soon He shall come, remembrance be no more:
 The love-feasts gone, earth's sacred banquets o'er!
 Then at Thy throne throughout eternity
 Our ransomed souls, O God, shall worship Thee.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

XII. HEZEKIAH (2 Chron. 29.-32.).

WE are now about to consider one of the most remarkable reigns of the kings of Judah, of such importance that the record thereof covers no less than four comparatively long chapters as in our Bibles. The house of Israel was by degrees broken up, and its subjects deported far off into Assyrian lands, the last deportation under Shalmaneser taking place in the sixth year of Hezekiah (2 Kings 18.).

Hosea 11. 12 apparently is an allusion to the better days during this reign, especially as read in Dr. Young's translation, but the R.V. gives much the same sense.

“Ephraim compasseth me about with falsehood, and the house of Israel with deceit; but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the Holy One.”

One obvious lesson which forces itself on one in the consideration of this life is the fact that notwithstanding the tiny little remnant of God's people still left—the daughter of Zion left as a booth in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city—yet God had delight therein, just as on a former occasion He took delight in those insignificant 400 who through their loyalty and attachment to David went out to him in the hold. Does not all this emphasize the fact that God passes by those things that are highly esteemed among men, delighting often in the things which are despised and contemptible?

There is another thing which is characteristic of this king's life—prayer—an essential accompanying all true revivals; prominent again in the revival under Nehemiah (see Neh. 1., 2., 4.), prefiguring Him in whom all shadows have fulfilment, the Lord Jesus, especially as brought before us in the Gospel by Luke—the Gospel of the man

Christ Jesus—where we find the perfect man in prayer continually to God (seven times are His prayers recorded in this book). If prayer is prominent in this reign, “the Book” is prominent in the reign of Josiah. We cannot do with the one without the other. Prayer without “the Book” would lead to sentimentality and extravagances of all sorts, as embodied in Swedenborgianism and numerous other sects; whereas “the Book” without prayer would lead to formalism, as embodied in, alas! too many sects to mention here. Of course we do not mean to infer that either element was lacking in these revivals, but merely to point out the characteristic of each. Thrice do we find Hezekiah prostrate before his God.

Once on behalf of the assembly.

Once in time of threatened danger.

Once on behalf of himself.

Do not these include the three classes of prayer which should characterize the believer's life from first to last?

The sanctuary, service, individual requests. That which is nearest to the heart of God being first; and that which is nearest to His heart will be nearest and most pressing to every one who is in fellowship with Him; the corporate testimony upon earth, expressed now by what God is pleased to call “Assemblies of God” locally.

Then there is that which answers to service and warfare, just as Leviticus comes before the book of Numbers.

Lastly, requests for himself; although one is well-nigh forced to conclude that in this latter Hezekiah made a mistake somewhat after the same manner of unbelief as exemplified by Abraham, especially as viewed in the light of subsequent events. Indeed, his life is not an exception to the kings of Judah taken as a rule, the former part being brighter than the latter.

His character as a man naturally appears to one to be a contrast to Jehoshaphat, for certain traits of selfishness are

apparent; indeed, it is more than likely that the magnanimous and apparently unselfish spirit of the latter led him into many a snare.

We purpose to consider briefly three of the leading incidents in this king's life.

1. The Passover and Revival.
2. Jerusalem and Sennacherib.
3. The latter days of Hezekiah.

1. THE PASSOVER AND REVIVAL.

The 29th chapter records the preparatory work necessary before the Passover could be kept in a manner at all pleasing to Jehovah, a doing which demonstrated a truly repentant condition and heart-returning to Jehovah. Verse 2 gives us a key to this great revival. "And he did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah, according to all that David his father had done."

On turning to 1 Chronicles 21. and 22. we find that Jehovah revealed to David His mind concerning the house which was to be built on the site of the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, the price which David gave to Ornan for the place being six hundred shekels of gold by weight. "And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings, and called upon the Lord; and He answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. And the Lord commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof." Thus we find a price was given, for David said, "I will verily buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the Lord my God which cost me nothing." The price given in 2 Samuel 24. is much less than that which we find recorded in 1 Chronicles, but the former was evidently for the threshingfloor and oxen alone, whereas the latter included the whole place.

What a contrast do we find when we come to the New

Testament! The spiritual house is not built upon an earthly foundation purchased by corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with no less a price than the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, Jesus Christ Himself being the Foundation. 1 Chronicles 22. 1: "Then David said, This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel." Thus we find God working good out of evil, overruling all for the accomplishments of His own purposes. We then read those soul-stirring words, "The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries." So David makes preparation for it abundantly before his death, "and David said to Solomon his son, As for me, it was in my heart to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God." However, Solomon was the one chosen to build the house. "Take heed now, for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it." In the case of David the Lord took the will and the desire for the deed; the whole bent of his mind, however, was towards a house for Jehovah his God. Thus he was a man after God's own heart. As it was with David, so it was with David's son, Hezekiah.

Verse 3 shows that on his part there was no hesitancy or delay in doing that which he knew was according to the will of God. No sooner had his wicked father passed off the scene than he betakes himself to open the doors of the House of the Lord, and to clean it from filthiness, reinstating everything as far as in his power lay to correspond with its former glory.

The 34th verse of this chapter tells us that "the priests were too few," and that "the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests." Whatever other teaching this verse may contain, it may suggest, what as a matter of fact often is the case, that through weakness

and failure, along with indifference on the part of others to the claims of God upon them, those less qualified, but having an intense longing to see the work of God go forward, are thrust into a position of responsibility, which having found themselves in, they occupy with cheerfulness to the best of their ability. In due time, providing there is a going on with God, these things right themselves.

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

(To be continued.)

THE OPEN POSITION.

(Concluded from page 54.)

BUT now, with regard to the other end of the chain, we should have found some years ago a very different state of things existing from what we have been occupied with. We refer to the assemblies in Scotland. "Union is strength," says the proverb; but not always so, and in this case the union has not only proved weakness—for be it remembered that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link—but it has proved, we fear, disastrous in great measure to the once clear testimony raised against sectarianism. Were you to have gone among the assemblies in the north in early days, you would have found many of the Christians would have entirely repudiated these open principles, and denied that they belong to Open Brethren. Some might even be found doing so to the present day.

It would be necessary to give some explanation of the origin of those northern assemblies, and why, at one time, they so differed in doctrine and practice from the assemblies in the south, and this is not difficult to explain.

The writer can remember the time when the assemblies of Open Brethren in Scotland could have been counted well-nigh on the fingers of one hand. In fact, there were no meetings, we believe, further north than Dundee. Nothing

was to be found in the Orkney or Shetland Islands. There had been a large Open meeting in Edinburgh, where non-eternity of punishment was tolerated as a doctrine, but this meeting had dwindled away. There were some few meetings in the west, and the meetings established by the late Mr. Bowes, of Dundee, which had their own special characteristics. How, then, did the present work originate? for the almost prophetic words of the late Duncan Matheson in some parts of the country are well-nigh fulfilled. He said that he believed the day would come when there would be a meeting for the breaking of bread in every village in Scotland. It was to labour with the late Duncan Matheson that the writer, with other brethren, first came to the north. At this time we were but throwing off the trammels of sectarianism. The liberty to meet as Christians and to break bread was seen and taught, the wrongness of sectarianism, the unscriptural position of the one-man ministry, setting aside as it does the gifts given of God for the edifying of the saints according to Ephesians iv. These things, we say, were taught through the length and breadth of the land as far north as the Orkney and Shetland Islands. None of the brethren engaged in this work had been trained in Open Brethren assemblies. Mr. R. T. Hopkins and Mr. S. Blow were both led out from Mr. Spurgeon's College; Mr. Harrison Orde and the writer had also been led out from the sects by the study of the Word of God, and it was with the open Bible that the Christians in the north were gathered into assemblies, and taught to look to it as their guide, not the traditions or practices of the Open Brethren in the south. The position of the meetings in the north, we remember hearing at this time, did not escape the notice of the late Mr. Darby, and he told his followers that they could not be treated as associated with evil in the same way as those in the south. Had a distinct stand been taken at this point, such as has been taken in the last

few years, the north might, in great measure, have been saved, we believe, from Open Brethren principles. But this, alas! was not done, and the opportunity was lost. By degrees teachers from the south came in and gained a footing for their doctrines; some made it their object to use their influence to break down the teaching and the practice that they found prevailing. They did not hesitate to build on other men's foundation, and a day is coming that will declare how much of this building has been of wood, hay, and stubble.

When we speak of the assemblies in the north, we would remember that in some parts of the south there were also assemblies that were established upon the same principles as those in the north, especially in Liverpool and its neighbourhood. Many of the Christians in these assemblies had seen with their own eyes that which was little known of in the north, and these, Berean-like, searched the Scriptures for themselves, which has led to very many assemblies following on in the truth as they first received it.

In Aberdeen, where the special effort we have spoken of was made to introduce Open principles, brethren had more or less fallen under their influence. The plea raised was that the condition of things in the south did not affect them in the north, that there were no such assemblies in their midst. Thus when their brethren further south took a position in which they could act out all the truth they had learned and what might still be unfolded to them from the Word of God, leading men in the north came together and deliberately decided to shut out the further light and truth from the assemblies which they represented, and this for the time being they have only too well succeeded in doing. We say for a time, for we believe that there will yet be many who will be brought to see that *they* have departed from the truth, and that others have simply

followed on as they began. The assertion has been made by many that they were cut off in the north from fellowship by those who separated from Open principles in the south, and a letter from the writer of this article has been made use of to prove this statement; and as many will only have heard of it, we now give the letter in full, that brethren may judge for themselves how utterly without foundation this statement is. Instead of cutting off the north, we might have expected that the north as one man would have stood for the truth; but, alas! as we have already said, the evil from the south had done its work, and not only did brethren decide to shut out further light, but they refused that which was granted by those in the south, who had far better ground for refusal—namely, a face-to-face meeting and looking into the Word of God together to see if those things were so. And how do matters stand to-day? The very worst form of ecclesiastical evil has been introduced into the north, and an assembly established where the subversive doctrine of non-eternity of punishment can be tolerated and held. And now the evil is at their own door, how do these brethren act? They have recourse to the miserable subterfuge of the three-cornered fellowship of which we have already written—namely, that of announcing that they will have no fellowship with this gathering of iniquity at their own door; yet when they go south they will find themselves confronted at the same table with those very ones that they refuse to be identified with at home. Can such a condition as this really satisfy the minds of intelligent Christians if they have ever known a God-given deliverance from sectarianism? We believe not; but light may be rejected, and then darkness will follow, and repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth may never be given.

There is no neutral zone in the things of God, no negative position; it is not *a* faith, but *the* faith, which is to be

contended for (Jude 3). We are either gatherers or scatterers, workers together or hinderers of the work.

We trust we are aware that it is comparatively easy to point out what is wrong; it is far harder to teach the truth, for, in order to do this, the truth must be known; and it is harder still to practise the truth taught. This we can only do as we live in the presence and power of God. In the pointing out of what is wrong there may be much of pride; in the teaching of truth there is much to make us feel our ignorance, and in seeking to practise it there is much, yea, very much, to humble us, on account of our failures.

J. A. BOSWELL,

Copy of a letter to a brother in the North.

“November 14th, 1892.

“MY DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—

“I think it well to send you a line as to matters here in Edinburgh, as we find there are many false reports being set on foot. I had a sad letter from G. M. last week, showing how he, without ever having heard what we had to say in reply to our opposers, has made up his mind first, and then asks us to tell him our side of the matter.

“On October 30th we removed from the hall in Marshall Street to our hall in Nicolson Square for the breaking of bread. On Lord’s day of last month we had told them of the step we had made up our minds to take, as those leading the flock. And on the 23rd we called on the Church to gather with us the next Lord’s day, the 30th, in Nicolson Square Hall. On this day we met in above hall, and those who went out from us went off to Jamaica Street, where they were received with open arms. Upon this some got up and left the meeting, and on the following Lord’s day others did the same. These have returned to the fellowship in Marshall Street Hall.

“Mr. B., whom you know a little of, and some of one

mind with him, are those who have gone out from us, and are in J. Street; so that our fellowship with J. Street is now at an end. You will get a letter in a few days in which our position will be more fully set forth than I am now able to do. I believe what should be done in Aberdeen at this point is to ask a few of those brethren who take a lead in the assemblies in the north to come together, and some of us will come up and meet them, and go into any matter they wish together.

"Now is the time to act. The question in the north is, Will brethren at this point go on with the Word of God, or will they take the traditions of Open Brethren as their guide? The day for a so-called middle path is, for us, now past, and past, I trust, for ever.

"I was sorry to see your son looking so poorly still.

"With love in the Lord,

"J. A. B."

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 143.—"*Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth the feet of the ox and the ass.*" *Isa. 32, 20.* What are we to understand the "all waters" to be?

The verses previous to the one referred to speak of a time of trial and judgment and barrenness; but to the seeker there would yet be a place to sow the precious seed where, in due season and by the blessing of God, it would one day bring forth fruit.

To understand the blessing of water and a place to sow seed in we should need to live in an Eastern land.

The sower of the Living Word, led spiritually by the side of "still waters," will find a place to work for God, even when all around to the eyes of others seems dry and barren.

J. A. B.

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.

THE LORD'S COMING AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

VI.

THE day of the Lord is a time that is often referred to in Scripture. It occupies a very prominent place, both in the Old and New Testaments, and yet it is a time regarding which very little appears to be known by the majority of Christians. We have already pointed out that God's present purpose will terminate with the coming of the Lord to the air, to receive unto Himself the Church for which He died; that afterward the revelation of the Lawless One, the Antichrist, will take place; that he will assume supreme power on earth and demand acknowledgment and worship as God from all that dwell on the earth; and that he will persecute with undescrivable fury, and hate all who dare to resist his impious claims.

During the time that elapses between the rapture of the saints and the acknowledgment of the supreme rule of the Antichrist, and especially toward the latter part of that time, many grievous judgments will be poured out by God upon the followers of the beast; and signs will appear in the heavens and on the earth that will strike terror to the hearts of the ungodly; for the earth shall quake and the sun become black as sackcloth and the moon become as blood (*Rev.* 6. 12). Let it be carefully noted, however, that all these sore judgments, of which the book of the Revelation and other scriptures speak, form *no part whatever* of the day of the Lord, but that they all precede that important event. A careful comparison of the Lord's words in *Matthew* 24. 29–31 with those of Peter, in *Acts* 2. 20, will clearly demonstrate this.

When the predestined moment arrives, and the mystery of God is finished (Rev. 10. 7); when the dark mystery of lawlessness has reached maturity and Satan's christ sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is God; and when every fear is allayed by Satan's whisper of peace and safety (1 Thess. 5. 2, 3), then, suddenly, shall the day of the Lord dawn, and the Son of Man shall be seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matt. 24. 30). The Antichrist shall be the first to suffer the vengeance of God's wrath, and, paralyzed with the forthshining of the Lord's arrival, without tasting death, he shall be hurled to his eternal doom (2 Thess. 2. 8; Rev. 19. 20). In flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, shall the Son of Man descend, and "a short work shall He make on the earth"; for all who know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (2 Thess. 1. 7-9). As in the days of Noah they were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away, so shall it be when the Son of Man comes with judgment of fire, consuming as chaff the host of the ungodly (Matt. 24. 38, 39; 3. 12).

"His feet shall stand in that day on the mount of Olives" (Zech. 14. 4), where of old in the days of His flesh He stood and looked upon His people Israel with rebellion in their hearts against Him, when He would fain have gathered them as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and He wept as He contemplated the doom that awaited them (Luke 19. 41); but at that day He will come to a people prepared to receive Him—a people with chastened spirits, who in the bitterness of their soul shall be mourning, every family apart, and on whom the spirit of grace and of supplications shall have been poured (Zech. 12. 9-14).

Then shall they look on Him whom they pierced; and He shall say, "It is My people"; and they shall reply, as did unbelieving Thomas, "The Lord my God" (Zech. 13. 9).

Thus shall He appear to the salvation of His own and to the dismay and everlasting contempt of His adversaries, as in judgment of unquenchable fire they melt away "like the fat of lambs"; and from the four winds of heaven by angelic power and ministry He shall gather together His elect, and *unto Him* shall the gathering be (Matt. 24. 31).

The day of the Lord, then, will commence with the Lord's advent, to clear by judgment the rebellious scene of earth, in order to establish that reign of righteousness so often mentioned in Scripture.

(*To be continued.*)

THE CLAIMS OF THE YOUNG.

IV.

Is the last word spoken by God in the Old Testament not a solemn appeal on behalf of the children? In a day of unbelief and indifference God was warning His people of coming judgments—judgments which would be dire and terrible for those who had forsaken the old paths and forgotten the God of their fathers. But in mercy He says, for His last word is ever a word of grace, "I will send Elijah before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. 4. 5, 6).

The fathers had said, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?" (Mal. 3. 14); and consequently the children were neglected. Formerly they had seen the ordinance, and had inquired the meaning of it, and had learned all that God had done for their

fathers, when He redeemed them and took them to Himself. But now the ordinances were not kept, and the children were not taught, and God was being forgotten. God had made a covenant with Noah that He would never again smite the earth as He did in his day. Had there been ten righteous in Sodom He would have spared it, and He will see that there is a righteous few in the great and terrible day of the Lord, lest He smite the earth with a curse. And it has to be by turning the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, that they may remember the law which He commanded in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly to us, pointing to a similar condition of things in these days (2 Tim. 3.). They are days of much effort in gospel preaching; saints will crowd to the street corner and come to the hall afterwards; but how many look in while the children are there?

There are empty little hearts to be filled, and the workers are few, while Satan is busy. They are easier to deal with now than they will be in a year or two, when, with a cheap cigarette in their mouths and cheap scepticism in their hearts, they stop for a few minutes to listen to you at the street corner.

Yes; there are a few years in their lives when they may be trained in the Holy Scriptures in such a way as shall affect their whole lives. And this God has promised to bless.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

XI.

WE have already traced, in association with the sanctuary of Jehovah and the camp in the midst whereof He dwelt, worship and worshippers in Leviticus, services and servants in Numbers, and we now hope to trace rule and rulers in the light of Deuteronomy.

In the legislation of Jehovah for the ordering of His House and His people, *these* had place and responsibility. "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment" (chap. 16. 18). "Take you *wise* men, and *understanding*, and *known* among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you" (chap. 1. 13). Rulers over you! Officers among you! These were to be known, to be owned, to be honoured, and to be obeyed from the smallest circle of the family, where the rule of God is associated with the parents, to the entire camp, as associated with the elders of Israel. The one authority of Jehovah, presented by and expressed in those *under* such authority, who again are *over* those among whom Jehovah dwells. To resist or set aside those over them in His appointment and will was to resist or refuse the authority of Jehovah, whether in the smallest sphere or the greatest.

In Deuteronomy 21. 18-21 we find actual illustration and practical demonstration of this, in its first application and smallest operation. The case is that of a stubborn and rebellious son. It is not simply that the rule of his parents is set aside, but it is the graver matter of resistance to the rule of Jehovah, whose will demands and whose word commands "honour thy father and thy mother, that

thy days may be prolonged and that it may go well with thee" (chap. 5. 16). After repeated warning and chastening without avail, then "shall his father and mother lay hold on him and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place," where witness is borne against him by his parents. Who can tell the heart-aching and heart-breaking to the parents in such a course? Nature shrinks from it; human fondness would spare the ordeal, to the dishonour of Jehovah, for His honour is at stake. Then "the elders of his city" hear evidence of guilt, pronounce sentence according to the will of God, and guide in carrying out the discipline of God in "putting away the evil from among you"; and the far-reaching effect of such discipline is here seen, for "all Israel shall hear and fear."

From the past we come to the present. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves greater judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good" (Rom. 13. 1-4). We make no apology for introducing such scriptures in connection with this subject, believing that therein we have a divine principle relative to the matter, and establishing powers or authorities that are ordained of God in any and every sphere, whether in home life, in social life, or assembly life; and would insist on this the more in view of the characteristics of the times in "disobedience to parents," "speaking evil of dignities," and "despising of governments," so manifest, and becoming increasingly rampant on all hands, and in almost every sphere.

With rule, as associated with the kingdom and house of God, our subject more particularly treats. The following

scriptures we adduce as establishing the same:—"Elders in every church" (Acts 14. 23); "The elders of the church the Holy Spirit has made you overseers" (Acts 20. 17, 28); "God hath set some in the church governments" (1 Cor. 12. 28); "Them which labour among you and are over you in the Lord" (1 Thess. 5. 12); "The elders that rule well" (1 Tim. 5. 17); "Them that have the rule over you" (Heb. 13. 7, 17, 24); "The elders of the church" (James 5. 14). In the fellowship of God's Son, as expressed in the churches of God, these have place and responsibility, who by the requirements of the Lord's will are to be known, esteemed, remembered, honoured, and obeyed. No plea of failure, either of omission or commission, on their part will afford a reason or excuse for ignoring or refusing this ordinance of God. As well might the child in the home urge the plea of failure of his parents for the setting aside of their authority and despising their word. Only when and as obedience to the parents' will demands the setting aside the will of God may and must the child "obey God rather than man"; and so also in the other relationships and spheres of powers and authorities that are ordained of God. For those who occupy such a sphere in the assemblies of God the requirements of the Lord's will are neither few nor small; these they are responsible to Him to know and perform; and for the performance of these "they must give account" (Heb. 13. 17).

They again, in their responsibility to the Lord, guide the assembly in the accomplishment of His will and carrying on of His work, being also the ears of the assembly to hear, the mouth of the assembly to speak, and the hands of the assembly to guide in acting out the discipline of the House of God; as in Matthew 18. 17, when the previous stages to gain the sinning one have failed, and but make manifest the condition of rebellion; or again, as in 2 Thessalonians 3. 6, 15, when the warning

of 1 Thessalonians 5. 14 and the further admonishings here fail in the winning and recovery of the sinning one, and the discipline of God must be carried out according to Titus 3. 10.

Having considered the first and smallest sphere of responsibility in carrying out judgment (for neither in the sphere of the family in the past, nor the church at the house in the present, do we find responsibility to do so), we now come to look at the matter as related to the wider spheres of the tribe and the camp or nation, which reveal but an extension of the above principles. In Deuteronomy 27. 1 we read, "And Moses, *with the elders of Israel*, commanded the people, saying." Here the elders are seen in association with Moses, in enforcing the claims and commandments of Jehovah, as well as the consequent blessing or cursing following obedience or disobedience thereto, which surely is sufficient in itself to establish their place and responsibility. Then, as to the practical working out of this, we refer to Exodus 4. 29, 12. 21, 24. 9; and Judges 21. 16; 1 Samuel 8. 4. In the mode of operation also there is an order, as seen in Judges 20. 11, 12. From the city to the tribe, and from the tribe to the nation. The elders of the city (Gibeah), responsible ones to deal with the evil in the midst thereof, fail or refuse to do so, when the responsibility next reaches to the tribe (Benjamin), who also refuse to do so, because of which they are reckoned participators in the evil, and share in the judgment and doom thereof. See verse 35.

In the fellowship of God's Son, in the extension of the principle from the assembly of God in the city, we find the next sphere of responsibility to be the province of a past day, answering, we think, to the county of the present day. Thus while in 1 Corinthians 1. 2 the responsibility is primarily with the church of God in Corinth (the city), in 2 Corinthians 1. 1 we find it next with Achaia (the province).

Likewise do we find "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1. 2), and the churches which are in Asia" (Rev. 1. 4). Failure or refusal to act out the will of God in the first sphere would lay obligation and responsibility upon the next to do so, in which action the elders therein and thereof would have the responsibility of guiding the assemblies, for which we find both principle and example in Acts 15. 2, where we find certain from Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia conferring with the apostles and elders in Jerusalem, and who thereafter guide the churches unto knowing and doing the will of God in the matter. For the yet further extension of the principle from the province to the country we have the grouping of provinces referred to in 1 Peter 1. 1, "Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," among which are two already referred to, Galatia and Asia, now found in association with others. Herein is comprised the "flock of God" (chap. 5. 2, 3) in its many allotted portions. Associated herewith also are "the elders which are among you" (ver. 1), presenting in the under-shepherds, in their subjection to "the great Shepherd," an "ensample to the flock," who again are required to know and obey them that are over them in the Lord.

These, again, who are *among* the flock for the feeding, leading, and ruling thereof, in all the varied exercise of privilege and responsibility, are likewise *around* them (for the flock is among the elders) for the protection and defence of them from those who, either as breakers-in or creepers-in, would seek to devour or scatter the flock of God.

DAVID SMITH,

(To be concluded.)

“GOD IS A REFUGE FOR US.”

God is my refuge strong ;
 In Him my spirit joys ;
 Through earth's dark night His heavenly song
 My joyous soul employs.

He makes my bitter sweet ;
 Water He turns to wine ;
 In darkness round my stumbling feet
 He makes His light to shine.

When shadows veil my sight,
 And clouds obscure my sky,
 Then gleams His radiant rainbow bright,
 The token He is nigh.

Though foes and sin assail,
 And nature's succour wanes ;
 My anchor, firm within the veil,
 My sinking soul sustains.

Jehovah's strength, I know,
 Is mine in life or death ;
 To Him my all on earth I owe :
 His is my fleeting breath !

O God, I trust in Thee :
 My refuge tried and true !
 Dependent on Thy grace I'd be,
 And still faith's path pursue.

The soul that rests in Thee
 Is blest whate'er betides !
 For faith can trust Thy kind decree,
 And bless Thy hand which guides.

CHURCHES OF GOD.

A CHRISTIAN is not a Christian on account of his making a profession, but because he is born of God; he is a divine creation, a new creature in Christ Jesus. Likewise a church of God is not a church of God because it professes to be such, but because it has, in like manner, had a divine origin.

No measure of profession will make a man a Christian, nor yet will any amount of profession make a company of Christians a church of God.

There must be a point in the history of the individual when he or she comes under the power of the Spirit of God, in order to be moulded by that Spirit, and made a vessel unto honour, a vessel meet for the Master's use. So likewise there must be a point at which a company of saints is gathered for the first time as a church of God.

There is a point at which the individual becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6. 19); and so again there is a point when an assembly becomes temple of God (1 Cor. 3. 16).

The divine pattern for a child of God to attain to is nothing short of perfect holiness: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5. 48). So likewise the heavenly pattern for a church of God is nothing short of perfection: "That ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1. 10). And this could only be when each individual of the church of God in Corinth was walking in perfect obedience to Christ as Lord.

But no child of God has ever yet manifested a perfect

life on earth ; the only perfect life ever lived on earth was that of the Son of God. His was a perfect obedience ; He came to fulfil the will of the Father, and all through His walk, from the cradle to the Cross, His was a law-abiding life, His will ever being subject to the Father's : " Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God " (Heb. 10. 9).

No perfect assembly has YET been seen on earth, but when the Lord comes with His saints, and our bodies of humiliation are laid aside, with all their sin and failure, then will be seen on earth a Company of redeemed ones in association with their Lord, holy and perfect, as He is perfect ; then will John 17. 23 be fulfilled. Nevertheless, it is the desire of our Lord that John 17. 21 should be fulfilled in the present age.

The moment a Christian takes the position of one who is so sinful and failing that it is impossible for him to become that which God calls him to be, he not only will not be what he might be and ought to be, but he will sink even lower than the standard he has set up for his own life, and instead of being an imitator of the Lord Jesus, he will be satisfied with comparing himself with others whose walk, may be, is even further from a walk of obedience to the Lord than his own.

The moment we take the position of saying that the Church is in ruins, and that we can never have things as God would have them to be, we are in a similar danger, and will probably set up something of our own imagination, or copy that set up by others, which is not according to the divine pattern.

God has given a revelation of His mind and will for His children to walk by as individuals, and this revelation is for all His saints down to the end of the age ; and because there has been, and still is, lamentable failure on the part of saints, yet this in no wise releases us from our responsibility to carry out the whole will of God as He would have

it done. Most would, we believe, agree with us here, yet, strange to say, because there has been failure in the collective responsibility, and the churches of God have failed, many, yea, multitudes, seem to imagine all responsibility to carry out the will of God on earth and the principles revealed in the Word of God for the churches of God has ceased, and that the Lord's people are released from their obligation to carry out the rule of the House of God as established in apostolic times. "The Church is in ruins," many say; and so we may fashion and mould the divine pattern to suit our own mind and our own imaginations. Little wonder, then, that we have around us such a Babel of confusion, such conflicting opinions, such endless creeds, such diversity of thought and practice, until the thinking world is driven further and further from God and the acceptance of God's Son through the manifested disunion of His people, and that is being hastened which will presently culminate in the coming kingdom of the Anti-Christ, when the son of perdition will seek to do his will on the earth in opposition to the will of God being done on earth as it is in Heaven. As we have already said in these pages, there is no neutral zone, no negative position in the things of God—at this moment either we are gatherers or we are scatterers, either helpers unto the Kingdom of God or hinderers.

If those who talk of the Church being in ruins would ask themselves the question, What Church is in ruins? it might greatly help them to see their solemn position; for if the church of God and the Body of Christ are one and the same thing, then the Body is in ruins: and if this be so, then the whole of redemption work has for us failed. Satan has marred, not only the earthly, but the heavenly thing. Surely such teaching goes far to crucify the Son of God afresh and to put Him to an open shame. But, thank God, the Church which is His body and the church of God are not the same. The Cross work has not failed, and

the triumph of the coming kingdom will manifest all this and more.

We are not called to accept any one as a Christian simply because he makes a profession; surely then we are not called to accept every company of people who meet for the breaking of the bread as a God-gathered assembly. We seek to satisfy ourselves in the former case by careful investigation whether there has been any personal dealing with God, whether there has been any working of the Spirit unto repentance and the acknowledgment of the truth. Surely there should be no less careful dealing with an assembly, to see that it is indeed temple of God, builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit.

But this brings us to another point of deep importance, and we would ask our readers' prayerful consideration of what we are about to bring before them.

It is not every one's business to deal with those who profess to be Christians, and who desire to be received into fellowship. Neither is it every one's business to deal with an assembly, to ascertain its real condition, and if it has been fitted of God for the expression of the fellowship of His Son (1 Cor. 1. 9). There is, then, government and rule connected with the House of God, and the House of God we understand to embrace all the assemblies of God at any given time upon the face of the earth.

Now when we turn to the Old Testament we find God had a House, and everything in that House spake of Him. Not only so, but in connection with that House God had a nation, and to that nation of Israel, alone of all the nations of the earth, He gave a form of government to be carried out in their midst. This form of government was to be carried out through human instrumentality—that is, responsible men chosen of God were to act for Him in the government of His nation.

It is very commonly supposed that with the new dispensation everything of the old has passed away, but this we believe to be by no means the case. That which pointed to the Cross—the types and ritual of the Levitical sacrifices—have, indeed, passed away, but God's principles of government for man by no means terminate at the Cross; the very contrary, we believe. On a careful consideration we shall find that the principles of government are much the same in the coming age as in the past. Men will be upon this earth in their mortal bodies as sinners, but sin will be ruled down with a strong hand, the now-rejected Ruler of the nations will rule them with a rod of iron (Rev. 19. 15), associating with Himself in this rule the overcoming ones of the present age (Rev. 2. 26, 27). In order to understand this subject, it will be necessary for our readers to carefully consider the means used by God for the rule of His people in the past, and also, so far as light is given us from the Word, the rule as to the future; and this will help us to an understanding of the present rule of God in the churches of God—keeping also in mind that the Kingdom past, the Kingdom present, and the Kingdom to come are all in harmony, and the principles of government for each age emanate from the same Holy One, who desires that His will should be done on earth as it is in heaven.

If we carefully study the book of Psalms, we shall find much to throw light upon the coming age and that government which is to be set up amongst the nations.

In Psalm 81. 15 we find that the haters of the Lord will yield a feigned obedience unto Him. This expression, "feigned obedience," occurs in several other places, and shows us that in the coming age the submission to the rule of Christ will by many be far from voluntary (see also Ps. 66. 3, margin). Will our readers also notice Isaiah 2., first four verses. Our reason for dwelling specially upon this

point is, as we have already said, to show that God's mode of government and the way of carrying out this government amongst His people does not greatly differ in the past, present or future, the conditions not being so dissimilar as some seem to suppose.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued.)

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

XII. HEZEKIAH.

1. THE PASSOVER AND REVIVAL.

(Continued from page 73.)

2 CHRONICLES 30. is as instructive a chapter as is to be found in the whole of the Old Testament. Verse 1: "And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the Passover unto the Lord the God of Israel."

There are three points in this verse which we might keep before us, covering fairly well the matter of the whole chapter:—

The Passover itself—when it was to be kept.

By whom it was to be kept.

The place where it was to be kept.

On our consideration of the Passover we do well to bear in mind a few facts, otherwise we might be perplexed at some of the things of this chapter. It was an ordinance appointed before the law was given, and seems to have been very inclusive in character. We find it once kept in the wilderness; but after Israel entered the land it was to be kept in the place which Jehovah chose out of all the tribes

to cause His name to dwell in (Deut. 16.) and not at any other; albeit it did not require to be kept in the Temple precincts, the very requirements of the case forbidding. Luke 22. 9, 10 will confirm this.

Then again if we did not bear in mind Numbers 9, it might appear strange that in a revival where those whose spirits the Lord had stirred were seeking to do everything "according as it is written" (note this expression, occurring over and over again), they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month instead of the same day of the first. From the scriptures mentioned, however, we find legislation which suited exceptional circumstances, but by no means gives license for believers now to change as they list the will of God laid down for such in the New Testament, except forsooth it be found that there is contained therein an *accommodating* clause, answering to that of Numbers 9, concerning the Passover. We learn also from this same chapter that there was one statute for the stranger and the home-born. "He that hath an ear let him hear." We find then that there were certain conditions surrounding the keeping of it. A place, a time, a people, an order. It was not to be kept when *they* thought fit, but as the Lord commanded.

The breaking of the bread likewise can only be where the authority of the Lord is owned, the "there" of Matthew 18. 20. "When" is indicated by Acts 20. 7: "The first day of the week" when assembly of God is in assembly. (1 Cor. 11. 18, there should be no "the" in this passage). The words "we were gathered," of Acts 20. 7, are in the passive, the same as "gathered together" of Matthew 18. 20, and again in 1 Corinthians 5. 4, showing that the occasion indicated here is unique—not having come together by chance, or of man's appointment, but being gathered by the power of the Spirit. The three scriptures above pointed out appear to cover the leading characteristics of our being

gathered together on the first of the week. The "as oft as" of 1 Corinthians 11. 25, are words qualified and circumscribed by the rest of the Scriptures, and have to be understood accordingly, and are by no means to be understood as saying "as often as *ye like*." John 20. 19, 20, would further suggest and bear out the above.

1 Corinthians 5. intimately connects the Passover with the present dispensation, but the Passover was always itself connected with the feast of unleavened bread and never disassociated. The Passover was a memorial feast (Ex. 12. 14). The breaking of the bread (1 Cor. 11. 23-26) is also that of remembrance, and as the Passover was that which told of a new start, "the beginning of months" (Exod. 12. 2), so also "the breaking of the bread" tells of that which hath been indeed a blessed beginning to us, the bitter past having been blotted out for ever. "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold they are become new" (2 Cor. 5. 17.) The passage in 1 Corinthians 5. reads thus: "For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ: wherefore let us keep the feast" (keep festival, R.V. margin).

Exodus 12. tells of that which was never to be enacted again, the night when the lamb was slain and the blood thereof applied on the two side posts and on the lintel. 1 Corinthians 5. tells likewise that which will never be repeated—the offering once for all; but as there was a remembrance of the one, so also there is a remembrance of the other. The keeping festival would embrace the whole, and answers to the life of the saint, the secret recesses of the heart being searched, and everything displeasing to a holy God confessed, judged, and put away, a life indeed well pleasing to Him. If such is the case with each respective individual, the same will be true in a collective sense. The feast of unleavened bread of olden time was for seven days; that

which is antitypical thereof to-day is expressed by each recurring first day of the week—with its as oft recurring seven days—the sum total being the “whole life for God.”

Hezekiah sent to *all* Israel; none were exempt; but if it was to all Israel there must be on their part a turning to God. “Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, that He may return to the remnant that are escaped of you out of the hand of the kings of Assyria” (*v.* 6). It was no message of peace at any price, no message of grace at the expense of truth. It was not a message after this sort:—The times are so changed since Moses, and even since the days of Solomon, we could not presume to ask you to come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. Oh, no! keep it where you are, and there is no occasion whatever to change your ways. Methinks such a message would have suited their tastes nicely.

How did those of Israel treat this message? Let us see. “So the posts passed from city to city through all the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn, and mocked them.” If it were not for the fact that man is unaltered and unalterable, one would be astonished at the attitude of these men. We need not, however, go as far back as Hezekiah’s time to see such things enacted, for what answers to the same has taken place before our own eyes time after time. The fact is, there is that in man naturally which ever kicks against the truth and rule of God. One fancies they can see the gibes, the curl of the lip, the reproachful look of these disdainful men, at what to them appeared to be a message too silly to be seriously taken; indeed, one can imagine that there was an expression of pity on the faces of some that there were those still remaining in Judah holding such ideas, which might

have done for time gone by, but not for those enlightened days. "Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves, and *came to Jerusalem*" (remember here Deut. 16.). A repentant, humbled condition is necessary unto a going on with God. If those are brought together unto whom God has not given repentance, there can only be trouble upon trouble as the outcome, and an absolute refusal to go on to a fuller knowledge of the will of God.

There cannot be there that which is spoken of in the next verse, the "one heart"; and the being "perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1. 10). Nothing is more clearly shown in the Scriptures, and emphasized again and again, than the need of repentance and that from God. Ezekiel 43. confirms this (v. 10). "Thou son of man, show the house to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities: and let them measure the pattern. And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, make known unto them the form of the house," and so forth. It was only on a repentant condition being manifested that instruction was to be given. When the Lord Jesus was asked by the chief priests and the elders of the people, "By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority?" the Lord Jesus absolutely refused to enter into further conversation with them until they answer Him one question, "which, if ye tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" They answered, "We know not," to which the Lord replied, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things." This is significant when we remember, that the baptism of John was unto repentance. With all this let us study prayerfully and carefully 2 Timothy 2. 24-26: "And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be

gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, having been taken captive by him, unto the will of Him" (that is of God) or, in other words, that they may recover themselves unto the doing of the will of God.¹

Before closing our remarks on this chapter, we would briefly refer to the remarkable incident and prayer recorded in verses 17-20, when we find a multitude of those who came out of Israel eating the passover "otherwise than it is written." From verse 20 we learn that some plague or sickness must have broken out amongst the people for so doing; but the Lord healed the people in answer to the prayer of Hezekiah: "The good Lord pardon every one that setteth his heart to seek God."

There are times and circumstances when God has mercy, and passes over lightly the ignorance and failure of His people, which at other times with a more perfect knowledge of His will He would not for a moment tolerate. Woe unto us if it were not for Him, a greater than Hezekiah, Who intercedes for us at God's right hand above. The essential condition, however, for blessing, and the bestowal of the mercy of God, is expressed in Hezekiah's prayer—a right heart condition before Him. We have to do with a God who searcheth the hearts. God will surely blow upon everything and every one where such a condition is lacking.

Chapter 31, in the main is a record of setting things in order, each one taking his proper place as assigned to him,

¹ The margin of the Revised Version shows this to be the right translation, where we read, "in the Greek the two pronouns are different."

See also *Needed Truth*, Volume I., pages 84 to 95.

God having first had His portion as in previous chapters; but all was done "as it is written in the law of the Lord" (v. 3). Then the Levites were to have their portion, "that they might give themselves to the law of the Lord" (v. 4).

"And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of corn, wine, and oil and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly" (v. 5), "and they brought in . . . faithfully" (v. 12). The intermediate verses give in detail the laying by of the dedicated things in heaps. "In the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month" (v. 7). When there is a heart-returning to the old paths, the good way, there is an accompanying exercise of heart about many things. Thus it was here.

Have we not seen much the same in our time? a searching of heart and exercise about the correctness or otherwise of many things which were formerly allowed to pass, indeed taken for granted, as being correct. As far as I am aware, there is no precedent of a box or plate being passed round for the collection of money in either the Old or New Testament. Probably such a practice is coincident with the early departure from God, and perpetuated down the centuries of darkness since. We find always, as in this instance, the offerer coming to the place to give his offering, and never a box or the like brought to the offerer. The Lord Jesus "sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the multitude cast money into the treasury and there *came* a poor widow" (Mark 12. 41, 42). In the measure in which we apprehend what God expects from us and the delight we give to Him when we respond to His claims (all to be done as pleasing Him), shall we think less of getting offerings, money and the like, albeit the desire for such may be with a right motive for the furtherance of the work of the Lord. No, rather the thought will be

far nobler and more worthy of God, the thought of giving Him joy because of giving to Him.

The Lord will not then have the blind, the lame and the sick. We are so apt to forget that all the gold and silver is His, and the cattle upon the mountains where thousands are. Besides, there is a distinct and definite command against giving grudgingly or of necessity. "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9. 7). It seems to me that God has gone out of His way, so to speak, to provide against a sort of giving that He gets nothing from, although the work of the Lord may apparently prosper. But some will say, How can the work of God be carried on? Well, let us remember that "Little is much if God is in it."

On the other hand, much is little before God if He is out of it. Of this we may be sure, that means to carry on the work of the Lord, and all else that God requireth, will never be lacking if God's way (always the best) is strictly adhered to. It would be absurd to think so, seeing His resources are infinite.

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

(*To be continued.*)

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.

THE LORD'S COMING AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

VII.

Six times in Revelation 20. a period of a thousand years is referred to, during which Christ and others with Him shall

reign. Satan shall be bound during that time, and shall be shut up and sealed in the abyss, so that he may not deceive the nations. Then shall the Son of Man sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from his goats. Let it be carefully noted that this judgment scene described in Matthew 25. is not of resurrected dead, but is of *living nations*: and those who find their place on the right hand of the King, because of their kindness to His brethren, shall inherit with Him the Kingdom and enter into the millennial reign; while those on the left hand shall depart into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.

Israel, with the veil removed and the law of God written on their hearts, will manifestly be the people of the Lord, and will gladly own the long-rejected claims of their King. Then shall be fulfilled the saying that is written, "A King shall reign in righteousness." Jerusalem shall be the earthly centre from which His rule shall radiate; and that rule, strong and unyielding as an iron rod, shall reach from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth. All on earth will be compelled to submit themselves to the authority of the Sovereign Lord, whether that submission be feigned or otherwise.

This is the time for which creation waits, with piteous pleading and constant groan, when it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption and brought into the liberty of the sons of God—the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets (Rom. 8. 19, Acts 3. 21). Isaiah most graphically pictures that time, and promises to earth the restoration of Eden fertility and deliverance from the curse. Through him also God has been pleased to declare how every creature of earth shall be blessed, and how the lion and the ox, the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and

hurting and destruction be unknown; the serpent only being the exception to this universal deliverance from the result of the curse (Isa. 11. 6-9, 65. 25). Death also shall all but disappear, and the darkness of night shall be unknown (Isa. 65. 20, 30. 26; Zech. 14. 6, 7).

Then shall the Lord sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day there shall be one Lord, and His name one. All nations shall worship Him, and from year to year they shall gather to Jerusalem and bring the glory and riches of the nations into it; and Jerusalem shall be called the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel, the joy of the whole earth.

“I see Him reign in righteousness,
The King on Zion's hill;
All nations own His sceptre now,
Submissive to His will;
Creation blossoms 'neath His smile,
The curse removed at length.
Fair is the scene! I wondering gaze
And joy in Israel's strength.”

Yes, fair is the scene! and the Christian, with worshipping heart as he contemplates it, can in anticipation utter the words of thanksgiving that will yet be spoken by the four and twenty elders in the presence of God: “We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power and hast reigned.”

(*To be concluded.*)

LORDSHIP.

IN these democratic days, when the servant is supposed to be on an equality with his master, lordship is little understood. The title lord conveys little more to some minds now-a-days than the idea of social rank, or that of an honourable distinction conferred for services rendered to the State. Yet the time is not so long gone since it carried with it powers and responsibilities which all men understood and accepted, or had to accept.

When a man was made a lord by having granted to him a barony, an earldom, or any other estate with the titles pertaining to it, he became a lord in very truth. With the title and the lands went absolute power over those who dwelt upon the land; they had to accept him or become outlaws. He was placed over them by their sovereign lord, the king, and from that there was no appeal. To the bounds of his land and to all who were on it he was as king, for the regal authority was delegated to him to that extent, and his powers were held at the king's will and pleasure. All who dwelt under him had to swear allegiance to him. In Anglo-Norman England the form was as follows: Each tenant came forward with his head uncovered, and placing his hands between those of the sitting lord, said humbly as he knelt, "I become your man from this day forward, of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and unto you shall be true and faithful, and shall bear to you faith," etc. From that day forward he was at his lord's bidding, to do his will, from tilling the land to giving his life in its defence. Nor was this arrangement such a one-sided affair as it may appear. Who touched the "man" and his property touched the man's lord; and every one who had taken the oath knew that he might go about his business in safety and security,

for his lord, with knights, squires, and retainers, were ready to ride forth and do battle on his behalf, if need arose.

Jesus is Lord in a far fuller sense than can be expressed by any earthly analogy. God has made Him both Lord and Christ, and His title has not become a mere honourable name. It expresses His degree; it also expresses His powers—the powers which God has given Him. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” Can His bands be broken asunder and His cords cast away? The answer is in that wonderful 2nd Psalm. They might crucify the Son of God; they might bury Him deep and seal His tomb: but “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; He shall have then in derision.” “This Jesus hath God raised up.” “Therefore let all know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ.” And let it be repeated that this “Lord” is no mere title of honour, but a title that expresses what in very deed He is. Rejected, perhaps, but none the less Lord of the heathen and of the uttermost parts of the earth (Ps. 2. 8), as the day shall declare.

And we have called Him Lord. We have in another way placed our hands between His, and kneeling, have sworn the oath of fealty; we have confessed with our mouth Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10. 9, R.V.). Henceforth we are His of life and limb and of earthly worship, to be true to Him and to bear Him faith. Therefore, “Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling” (Ps. 2. 11); for He is our Lord.

Do we ever bear in mind that we should have had to bow the knee had we not confessed Him Lord in believing? Though we were saved by grace when we saw our lost condition, do we remember often enough that grace is the prerogative of sovereignty, and that a command had gone forth for all men everywhere to repent? We fear that the

word grace has lost its meaning, since men have forgotten what lordship meant.

Let us remember in all our service that, though it is our Lord's will that love should rule our hearts, yet His claims are as binding upon us as though they had been declared with the thunderings of Sinai; for it is the Lord Jesus Christ who shall sit upon the judgment-seat of Christ as it is He whom God has made both Lord and Christ who shall preside at the more awful tribunal of the Great White Throne.

AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL.

THE writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews in chapter 6., speaking of the hope which he there refers to, says, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul." These are days when the souls of young Christians need to be firmly anchored in the Word of God. That blessed hope, the coming of the Lord, should ever prove a stable and an abiding anchor. At times the billow-tossed vessel on the heaving sea drags her anchor and drifts on the rock-girt shore to certain destruction. The hope of the Lord's coming appears, alas! to be a dragging anchor with many a Christian to-day. Once it held them fast amid the beguiling influences of a seductive world for their absent Lord; once, with garments unspotted, and with virgin purity, they held their head and heart aloft, waiting in joyful expectation for His coming again; but now their anchor drags, and they are drifting, slowly but surely, on to the rocks of worldliness.

Time was when their last thoughts at night, ere sleep mastered thought, were, "I may be with my Lord before the morning dawns"; and their first thoughts in the

morning were, "The Lord is coming; He may come to-day; I may be with Himself ere sunset." Thus watching and waiting, prepared for review, they longed for His coming again. But now how different everything is. The midnight oil is burned over the lengthened columns of the ledger or the day-book; the rising sun beckons them, while yet the dewdrops adorn the flowers, to renew the fevered haste and anxiety of yesterday in business pursuits. All this, of course, to enable them to have food and raiment, and therewith to be content! Is this seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness, knowing that a Father's hand will add all these things? Ah, no! Alas, no! More often to enable them to keep pace with worldly and pompous neighbours around them; more often to enable them to add to their earthly pile in order that the moth and rust may have more to feed upon, and the thief reap a greater harvest. Oh brother, sister, pause! Where is now the blessedness of which ye once spake? In the quiet of God's presence cast your mind back on the former days when first the light of the knowledge of the glory of God illuminated your heart; when ye sang with fulness of joy, "Take the world, but give me Jesus"; or, "Thou art coming, blessed Saviour; nothing else seems worth a thought." Then you possessed little of the world, but Christ was everything to your heart; and you knew no lack of joy, rest, and peace, for your portion was Christ. Now you have much of the world, and Christ has lost His charms to your soul; His coming again is rarely ever thought of; the new song has ceased! What a change! Tell thy God which is the better portion!

Some there are who laugh at the fervour of their first love, and the energy and zeal of their youth. They feign to be ashamed of what they did, and what they said in the fulness of their heart for their new-found Saviour; but would to God that many were infants still. Better far the

prattle of the babe in Christ, better far the fervour and constancy of the first love than the sealed lips of the one who is so steeped in worldliness that he rarely ever mentions the name of Jesus to saint or sinner, whose heart has long been estranged from the One who claims its undivided affection.

Young believers, let the blessed hope of the Lord's coming fill your hearts; let it shine in all its heavenly brightness on your pathways through life; hold it fast, let it not go, barter it not for the world's favour or gold; let it ever be the anchor of your soul which will hold you fast for God during your short voyage over life's stormy sea. Be warned by the shipwreck of others, and hold fast till Jesus comes.

FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER.

God has caused many exhortations to be written in His Word with reference to forgiveness amongst His people. Probably there is nothing more contrary to human nature and more distasteful to the flesh than the exercise of the beautiful grace of forgiveness. That God well knew there would be great need for the constant exercise of this grace the many exhortations in that direction abundantly prove. Moreover in this matter, as in all else that is good, He has Himself set us the example; which, by His grace, may it be ours to seek ever to follow.

God in boundless grace has forgiven us all our sins. He has done more than that we well know. He has justified us, He has sanctified us, but with these and other wonders we do not at present wish to deal. "In Christ" He hath forgiven us. Marvellous thought! In spite of all that we

had done and in spite of all that we were it has pleased God to forgive us. There was nothing in us to merit the exercise of such grace, but God has found everything needful in Christ, and therefore He has righteously forgiven us. Whether it is the debtor of five hundred pence or the one of fifty, whether it be the sinner with many sins or the sinner with few sins, both have known the same perfect and eternal forgiveness through the grace of God. We have tried to reckon our debt to God, the shadow of the dark cloud of our sins has often passed before our troubled souls, but we have never known the enormity of the debt we had contracted, we have never known the multitude of our sins, nor the doom they deserved. Thank God we shall never need to meet that debt, we shall never need to face our sins: all is forgiven for Christ's sake. Surely they who have been forgiven so much will love much.

The Lord Jesus Christ spake of a certain king who took account of his servants and who found one who owed him ten thousand talents. This servant had nothing wherewith to pay and so in compassion his lord frankly forgave him all. Not long after the same man met one of his fellows who owed him a hundred pence but who had nothing wherewith to pay. He refused to show mercy, and seizing him by the throat cast him into prison until he should pay the debt. Had this man forgotten what transpired a short time before as he stood trembling and penniless before a ten thousand talent debt? Had he forgotten the anguish of his own soul until he heard his lord pronounce a free forgiveness? What base ingratitude! He who had been forgiven so much failed to forgive so little.

The hundred pence debts are not uncommon amongst God's people to-day—the little things which call for the exercise of love and forgiveness. Yet alas! how often Christians are like the unforgiving debtor of the parable. Although their own mighty "all" has been freely forgiven

they often fail to forgive their brother his little debt. Thus the little things become often a root of bitterness which, when it has sprung up, defiles the many. The petty quarrels and fleshly strifes lead to tumult and every evil work. How easily such sorrows could be avoided by the exercise of forgiveness! How well pleasing to the Lord such conduct would be! How the enemy would be vanquished and deliverance from sore heart-rendings effected if saints would only remember how much they themselves have been forgiven, and shew like forgiveness to one another.

But then the wronged one would often have to suffer the wrong without any reparation. Very well: that is something to glory in, that is something which is thankworthy in the sight of God. When the Lord Jesus was reviled He reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not, but committed His cause to Him who judgeth righteously. Here is our example! What could that heart not forgive Who prayed for His tormentors, "Father, forgive them"? Oh! to cultivate the spirit of our Master in this matter; oh! to follow the lead of our Lord! Why do we find it so difficult? Because we have learned so little of Him. Because we are yet so carnal as to think that self's interests and self's honour must be vindicated. May it please God to bring with power to our every heart the Spirit-breathed words: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you"; "If any man have a complaint against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." Any other conduct is but adding sin to sin; for to him who knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

ON THE WATCH TOWER.

WHAT is Thy word for me to-day,
 For me to-day?
 What for Thee can I do or say,
 While yet I may?
 Thy word I'd hear in accents clear,
 Give opened ear, give opened ear.

In service still, I'd bow my will,
 I'd bow my will;
 Active or passive, happy still,
 Thy word fulfil!
 In this I'm blest, 'tis choicest rest;
 Thy will is best, Thy will is best.

What is Thy word? Oh! speak it clear,
 Oh! speak it clear;
 Do Thou but speak and I will hear,
 Nor ever fear;
 Gladly obey, work while I may;
 Still 'tis "to-day"! still 'tis "to-day"!

For me the morn may never be,
 May never be;
 My eyes its sunlight may not see,
 Caught up to Thee!
 Why should I pine, to-day is mine,
 The future Thine! the future Thine!

NEEDED TRUTH.

This is Thy word, I hear Thee say,
I hear Thee say,
In still small accents, " Watch and pray
While yet you may !
Full many sleep in slumber deep,
Thy vigil keep ! Thy vigil keep

Oh ! Morning Star, I wait for Thee,
I wait for Thee !
Till Thou appear no sleep for me,
Nor beauty see !
Earth's charms benumb, o'erpowering some.
Lord Jesus come ! Lord Jesus come !

THE PILLOW OF REST AND THE PILLAR OF TESTIMONY.

THE names and characters of Old Testament Scriptures have in them that which is profitable and is written for our learning. So we may gather something by the way from that part of the life of Jacob recorded in Gen. 28. 10-22. Jacob, as to his name and character, reminds us of ourselves, and what we were before being born again, his name meaning supplanter, his character crafty and deceiving. All this we were, and much more besides; and it was indeed a revelation for us when we learned for the first time that the heart was deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. When we learned that we were lost sinners, and when God said, as it were, What is thy name? we could answer Jacob.

Jacob was under his brother's wrath, and a fugitive; and some of us can remember the time when, in part, we knew that the wrath of God abode upon us because we believed not in His Son. Does this meet the eye of one who knows not his sins forgiven? Ponder well what it means. The wrath of God abideth upon him (John 3. 36). Blessed be His hallowed Name, some can sing:

"The terrors of wrath and of God
With me can have nothing to do,
My Saviour's obedience to blood
Hides all my transgressions from view."

As the fugitive Jacob journeyed on, he came toward Haran (Parched or Dry). Here God met him. Like Mephibosheth, when David's grace went out to him, he was in Lo-de-Bar (Place of no pasture). Like Israel, also described by the name of Jacob (Deut. 32. 9, 10), he found him in a desert place and a waste howling wilderness. Also like ourselves, when we were found by the

Lord Jesus, we had proved that there was no satisfying portion under the sun. Jacob being weary, and night fast approaching, takes from the stones (see Newberry's margin) of that place, and puts one for his pillow and lies down to sleep. Here he finds rest upon the stone. What a picture here of ourselves. Night approaching—yes, going onwards to the blackness and darkness for ever, weary with ourselves and sin, we found rest upon Him, the Living Stone, hearing His loving invitation, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11. 28). What a pillow this was for a tormented conscience and a weary soul stained with the guilt of sin. May our souls never lose the savour of the sweetness of the rest we found in Him. How true, as we sometimes sing :

"I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad,
I found in Him a resting-place,
And He has made me glad."

Has the reader known this experimentally? Knowledge is not the Saviour, and doctrine is not the Lord; though it is well, indeed, to have both, after you have found rest in Him.

Jacob, during his rest, gets a vision and a revelation from God, and sees a way cast up (Newberry margin) from earth to heaven. Its interpretation we do not purpose going into, but to draw from it lessons that may be to profit. A way cast up! Wondrous grace indeed it is to know that the Lord Jesus, having met all God's righteous claims, satisfying justice, opened up a way by which God could reach the sinner in righteousness, and bestow upon him the love of His heart. But more wondrous seems to be the grace which has cast up a way for the saved sinner to come right into the presence of God and say, Abba Father. The new and living way which He hath opened through the veil—that is to say, His flesh. This enables the soul to have com-

munion direct with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely as we thus draw near to God, what a holy reverence becomes us. May we know the meaning and power of those words—Hallowed be Thy Name.

During Jacob's dream he hears a promise from God, which assures him that He will not leave him until He has done that which He has spoken to him of. Does not this remind us, who have found rest, of our eternal security, based upon the very promise of our Lord Jesus Christ? "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10. 28). Also Paul, by the Spirit, says, "Being confident of this very thing that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philip. 1. 6). Upon Jacob awaking out of sleep it was morning. This revealing of God to him was an epoch in his history. It was the beginning of days to him, for he had heard the voice of the Lord. He had been brought into touch with the presence of God, and realized the dreadfulness of the place upon which he stood, and exclaims, "This is none other than the House of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

THE PILLAR.

As God has made himself known to Jacob, and given such promises, Jacob now realizes that there must be something for God. So he takes the stone upon which he had rested, and sets it up for a Pillar, and pours oil upon it, and calls the name of that place Bethel (House of God), though the name of that city was called Luz (perverseness) at first. Beautiful sight, a perverse place made into House of God; precious thought, that apparently God's object in revealing Himself to Jacob was to have something for Himself. And He got it—the anointed pillar of testimony. Has this no voice, no teaching to our souls? Surely it ought to have. There is something beautifully solemn

about the House of God in Jacob's day, faint as the picture is. It was the place of the Lord's presence. For he said, "Surely the Lord is in this place." This was one of the essential features of its being the House of God. There would have been no use in Jacob's raising the pillar and pouring oil upon it if God's presence was lacking. That would have been form without power.

The Lord's presence there made it a dreadful place, because it was a place of holiness. Note well when Jacob had gone away from Bethel, God bids him to come back; and Jacob, knowing the character of the God of Bethel, bids his household to put away the strange gods that are among them, and to be clean and change their garments. Jacob realized that if he was to return to the House of God he and his household must have that which is in keeping with the House of God (see chap. 35.).

It was a place of fear. Jacob was afraid. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints" (Psa. 89. 7).

It was a place for worship. For in chapter 35. he builds an altar and calls it El-Bethel (God of Bethel). Here was something for the God of the House of God.

It was also a place of testimony to God. This we may gather from the raised pillar.

To go back to our previous thoughts, namely, that one of God's objects in revealing Himself to Jacob was to have something for Himself. So with the children of Israel. God's object and purpose in their redemption and deliverance from the power of Pharaoh is contained in the words, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." And the outcome of that service was the tabernacle in the wilderness, completed after the mind of God, and so God found a dwelling-place in the midst of His people, and His presence filled the place.

Let us meditate upon the importance of God deigning

to dwell amongst men as seen in Solomon's prayer of 2 Chronicles 6. 18. "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built!" Solomon built Him an house (Acts 7. 48). The grandeur of the material and its costliness, and the glory that filled it are seen in the first five chapters of 2 Chronicles. "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 7. 48). This applies to all of earth's material buildings that are called "House of God," "My Sanctuary," etc., etc.

Has God a dwelling-place to-day? If so, what material is it composed of? The rejection of the Lord Jesus by His own people (John 1. 11) led to His rejecting them as a nation. And after His ascent to the Father's right hand, and the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.), a new dispensation began, when God began to deal with all men on the broad basis of sinnership, and to take out of Jew and Gentile a people for His name (Acts 15.). The middle wall of partition being broken down, He made both one, and became Head over the Church which is His Body. This aspect of the Church is entirely heavenly, having a heavenly calling, with heavenly hopes, and a heavenly destiny, in contrast to Israel's earthly calling, earthly hopes, and an earthly city. Into this Church human instrumentality never received a member. For it is the building of Matthew 16., where He says, "I will build." This is the heavenly thing composed of every believer in Christ Jesus everywhere. It is not this aspect of truth we are writing of, but mentioning the foregoing to make clear what is to follow.

Tracing from the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles we notice those who received the Word and were baptized were added together. And these disciples, who were thus brought together by the operation of the Holy

Spirit into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, formed in any given locality the church of God in that place. For instance, Paul goes to Corinth and preaches the Gospel there, with the result that many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized. These were brought together and formed the church of God in Corinth. Of this company Paul could say, I laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon, but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon (1 Cor. 3.). Contrast this with Matthew 16., "I will build." Paul, speaking by the Spirit in this chapter, calls himself a wise master-builder.

The conclusion is apparent, that the one refers to the heavenly and the other as relating to earth, with its local reception of disciples, its local responsibility, with its many details.

Paul, writing his first and second epistles to the Corinthians, addresses them as a church of God. It is a local company of gathered together saints that the Lord Jesus has in view when He says in Matthew 18., "Tell it unto the church. This is the company who are gathered together unto His Name" (see ver. 20).

Such a company Timothy was of, in Ephesus, when Paul wrote his first letter to him, and in chap. 3. ver. 15, says, "These things write I unto thee that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God which is Church of the living God,¹ the pillar and ground of the truth" (see R.V.). Also Hebrews chap. 3. ver. 7, "But Christ as a Son over His House (that is God's—R.V., margin), whose House are we," etc. These and other Scriptures establish the fact that God has a dwelling-place to-day. That it is found where two or three are gathered together into His Name, thus being assured of

¹ Nevertheless let none confuse church of God with Church of living God, for the two expressions by no means denote the same thing.— [Ed. N.T.]

His presence, "there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18. 20).

It is not a material house, but a spiritual one, being composed of believers who have been baptized and gathered into His Name, hence are disciples of the Lord Jesus, having hearts subject to Him.

Such also is like the glimpse we have of Bethel in Jacob's day, in that it is the place where the Lord's presence is.

It is the place where God is greatly to be feared (Ps. 89. 7).

It also is the place of holiness where evil should be judged as seen from Revelation 2. and 3.

And again, holiness becometh Thine house.

It is the place where His glory dwelleth (Ps. 26. 8, R. V.).

It is a place where behaviour and order should be of the very best kind. For the assemblies of God form the House of God (1 Tim. 3. 15).

It is a place for collective worship where we can offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2. 5).

It is a place of testimony, for it is pillar and ground (firm foundation) of the truth.

Surely, if we but entered into God's thoughts about His dwelling-place, that is, for us to be an habitation of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2. 22), we should exclaim like Jacob, "How dreadful is this place; this is none other than the House of God."

J. DORRICOTT.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

XII.—HEZEKIAH.

*(Continued from page 101.)*2. JERUSALEM AND SENNACHERIB (2 Chron. **32**. 1-23).

Most of this chapter deals with Sennacherib's invasion of Judah and Jerusalem (for a longer description of events at this time, see Isaiah **36**. to **38**.). Sennacherib was one of the greatest kings of Assyria, a ruler remarkable for his great military power, and love of conquest; his ambition (like his great brother-warrior Napoleon of later date) growing by what it fed upon. Along with this, the great ancient power of Egypt was rapidly assuming alarming proportions under an Ethiopian dynasty, which makes historical events happening now most interesting. The first contact of this great power with Assyria is said to have occurred two reigns previous to this, under Sabaco, the "So" of 2 Kings **17**. 4. The Assyrian monarch reigning in the time of So was Shalmanesar. Hoshea, last king of Israel, was tributary to this monarch, but rebelling, joined affinity with the Egyptian monarch for mutually resisting the encroachments of Assyria, but the sovereign of that empire soon put an end to the alliance by defeating Sabaco. The new Egyptian power, however, was not broken.

In the time of Sennacherib Egypt and Ethiopia were looked upon as one; this fact accounts for "Tirhakah" being styled "king of Ethiopia" (Isaiah **37**. 9). Interesting details might be given concerning Tirhakah, but this is hardly the place for such.

Verse 1. "After these things and this faithfulness, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came and entered into Judah." This verse in itself is a testimony of God's approval and delight in Hezekiah. We must consider sub-

sequent events recorded in this chapter as a testing of his faith, just as gold is tried in the fire, but loses nothing by the process, but only becomes purer—events which unquestionably cast Hezekiah and other faithful ones in Judah and Jerusalem more and more upon the Living God.

Do we not find God acting on this principle with all those whom He loveth, and who are raised up to do a work for Him? Was not Abraham tried again and again, and caused to pass through the fire, until the crowning test of all came, the which we find summed up thus in the following Scripture? "By faith Abraham, being tried, offered up Isaac: yea, he that had gladly received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; even he to whom it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God is able to raise up, even from the dead; from whence he did also in a parable receive him back." Hebrews 11. 17-19, R.V.

We have noticed how God gave victory in the days of Abijah, Asa, and Jehoshaphat; and now, again, He rises up to deliver gloriously. It would seem that on each successive occasion, as declension became more marked, the victory on God's part was more patent and miraculous; for on this occasion, it would appear, that they not even as much as thought of giving fight; in Jehoshaphat's day Judah not even as much as draws a bow. This is the last national victory given by God on behalf of His ancient people, so marking it with a peculiar interest.

Verses 7 and 8 are worthy of our attention, and it is indeed blessed to know that the same covenant God Who fought for Hezekiah and Judah at this time, is the Living God Who fights our battles too. "For this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto (over or beyond) death" (Psalm 48. 14). For what can the arm of flesh do, the enemy being overwhelming in-

deed? Who is sufficient for these things? God, even the living God!

It is interesting to learn that in secular history mention is made of Sennacherib's misfortune and hasty return into his own land, but, as we might expect, not similar to that Divinely given us. The Egyptian tradition is interesting when compared with the inspired record. It is to this effect: "In answer to the prayer of one Sethos, who despised the warrior class—a priest-king who is said to have ruled at the same time as Tirhakah—a miracle was worked, by which the quivers and bow-strings of the enemy were eaten away by field-mice, together with the thongs of their shields, so that on the following morning they were put to disastrous flight."

The annals of Assyria make no mention whatever of the ignominious defeat of Sennacherib at this time, as it was not a general custom for these ancient powers to record their defeats.

We know, on the authority of the Word of God, that the victory was given in answer to the prayers of such as Hezekiah, Isaiah, and others in the mind of God, for Sennacherib had reproached not merely Hezekiah and Judah, but the Living God. It was against a more powerful enemy than Hezekiah and Judah that Assyria was waging war, even against the Living God. God consequently rises up to vindicate His own character.

Isaiah 36. 7 shows how the natural man can never distinguish between things which differ regarding the things of God; putting together things which are diametrically opposed. So to-day those who are seeking to give effect to the truth of God are classed together in one heterogeneous mass, in the estimation of the natural man, with those who are far from being in the mind of God; for although outward appearances may be similar, they are often deceiving, for when looked upon from a heavenly standpoint—one

being in the mind of God—they are found to be as different as possible.

The second prayer of Hezekiah, as recorded in Isaiah 37. 14–20, is most touching and sublime. Surely he brought his trouble to the right place and to the right One. The only place where true solace abounds.

“God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.”

—Ps. 46, 1.

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

(*To be continued.*)

- “The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.
- “Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn had blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.
- “For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd;
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever grew still!
- “And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.
- “And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.
- “And the widows of Asshur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!”

BYRON

JABBOK.

IN reviewing the past, with its record of many failures, much unfaithfulness, and self-will, contrasting so sharply with the love and faithfulness of our God, surely the desire of our hearts for the future is expressed in the words:—

“Oh to be nothing, nothing!
 Only to lie at His feet
 A broken and emptied vessel,
 For the Master's use made meet.”

It is also His desire that each one of His people should be a vessel meet for His use, and if He has not been using us in the past, it is well for us to enquire if the fault is not our own.

In some cases the reason why God cannot fill and use His vessels is because they are already full of things contrary to His will. A consideration of the latter verses of Genesis **32**. may help us to search ourselves, and see whether there may not be that in our hearts which prevents Him blessing us, and making us a blessing.

Jacob was in terror at the thought of meeting his brother, whom he had wronged; and instead of simply relying on the word of the God who had promised to bring him back into the land, his active, scheming mind suggested the giving of a present, which he evidently hoped would appease the anger of Esau.

This present was sent over the brook Jabbok, which means “emptying” or “pouring out,” and this suggests the thought that God needs to empty His people of anything and everything which they trust in apart from Himself. To have props and stays taken from under us, on which we may have leaned for years, is a painful process, but is absolutely necessary to the life of faith. There are hundreds of things which we are tempted to put in the

place of Him who has promised to supply our need, all of which must be poured forth, if we want to be filled with Himself.

In that night he also took his wives and sons and sent them over Jabbok. In no heart should natural affection be more fully developed than in a Christian's, but Christ as Lord must have the throne. If He reigns, every one else must have their true place, and our affection be stronger, truer, and more tender. All unhealthy love must, however, be cast forth, for honey was excluded from the sacrifice.

He sent over the brook "that he possessed." We are only stewards of anything God has put in our charge, consequently all must be laid at His feet and held at His disposal. Possessions, time, talents, money, all are purchased by the precious blood, and are not our own. Let us also see to it that none of these things occupy the place that He should have in our hearts.

We should seek to own His Lordship in the most minute details of our business, social and assembly life. Everything must be brought under the gaze of those eyes which are as a flame of fire, yet withal are as tender as doves by the waterbrooks.

"Jacob was left *alone*, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." If we desire to be of any use to our God we must cultivate the habit of being much alone with Him. Some have more opportunities than others in this direction, but it is doubtful whether God puts any one in circumstances in which they have *no* time to come apart for a little while with Him. We must commence the day with Him, and if at all possible have set times during the day to sit at His feet, and hear His word. If the perfect Servant needed at times to deny Himself the rest He so dearly earned, and spent the night alone with God, how much more do we in our utter weakness need to have our strength changed in the quiet of His presence. If

the adversary can keep us from prayer, he has gained a great victory.

“Alone with Thee, O Master, where
The light of earthly glory dies;
Misunderstood by all, I dare
To do what Thine own heart will prize.”

“And when he saw that he prevailed not, he touched the hollow of his thigh.” The Christian must learn to have no confidence in the flesh; that His strength is made perfect in weakness. This also is a painful lesson, but a delightful one when we experience the upbearing of the Everlasting Arms. Then, like Paul, we may well glory in our weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon us.

Surely Jacob is now in a condition to be blessed; stripped of everything, worn out, crippled, and only able to cling to the angel! But no, something else is needed!

“Let me go, for the day breaketh,” says the angel.

“I will not let thee go except thou bless me,” answers Jacob.

The emptying, the taking away of all confidence in ourselves is only of use as it leads to our cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart; resting in Him for the supply of all our need; a living by faith in the Son of God who loved us, and gave Himself up for us.

Now Jacob is in the condition to receive the blessing he so earnestly desired; “and he blessed him there.” He had power with God and with man and had prevailed.

“And the sun rose upon him.” How many of God’s people are spending their days in darkness, when they might be basking in the glorious sunlight of His presence. If we are at present living among the shadows; if we are not consciously walking in the light, day by day, let us at once spread out before God the condition of our hearts, and all our ways, prepared, if needs be, to cut off the right hand, rather than let it cause us to stumble. Let us ask

Him to put His finger on the plague spots, and seek grace to have them cleansed out of our lives immediately, and let us sing from the depth of our hearts, "Christ for me." Then shall the sun rise upon us also.

"He halted upon his thigh." The effects of that night's experience was ever after seen in his walk. May it be ours to so walk before God henceforth, that others may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, and be led to exclaim, "Whither hath thy Beloved turned Him, that we may seek Him with thee."

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 144.—*Is the creation of Romans 8. 19, 20, 21, 22, the same as Mark 16. 15, or in what sense shall the creation be delivered from the bondage of corruption?*

While "the whole creation" in Mark 16. 15 appears to be strictly limited to such as can believe and are then baptized, in Romans 8. 19-22, on the contrary, it is manifestly extended to include all that which groans and travails in pain. That this includes the beasts and the birds is surely the common knowledge of us all. The sufferings of the brute creation are not the least of the humiliating evidences around us of that fall of man in which he has dragged innocent beings down to share his shame and sorrow.

C. M. L.

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.

THE LORD'S COMING AND SUBSEQUENT EVENTS.

VIII.

WHEN the thousand years' reign is finished Satan will be loosed from his prison in the Abyss, and shall go forth to deceive the nations that are in the four quarters of the earth, and shall gather them together to battle, their numbers being as the sand of the sea. Their desire, clearly, is to overthrow the rule of God on earth and to establish that of Satan; for they proceed to compass the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. Then the great Deceiver of men, the Devil, shall be consigned to his eternal doom in the Lake of Fire, where the beast and the false prophet were previously cast, and torment shall be his and their lot to the ages of ages.

Then follows in *Rev.* 20. a description of the last great judgment, which will include all who have not had part in the first resurrection, when the dead, small and great, shall stand before the Great White Throne. Earth and heaven flee away from the face of Him who sits upon the Throne; and the sea gives up the dead in it; and death and Hades deliver up the dead in them; and the books are opened and the dead are judged out of the things written in the books according to their works. The Book of Life, also, is opened, and whosoever is not found written therein is cast into the Lake of Fire.

This, be it noted, is a judgment of resurrected dead, and the judgment is fixed according to their works, as written in the books. Then will God render to every man according to his deeds: “To them that by patience in well-doing seek

for glory and honour and incorruption—eternal life; but unto them that are factious, and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness—wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil
for there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom.

2. 7-11).

The last enemy that shall be destroyed, writes the Apostle, is death; and so we here read that death and Hades are cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20. 14). Death, the fell wages of sin, had long boasted of its triumphs, and dark its reign had been, but here it for ever disappears, for sin shall be no more. "Behold, I make all things new," is spoken by Him who sits on the throne; and His precious words, "It is done," intimate the consummation of God's work in subduing all things to Himself. Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all. Hallelu Jah!

THE CLAIMS OF THE YOUNG.

V.

I HAVE read with much interest the papers on the "Claims of the Young," and most heartily do I sympathise with the writer in his efforts to awaken fellow-believers and assemblies throughout the fellowship to their responsibilities in connection with the children. Hitherto work among the young has been carried on in a half-hearted, unmethodical way. Indeed, the importance of the work has not been realised, and the idea that anybody could teach the children has prevailed to a very great extent.

Why are there so few of the older Christians in the assemblies engaged in seeking to win the young ones for the Lord Jesus Christ? Surely their knowledge of God and the Word of His grace, their riper experience and con-

sequent greater patience and tact would be well and worthily employed in this work, which is of such moment. The children were not beneath the notice of the blessed Lord Jesus!

Truly, "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The world knows the truth of the saying, "Learn young, learn well." On every hand men are teaching the young the ideas they are anxious to propagate; the social reformer and the temperance parties are busy inculcating their teachings into the minds of the young; while, alas! how many young minds are being polluted and perverted by reading the cheap trash which, like an open sewer, is continuously pouring its poisonous and unhealthy matter into the hands and the hearts of the rising generation.

Have we no responsibility? Has the responsibility been shirked? It is true that there are a number of bright young men of much promise in the assemblies who have been saved in the Sunday School, but they are almost, without exception, the children of Christian parents. What are we doing for the boys and girls outside the influence of the assembly and the Christian home?

Satan is busy among them. The pleasures of sin allure them on. The false and frivolous penny novel promises fun and frolic, which, though realized, never satisfies: a very mirage of the desert, it leads them on and on, till in the end they become sin-hardened and careless.

If your child is playing with a sharp knife you don't seize the handle and pull the blade roughly through the child's fingers. No; but you present something better to the child, and it drops the dangerous blade at once. We have the Word of God, which is quick and powerful; we have the Spirit of God; we know the love of Christ. The latter should constrain us to go out into the highways and by-ways after the young.

The spring time is the seed time. Let us endeavour to reach the children and teach them the Word of God, and leave the result with Him. "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecc. 11. 1). The bread of life has come down from heaven, and he that eateth of this bread shall never die. Shall it be said now, as in the past, "The young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them?"

A well-known and much esteemed brother used to tell of a Roman Catholic priest, who said that if he could get a child under his influence and teaching for the first seven years of its life, he was certain no power would be able to turn that one from Romanism after. The grace of God has rescued souls out of that system of darkness, but we ought not to be above learning the lesson his assertion teaches.

If error, once learned, has such influence over the young mind, how much more the truth! Let us endeavour, then, to reach the young; they will listen to, and receive, the Word of Life, which is able to make them wise unto salvation.

"We want the young for Jesus!

On earth, when He was here,
With gentle sweet affection
He drew the children near.

And still He waits to bless them
With fond and yearning love;
Kind Shepherd, He would lead them
Safe to His fold above.

We want the young for Jesus!
Be this our blest employ;
No mission could be nobler
Or fraught with sweeter joy."

DOTH GOD KNOW?

“COMFORT ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God” (Isa. 40. 1). Such was the message which Isaiah received from Jehovah at a time when His judgments lay heavily upon His people. For her sins Israel had received double at the Lord’s hand; withal, His heart pitied, and His compassions found expression in words of sweetest comfort.

They were tempted to think that they were forgotten by Him, and said: “My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God.” It was at such a dark moment in their experience that God’s voice broke the stillness, assuring them that their warfare was well-nigh accomplished and their iniquity pardoned.

How often, like them, our pathways are beset with darkness, trouble and anguish, and we are almost tempted to ask, “Doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?” We are brought into darkness; our ways are inclosed with hewn stones; we are pulled in pieces and made desolate. Has the Lord forgotten us in such circumstances? Have His compassions failed?

Far be the thought! Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord.

O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, peace! Behold He cometh; thy warfare is well-nigh accomplished, thy travail nearly ended. Hush, then, the rising sigh; still each prompted murmur. For a little while He has hid His face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will He have mercy. Ye weeping saints be comforted, for God will come nigh to you soon and will wipe the last trace of tears from your eyes.

NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS.

THE Christian, though not of this world, knows very well that he is still in it. He finds himself a real man amongst real men. Because of this he must deport himself as a man, and be worthy of the Name which he names. We would scorn the idea of appearing to countenance the too common dreamy indolence which seeks to justify incapacity by taking refuge beneath the name of "Christian." To the Christian God speaks and says, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

The Christian should adorn his calling in life, whatever that may be. He should be the best workman, the best servant, the best master. Sad it is to hear some own, from bitter experience, that they would prefer to serve the unregenerate rather than Christians, or that the Christian master would prefer to be served by the unsaved rather than by the saints. These things ought not to be.

The Christian will not always be able to employ the tactics of the worldling by his side in order to be successful in his calling in life; nor should he ever desire to do so. He has a higher ideal in life than the worldling, whose one idea is often, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewithal shall we be clothed?" The Christian serves the Lord Christ; his one ambition to be well pleasing to Him. With faithfulness to God follows faithfulness to the earthly master; and where faithfulness and righteousness are employed, they will, with rare exceptions, always bring their own reward.

So the young Christian need not falter. He may face the battle of life with a godly confidence that will brook no repulse. Diligent in business. He must work: he must make up his mind for that. There is no royal road to learning of any kind, or to competency in business. Why work? Why diligent in business? To pile up earthly riches

and to have a name among men? Never! That we may have to give to him who hath not; that we may do good and communicate; that we may entertain strangers; that we may hold all in trust for our absent and quickly coming Lord. Oh, young Christians, as you start out in the battle of life let us entreat you never to forget that all you are and have is the Lord's. Let us entreat you never to fail to render to the Lord His portion of your earnings—the first and the best. Let us entreat you to begin life by laying aside, weekly, monthly, or quarterly, as the case may be, your Lord's portion, and never to allow it to be spent for any other purpose.

But, says the selfish heart, to do this will impoverish me; it will take away a part of the very little that is left for myself; it will curtail my enjoyment. But God says, "They that honour Me I will honour." And who that knows Him will doubt His ability to make all grace abound toward us, so that we, always having all sufficiency, may abound unto every good work.

It is blessedly possible, then, for us, whilst treasuring in our hearts the blessed hope of our Lord's return, to work with might and main; to leave no stone unturned to make ourselves an adornment to our profession; to demand by our faithfulness and competency the respect of every on-looker, withal knowing God-given deliverance from the inroads of worldliness.

A PRECIOUS PROMISE.

"I WILL in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee," is a promise upon which our souls may rest. He is faithful Who has promised, and His word can never be broken. What joy such a promise should bring to our hearts, and what peace it should bring into our lives! In all the vicissitudes of our earthly journey the Lord will never fail us, the Lord will never forsake us.

Each one of us gladly owns that this is true: we believe it because God has spoken it; but do we hold it fast "in faith"? The mere assenting to any statement in God's Word may be a very poor thing; we may know that such promises are true—for God cannot lie—but unless they are held in faith they must be absolutely void of the comfort and cheer which God intends they should minister to our hearts. Faith not only enables us to find our joy and strength in the promises of God, but it also enables us to joy and to rest in the God of the promises. Apart from faith, the exceeding great and precious promises with which the Scriptures abound may be nigh us, and may be known by us, whilst the God of the promises may, in our experience, appear to be very far off.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Therefore when difficulties and trials confront us in our earthly pathway, if we are living and walking by faith, and holding fast the promises of God in faith, we shall not be found, like Israel of old, saying, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." Nay; our language will be, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust Him."

Is the present dark and cloudy? Is the future heavy with forebodings and fears? Thy God hath said, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee!" Therefore cast from thee thy fears and nerve thee to the pathway of faith, saying, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear!"

HE IS WORTHY.

Rev. 5. 8 to 13.

ROUND the throne a throng is kneeling
 All in Heaven prostrate fall;
 Loud and long their praise is pealing,
 While angelic voices call—
 Worthy is the Lamb once slain!
 Worthy He Who lives to reign!

Myriad voices join the chorus—
 Rolls the anthem near and far,
 Till its endless echo reaches
 To each distant twinkling star.
 Worthy is the Lamb once slain!
 Worthy He Who lives to reign!

Downward borne like ocean's thunder,
 Earth revibrates with the strain;
 And all flesh in holy wonder
 Joins with joy the rich refrain—
 Worthy is the Lamb once slain!
 Worthy He Who lives to reign!

Lonely souls in nether regions—
 Voices hushed through ages past,
 Hear the song and Hell's dark legions
 Bow the knee and praise at last.
 Worthy is the Lamb once slain!
 Worthy He Who lives to reign!

Mightier than the roar of ocean—
 Louder than the thunder's peal—
 Rolls the praise of all creation
 Till earth's firm foundations reel.
 Worthy is the Lamb once slain!
 Worthy He Who lives to reign!

Wafted backward swells the worship—
 Pealing Heaven-ward whence it came:
 One creation owns one Lordship
 Greets one King Who overcame.
 Worthy is the Lamb once slain!
 Worthy He Who lives to reign!

THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

THERE are five enumerations in Scripture of the tribes of Israel—namely, Genesis **49.**, Numbers **1.**, Deuteronomy **33.**, Ezekiel **48.**, and Revelation **7.**, not one of which is uniform with the other, either in the original order or continuity of names. In view of the perfection of Scripture, this is not without significance, and teaching is doubtless involved in it. A few thoughts occur to the writer which perchance may suggest others also to the reader, and thus may make for completion (Eph. **4.**, 16).

In Genesis **49.** we get the names in the order according to the birthright, and inclusive of the *whole* of the tribal heads. Herein is shadowed the calling by grace of God's people in this dispensation, and involves their inalienable position before God. Not one is omitted, and their security in this position for ever is indicated in their registration on the engraved onyx stones on the shoulders of the high priest and the breastplate of the same. Right down the stream of time, in spite of apostasy, defection, and ultimate dispersal, they are in God's purpose unalterably the same (Isa. **49.** 15, 16; Acts **26.** 7; James **1.** 1). Thus in type we see the eternal calling as well of the individual believer and the whole Church, which is His Body (Eph. **1.**, **2.**, **3.**).

In Numbers **1.** they are presented in the aspect of servants and worshippers. No mention is therein made of Levi. For a significant service rendered by him in loyalty to God when Israel had so grievously sinned (Exod. **32.** 26-29), and for the satisfaction he made on that occasion, he is separated and exalted to a priestly position, having no earthly portion or temporal advantages, thus figuratively setting forth the character of our priestly calling as a spiritual and heavenly one, and as well is suggestive of the high priesthood of Him who is the firstborn among many brethren (Heb. **2.** 17). Levi had sinned equally with

Simeon (Gen. 49. 5-7), but the service rendered was accepted as satisfaction for the evil done, which otherwise disqualified him for the place indicated; and as a reward there was given him that exceptional dignity and honour he was to hold until the consummation of God's purposes (Deut. 33. 8-11; Mal. 2. 4-6). How much will the Lord not do for those who thus recognise His Lordship! How abundant His recognition of any act of loyalty to Him?

In Deuteronomy 33. we have the tribes in their national or political character. In this Simeon is omitted. He had sinned, as already mentioned, and the effect thereof was to prejudice his father, and as well the whole of the tribes, in the eyes of the surrounding nations.

The enumeration here is by the Leader and Lawgiver of the people, and the blessings declared are in reference to their position among the nations; whereas the patriarchal blessing was that which predicated their individual characteristics. In this record Joseph's name appears, whilst omitted in the previous narration. The fitness of this is apparent. Joseph was in the position of the saviour of the people in the land which became that of their bondage, as Moses became the appointed leader forth from the same. Thus their salvation and redemption became the ground of their national position. Joseph was the "shepherd and stone of Israel" (Gen. 49. 24), alike the one who had fed and tended them and the foundation of their future greatness. In the place of Levi we find Ephraim and Manasseh jointly put, and in Numbers their names appear to severally substitute those of their father Joseph, as well as Levi. Either separately or in combination they are mentioned in the successive catalogues, whereas Joseph is omitted in the ecclesiastical roll, and also in that referring to the restored temple record. Ephraim hereafter appears to represent Israel in kingdom¹ aspect as distinguished from Judah.

¹ But in apostasy.

In this character God appeals to the former in Hoshea and elsewhere, and recognises that distinction in Psalm 78. 67, 77. 15, 2 Chronicles 25. 7, Isaiah 11. 13, etc., etc.

The Ezekiel catalogue is virtually that of the one in Numbers, though in somewhat diverse order, and, as it refers to the restored temple worship, fittingly corresponds to the ecclesiastical aspect of the Numbers record as pertaining to worship and service. The reasons for the respective differences in the order of precedence are not here considered. Doubtless profitable teaching underlies it; maybe the suggestive meaning of the respective names would furnish a key, but Divine illumination is essential to the true discernment of the same.

In the last enumeration—in Revelation 7.—the order is very instructive and deeply interesting. We there note that the list begins with Judah and ends with Benjamin, the two tribes which alone remained loyal to the dynasty recognised by God, within whose territorial allotment (as regards Judah) God had His house and place of worship, and where He had recorded His name (Ps. 76. 1 and 78. 67-70, etc.), and who were the only conservators of that house and worship. The tribe of Benjamin became merged in that of Judah, the chosen tribe referred to above—the one who throughout the ages has stood representatively for the whole nation. This list also contains Joseph, the stone of Israel, and Manasseh (the only time he is referred to without Ephraim), and is without the name of Dan. The epoch to which it refers is the consummation of God's judicial dealings in respect of His people, and the fulfilment of His promises to and for them. Thus we have Levi again taking his tribal place in equality with the others, and becoming again *joined*. Joseph is again *added* with Manasseh, his firstborn (heretofore set aside for the second), now put in his legal place, the past being *forgotten*, and Dan (*judgment*) left out. In Judges 18. 29, 30 the

crowning sin—idolatry in the House of God—which was the paramount cause of God's indignation against His people, and their consequent downfall, had here its beginning in connection with that tribe. God's denunciation of this sin, and its decreed judgment, had its first distinctive pronouncement in Ezekiel 9. 6, indicating typically also the judgment against apostate christendom (1 Peter 4. 17). Its fulfilment has been more or less progressive, but we here see it as having culminated in those terrible experiences which usher in the new order of things, of which Revelation 7. deals. Judgment is now past. Dan disappears. The hitherto *separated* things have been again *joined* in Levi, because the whole nation has now become a kingdom of priests, and the bitter experiences and humiliating things are *forgotten*, Manasseh taking his rightful place, and the blessing promised of God to his friend Abraham regarding his seed has now its perfect fulfilment.

H. W. DAVIDSON.

SHOULD CHRISTIANS VOTE

AT MUNICIPAL AND PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS?

It is very plain from the sacred records that men like Joseph, Daniel, and, in a less degree, perhaps, Cornelius and Erastus, have been pleasing to God whilst occupying positions of considerable authority under earthly monarchs. In view of this the arguments sometimes adduced against Christians taking part in parliamentary and municipal contests are thought by some to be strained and invalid.

The present writer has sometimes thought that the Apostle Peter has been purposely allowed to write as a comparatively ignorant and unlearned man who would hardly approach any subject with the same breadth of grasp as

would the Apostle Paul. But Peter had his heart in the right place, and he could never forget that Octavius Cæsar's governor had put to death the Christ of God. He can bid the elect sojourners be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether king, governors, or what not; but the whole tone of his letter is that of one who, though in the world, is not of it, writing moreover to an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, sojourners and pilgrims, distinct from the Gentiles among whom they were (see 1 Pet. 2. 9, 11, 12). It seems as if his whole nature revolted from any alliance or fellowship with the corrupt world power.

If we come to look more closely at the fundamental difference between the position of Joseph and Daniel on the one hand and of ourselves on the other, I think it is twofold.

In the days of Nebuchadnezzar it was plainly revealed to Daniel that God had given him power and authority as a mighty king. Whatever explanations men may offer of the rise of kings and kingdoms, we have in this case the direct word showing that Nebuchadnezzar was placed by God in the position he occupied—a position, be it noted, of absolute power. Under him Daniel was a servant—a servant highly placed indeed, as Joseph under Pharaoh long before; but both these men were servants, stewards, so to speak, for their masters, the monarchs whom God had raised up to rule over the sons of men. Whether Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar, on the one hand, or Joseph or Daniel on the other hand, the position might be filled for good or for ill. The former were responsible to God and to God alone; the latter to God, indeed, but also to their masters, to Pharaoh and to Nebuchadnezzar respectively. We know that we are speaking in flattest contradiction to the spirit of the age. But with all their faults, and notwithstanding the fearful fall of Nebuchadnezzar, we say advisedly that

herein lay their strength. "Thou, O King, art the head of gold."

Hastening on, nor wearying our readers with the historical periods that have intervened, we ask, What have we to-day in this United Kingdom so-called of Great Britain and Ireland? It is the glory and boast of public men of well nigh every party that the divine right of kings is an exploded fallacy; that the sovereign of these realms is but an embodiment of power and authority that are in no sense her own. The Parliament of the United Kingdom is the supreme government of the mightiest Empire that the world has ever known, and the ultimate court of appeal is a general election, when millions of voters in these islands practically choose their own rulers and make their own laws. And where is God in it all? we ask. What authority has He given to men to rule and govern one another in this fashion? We reply, None. He has permitted it as He permitted Satan to entice Adam and Eve in days long gone by; and as this was overruled, so that where sin abounded grace might much more abound, so has He overruled now that His Word can be preached and His will done, none hindering. But He has never sanctioned the principle of democracy.

Again we ask, How is the government of these lands carried out? There are two principal parties in the State, each seeking for power—partly by fair means, partly by foul. If the one succeed we have these laws; if the other, those. With which party can a child of God be identified? As well ask, With what sect in Christendom? We ask in reply, By which or by whom is the Word of God taken as the sole unerring guide? And the answer is, By none. The motto is "*Vox populi vox Dei.*" Granted. The voice of the people is the voice of a god, but it is the god of this world—the Devil.

Yet again, the Son of God has come to earth and been

rejected, crucified, and slain. Has that crime been expiated? At a recent noted trial in Paris the iniquity of Calvary was referred to as an instance of a *chose jugée* that all now admitted to have been indeed a miscarriage of justice; and yet it is unreversed, and we make bold to say that men are to-day what men were then. Then the crowd cried Crucify Him, and if He were here to-day would He be more welcome, or would the democratic governments of England or France or America treat Him any better than did the Roman power in that day? We trow not. But we need not ask that. What are men to-day doing to His word?—men who profess to revere His character, yet labour to prove Him false.

We fully and freely grant that under the national government, or under municipalities and the like, Christians may be servants, and trusted, honoured servants too in many capacities. This we say, spite of the ungodliness of democracy, for the powers that be are ordained of God, and this we would say if they were still worse. But can a Christian who loves the Lord Jesus ally himself with the Lord's enemies? Can a disciple join those who own not his Master? Can, in short, a sojourner and pilgrim forget Jerusalem above and take a part in the hydra-headed government of Vanity Fair?

C. M. LUXMOORE.

CHURCHES OF GOD.

(Continued from page 94.)

WE have already in these pages drawn the attention of our readers to Deuteronomy 32. 8, and as far as we understand the teaching of the Word of God it is that the earth was divided to the nations into twelve portions, but when the nations rebelled against God we find a nation called out; with this nation we find the number twelve associated

twelve sons of Jacob, twelve tribes, and the land divided to the twelve tribes. A form of government was delivered to Israel and to no other nation; one law was for those who were Israelites by birth and for those who were proselytes; so to-day there is government of Churches of God but no form of government for anything else. Only those who are in such can carry out the rule of God in His House in accordance with His will. Jews in Babylon could not do this, neither can Christians in the spiritual Babylon do so to-day. There had to be deliverance from Babylon for an Israelite to the place where God had put His name at the beginning, and when thus restored they were responsible to carry out that form of government that had been delivered to the nation (Neh. 10. 29), although the greater part of the nation still remained in exile. There has to be deliverance from the spiritual Babylon—a divine awakening and a recovery out of its iniquities—and only those thus delivered can carry out the will of God as revealed for the collective government of His saints.

When we turn to the New Testament we find John the Baptist heralding forth the coming of that one who has authority on earth, of whom it is said, "The government shall be upon His shoulder" (Isa. 9. 6).

Let us now notice that in the opening of the Lord's ministry we find Him occupied in choosing twelve disciples, that they might be with Him (Mark 3. 14), and although one of those chosen was a traitor, they were sent forth with authority to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom. It may be well to pause a moment here and remind our readers that it was the Lord who chose Judas, placing him in a position of responsibility and power. The fact that he was thus associated with the twelve apostles did not invalidate, or, in other words, render of none effect the apostles' authority. It was true that he was unknown

to the others as a traitor, and it also is true that this would in no wise warrant the bringing into the place of authority those who are Judas-like in their character, but it also goes to prove that if unknowingly those have been brought into responsibility who have not been fitted of God in heart for this work, it will not render the authority and rule in the House of God of none effect. Happy, indeed, it is that it should be thus, for all that is committed into man's hands he fails in, and were failure to set aside all rule and authority our case would indeed be desperate. If this be so, as we have stated, let saints beware how they point at the failure of one whom they own as a child of God, and one who stands before them as a guide. We say failure, for all men fail; and were we to wait, as some would seem by their speech to suppose we should, until all those who go before the flock were perfect and without failure, we should have no guides at all. We say failure, for we fully believe that those whose character of life is contrary to the divine pattern of 1 Timothy 3. are excluded from rule in the House of God, but a man may be overtaken by a fault—may give way to temper without being an angry man.

We have said that the Lord chose twelve and associated them with Himself, but more than this we find Him also associating them with the coming Kingdom (Luke 22. 28, 29), but what of to-day and the present sphere of the rule of God? Notice, reader, that up to the cross the work of redemption occupied very specially the thoughts of our blessed Lord (Luke 9. 31). After redemption was completed we find Him again for forty days with His disciples, and now it is with the Kingdom that He is occupied (Acts 1. 3). Amidst the wreck and ruin worked by sin among the nations and then in *the* nation of Israel, where shall we find a company of people in whom and through whom the Lord can carry on His

work on earth? Let those who despise the day of small things give heed. With one company and one company alone do we find the Lord associated. In the upper chamber at Jerusalem they are gathered at the word of the Lord, numbered of God, and with those disciples He is occupied and they are occupied with Him.

To trace out the many lines of thought connected with this company of gathered together saints would fill too many of these pages, and though we would fain linger and follow them step by step, we must hasten on. Our readers will remember that these disciples were told to tarry at Jerusalem until endued with power from on high. We are familiar with the description given us of the descent of the Holy Spirit, and from this point we find a fresh manifestation of the power of God upon earth. His grace breaks down all barriers. First the gospel is preached to the Jews, then the Samaritans hear the glad tidings, and we would ask our readers to remember if they have already learned the lesson, and if not that they will now notice it for themselves, namely, that the Samaritans, full of pride and claiming to be the people of God equally with Israel, when converted had to wait until apostles came from Jerusalem and laid their hands upon them. Then and only then they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 8. 17); but when we read of the Gentiles' conversion—those upon whom the Jews looked down with contempt as dogs—we find not only no laying on of the apostles' hands connected with the reception of the Spirit; on the contrary, we find the Spirit descending on them as He did upon the disciples upon the day of Pentecost. This, Peter, when narrating to the other apostles, especially dwells upon (see Acts 11. 15).

God is about to create a new thing upon the earth, and we see how carefully He guards His work from the efforts of

the adversary. Samaritan pride has to be humbled, Jewish prejudice has to be set aside, and the Gentile is brought into an equal place of blessing with the Jew. It is not that the Gentiles as nations are blessed; this will only be when Israel is again grafted in to its own olive tree (Rom. 11. 15).

Meanwhile God is taking out from both Jew and Gentile a people to His name. The Lord is baptizing them in one Spirit, into one Body, where there is neither Jew nor Greek (1 Cor. 12. 13; Gal. 3. 28). But not only is there the oneness of the one Body, but there was also that manifested oneness which could be seen by the world and realized by the disciples. It is this oneness, as we have already said, which was so carefully guarded, God's object being that its manifestation should reach the guilty heathen world as well as His own rebellious people, convicting them and bringing them to believe the gospel, accepting the sent One of the Father. Little wonder that Satan should turn all his energy now upon this Jerusalem company of saints. First he stirred up bitter persecution, and thus from the Jerusalem centre the disciples were scattered through Judæa. Whatever purposes Satan had in thus scattering the saints, this we see that he was baffled in his purpose. Not only was the gospel more widely preached, but we find that the scattered saints from Jerusalem became the churches of Judæa (Gal. 1. 22).

At this point we must introduce a fresh line of thought to our readers. If we turn to Genesis 1. 24 we find that the earth brought forth abundantly cattle and creeping things *after their kind*. We would ask our readers' special attention to these words. The subject is a broad one, and we cannot do more than suggest an outline of thought. If we look through God's creation, where His will and purposes are working unhindered by the power of evil, we shall continually find, both in the natural and the spiritual world,

reproduction after his kind. The child of God, who is fulfilling God's mission for Him upon earth, is reproducing after his kind, begetting spiritual children, as the Apostle Paul writes (1 Cor. 4. 15). The ministry of the one who is teaching in accordance with the will of God will be producing teachers after his kind—in other words, perfecting saints unto the work of ministry (Ephes. 4. 12, R.V.). Rulers that are ruling for God in the assembly, themselves ruled of God, will lead on and lead out others before the flock fitted to share with them responsibility as rulers. Assemblies will reproduce after their kind, and had you gone into any of the Churches of Judæa you would not have found amongst them independency, for the multiplication had been according to the will of God, and the characteristics of each assembly would be that of the mother Church of Jerusalem; and not only so, but as the work of God spread, and the churches of the Gentiles were called together, still it was after their kind, and still the characteristics of the Church of God at Jerusalem might be found throughout the churches of the Gentiles, for the great apostle of the Gentiles taught in every church, as he himself had been taught, the one will of God (1 Cor. 4. 17). And thus God spread abroad upon the earth companies of His saints—men and women divinely called Christians, and in these companies alone could His will collectively and the government of His House be carried out.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be continued.)

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

XII. HEZEKIAH.

*(Continued from page 123.)*3. THE CLOSING YEARS OF HEZEKIAH (2 Chron. **32**. 24-33).

THE third prayer of Hezekiah is recorded in the 24th verse (for a detailed account see Isaiah **38**.), the result being that Jehovah answers his prayer and adds fifteen years to his life. "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem" (ver. 25). We read in the 3rd verse of Isaiah **38**. and also in 2 Kings **20**. 3, what Hezekiah told Jehovah in his prayer. "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech Thee, how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart." The 31st verse of this chapter tells us "that God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart." These verses taken together are most instructive and interesting. It is indeed a long lesson for the child of grace to learn that the heart is deceptive above all things. Jehovah takes Hezekiah at his word and leaves him that he (that is, Hezekiah) might know all that was in his heart. God had no need of proving him for His own satisfaction, for He knoweth the secrets of the heart, and the innermost recesses are not hid from him.

Is it not almost invariably the case that in those very things whereof there hath been boasting that ultimately, when tested, the greatest weakness and failure are seen?

The same thought appears to be contained in the following Scriptures, similar except in the last clause. "The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts" (Prov. **17**. 3); "and a man is tried by his praise"—that whereof he boasteth, R.M.—(Prov. **27**. 21). Was it not the same with Peter? "I will not deny

Thee," "but he denied"! "He again denied," "But he began to curse and to swear, I know not this man of whom ye speak." Like Uzziah, pride became the downfall of Hezekiah at this time: although not developed in the same way, or to the same extent, each act ultimately bearing its own fruit, the one more immediately, the other postponed for many years after. "His heart was lifted up" would remind us of Jehoshaphat's early golden days. What a contrast, however, for the heart to be lifted up in the ways of the Lord, and the heart to be lifted up with pride.

The Merodach-baladan, king of Babylon, mentioned in Isaiah 39., with whom Hezekiah made friends, was a rival against the king of Assyria, the most powerful ruler of the time. Even apart from religious considerations altogether it was, one would think, from a political standpoint, a weak and wretched policy for Hezekiah to pursue: however, the trying circumstances narrated in the early part of this chapter made it very tempting to the natural man to form an alliance with one who himself was the bitterest enemy to him who was Hezekiah's enemy as well. It is highly significant that the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah was finally brought about by the restored monarchy of Chaldea, a revival of which was taking place at this time; and this fact is taken into account in the prophetic denunciation recorded in Isaiah 39.

It is refreshing to find that, unlike Asa and others besides, "Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart" as well as the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The life of Hezekiah on the whole forms a very bright epoch in the history of God's ancient people, indeed we may conclude that he was the best king who ever occupied the throne since his father David (the most uneventful life of Jotham hardly being an exception to this), especially taking into account that the general character of the times

was one of degeneracy, indifference, and departure from God; relieved now by a search after truth and many discoveries made (see Prov. 25. 1); a decided impetus given to true godliness; indeed one would think that there is much in our own day parallel with the days of Hezekiah. May we, then, follow his example, in this evil and dark day, of betaking ourselves unto God and the word of His grace.

We cannot conclude our narrative without making mention of one thing (for some wise purpose omitted in the Chronicles) which happened during Hezekiah's early days: we allude to the breaking in pieces of the brazen serpent that Moses had made, "for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it" (2 Kings 18. 4). This verse is most interesting, revealing to us the fact that the serpent of brass was preserved, and around it gathered a sort of relic-worship. Hezekiah called it "Nehushtan," that is, "A piece of brass," so much for the value he placed on it. Surely, if such a thing was a snare and of no value in the sight of God in a day of material things, with an elaborate ritual Divinely given and handed down, how much more displeasing and abominable must the like be in the sight of God in a day not of material things, but truly spiritual in character; a day when veneration for material things is prohibited, "for we walk by faith, not by sight"; a day when mere sentimentality should be discouraged, and intense practicality encouraged. Let the Lord Jesus Himself speak. A certain woman cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the breasts which Thou didst suck, But He said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11. 27, 28).

We must take care, however, to distinguish between things which differ, and not to denounce that which today may be ordained by God, with that which has no place in the order of God's house.

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 145.—*Do not the terms Jews and Greeks, or Gentiles, as found in Rom. 1. 16.; 2. 9; 3. 9, 29; 9. 24–32; Gal. 2. 15; 3. 28, include all men upon the earth previous to the baptism in one Spirit into one Body of individuals from each of them, as found in 1 Cor. 12. 13; Eph. 2. 11–22, and Gal. 3. 28?*

This question might be allowed to open up a very large subject, but perhaps the following answer will be found to meet what is really in the mind of the questioner:—

The first readers of the letter to Romans would naturally divide such of the sons of men as they might meet with into two main classes. First, those to whom the promises of God had been made. Second, those who were without hope and without God. The former were commonly called Jews; the latter might be called Gentiles or Greeks, according to circumstance. The words Gentiles and Greeks are by no means strictly speaking synonyms, but they are both used in general to designate such of mankind as were far off from God. The words are commonly so used in the letter to Rome and in the somewhat later letter to Ephesus, and in other letters of Paul, as that to the assemblies in Galatia. Individuals then who were Jews or Gentiles (often called Greeks) were baptized into One Body in One Spirit, and ceased then to be Jews or Gentiles, as the questioner says.

QUESTION 146.—*Please explain the words in Ephesians 2. 14–18: "Who made BOTH one, and brake down the middle wall of partition. Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that He might create in Himself of the TWAIN one new man, making*

peace, and might reconcile them BOTH in one Body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and He came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that are nigh; for through Him we BOTH have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.” Do these expressions refer to Jew and Gentile?

Yes, unquestionably; Jews and Gentiles who were at enmity with each other, and at enmity with God, are reconciled. Gentiles were far from God and are brought nigh. They who were of the Circumcision, though near by promise and covenant relation, were equally far off in heart, but these and those are taken and joined together in one new creation where neither Jew nor Gentile is, but Christ all and in all—His Body which is the Church.

QUESTION 147.—*Do not the terms in 1 Cor. 10. 32, “either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God,” include all men at present upon the earth? If so, do those not in the Fellowship remain Jews or Gentiles, notwithstanding they are children of God?*

The three expressions, Jews, Greeks, church of God, do not include all men upon the earth, and there never was a time when they did. Each term includes a large and important division of mankind, just as England, Scotland, Ireland are three great divisions of the British Isles. But though England includes the Isle of Wight, the Scilly Isles, and others, and Scotland includes the Hebrides and Shetlands and Orkneys—neither England, nor Scotland, nor Ireland includes the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands, which, however, are included in the British Isles (though not in the United Kingdom). Yet again the United Kingdom includes Wales, which may or may not be meant when England is mentioned. So it is, we understand, with the expressions in 1 Cor. 10. 32. The word Jews sometimes includes proselytes, sometimes not. The word Greeks (so

the R. V. correctly reads here) may sometimes include Barbarians, but is elsewhere used in opposition thereto. Whether Samaritans are included under either we cannot say, but certainly all converted persons were not in scriptural times in the churches of God (though that was and is the proper place for a Christian to be). To give a single, oft-used illustration of this, the man of 1 Cor. 5. may again be referred to, and with this many others might be joined if time and space permitted. But Matthew 18. 17 shows clearly that a Christian put out of a church is not a Gentile, for we are told to treat him as we should treat the Gentile and the publican.

The word for Gentile here is the adjectival form *ἔθνικος*, *ethnikos*, which I think the late W. Lincoln used to translate, "Gentilish one," but this would in no way weaken the argument that an excommunicated person is not a Gentile.

C. M. L.

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.

ISRAEL'S JOURNEYINGS FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

XII.

IN bringing to a conclusion our consideration of this subject, we would turn to Numbers 10. 11, 12: "And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony. And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran." Thus did they journey at the commandment of the Lord, and thus did they enjoy His companionship and learn to walk with Him. But this was no easy matter, at least to nature and to the flesh. Sometimes they halted after a day's march; sometimes they journeyed not for days, or months, or even a year.

Progress in such circumstances would seem so slow that the temptation would be to hurry on without the marching orders, and consequently without Jehovah's presence. Thus it was that the Lord trained His people and tested the reality of their subjection to His will.

They are now nearing the land to which it was Jehovah's purpose to bring them. The expectation of their hearts seems about to be realized; yet often it is at such times that bitter disappointment is experienced. Not that Jehovah ever fails; but here, as ever, the failure, alas! is with His people. The cloud and the commandment guide them onward until they reach Kadesh-Barnea (Deut. 1. 19). There the Lord's message is heard through Moses: "Behold the Lord thy God hath set the land before you: go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee: fear not, neither be discouraged." Could anything be more explicit? Surely not. Yet, what do they do? "Ye came near unto me every one of you, and said, We will send men before us, and they shall search us out the land and bring us word again."

Herein, doubtless, was the first expression of unbelief that led to such disastrous results. God had already spoken as to the land; He had given His report, which Caleb believed, and so brought back word as it was in his heart. There were others, however, who did not believe God's word, and they brought back an evil report. This the people believed, and their hearts were discouraged; and their self-chosen leaders led them in rebellion against Jehovah's will and word. The difficulties and foes were magnified, and measured by themselves and by their own strength. Jehovah's presence was lost sight of, and His power was limited. "They despised the pleasant land: they believed not His word" (Ps. 106. 24). Thus they lost their inheritance through unbelief and disobedience.

It is true that their children did enter the land after

many years of wandering, yet they who thus rebelled, and others besides—leaders such as Moses and Aaron—were never permitted to enter therein. What a solemn commentary we find thereon in Hebrews 3. 17, "Whose carcasses fell in the wilderness;" and what a sad consummation this was to the purposes and expectations of the Lord, for He brought them out that He might bring them in! They were brought out, and thus far His purposes were accomplished; but how very far short this fell of what He intended for them, or what He expected of them! Jehovah's expectations were evidently lost sight of; or, it may be, thinking only of their own blessings, they rested satisfied therewith, and getting wearied with the walk of faith, they settled down, unwilling to face further trouble and difficulty. Any causes for such actions which may have existed only helped to manifest their evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.

May such solemn records of failure and warning not be lost upon God's people to-day, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Hebrews 3. connects this particular portion of Israel's history with the present path and testimony of the Lord's people.

It is through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom; and he that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of God. Difficulties and enemies looked at, suffering and loss considered, may have been the cause, in a greater measure than would be willingly acknowledged, of keeping many from entering the path of faith and of turning others therefrom. Yet God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and God and the word of His grace are able to build up and to give an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

In the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelt (Josh. 22. 19), was Israel's inherit-

ance. In the place of God's rest (Heb. 4. 1) there remaineth a rest for the people of God to-day. Let us therefore fear of coming short of that rest, and give diligence to enter therein.

DAVID SMITH.

CONSIDER HIM.

A RIGHT position can only be maintained, in a manner well-pleasing to God, as our souls are in a right condition. A right condition of soul can only be had and maintained as we know the One Who sits at God's right hand as LORD, and as we acknowledge His claims over us. In order to know Him, we must consider Him. The contemplation of a sevenfold occurrence of the word "Himself" may help us to know Him better, and to serve Him more worthily.

"He saved others; Himself He cannot save" (Matt. 27. 42). Though spoken in derision, how true these words were! No salvation for sinners such as we unless the Lord Jesus dies and meets God's righteous claims against us. He has died, and God is satisfied, and by faith we behold Him upon the cross taking our place as sinners.

"For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2. 18). As sinners we required Him to meet our need on the cross; as saints we require Him upon the throne. He is a merciful and faithful High Priest; He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities; He is able to save to the uttermost. Therefore let us come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

"Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2. 6). Thus we learn, and can proclaim aloud that God desires all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. It was the world that God loved,

and for the world He gave His Son. May we herald forth the tidings, so that weary souls may taste of that love which begets love.

“Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5. 25). The Church here referred to is the Body. So great was His love for the Church, that in order to save it He gave Himself. A like love should exist amongst the members of that Body for one another. Constrained by love, we should endeavour to reach all who are reachable by us with the truth, so that God may deliver them from every way which is not according to His will.

“The Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2. 20). How very precious! How very personal! He loved me, and gave Himself for me.

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

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil age” (Gal. 1. 4). This is more than salvation from the Lake of Fire: it is a present salvation from the ways of the evil world through which we are passing. We were saved to do the will of Him Who said, “They are not of this world.” Is the purpose for which the Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself being effected in the case of the reader? Solemn question! If it is not, then, in this sense, He has died in vain for you. See also Titus 2. 14.

“The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout” (1 Thess. 4. 16). We know what this refers to—His coming again for which we wait, when the sleeping saints shall be raised and the living shall be changed, and together caught up to be for ever with the Lord. Then shall the body of our humiliation be fashioned like unto His own body of glory; then shall we be like Him, for we

shall see Him as He is. Blessed end to earth's rough pathway! Eternal calm shall follow earth's storms. May we strive to live now so that we may merit the Lord's "Well done" in that day.

W. C.

PRAYER.

"MEN ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18. 1). In order to illustrate the truth of these words, the Lord Jesus spake the parable recorded in this chapter.

A widow in a certain city came to a judge who feared not God, neither regarded man, and desired him to avenge her of her adversary. For a time the judge heeded her not, doubtless considering a poor widow's case beneath his notice. Again and again she urged her claim, and at length the judge, becoming wearied with her repeated appeals, granted her the desire of her heart. Her continued asking brought its reward.

There is surely encouragement in this for us to pray constantly to God, for He can never be wearied with our much crying. If an unjust judge was prompted to grant a widow's request because of her constant appeals, how much more will God listen to the cry of His elect and grant the desire of their hearts.

Is there something in accordance with His will that we have often asked but have not received? Shall we allow our hands to hang down because of this, and give up praying? Nay; pray on: God hears. Pray without ceasing is the Apostle Paul's exhortation.

In this, as in all else that is worthy of imitation, the Lord Jesus has left us an example. He, while on earth, was a Man of prayer. The mountain top and the midnight hour often beheld Him kneeling in prayer to His God and Father. Then on the morrow, when He opened His lips, men perforce exclaimed, "Never man so spake!"

Prayer is the secret spring of power; prayer is the best

antidote for soul faintings. It lifts aloft the hands which hang down, and strengthens the feeble knees. Five minutes alone with God in the closet would do more for the weary than a lifetime of grumbling. "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint;" therefore it is their duty to do so.

W. W.

"YE DO SHOW THE LORD'S DEATH TILL HE
COME."

(1 Cor. 11, 26.)

"TILL He come!" our hearts responding

To the Word and Will
Of the Lord, His death proclaiming,
We come together still.

And in midst of the assembly,

As He leads the song

Which His triumph celebrateth,

Worshippers now join.

Wondrous answer to the anguish

Of His travail cry,

From the midst of wrath and judgment,

"Lama sabachthani."

Pain and anguish now are over,

Fruit of all He sees

In the children given to Him,

Cause of His joy—these.

Thus in glad anticipation

Of the future too,

He rejoiceth, when He cometh,

In songs ever new.

Fullest reaping from that sowing,

"Corn of wheat," He died;

Seed not lost, but much fruit bringing,

He is satisfied.

D. S.

“ELEAZAR, THE SON OF DODO”

(2 SAM. 23. 9, 10).

Most deeply instructive are the short narratives of David's mighty men in the 23rd chapter of the Second Book of Samuel. These men shared David's rejection—shared his toils and trials when his fortunes were at their lowest ebb. And when he came into his throne they were honoured by being near his person, and sharing in the glory of his reign. Only one motive seems to have actuated most, if not all, of them from the beginning to the end of their career, and that motive was *love to the person of their master*. In the energy and power of that love they wrought deeds of valour that the Holy Spirit has been pleased to record for our learning and exhortation. In verses 9 and 10 of this 23rd chapter we have the inspired record of a mighty deed wrought unto the glory of God by one of the most remarkable of these men, Eleazar, the son of Dodo the Ahohite.

It was evidently a troublous time in the land of Israel; the Philistines were raiding the land—the fair fields of Judah and Benjamin were being overrun by the bands of the uncircumcised; the heathen had come into God's heritage.

These Philistines appear to have been so successful that the Israelities would not stand before them. Very solemn are the words recorded here: “*The men of Israel were gone away.*” The men who should have stood for God; the men who ought to have been found in the forefront of the hottest battle; the men whose duty and privilege it was to defend the *kingdom*; the men of Israel were *gone away*. We have no reasons given. With some, it may have been fear and cowardice; with some, a question of returning to the comforts of their families; with some, perhaps, a weariness in well-doing. But, whatever the motives for

their flight, nothing but the bare fact is recorded, that at a time when their services were needed for the fight they had turned their backs and *gone away*. It is difficult to see what they hoped to gain by flight, for it is very certain that if the Philistines were not beaten back, the men of Israel would pay dearly for their cowardice. But this they heeded not. Their policy was the policy of a moment. Present difficulties had greater weight with them than future glory, and they forgot that death in the service of the Living God of Israel and for the glory of the kingdom would have been far better than disgraceful retreat in the hour of trial.

At this critical juncture when the men of Israel were gone away, three men, and three men only, remained by their master David; and that tiny band defied the Philistines. Mark, they started by defying the Philistines. One of these was the hero of our text.

Eleazar was a man who did not allow others to do his thinking for him. He knew his God and his leader, and strong in the power of the One, and strong in his devotion to the other, he arose and smote the Philistines.

Undismayed by those who went away, he was a man who grasped the situation, thought and acted for himself, and without wasting any time in seeking to recall those who fled or decrying them for leaving, he set about hewing down the Philistines with all his might and main. He could not be held responsible for them, but he himself would have been deeply responsible if he had followed their example. So he struck out on what many would have termed his own independent line, and setting his face towards the advancing enemy, and his back towards his retreating countrymen, he set about doing what he could in a day of very small things. He smote the Philistines, we are told, "until his hand was weary."

The measure of his strength was the measure of his

service. He slew and slew until he could slay no more, for he came to the end of his strength. No more was expected from him. He played his part, and a noble part it was. His work was not theoretical, it was intensely practical, and the heaps of dead Philistines bore testimony to his labour at the close of that eventful day.

But further than this, he hacked and hewed away until his hand was weary, and *his hand clave unto his sword*. He had gripped that sword from the beginning in such a determined manner that when his work was done the muscles of his fingers refused to relax in the tightness of his hold upon his weapon, and in the work that he accomplished with it that weapon had become part and parcel of his very self. From the time that he grasped his sword he never let it go until the victory was won for God, and then for offence and defence that sword was glued, as it were, to his hand.

And God honoured His noble servant. We are told "*the Lord*" wrought a great victory that day. The work was Eleazar's, but the victory was the Lord's. The reward will be Eleazar's in a day that yet shall come, but unto God be the glory.

As in the case of another hero of an earlier day where it was the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, so now it is the sword of the Lord and of Eleazar. And how instructive to remember that Eleazar only grew weary when the victory was won. His strength had been in the God of armies all that day, and now as he surveyed the numbers of uncircumcised dead, no pride filled his heart, the victory was the Lord's. Perhaps in Eleazar's mind that day was the recollection that "they got not the land in possession through their own sword, neither was it their own arm that helped them, but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them."

“And the people returned after him *only to spoil.*” So those that ran away did not go far. They waited to see the result of that day’s work. They were too cowardly to fight themselves, but they appear to have watched to see how the battle would go, and then returned to share the plunder. Eleazar got them back, but it was by setting them the noblest of all examples, the example of a man strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, rising to the exigencies of the occasion, and acting out what he knew and felt to be right.

Dear Christian reader, has this no lesson for us? Yes, many.

We, too, live in difficult times, and many have gone back. Some, perhaps, from principle, some from weariness, and, alas! some from cowardice. What are we to do? Dare to be an Eleazar, and, learning in the presence of God those principles that He would have us know, carry them out in His strength.

It may be that we shall feel the weariness of the way, that we shall have many difficulties to encounter; but if we earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints, and continue in things that we have learned and known and been assured of, there is a bright reward to come.

May He who energized the arm of Eleazar give us each the strength to live for Him in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, and give us the honour and privilege, too, of strengthening the things that remain that are ready to perish.

Well for us if at the judgment-seat of Christ it shall be said of us that we used our sword until it clave to our hand.

The privilege and opportunity are ours now, the glory shall be His.

CHURCHES OF GOD.

(Continued from page 148.)

IN our previous article we referred our readers to 1 Corinthians 4.17. This is an important passage of the Word of God, and we would ask a careful consideration of it. It goes far to overturn the idea that one form of government was given to Corinth, another, it may be, to Ephesus and a third to the Thessalonians. It goes to show that the Apostle Paul received from God but one form of government for all the churches of God, whether formed from Jewish or Gentile converts. (Read also 1 Thess. 2. 14.) In the thirteenth verse we find that the Thessalonian assembly was formed by the Word of God, that word which formed the world. We have already said that it was with the little company in the upper room at Jerusalem that we find the Lord was associated, a company numbered of God (Acts 1. 15) at about a hundred and twenty. Now we wish our readers to notice very specially that this company was together, not by chance, not by mere human arrangement, but by the Word of the Lord (Acts 1. 4), and as thus together, we find them in a divinely formed association. Their first act is to again restore the broken number of the apostolic circle, and Matthias is numbered with the apostles in the room of Judas the traitor, thus restoring their number to twelve. This to us seems most interesting, for, as we have already said, the number twelve we find continually associated with government and rule upon the earth.

It is interesting to notice that Solomon—a type of the Lord Jesus in His coming kingdom—made provision for his house according to the number twelve (1 Kings 4. 7). Now while it was the Word of the Lord that first brought together and then kept together disciples at Jerusalem, and this word first spoken directly from His own lips, as we have seen in Acts 1., it was none the less the Word of the

Lord spoken through His disciples which formed the churches of Judæa and the churches of the Gentiles with which we have been occupied. Of these early saints we find it written—"They continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2. 42). Thus we see that the word that formed the world or ages (R.V.) is the word that forms the assembly, the word that also forms or brings into being the individual Christian. As it is written, "Begotten by the Word of God" (read 1 Pet. 1. 23 to end, R.V.).

If to-day we find an assembly that does not take the position of a church of God we may well ask the question, What is the Word of God that called it into being? And more than this, we have a right to ask on what authority such an assembly is based, and how has it originated? For a church of God we have divine legislation—that is, a form of government to be carried out by those fitted of God for such work—and divine ministry for the edifying and building up of the saints on their most holy faith.

With regard to ministry, much has been said and written, and the evils resulting from the one-man ministry have been pointed out, but the subject of rule has been little dwelt upon, and its importance seems to have been little realized by the many. We are convinced that as the one-man minister has hindered the development of spiritual gifts, so the one-man rule has hindered and is hindering the development of Godly rule. There is the greatest danger of the will of an individual swaying a whole assembly if that individual is not himself controlled by others. There is room in God's economy for every gift that He has given to be exercised to the full, and this is perfectly consistent with a godly subjection one to another (Rom. 12. 10). We do not here intend entering into the subject of the elderhood at any length, as we have already done this in these pages, but we would wish to look at some of the practical working

in connection with rule in the House of God. We have already spoken of the church of God in Jerusalem, which rapidly multiplied until we find that multitudes were turned to the Lord (Acts 21. 20). No one, we think, can reasonably suppose that all those Christians met in one building; probably they met in comparatively-small companies, and as the days were those of persecution, the assemblies of the saints would be probably oftentimes changing their place of gathering. The Church of God in Jerusalem, then, would not be those saints gathered in any one locality, but would embrace the whole of the called-out and called-together companies. Those who ministered the Word of God in their midst would not be confined to any one company or locality, nor would those who ruled for God be confined in their rule to a local building where there was an assembly of saints; on the contrary, the elders of the church in Jerusalem would have a mutual responsibility over the assembly in the city, caring for the saints and ruling for God. Reception would be into the church of God in Jerusalem. It would not be reception into any local place of meeting; and it would be a reception with which the whole of the overseers of the city would be concerned, as well as the whole of the assembly.

It is perfectly possible to be occupied with principles of truth and yet to lose sight of the very object for which these principles are given. We may have a correct and Scriptural order, but there must be also the spiritual apprehension of God's purposes in the order; and this will necessitate a continual exercise of heart before God. Every case of reception or putting out of the fellowship, and all the various cases of internal discipline, which far more test the spiritual power of an assembly than the putting away, each case, we say, must be dealt with in patience and prayerful waiting upon God.

It is too common a thing to find Christians sitting in

judgment upon those who have sinned, as though they were entirely clear; but it is well for us to bear in mind the word of God to Moses when Achan had sinned: "Israel hath sinned." And when there is sin in the assembly, if there is no assembly humbling and no assembly sense of the wrong that has been done against God, more sorrow may be permitted, that a godly repentance may be wrought, not only in the one who has sinned, but in those in whom if there had been more of the spirit of prayer and watchfulness such a sinning one might have been saved from going so far in the path of sin and disobedience.

As we have before said, we have already written much on the subject of rule, and we do not desire again to repeat more than necessary of what has been already before our readers. Yet the subject is an important one, and claims our consideration. We believe that churches of God are the only spheres in which the will of God can be fully carried out to-day upon the earth. We believe that for churches of God alone there is divine legislation.

Now some one may say to us, What have you, meeting professedly as church of God, more than we have who make no such claim, but simply meet as Christians to break bread? You recognise definitely an elderhood—that is, that all who are fitted of God for rule should be a together company. We likewise have exactly the same men with the same qualifications, but we do not recognise them as elders, for we believe that elder applied only to those appointed by apostles or delegates. In reply to this, we would say, supposing I had all the parts of a watch, each part perfect in itself, and supposing I take this machinery and place it in an earthen vessel of some description, I should have all the parts of a watch, it is true, and so far as the parts went, they might be perfect in themselves, but thus mixed up in an earthen vessel they could never fulfil the purpose for which the watchmaker had bestowed

such care upon them. We could not call such a confused mass a watch, although it might contain all the parts which, if put together according to the mind of the watch-maker, would then, and only then, fulfil the purposes for which they had been fashioned. So also in assembly: it is not only to have those gifted of God collected together in a something, but it is to have those gifts arranged according to the mind of the Giver, so that they may to the fullest extent fulfil the purposes for which they have been created. Our watch must be put together, and kept together, in the case that has been prepared for it by the watch-maker, if it is to keep time according to the will of the constructor,

J. A. BOSWELL,

(*To be continued.*)

THE VINE.

NOTES OF ADDRESS ON JOHN 15.

(*Communicated by W. C.*)

THERE was an allusion to Israel when the Lord said, "I am the true vine." He doubtless spoke in such a way to the disciples to suggest to their minds that Israel had been God's vine before. The vine is used as a figure of fruit-bearing on the earth. And Israel ought to have borne fruit on the earth, for God spoke of them as His vine. He asked that they should have brought forth grapes, and they brought forth wild grapes. Turn to Psalm 80., verse 8. That clearly sets forth that Israel was God's vine in the earth, and that they were tended by Him, and were to bring forth fruit in the earth for Him. Look at Isaiah 5., where we see why God forsook His vineyard. See how lamentably they failed in fulfilling the purpose of God. Wherefore God gave them over to judgment.

There was a time of restoration and blessing, when God

visited His vine again; but at the time when the Lord Jesus Christ came Israel's iniquity reached a climax. What did He find? There was nothing for God, practically speaking, in Israel. And when we arrive at the close of the Gospel according to John, when He has been utterly rejected, we find that He utterly rejects the whole house of Israel and sets them aside. But He gathers around Him the nucleus of a new thing. And the Lord speaks to His disciples as being the nucleus of a new thing, a new testimony for God; and as He passed out of that large upper room, He said to them, "I am the true vine."

He was the tender plant of Isaiah 53. We have only to contrast what God got from Israel and what He got out of His Son. Both Israel and the Lord Jesus Christ were brought out of Egypt into the land to be a testimony in the land. Israel had apostatized; but He was the true vine. Notice what the Scripture says about the vine. It is that which cheereth God and man—a double service for the fruit of the vine to render. It will be gladly acknowledged that in the brief sojourn of the Lord Jesus Christ upon earth that double service was always rendered; God was always first, and man was never left out. What a marvellous life, full of fruit! It astonishes us, the much that He did! There was not only quality, but quantity as well. With us there is but little, and much of that is worthless. His was the busiest life ever lived upon earth. No rush, no hurry, no feverish excitement. The beloved John says at the close of his narrative, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." That just shows how it impressed the mind of the apostle who was most intimate with Him. He was always full of service for His God; never unfitted for service, as, alas!

we often are. Even when He was physically tired, as in John 4., He was at work. He sits at the well, wearied with His journey; there He sits: surely He must take rest now. When the disciples come back to Him and beg Him to eat, He replies, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." How true it is that when the soul is refreshed the body is refreshed as well.

All this emphasizes the words which He spoke—"I am the true vine." What Israel ought to have given to God, that the Lord Jesus gave in full. He was God's servant, in whom God was glorified,

In John 15. He is about to go away to heaven, and He is going to associate a heavenly people with Himself as a witness for Him on the earth. He is the true vine, and His disciples are the branches. He is in heaven, and they are left down here to serve Him, and to be His witnesses.

"And My Father is the husbandman." This shows the deep and tender anxiety which God the Father finds in looking after the work of His Son. Who are the branches in the vine? Many eminent men have said that the unfruitful branches are not true disciples, but mere professors, with a nominal attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that when the time of testing comes they break down. But the language of John 15. would not encourage such a thought. The Lord took particular pains that such truth as He is here setting forth was not uttered except in the ears of those who were His loved and His own. The world was outside when He was speaking to them. He had done with that. There is no thought of mere profession here, He has spoken of Israel being put aside, and God has got a new thing; and as we go on I think we shall find the language naturally lends itself to the suggestion that the branches are all the true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Saints sometimes tremble in view of this scripture, at the thought of being lost for ever. The

thought here is not one concerning the possession of life or not, but of fruit-bearing.

Now turn to Ezekiel 15., and read that chapter. Why is the vine so valuable? If it does not fulfil its one object, fruit-bearing, it is worthless, and the fire burns it; if it fails in that it fails in its one service, and it is only an encumbrance. Read this 15th of John with that thought—the thought of testimony, of fruit-bearing.

Verse 2. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Notice the structure of that verse; to my mind it is helpful. "Every branch *in Me*." The branches are in Him, even the unfruitful branches. It is not the branch which beareth fruit that is so spoken of, but the branch that beareth not fruit. It is not only the fruitful branches that are in Him, but the one that beareth not fruit is also said to be in Him. That is a great comfort, and exceedingly precious, though also solemn if you are a child of God. If you do not believe that, you are giving away truth that is for yourself here, truth that is for your own heart and conscience; and we cannot afford to do that. We need the words of verses 2 and 6 to search us through and through.

Hebrews 3. has an application in this connection: verse 12, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." The language is very strong. It is not merely "Take heed," but it is "Take heed, brethren"—the same persons who are addressed in verse 1: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." Do you not see how you rob yourself of precious truth if you give this to mere professors? It may be very humbling, but it will be very beneficial to us to take it to ourselves.

There is a sort of analogous truth in John 13., where we get the Lord washing the feet of His disciples. The

husbandman cleanseth the vine, doubtless with the Word, that it may bear more fruit.

Then the Lord speaks graciously : " Now (already) ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. . " He is the source, and we are only the channels. We see our utter weakness, except Christ works through us. We are continually trying to get on without Him, but we can do nothing that is pleasing to God apart from Him. The flesh is continually trying to act without Christ ; but the flesh profiteth nothing. There is not a more humbling word for the old nature than this, " The flesh profiteth nothing. " God writes that across it ; it is not that it is weak, and cannot do much. Men say there is hope for it, by restraint and culture, and by education. But here is the plain word of the Lord, " Apart from Me ye can do nothing. " Let us see to it that we are constantly in Him, and know our utter nothingness apart from Him, just as a little babe clings to its mother, for it will perish if its mother leaves it. Think of His words, " I am the vine. " You are not the vine ; I have all the life, all the sap, all the power ; you are only a branch : and as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. Your fruitfulness depends upon your abiding in Me ; and if so, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. You see to your part, He says in effect, and I will do Mine. Feel your need of Me, always maintain communion with Me. We need to be impressed more and more with our need of this word.

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 148.—*Is it according to God's word to wear a beard? Is trimming the beard the same as shaving?*

We believe that there is full liberty for the Christian to wear a beard or to shave. The beard has been given to man by God as a protection for the throat and chest, yet as it is comely for men to have their hair cut short, so it is proper that the beard should be trimmed, and permissible that it should be entirely removed by shaving. In proof of the comeliness of trimming the beard we direct attention to the threefold sign of mourning observed by Mephibosheth during the exile of his royal benefactor. He had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes. That it is in general permissible to shave is, we think, shown by the fact that the vow of the Nazarite included a prohibition both of shaving and of cutting the hair short.

C. M. L.

QUESTION 149.—*Please explain the word Propitiation, found only in Romans 3. 25; 1 John 2. 2, and 4. 10.*

The word *ἱλασμός*, *ilasmōs*, which occurs in 1 John 2. 2, 4. 10, means a sin-offering or atonement victim, and is so used in the Septuagint translation of Ezekiel 44. 27. With this word is connected the verb *ἱλάσκομαι*, *ilaskōmai*, which means to make atonement for sin. It occurs in Luke 18. 13; Hebrews 2. 17. The word in Romans 3. 25, though derived from the same root, is another word, *ἱλάστηριον*, *ilasterion*,—which occurs also in Hebrews 9. 5, where it is translated mercy-seat. It is also used to indicate this golden covering of the ark in the Septuagint (Exod. 25. 18, 37. 6, and elsewhere). This seems to show that Romans 3. 25

sets forth Christ Jesus as the true mercy-seat on which God sees—and man through faith may also see—His blood, token of His death, atonement made, so that sin can righteously be forgiven.

C. M. L.

QUESTION 150.—*To whom did Paul refer as the presbytery in 1 Timothy 4. 14? Does the term apply to certain to-day?*

It was one of the most striking characteristics of Paul's work that he always associated himself with others, and others with himself. Acts 13. tells how in Antioch, in the church that was there, were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Symeon, Lucius, Manaen, Saul; and as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

Then, after fasting and prayer, the others laid their hands on them and sent them away. This, taken with previous scriptures, as Acts 11. 22-25, shows how Paul's work was linked on with that which went before. After disciples had been made in Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, in a return visit Barnabas and Paul pointed out in the assemblies in those towns the elders whom God would have to rule for Him there. In a yet later visit to Derbe and Lystra Paul found there a certain disciple of whom these elders gave a good account, and having circumcised him, took him with himself and Silas. Thus far the Acts of the Apostles; but in his two letters to Timothy Paul reminds him (2 Tim. 1. 6; 1 Tim. 4. 14) of a gift of God given him through the laying on of the Apostle's hands, which was accompanied with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery or elderhood. We coin the word elderhood to use here because the word presbytery is derived from the word presbyter, and as the latter is always translated elder in the New Testament, it is only consistent to translate the word presbytery by a corresponding word. (We prefer elderhood to elder-

ship because the latter means the position of being an elder.)

Well, of what did this presbytery or elderhood consist? Clearly of presbyters or elders. If we suppose the reference to be those of Derbe and Lystra (as it well may have been, for these evidently did show their fellowship with Timothy being taken by Paul), we may well ask, Were there at the time of this (Acts 16.) visit no other elders than such as were appointed—that is, pointed out by Barnabas and Paul at their previous visit—or, if there were others, how had these further elders been linked to those previously recognised? We cannot of course answer these questions definitely; but inasmuch as we believe the elderhood is a divinely formed organism which grows, we see no reason to limit the use of the word to elders who had been pointed out by Apostles. It seems to us applicable to the circle of overseeing men in contiguous churches of God who act together in the fear of God in the rule of His House, as expressed in those churches. It would not, we believe, be correct to speak of the elderhood or presbytery in a single assembly.

C. M. L.

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.

REDEMPTION.

I.

REDEMPTION is one of the great central truths of the Word of God; upon redemption all else rests. The Lord came to redeem; He went back to God having obtained eternal redemption. Every blessing that God has made possible for man, and for the world, is on the ground of redemption. How important, then, to understand this great work! How necessary to know the Lord as Redeemer and Saviour!

God has a great deal to effect through redemption; but we shall not touch upon that in this paper. We wish in the meantime to understand redemption as it affects us, and to this end it is necessary to learn what the Redeemer had to do before He obtained redemption for us.

The elements of nearly every divine truth may be learned in the Old Testament; and it is always helpful to go back and see how God formed the ideas which prepared the way for His revelation of higher things.

Leviticus, chapter 25., gives the law for the redemption of lands, goods, and slaves, and supplies a type and illustration of our subject.

If a man through stress of poverty had to sell any part of his possessions, and at the time appointed could not buy it back, his kinsman paid the money and redeemed for him his possession. If a man had to sell his liberty, and was unable to recover it himself, his kinsman bought him back his freedom. In each of these cases the kinsman stood as redeemer.¹ Again, in Numbers 35., if a man had killed his fellow by accident or by design he must pay the penalty. The kinsman of the slain man exacted that penalty, and he was called the avenger, or redeemer of blood, for he took up the cause of the wronged one and saw that the wrong was righted.

Now these examples of a redeemer and his work cover almost completely the work of our Lord and Saviour as Redeemer.

Our condition was the same as that of the one who had sold his possession and his liberty; it was the same as that of the man who was slain. It was true of Adam, who represents all of us.

The Lord planted a garden and put Adam in it. With

¹ The three English words, "Redeemer," "Kinsman," and "Avenger," used in the scriptures referred to in this article, are the translations of one Hebrew word.—*Ed.*

only one restriction he might come and go and do as he pleased. The garden was his and in all things he enjoyed perfect liberty; but he sold his possession and his freedom for knowledge of good and evil. The Lord had said of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and the serpent compassed his death. Death thus passed upon all men; and the angel of the Lord, with flaming sword, barred the way back to life and to liberty. Henceforth man was the servant of sin, and death reigned where life only had been.

Who would pay the price—that awful price of death—and redeem the possession and the liberty that man had sold? Who would be the avenger of blood and destroy the destroyer?

It required one who should be able to pay the tremendous price that righteousness and judgment demanded; it required one who should be stronger than the adversary.

"Lo, I come" are the wondrous words that reach us from the throne of God itself. The Only Begotten is revealed.

"None of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night the Lord passed through
E'er He found the sheep that was lost."

The life that He lived and the death that He died are known to all; but of the mighty fight that was fought we know little or nothing. Heaven opened and God testified to His perfect pleasure in the life; and the glad tidings from God concerning the Christ show that the death has met the claims of righteousness.

The Avenger of Blood has exacted the penalty from the slayer; for He died that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death—that is, the Devil.

Life and liberty are now God's free gift to whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman" (Ruth 4. 14).

TWO LITTLE THINGS.

THE helm of a ship is one of the most important parts of the vessel. The engines, excellent and powerful though they be, are of little use without it. The power which propels the vessel is vested in the engines, but that which directs its course is the helm. The largest battleship afloat is turned whither the steersman lists by a touch of the helm. Great are the consequences for weal or for woe which at times are attached to the turning of this little thing. When the helm is rightly set the vessel ploughs its way in triumph through the deep, but one false turn may drive it crashing on the rocks. Momentous issues then devolve upon the use to which the helm is put—what joy, what gain, if rightly used; what sorrow, what loss, if wrongly turned!

Like to the part played by the helm in a vessel is the tongue in a Christian. They are both small things which may be turned to the greatest good or may be used for the greatest evil. A perfect Christian, indeed, is the one who has the tongue under control. He controls his whole body who controls his tongue.

What a world of misery an unguarded tongue may create! An idle word uttered, a doubtful story told, a disparaging statement made about some fellow-saint, may appear to be very trifling things at the time, but who can guess the far-reaching results of such doings? Behold, how great a forest a little fire kindleth! What ruin, what devastation, what withering work the tongue can accomplish! "She hath cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by her," can surely be said of the tongue. The young and the old have fallen before its fury; the testimonies of individuals and of assemblies have been blighted by its work; that fairest scene of all

—brethren dwelling together in unity, so good and so pleasant to behold—has been turned to a waste of confusion and strife by an uncurbed tongue. Eternity alone can reveal the extent of its ravages, for then only can the accumulated evil which results from unguarded and foolish speaking be weighed and measured in the light of God.

THE CLAIMS OF THE YOUNG.

VI.

WE have good reason to believe that it has pleased God to revive in the hearts of His saints, in a very marked manner, a deep interest in His work amongst the young. We hail with pleasure and thanksgiving every token of increased earnestness in this noble work of winning the young for the Lord Jesus Christ.

It may be that in some parts of the country, where meetings for the young have not hitherto been held, brethren may wish to commence such work. With the object of helping in such cases, we desire to make a few practical suggestions, which may help to set the machinery of work amongst the young in motion. Who can tell what may be accomplished if such work is only once started?

We do not intend to base the suggestions we wish to offer on any particular portion of God's Word. We truly recognise that the Scriptures impose upon us the weighty responsibility of labouring amongst the young with the object of winning them for Christ, and of teaching them the Word of God; but we are free to admit that we know of no special portion of the Scriptures which tells us exactly how this important work is to be done. As in many other matters, it appears that God has told us plainly that this work has to be done if we would be well-pleasing to Him,

and that He has left it to the wisdom which He gives, so that we may arrange for ourselves how the work can best be accomplished in our varied circumstances. We suggest, therefore, that what we have heard an esteemed brother call "sanctified common sense" is the most valuable instructor which we possess in the matter. Moreover, there are doubtless broad principles to be found in the Word of God which, if heeded, will guide us aright.

We have a deep conviction that work amongst the young should be considered by us as being of as great importance as the meetings for teaching the saints or for preaching the Gospel. Indeed, if some were asked to name these meetings in the order of their importance; they should have little hesitation in mentioning the children's meetings first! And here, at once, we touch a point of vital moment. In the past the interest and the fellowship of the assemblies have not been extended to this work as they ought to have been. Indeed, often many of the saints knew little or nothing about the work, and seemed to think that they had no responsibility toward it; and ere it can prosper it must be rescued from this fatal obscurity and be given the place in the thoughts and in the care of the assemblies that its importance merits. The assemblies must be educated to understand that primarily the responsibility of this work rests upon them.

It is therefore the duty of the assemblies, through their overseers, to see that the care of this work and the teaching of the young are in capable hands, and not left, as they too often are, in the hands of incompetent persons. It seems to have been an accepted thing in the past that any one was good enough and gifted enough for this work, and mere boys and girls when received into fellowship, who had more need to be taught than to teach, were expected to expend their untrained energies in teaching the young. There is no reason why many of the younger members of

the community should not be actively engaged in this work, but at the same time let us see to it that only the capable are permitted to do so.

As a general rule, it will be found most convenient and most profitable to arrange the children in sections or classes, according to their age and capacity of understanding. The classes should never, if possible, consist of more than six children, and three will always make a good minimum. Let the charge of each class be given to a capable brother or sister.

In order to secure efficiency amongst teachers, a good superintendent is absolutely necessary. He should be one who is well known to overseeing men, and if possible one of themselves. At least he must have the confidence of the overseers, and be one whose abilities are sufficiently known to enable them to confidently entrust him with this sacred charge.

The superintendent's work is a most important one. It should consist of superintending the school; not in giving out the opening hymn, engaging in prayer, and teaching a class. The organization of the school is his particular responsibility. He must look after his teachers and see that they are discharging their duties in a becoming manner; he must see that they are present every Lord's day: and if any one is absent he should find out the cause before another Lord's day comes round. In short, the best way that a superintendent can serve the children is by looking well after the teachers. The children are the teachers' care, the teachers are the superintendent's care. It is his work, in fellowship with the teachers, to arrange the classes and to wisely divide the work amongst the teachers.

The superintendent should endeavour to get into personal contact with the children and the younger teachers while they are at work. By sitting down for a few minutes

beside a young teacher and listening to the children repeating their verses, or asking a few questions regarding the lesson, he may help and encourage an inexperienced teacher not a little; and the children likewise appreciate such attention. Indeed, we cannot too strongly urge the value of a brother who acts the part of the superintendent well. The welfare of the school rests almost entirely on his shoulders, and a school is seldom worthy of the name without a superintendent.

A point that must be insisted upon is method. Every school should be characterized by punctuality—punctuality in beginning work and punctuality in closing. The attendance of the teachers must be regular; and if a teacher requires to be absent for one day or more, that one should see to it that a competent substitute is found. For teachers to absent themselves from the sacred work to which they profess to be called by the Lord without securing substitutes can only be characterized as culpable neglect of a holy duty.

In order that teachers may be able to properly look after the children under their care, they should supply themselves with roll-books, where the name and address of each child, and their attendance, should be duly noted. In this way, when one is absent, the teacher will be able to visit the home of the child and find out the cause of absence. Moreover, this is a good opportunity of reaching the parents with the Gospel; and systematic visiting of the children in their homes, whether they are absent or not, is to be strongly recommended.

THE REMEMBRANCE OF HIS HOLINESS.

LORD God of hosts! thrice holy Lord!
 For ever be Thy name adored!
 The seraphim around the throne
 Proclaim Thy holiness alone,
 As in the light, with wing-veiled face,
 They bow before Thy holiness.

Lord God of hosts! with glory Thine
 The world is full, in shade and shine;
 Earth moves when'er Thy voice it hears—
 Tremble with awe celestial spheres;
 All naked are before Thy face,
 And bow and own Thy holiness.

Lord God of hosts! Whom darkest night
 Sees wrapt in uncreated light,
 Whose throne's foundation standeth sure
 In righteousness and judgment pure,
 Made nigh in Christ, we seek Thy face,
 And bow and own Thy holiness.

Lord God of hosts! thrice holy Thou!
 Low at Thy feet we contrite bow;
 The terrors of Thy throne we learn,
 Mercy and truth in Thee discern,
 Whilst in the light with unveiled face
 We bow before Thy holiness.

Lord God of hosts!—Who holy art—
 We worship Thee with glowing heart:
 Thy faithfulness our endless song—
 Thy righteousness our refuge strong.
 As in the light Thy love we trace,
 We bow before Thy holiness.

Lord God of hosts! thrice holy Lord!
 Jehovah, great I AM adored!
 Eternal Rock of Ages strong!
 Peals in Thy praise the ceaseless song;
 In Thee alone our spirit boasts
 The glory Thine—Lord God of hosts!

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

(Continued from page 151.)

XIII.—MANASSEH.

(2 Chron. 33.).

IN several particulars the reign of this king is remarkable. In the first place he reigned longer than any other of the Kings of Judah. Secondly, he was the first of Judah's kings after the disruption to betake himself to necromancy and the like. Thirdly, he was the first to be carried into captivity. Lastly, his reign is unique, and presents a perfect contrast to the rest, inasmuch as his latter end is better than the beginning.

From verses 1 and 2 it would appear that he was not long reigning ere he began to manifest that wicked course which characterized his early days. A mere lad of twelve years when he came to the throne. What a contrast to Him who sprang out of the same line, destined to sit upon the throne of David ("Yet I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion"—Ps. 2. 6), who, when twelve years old, was found by His parents in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions (Luke 2. 46).

Verse 6 shows the length to which this king went in his folly and wickedness. "He also made his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom; and he practised augury, and used enchantments, and practised sorcery, and dealt with them that had familiar spirits (like Saul), and with wizards; he wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke Him to anger."

Whatever one may believe to be the teaching of Scripture concerning that which is called spiritualism in this day, whether it has or has not a close relationship to the

above, one thing is indisputable: that these things have always been recognised in the Scriptures as things which have an existence, and not as incredible, like the ghost stories of our youth. Hence we read the most solemn denunciations are pronounced on those who meddle with these abominations (for example see Exod. **22. 18**). Besides, the demons which are so often mentioned in the New Testament as inhabiting human beings are destined yet to play a most important part in the history of the world. One cannot very well read the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation without connecting these occult practices with the demons (whatever origin one may believe them to have had). Three times the mention of demons is found in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ:—

Worship of demons (Rev. **9. 20**).

Spirits of demons (Rev. **16. 14**).

Habitation of demons (Rev. **18. 2**).

From Deuteronomy **18. 12** we learn that it was for these sins the Lord drove out the inhabitants of the land before the children of Israel. This may explain somewhat Genesis **15. 16**: "The iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full." The consummation of these things seems ever and anon to bring down condign punishment upon those who are entangled. But as God's ways are ever equal, the falling into these things on the part of His own people brought down the same judgment upon them as was meted out to the inhabitants of the land by them (the sword of the Lord) many centuries before.

We remember how Saul was zealous in exterminating the witches out of the land, but betaking himself to the witch of Endor in his despair, the Lord having rejected him, very soon God's judgment overtook him.

It appears to me from the Scriptures that when Christ comes as the righteous King and Judge to execute judgment upon the ungodly, that this phase of wickedness will

have culminated, so bringing down summary judgment. The Anti-Christ, who will be taken without hand—allied with all the powers of darkness—for he gets his authority directly from the Dragon (Rev. 13. 2, 4).

It is a solemn fact that God did not turn away from the fierceness of His wrath, wherewith His anger was kindled against Judah, not even in the time of Josiah, who himself tried to undo the mischief caused by his grandfather by putting away those who had familiar spirits and the wizards (2 Kings 23. 24). And God's wrath is attributable to the provocations that Manasseh had provoked Him withal. There is a point when patience becomes toleration of evil (2 Kings 23. 26).

Verse 7 of this chapter is one of the many which give emphasis to the fact of God's delight in the place where subsequently our Lord was crucified outside the city gates; and with this let us again remember Deuteronomy 12. and 16. along with Matthew 18. 20.

Verse 8 reminds us of Isaiah 48. 18: "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

Verse 9 would suggest that when God's people go astray they may apparently get further away than those who never knew His love and power.

The King of Assyria mentioned in verse 11 was Esar-haddon (the successor of Sennacherib, of whom we had occasion to speak in our last), but, unlike him, who, as we saw, was miraculously defeated, together with his army, effected an entrance into the capital, and took Manasseh in chains, and carried him to Babylon, an earnest of that which was about to take place a little later, when all Judah were carried down there as captives.

Sennacherib binds the city for a time, but Esar-haddon binds the man. It is remarkable that in the Assyrian discoveries Sennacherib, when recording his invasion of Jeru-

salem, says "he attacked Hezekiah, who, against the counsel of Isaiah, had been drifting to Egypt." "Hezekiah himself," he says, "I shut up like a bird in a cage, in Jerusalem his royal city." There is no word that he took Jerusalem, although much is said about the other cities which he captured. If he had taken Jerusalem he would have been jubilant. This is another remarkable instance of the agreement of these secular historical records with the inspired Scriptures.

The conversion of Manasseh is indeed remarkable—unique, as we have already said—for while we find king after king going wrong at the end, the reverse is true of only one. Surely the fact of this king's conversion is an additional proof that God is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. How unlike man in all His ways! none of that resentful spirit found even at times in the best dispositions. It is of His mercies that we are not consumed.

"For I the Lord (Jehovah) change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed" (Mal. 3. 6). God has often to bring very low before He can bring high. How often is it the case that in the times of distress and perplexity those, who never otherwise would, cry to God, and He is heard of them. This is true in the case of nations, as well as of individuals.

The Psalmist says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I observe Thy word." "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Thy statutes" (Ps. 119. 67, 71).

If we are not instructed and taught in the way we should go and counselled with His eye, He must deal with us "as the horse and the mule, which have no understanding, whose trappings must be bit and bridle to hold them in, else they will not come near unto thee" (Ps. 32.).

XIV.—AMON.

THERE is nothing remarkable to relate about this king, the history of whom is told in five verses (2 Chron. **33**. 21-25). He reigned but two years, and may be classed with Ahaz as being an exceedingly bad king without one redeeming feature. "He humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but this same Amon trespassed more and more" (ver. 23), being murdered while hardly more than a youth of twenty-four years.

His name appears to be Egyptian in origin, and may have been given by Manasseh in commemoration of the Egyptian god. (See Jeremiah **46**. 25.)

J. C. RADCLIFFE.

CHURCHES OF GOD.

(Continued from page 169.)

God's purpose with an individual Christian, or perhaps we should say one of His great purposes with such a one, is that he should be a light in the darkness of this world. "Ye are the light of the world," said our blessed Lord to His disciples. Now a light is made to shine, and the shining is for a purpose. God's object in the salvation of a sinner is not simply to save him from eternal judgment, but that by his shining for God in the darkness he may be the means of leading others to the light of life, and thus his influence may be felt on those around him. A child of God is one who has been fashioned of God; he is, as we have already said, a temple of the Holy Spirit. Now it is the purpose of God that the new nature should rule down or keep in subjection the flesh, so that, in other words, the new creature is to keep in subjection, and in the place of death, that which is not really dead, and never will be so long as we are in the body. For a proof of these things we refer our readers to Galatians **5**, 24, Colossians **3**. 5.

If we look into the construction of an assembly we shall find, the writer believes, exactly the same principles of government as with the individual—that is, that the men who are to rule for God are themselves to be ruled of God, and so far is this so that the very house of the one who rules for God in the assembly is to be a pattern of godly order and rule in itself. If, then, the mind of God in these things is carried out according to 1 Timothy 3. and Titus 1. we shall have a divinely formed circle of overseers ruled of God in itself and ruling for God in the assembly; in other words, those who have ruled down sin in themselves will be ruling down sin in the assembly, and bringing all that is contrary to the will of God into subjection, not to their wills, but to the will of Him Who worketh in them, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. As with the individual ruled of God, so with the assembly ruled of God; its influence is to make itself felt upon all its surroundings, that by the Church might be known the manifold wisdom of God (John 17. 21, also Eph. 3. 10).

Again, if we look into the nation of Israel we shall, we believe, find the same principles of government; authority vested now in the hands of the man after God's own heart, and in the reign of David and Solomon the two characters that unitedly make the perfect type of the Lord Jesus. We not only find sin ruled down in the nation with a strong hand, and rulers ruling for God under the kingly authority, but we find also Gentile nations reached and brought under the rule of God. Again, if we look into the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall find the same characteristics as with the individual, his house, the assembly, and House of God, and the nation of Israel, God's rule and God's authority carried out, sin and all that is in rebellion against God brought into at least outward subjection; for be it remembered that after the millennial reign the nations who have been outwardly subjected, headed by their great rebel

leader, will again be found in open rebellion against Jehovah and His Anointed. During His reign He has ruled the nations with a rod of iron (Rev. 19.), associating with Himself in this reign and in this rule the overcoming ones of the present age, now perfected with the risen Christ.

Turning our thoughts again to the assemblies of God, we find when the apostle Paul called for the elders of the church in Ephesus, he exhorted them to feed, shepherd, or rule the flock; and again, Peter, writing in his first epistle, fifth chapter, second verse, says, "Feed the little flock of God which is among you." The word "feed" in this passage and the one referred to in Acts is the same word translated "rule" in Revelation 2. 27 and 19. 15. We would ask our readers' special attention to this point, that, while the apostle Paul addressed the elders of a church, Peter addresses the elders of a vast expanse of country, he directs them to do the same thing that the apostle Paul directs the elders of the church at Ephesus to do.

Now, in order for the elders of the church at Ephesus to care for, in a godly and efficient manner, all the saints in the city, it would be necessary for them to come together at stated periods, so that full advantage might be derived from all the gifts that God had given, and that there might be a mutual strengthening and encouraging one another with prayer and searching into the Word of God for guidance as to His will. Whilst these elders of the church would be continually occupied in caring for and shepherding the sheep, they would never act in internal discipline apart from the assembly, for a discipline carried out by the overseers alone would be no discipline; discipline can only accomplish God's purposes when unitedly carried out by the whole assembly, and we would here remind fellow-saints that it is no real love to treat those who have sinned and brought dishonour on the Lord's name as though nothing had happened. This will not help godly repentance

and restoration, first to God's fellowship and then to that of the assembly. It is grievous indeed to see the light and thoughtless way that saints so often act in, concerning this matter. Again, as we have said, the elders of the church would necessarily need to be together at stated intervals; so also would the elders of the country need to be together for much the same purpose as the elders of a church—that by mutual prayer and exhortation they might be the better guided in caring for the churches of God in their localities. One would suppose it hardly necessary to say that if the elders of an individual church can neither act in internal discipline or put outside of the fellowship one that has sinned on their own authority, apart from the assembly, much less can the elders of the country, when together, act for the assemblies with which they are specially associated in the matter of internal discipline or putting out. There are matters in which they can act, and burdens which they can bear, apart from the assembly, but this is a different thing altogether from their taking action in matters of discipline. We dwell specially upon these points because there has been persistent misrepresentation on the part of some, which has had the effect of confusing the minds of saints, and leading them to believe the very opposite of the truth.

Before we leave this subject we would remark that where there is united action amongst those who rule in an assembly, even should there be one of their number who is in a condition unfit to act for God, there is far more hope that his brethren should see his condition, and guard the flock from any unhappy influence on his part, than where there is a one-man overseer. Such a one, backsliding from God, and acting in the flesh, may lead the greater part of the assembly with him, there being none to counteract his influence, and warn the saints of their danger.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(To be concluded.)

"I."

It is significant to notice, in New and Old Testament Scripture, where this personal pronoun is continually in opposition to the mind and will of God. If our hearts and wills are not actuated by the Spirit of God, to be guided alone by the written word of God, there will be in us a rebellious heart. Many true-hearted saints have allowed a root of bitterness to spring up in their hearts through self-will and stubbornness, which has often ended in shipwreck to their once happy, spiritual life.

Let us pause a few minutes to look at 2 Chron. **34.** and **35.**, and think of the sad end of the tender-hearted king, Josiah, who, in the midst of a life of usefulness for God, allowed himself to meddle with the powers of earth and thus bring upon himself a speedy death (chap. **35.** 22, 23). He was a bright and shining light in one of the darkest periods of Israel's history. Through his godliness and courage, Judah and Jerusalem were purged from sin and idolatry, and, moreover, the written word of God was honoured and appealed to by him for guidance. Hence Israel was led back again to the old paths of truth and righteousness. Accordingly then, there was happiness and spirituality amongst the people of God. Wherefore the Passover feast was kept, and there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel (chap. **35.** 18).

Godly order prevailed in their midst. The priests and Levites, and the sons of Asaph, were all in their proper places, also the Ark of God in the house which Solomon built for it (chap. **24.** 3). But, alas! the king, who in the days of his youth sought the Lord and humbled himself and wept for the departure of Israel from God, is seen in self-will striving with the potsherds of earth, and then carried off the battlefield wounded to death (chap. **35.** 23, 24).

What we would seek to learn from the sad end of Josiah is, that only wisdom and power and strength, resulting from communion with God, can keep us from the wiles of the Devil. We may be in the House of God where the word of the Lord is carried out, and the Lordship of Christ owned by the saints, and the assemblies where we live may be free from all evil doctrinally. But position will not keep us from the dictates of our sinful hearts or from the power of Satan.

We write thus in humility. Paul realized that after preaching the gospel and teaching the saints, it was possible for him to be not approved, and to finish his course he had to bruise or buffet his body and bring it into bondage, lest by any means, after he had preached to others, he should be rejected (1 Cor. 9. 27, R.V.).

Beloved saints, we are in the race; an overcomer's crown awaits us. Ah! who will gain it? There are many Christians in heaven who have lost it, and many on earth who have no desire to gain one. Saved by fire they enter heaven. But still the cheering words of Him Who is the Alpha and the Omega to every saint: "Behold I come quickly, hold fast that which thou hast that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3. 11). Children of God, the path of separation that the Lord has marked for us in His word to walk in, affords no earthly reward, it entails suffering and sorrow. Little did Peter and John realize what the Lord Jesus meant when He said unto them, "Follow thou Me." The steps they took after Him brought upon themselves reproach and suffering. Yea, more, imprisonment and stripes and death awaited them, but withal they could rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (Acts 5. 41).

The Lord Jesus Himself would never allow saint, or Satan, or man to hinder Him from doing the will of God. He set His face like a flint against everything that was

contrary to the mind of God (Isa. 50. 7). Such steadfastness and fixedness of heart ought to characterize us in these days of departure from God.

From you, Christian reader, God wants a living sacrifice (Rom. 12.). If you are in an unscriptural position, far better come out from it, and leave results with God. Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams (1 Sam. 15. 22). If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully (2 Tim. 2. 5). It is easy to find many excuses to keep us from fully following the Lord. Many Christians think this usefulness in the Lord's vineyard will be insignificant if they take their place outside the camp with Christ. They linger in a God-dishonouring position, for the sake of preaching the gospel to large congregations of people. Their plea is, I stay in denominationalism, because God uses me to the conversion of sinners. "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me, and where I am there shall My servant be. If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour" (John 12. 26). And again, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me; for whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever would lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 16. 25, 26). These are searching words applicable to every saint. Oh, for grace to apprehend the glories of Christ, so that we may be able to say in reality, like Paul, "I count not my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course" (Acts 20. 24). Amidst suffering and sorrow and reproach, through evil report and good report, he pressed on in the fight of faith, and in anticipation of a crown of righteousness he wrote, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will

give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (2 Tim. 4. 6-8).

In contrast to the victorious, happy end of Paul, we would seek observation of another faithful servant of God, Moses on Mount Nebo (Deut 34.). His natural force was not abated, nor his eyes dim in the full vigour of health and strength, and well able to lead Israel over the Jordan. But, alas! only a sight of it was his portion, he had sinned at the waters of strife, and disobedience must be punished by Jehovah. He spake unadvisedly with his lips (Ps. 106. 32, 33). Being vexed to desperation by an unbelieving nation, he said, "hear now, ye rebels, must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, with his rod he smote the rock twice, and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also" (Num. 20. 10, 11). Here we see man acting in the flesh, speaking against God's heritage.

Jehovah's testimony concerning Israel was through Balaam. "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel: the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them" (Num. 23. 21).

Precious indeed were His people to Himself, although grieved continually by their unfaithfulness. He kept them as the apple of His eye. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Shall God that justifieth? "Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, Who is even at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us?" (Rom. 8. 33, 34.) Very precious Israel was to God. But far dearer are the members of the body of Christ to Him. He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, so as to make every saint in Christ holy and without blame before Him in love (Eph. 1. 4). Oh, how careful we should be so as not to sin with our lips! Truly, the tongue is a fire,

a world of iniquity ; so is the tongue among our members, that it defleth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature ; and it is set on fire of Gehenna (James 3. 6). Many faithful Christians who have laboured together in the Lord's vineyard have been separated through unadvised words spoken in the flesh.

A. LAWRENCE.

(*To be continued.*)

BAPTISM.

“Suffer it to be so now.”—MATT. 3. 15.

WHILST commending to its fullest all evangelizing effort put forward by devoted servants of our Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus for the salvation of sinners, by bringing them to put their trust in the Lord Jesus as the One who died in their stead to deliver them from the punishment of their guilt through sin, how strange is it that the majority of His labourers in His vineyard omit all the accompanying tenets concerning “the truth that is in Jesus.”

Yet the words, “Suffer it to be so now,” referring to baptism were uttered by the Lord of the vineyard, and that also in reference to Himself, who would be supposed to have the right to do as He willed, His servant John even rebuking Him for coming to him to be baptized, saying, “I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me” (Matt. 3. 14), Jesus replying in the words given. The one desire of the Lord Jesus was to fulfil all righteousness, not to do His own will, but the Father's. When the Master directed the disciples to go forth and teach all nations the truth, He did not say, teach only, but make disciples, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28. 19).

When the Ethiopian eunuch was led to see the truth, as it is told in Isaiah, concerning Jesus (chap. 53.), through

the expounding of it to him by Philip the Evangelist, what was his first teaching by the Spirit? "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" Coming within sight of water Philip gave him his wish and baptized him (Acts 8. 36, 37) clearly showing that whilst baptism is no stepping-stone to salvation, it is a first act of obedience after the sinner has accepted Christ as Saviour.

Evangelizing brings the sinner to the first stage of salvation within the fold, but how much after teaching is needed to build up the spiritual fabric whose foundation is laid in Christ?

If the Lord Himself underwent it for the fulfilling or completing of all righteousness, who was perfect righteousness in Himself, how essential that His followers, who in themselves are sinners, should comply with His own express command! In almost all instances of conversion of belief in Christ, we learn in the apostles' labours that they, whether many or few, were baptized directly after. "Suffer it to be so now."

It behoves us to study to be approved of the Lord in all things after our acceptance through grace of Him, growing up a spiritual temple unto God, and truly all enjoined acts of obedience should be willingly fulfilled.

God is not unmindful of such; they bring blessing to the child of His redemption.

Colossians 2. 12 tells us our act of baptism is our burial with Christ, or the putting off of our body of sin, and also our resurrection in Him into the new life by the operation of faith in His atoning work.

Ephesians 4. 5 speaks of one Lord, one faith, one baptism, giving a unity to the three.

Baptism was a doctrine distinctly taught in the churches. Paul's counsel to Timothy was, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth.*"

It is a happy thing to see a disciple of the Lord giving testimony to truth up to any standpoint, but far more praiseworthy when the whole truth or counsel of God is proclaimed (Acts 20. 27), taking heed to feed the flock of God.

The Lord give His own counsel to His labouring ones.

E. J. OWLES.

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 151.—*Can we apply the term "disciples" to believers of this present day, seeing, although used in the Acts, it is omitted throughout the Epistles?*

Surely yes; since the other Scriptures, for present time, notably the Gospel according to John, pass it on. Compare too, Matt. 28. 19, 20, with Acts 14. 21. J. B.

QUESTION 152.—*What Person does "him" refer to in Romans 8. 20?*

Surely to God alone. I observe that Dr. R. Young publishes the word "Him." J. B.

QUESTION 153.—*The Alexander of Acts 19. 33, and 1 Timothy 1. 20, and 2 Timothy 4. 14, are they one and the same person?*

Probably enough. J. B.

QUESTION 154.—*Is a "great house" (2 Tim. 2. 20) an illustration of an assembly or assemblies of God in a certain state, Christendom, or the world?*

The scripture referred to uses a large house as an illustration of a place where there are vessels of gold and silver, and vessels of wood and earth, vessels to honour, and vessels to dishonour. Certainly this cannot possibly be an illustra-

tion of an assembly or assemblies of God. We are disposed very seriously to doubt if it is meant as an illustration of Christendom or the world (which mean the same thing), for it is difficult to see in what respect this can be looked on as a house. Perhaps this would never have been thought of, but for the very erroneous and misleading teaching of some who have sought to establish an utterly false and deceptive connection between a great house here and the House of God in 1 Tim. 3. More on this head has been already said in these pages by another editor, and the present writer (see NEEDED TRUTH, vol. i. p. 133; vol. v. pp. 210, 270, and elsewhere). C. M. L.

QUESTION 155.—*If it is unscriptural for women to preach and teach, is it not also unscriptural for them to write gospel and other articles?*

That which nature itself teaches, and with which Scripture is in most entire and happy agreement, is that women must not take the man's place of leading and authority, nor exercise herself in the province of public ministry. Apart from this woman may indeed teach. None can do so better or more effectually than she, for there is no teaching more fraught with far-reaching results for weal or for woe than the teaching of woman, and no human influence is greater than hers, be she mother or grandmother, sister or wife. Nature teaches this, and Scripture confirms it again and again. King Lemuel has put on record the oracle which his mother taught him, and a beautiful and lucid portion of Holy Scripture in truth is her picture of the virtuous woman that she desired for a helpmeet for her son.

The inspired writings of the New Testament are in complete harmony with those of the Old in this respect. Mary's song (or hymn), when she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth, is on record at the bidding of God to his servant

Luke, for our profit and blessing. This, like the teaching of mother and grandmother, from which Timothy derived such benefit, was also in private as far as Mary and Eunice and Lois were concerned. But if Mary did not publish her song, Luke did, and did aright. Many other scriptures might be adduced, but these may suffice for the present.

C. M. L.

QUESTION 156.—*In the Pauline writings is there any indication of the discontinuance of baptism at any point of the present dispensation?*

Absolutely none. Amongst later writings of the New Testament Peter's letters must be counted. Peter says, "Baptism doth now save you" (1 Peter 3. 21). Paul himself in writing from Rome to Ephesus puts "One Baptism" side by side with "One Faith," and in his letter to Colosse, written at the same time, speaks to the saints there of being buried with Christ in baptism, raised also therein with Him through faith in the working of God. Some Christians, it is true, have got beyond baptism; concerning such it is written, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God" (2 John 9.).

C. M. L.

QUESTION 157.—*When the apostle Peter, in his first Epistle, addresses those as strangers scattered abroad, does he exclusively refer to those who are Jewish believers? Or is it that he looks upon the united Churches of Christ as the true Israel?*

Primarily, no doubt, the address is to those who were of the seed of Israel according to the flesh, but who had become disciples of the Lord Jesus. With them were disciples who had been Gentiles. These and those were one in Christ, and were also one in assembly fellowship. Therefore all were addressed together because they were joined together.

C. M. L.

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.

A THREEFOLD CORD.

THERE is much said in the Word of God about understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. In the book of Proverbs, in particular, these words occur very frequently. Indeed, they appear to be the centre thought in that wonderful portion of the Scriptures round which every proverb circles. The main injunction there pressed upon the spirit of the child of God, in tones of earnestness and pleading, is to get understanding, knowledge, and wisdom. Get them by every means; leave no stone unturned to get them; make it the business of life to get them, for nothing else is so important, nothing so valuable as they. They are your life and light, and without them you are dead while you live, you are in darkness in the brightest sunshine. Every proverb, also, either tells of the blessings which the possessor of them is sure to know, or of the sorrows which always accompany the lack of them. Wisdom is the principal thing; "therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee." Alas! how often Christians are to be heard speaking disparagingly of these things which God has declared to be more precious than rubies, understanding not that in so doing they are but glorying in their shame.

But, says some one, "It is usually men of understanding who go astray and depart from the ways which be in Christ; and this continual search after knowledge I dislike very much, for do not the Scriptures say that knowledge

puffeth up?" Yea, verily, men of knowledge do often go astray, and knowledge does puff up, but we fearlessly assert that the threefold cord of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding never yet led any of the sons of men in any course but nearer to their God; and that for the simple reason that, when found in combination, they are governed and controlled by one another; so that if knowledge desired to depart from the straight course, wisdom, with her heavenly discretion, whispers words of caution, and points out the more excellent way, and thus, through listening to wisdom's voice, understanding and knowledge are guided aright.

The child of God, therefore, who stretches after and lays hold of these things lays hold of life; and the one who neglects the pursuit of them makes willing choice of death. This is a strong assertion, but the Word of God abundantly testifies to the truth of it. Surely, then, these things are of vital importance to God's people, and should impress upon our minds the fact that the Christian's life is no child's play, but is the most stern reality that man can be called upon to face.

We would that young Christians might understand this, so that they might be delivered from the unworthy thought that because they are saved from the wrath to come they have attained to nearly all that is required of them; which, alas! often results in the days of youth being frittered away in empty pursuits, and in after years the Christian awakens up to his dire need of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding when perhaps they have for ever slipped from his grasp.

Young believers, prize the days of youth; make good use of them; that is the time to lay up a good foundation against the years to come. While we freely admit that education does not of itself enable any one to serve the Lord acceptably, we must also admit that many would

know more of God's blessing in their service if they had given more attention to their education in their youth. The Christian who, in fellowship with God, gives due attention to mental culture will not be lacking in service. His service, however, will in all likelihood not be nearly so bulky as it otherwise would have been, but the quality will be genuine. Sooner far would we urge young Christians to occupy every day a part of their spare time (after giving God and His Word the first place) in the pursuit of useful knowledge and in mental culture, than to rush into what passes current for service, which is often but the offspring of folly.

REDEMPTION.

II.-

(Continued from page 178.)

THERE are two thoughts in redemption: the one is the thought of purchase, the other the thought of power. The kinsman of Leviticus 25., who comes forward and pays the debt, illustrates the one; the kinsman of Numbers 35., as the avenger of blood, illustrates the other. The thought of purchase must inevitably be the prominent one, but the other must not be lost sight of; for, while the Lord took from Israel the blood of a lamb for the life of the firstborn, He said: "I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments" (Ex. 6. 6).

In his fall, man became on the one hand a debtor to divine righteousness: he sinned, judgment claimed him, and he must pay for his sin by death. On the other hand he became the bond servant of sin, and sin had dominion over him. His Redeemer must satisfy the claims of righteousness, and break the power which held him in bondage.

The Lord Jesus, the Redeemer, paid the ransom, and broke the power of sin.

Righteousness had no claim against the holy person of

our Lord. After thirty years, of which we know very little, He entered upon his public life, and John, seeing Him, cried: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The lamb which Israel killed, the lamb whose blood was sprinkled for the redemption of the firstborn, had to be without blemish or spot before it could satisfy Divine righteousness; and the Lamb of God, as He appeared before the world, had this testimony from Him who had numbered these thirty years moment by moment: "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Thirty years in the likeness of sinful flesh, thirty years in which God had found perfect delight and perfect satisfaction. Behold the Lamb of God's providing.

After several years—years of sorrow and trial, of misunderstanding and persecution, years in which all the forces of Hell were arrayed against Him—when His own people had rejected Him, and the shadow of the cross had fallen across His pathway, He went apart up into a high mountain, and there, in the searching light of God's holy throne, He stood pure and undefiled: and His face shone as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light, and from the brightness above came the words again: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased."

God was satisfied; but could man find anything against God's Anointed? Could the laws of the world in which He had lived find anything against the Son of Man? Let them try.

"Now the chief priests and elders and all the council sought false witness against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none: yea though many false witnesses came yet found they none." Thus the religious power could find nothing against Him; yet, on the strength of a lie, it passed Him on to be tried by the secular power—its voice has rung down the ages: "*I find no fault in Him.*"

The Lord Jesus was put to death on the cross, not for

any crime committed against the religious powers of His day, not for any crime against the secular powers: He went as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Perfectly righteous as judged by human tribunals, perfectly righteous before the God of heaven, He died. On that cross His life's blood was poured out.

By one man sin entered, and death by sin, and death reigned. By the death of one righteous man the ransom of mankind was paid and grace reigned.

The sword of judgment, which turned every way and shut man up to death, was sheathed in the bosom of our holy Lord; and now the cry goes out from the paradise of God, "Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."

DEAD TO SIN.

"WHAT shall we say, then?" asks the apostle Paul, after he had demonstrated the ruin of man, the uselessness of works of righteousness as a means of salvation, and the triumph of Grace in justifying the unrighteous through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. What has to be said now?

Man is utterly corrupt; he cannot please God; yet corrupt as he is, God has saved him on righteous grounds. But if he could not please God before he was saved, can he please Him now he is saved? If works of righteousness were of no avail then, are they of any avail now? What has to be said? What has to be done? Have we just to continue in sin, and shall grace overlook it and take no account of it? God forbid!

The 6th chapter of Romans unfolds the grace of God for the saint. It takes him and shows him his standing in Christ; it points out what grace has done for him as a saint, and what grace expects from him; and the answer to

his difficulty about his corrupt self, the answer to the query, "What shall we say, then," is in the words, "Dead to sin."

In the preceding chapters it was shown that he was dead *in* sin and dead *to* God. The lesson which the 6th chapter teaches is that instead of being dead *in* sin he is dead *to* sin, and instead of being dead *to* God he is alive *unto* God.

The 6th chapter, in fact, greets the saint on the threshold of resurrection life, and turning him round, points to the cross and to the grave, and shows him the last of his old self. Let him look well, and let faith grasp once for all what it sees. That cross means that he has paid the penalty of his sins; that empty grave means that he stands a new creation before God. On that cross God Himself has dealt with that old man, which is utterly corrupt and which could never please Him, and gazing there the saint must, by faith, accept the fact that, with all its corruption, the old man has been crucified with Christ, in order that the body of sin, which could never please God, might be done away with—counted as a thing that is gone, a factor which has no longer to be reckoned with as affecting his standing before God.

Can his past rise up before him again? No; for his past and all it deserved has been dealt with at that cross. God has overlooked nothing, and death has ended a career of sin. Death intervenes between all that he was and all that he is.

"What shall we say, then?" We could not please God before we were saved, because we were utterly corrupt in our every part; but we can please Him now because He counts that which was so corrupt to have died? Yes, that is the answer to the query, with this further: If we died with Christ we believe that we shall also live with Him, so reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God.

Mark well and emphasize these words: "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin." It is by faith we live, and this is one of the points which active daily faith must grasp. Because God says, "Crucified with Christ," then you must *reckon yourself* to be dead. Only by believing God in this matter shall we be able to grasp the further fact that now we are alive unto God and live in the power of it.

Dead *in* sin and dead *to* God once, but now dead *to* sin and alive *unto* God. Alive with powers that we never had before. For verse 12 goes on: *Let not* sin therefore reign in your mortal body. Sin reigned there once in spite of us; but all that is changed. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace. Therefore *let not* sin reign.

The man who could not walk got up and leaped about when Peter addressed him in the name of the Lord. So did the cripple whom Paul healed at Lystra. And God expects that you should put forth your new powers, and pit them against those that held you in their bondage before.

In another article we hope to show the provision that Grace has made to free us from the dominion of sin.

THOUGHTS CONCERNING THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

“Is not this One the son of the carpenter?” So asked men in the days of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ. In reply to the inquiry of the blind man the crowd answered, “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.” It was as Jesus of Nazareth, the son of the carpenter, that the Lord of Glory was known to the world when He walked as a Man amongst men.

His disciples, however, knew Him differently. “Whom do ye say that I am?” asked the Lord. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” was the prompt reply. Their manner of addressing Him bore witness to this fact. The world might call Him Jesus of Nazareth, or the son of the carpenter: they called Him Rabboni, or Lord.

There is not to be found in the Gospel narratives, so far as we are aware, a single record of the disciples addressing the Lord as Jesus, or is there any evidence that they spoke of Him to others or to one another by His earthly name. This not only applies to the twelve, but to all who really loved Him, and who knew Him as the Son of God. Their love for Him and their intimacy with Him never caused them to address Him in terms of familiarity, but rather as their intimacy increased their reverence deepened. The disciple who leaned on the Lord’s bosom at supper, when inquiring as to who should betray Him, said, “Lord, who is it?” “Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick,” was the message sent by the Bethany sisters. The wail of the sorrowing Mary at His tomb was: “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” “The Lord is risen indeed,” was the language in which the disciples made known to one another the glad tidings of His resurrection.

As for the world it knew Him only as Jesus, and its cry

was, "Away with this man—crucify Him! crucify Him!" Demons knew better. Thou art the Holy One of God was their confession.

When on the day of Pentecost the apostle Peter addressed the crowd as Acts 2. records, he declared that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ. "The Gospel of the glory of Christ," which the apostle Paul preached, is partly explained by the words, "We preach Christ Jesus as Lord." To Christians, this truth should not require to be emphasized. The One who was crucified through weakness liveth by the power of God. To Him, all authority in Heaven and on earth has been given. He has been exalted to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the Heavens—far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come. Of Him it is written, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." All judgment has been given by the Father unto the Son, that all may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. The Lord's claims over the Christian are not merely paramount—they are absolute. He is, in the fullest sense of the word, Lord over His Church, and Sovereign Lord of all creation.

It is well thus to think of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to remember that He who occupies this place of pre-eminence and glory at God's right hand is our Saviour. "Who shall condemn?" we may well exclaim as we bow in heart before Him. It is well also that we should ponder the glories of His person, and the terrors of His throne. "Consider how great this man (Melchisedek) was," says the writer of the Epistle to Hebrews, "unto whom Abraham gave a tenth." How great, indeed! and yet he was but a mere man, and only a faint type of the Lord Jesus Christ. His glories can never be declared; His greatness can never be disclosed. Therefore, consider Him!

We have referred to the reverent manner in which the disciples addressed the Lord in the days of His humiliation, and of the honour they associated with His name when speaking of Him to others. If it were seemly thus to do and thus to speak in the presence of the Lord on earth, how much more so now in the light of His exalted place at God's right hand!

The world knows Him not. They have, in a measure, learned about Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified on the Cross, and many assent to the indisputable fact that He was raised from the dead. They speak of Him, they sing of Him, they patronise Him by the name of "the Saviour." Among the religious people of Christendom His Name is the lightest and the cheapest that their tongues utter; and in the streets of our cities that precious Name, at which every knee shall bow of things in Heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, is a byeword and an oath on the lips of the profane. The Jesus who is pictured in the words and the songs of the religious world is but the idol of their own imagination—a creature of Satan. He is not the Lord Jesus Christ of the Scriptures. He is not the One who shall yet judge the quick and the dead. He is not the Sovereign Lord of earth and Heaven, who is yet to rule with a rod of iron, and who is to dash sinning nations to pieces like a potter's vessel. There is no iron rod in the hand of the Jesus who is pictured by the religious world, nor is there power in His arm to visit the wicked with judgment.

We can understand the religious world speaking and singing in a frivolous way of the Lord Jesus Christ whose majesty and whose terror they have never known, but what shall be said when Christians also do so? Yet can it be denied that in this matter Christians have failed most culpably and most grievously? They are few, indeed, who habitually speak of "Christ Jesus as Lord." The many

speak of Jesus, or Jesus Christ, as if He were little more than their equal, but few give Him His worthy title— Lord Jesus Christ.

The writer remembers being present at a large meeting of Christians in the west of Scotland a number of years ago. On that occasion an aged brother led the assembly in prayer. Never shall he be able to forget the terms of endearment with which that brother addressed God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Though only a babe in Christ, a few months old at that time, he remembers well how his spiritual instinct rebelled against such unwarranted familiarity in approaching God. The expressions that were then used might be permissible in an earthly family circle, but for Christian men to address the Lord Almighty in such a fashion is too solemn to speak of.

We are aware that when the Lord is referred to in the epistles, He is not universally spoken of by His full title— Lord Jesus Christ. This in no way affects the force of our arguments. Careful readers of Scripture will discern that there is a significant meaning attached to each name or title by which the Lord is known—with which we do not at present deal; and although Christians may use these sacred titles in a haphazard manner, Scripture knows nothing of such usage. When the Holy Spirit mentions these titles, He does so of deliberate purpose and definite intent. Yet apart from this be it remembered that the Holy Scriptures are God-breathed, and that it is permissible for one Person of the Trinity to speak of another in a manner in which it would be altogether unbecoming for us to do.

We are living in democratic days. Socialism and other isms of a kindred nature, so contrary to the mind of God, are rife. These rail at dignities, and disdain every mark of exaltation and every title of rank. There is a danger of this spirit unconsciously finding a resting-place amongst Christians, and of its shaping their course and moulding

their expressions. The characteristics of the last days are openly stalking through the land, and it becomes the Lord's people to be on their guard.

In the majority of cases we would deprecate what might well be termed fault-finding with words or phrases. It is not always the most godly who criticise expressions used by their brethren in prayer or ministry. The exhortation, however, should not be forgotten by any who lead the saints in thanksgiving or prayer, or who minister the word to believers or unbelievers, "Hold fast the form of sound words." Were the matter with which we are dealing less vital, were it merely a question that affected ourselves, we might well be silent, and see in it an opportunity of exercising the beautiful grace of forbearance. But the matter is most vital, and it touches the Person and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we ask a fellow saint as to the welfare of members of his family we are wont to say, "How is *Miss A*—? How is *Master J*—?" It is only one of the first principles of courtesy to do so. Yet Christians seem to think it is quite becoming to speak to God of the Lord Jesus Christ in a manner in which they would at once admit it would be out of place to address an earthly parent about his children! Do we realise in any measure the glory and the greatness of the One of whom we speak? The apostle John, who leaned on the Lord's breast at supper, tells us of special circumstances in which he beheld One like unto a son of Man, and what does he say? "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead! And He laid His right hand upon me (compare the 'I will cover thee with My hand' of Exod. 33. 22), saying, 'Fear not; I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I became dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.'"

Saul also beheld the light of His glory on the Damascus

road, and it bowed him to the earth and made him a blind man for days after. The Lord Jesus is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in light unapproachable; whom no man hath seen nor can see; to whom—honour and power eternal. Moreover, no Christian in mortal body could live in the light unapproachable where He is. We shall see Him by and bye, and we shall be for ever with Him, but Scripture significantly declares that ere this can take place we shall be *like* Him—that is, the mortal shall have put on immortality, and the corruptible shall have put on incorruption.

In the light of these things we ask, Is it becoming that we should speak or sing of our exalted Lord as Jesus, my Jesus, dear Jesus, or, when it is applicable, in any other way than by His pre-eminent titles Lord Jesus, or Lord Jesus Christ? Is it becoming, when speaking to God the Father of the One whom He delights to honour, to mention Him by any other name? Is it not the will of God that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father? It may be thought that there is little need to write thus to brethren with whom we are associated in the Fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We rejoice if it is so; but, doubtless, there is yet much to be desired, and much to be attained unto in this important matter amongst us.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

HIS LOVE.

"God commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

His love! how full, how vast! 'tis like
 A sea without a shore,
 Whose swelling tide without an ebb
 Flows on for evermore,
 And brings to every troubled heart
 A sweet and blissful calm,
 And to the guilty conscience peace
 Through faith in Calvary's Lamb.

Proclaims salvation full and free
 To all by sin undone;
 Whoso accepts the terms becomes
 "An heir of glory's throne."
 From condemnation ever safe,
 So saith the great "I Am";
 Made "heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ,"
 Through faith in Calvary's Lamb.

A heritage which far excels
 The spoil of feudal war;
 A lineage of nobler fame—
 None with it can compare;
 To which there's none of earth or hell
 Shall dare dispute their claim.
 'Tis made secure for ever by
 The blood of Calvary's Lamb.

Oh, wondrous love! oh, marv'llous grace!
 What could I wish for more?
 My ravished soul, in mute amaze,
 Doth wonder and adore;
 Triumphant enters heaven's courts
 By virtue of the Name
 And all-prevailing merit of
 The blood of Calvary's Lamb.

ROBERT MURRAY.

CHURCHES OF GOD.

(Concluded from page 192.)

IN concluding these articles the writer feels that some may think we have been occupied with the failures of fellow saints. We reply, no; we have been seeking to act according to the divine principle: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good." We have been dealing with principles, not with individuals; principles we must judge by the standard of the word of God, the judgment of individuals we leave to a coming day, when the secrets of men's hearts shall be revealed and the motives which have shaped our actions during our brief pilgrimage here below will be made manifest, and for that which has been according to the will of our God we shall have praise of Him. We do not point to the failure of Christians, for we all fail, and failure is no proof that we are not the children of God; and be it remembered also that the failure of a church of God is no proof that it is not His assembly; if otherwise, we should unchristianize Peter (Gal. 2. 11.), and unchurch the church of God in 1 Corinthians 1. 5.

Again, it may be said, would it not be best to be simply occupied in seeking the salvation of souls, and seeking to live, as individuals, a godly life? By all means let us do these things, but let us not come under the condemnation: "These things ought ye to have done and not to have left the others undone." Let us remember also the word in 1 John 5. 3., where we read: "For this is the love of God that we keep His commandments." Yes, His commandments for us as individuals, His commandments for us as households, and also for the House of God, behaving ourselves in such so as to be well pleasing to Him who has called us unto obedience of faith (Rom. 16. 26, R.V.).

Yet more, we must not be simply occupied with the

present, but we must remember that should the Lord still leave His saints in the place of testimony for future years, the result of letting go His truth may work untold disaster amongst generations yet unborn. The condition of lawlessness that we find around us at the present time prepares the way for despotism; this we find in the history of the nations. It was after the reign of terror in poor, distracted, and infidel France that Napoleon stepped to the front and took into his iron grasp the reins of government. Prior to the coming of the Anti-Christ the nations are seen in turmoil and strife (Rev. 6. 4.), and gladly will they hail him as their deliverer, we believe, till they find they have put in the place of power one who will rule them with an iron hand. The spirit of the age may often be but too clearly seen working amongst the children of God, leading first to every man's doing that which is right in His own eyes, thus preparing the way to a species of despotism, where the will of some man becomes law, and the construction he places on the word of God must be accepted; if not, then the disciples, already drawn away after a leader, will be gathered according to the will of the one they follow. The Diotrephes spirit is in us all more or less by nature, the love of having our own way and doing our own will is painfully manifested by party after party being formed by those who have led away the disciples after themselves, and this will continue, under the plea of contending for the truth, till God's way is evil spoken of.

What is the remedy for all this? Is it the toleration of all evil, for the sake of keeping up an outward appearance of Christian union? This, too, has been tried, and is being tried to-day amidst the various religious organizations around us. The cry has gone forth for union, but it is union at the expense of truth. There is an organization that is fatal to the will of God being done on earth, as also there is a want of organization which produces the same

result. The end of these things is that truth is called error, and error is called truth.

What, again we ask, is God's remedy for all this evil? Is it not to seek the old paths, to contend earnestly for the Faith, not merely for some special doctrine of the Faith so that that doctrine becomes a party badge—a gathering centre—instead of Christ, but in meekness and gentleness, each esteeming others better than himself to seek to contend for the whole truth, walking in the power of that truth, so that we may not only do the right thing, but do it in the right way. In God's care and infinite goodness to us, and knowing our frailty, He has made provision for us as but learners, at the best, of His will, that we may together wait on our God to fulfil His promise as given in Philippians 3. 15., and that to which we have attained of unity and oneness of mind, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Thus, and only thus, shall we be able to walk together so as to bring glory to that holy name by which we are called. Whilst fully recognizing that in the House of God there is room for a godly exercise of all the gifts that He has bestowed, we would jealously watch our own hearts and press on fellow saints their responsibility to do so likewise, lest the gift exalt itself, or we exalt it into the place of the Giver. We shall ever need, beloved brethren, to walk in the light of 1 Corinthians chapter 13., remembering therein the solemn words of warning, till the battlefield is behind our backs, and the valley of the shadow of death be passed for ever.

J. A. BOSWELL.

"I."

(Concluded from page 197.)

IN the account given in Exodus 3. we see that in man, that is, in his flesh, dwells no good thing; but God bears with Moses. "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh that thou mayest bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. And Moses said unto God, Who am *I* that *I* should go unto Pharaoh, and that *I* should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt" (ver. 10, 11).

After forty years' schooling in the back of the desert, Moses seemed not to realize what Paul learned, namely, I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. How dishonouring to our God for any of us to be occupied with "*I*" instead of Christ! The fruit of self-occupation is weakness and departure from God. Unhappy, self-occupied child of God look to Calvary, and see yourself crucified with Christ, and then gaze through the heavens to the right hand of God, and know thyself as perfect as He is.

"And henceforth know with wondering joy,
As Christ is so am I;
Pure, holy, loved, as Christ Himself,
Who shall my peace destroy?"

"Reach my blest Saviour first,
Take Him from God's esteem;
Prove Jesus bears one spot of sin,
Then tell me I'm unclean."

How lovingly gentle God is to His servant Moses. He seeks to draw him with cords of love to Himself. "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth My people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (ver. 10). This beautiful word "come," when followed through Scripture, brings us again and again into the presence of the Lord. "Come ye yourselves apart into

a desert place and rest awhile," He said to His few weary disciples. He knew they were weary and fatigued after preaching the kingdom of God from house to house (Luke 9. 2). Then He took them to learn from Himself. And thus our God has ever sought the affections of His people, before thrusting them out in His service. This chapter is characterized with "I." Godward and manward; Jehovah in majesty and power, Moses in weakness. Moses said, "Who am I?" Jehovah said, "I AM THAT I AM." With this precious promise of God, "Certainly I will be with thee" (ver. 12), he is found lacking in faith to respond to the call of Jehovah. If there is anything in man that God delights in, it is faith in Himself. Jehovah Jesus was made to marvel at the faith of a man set under authority, who appropriated His divine healing power for his sick servant. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Luke 7. 9). How precious to the heart of the Lord in the midst of an unbelieving nation was the fearless faith of the centurion! Oh, beloved! why should we not appropriate the precious promises our Lord has given to us in His Word? Why is there often so much spiritual poverty in our midst? Is it not often in our gospel meetings, as it was in His own country, He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief?

In the fourth chapter we are still confronted with the weakness of this faithful servant of God. "O my Lord, I am not eloquent; I am slow of speech" (Exod. 4. 10). This is terrible backwardness and unneeded weakness. Here again God's sustaining grace is seen encouraging His backward servant: "I will be with thy mouth and teach thee what thou shalt say." But human nature is weak, and is ever ready to trust its own kin rather than the living God. Moses knew his brother was an orator, and thought, no doubt, that Aaron was better fitted to deliver God's message to the king of Egypt than he was.

"And he said, O my Lord, send, *I* pray Thee, by the hand of whom Thou wilt send. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee; and when he seeth thee he will be glad in his heart" (ver. 13, 14). Then from the face of his displeased God he goes to meet his eloquent brother. Space forbids us dwelling any longer here. The reader has no doubt read of the evil result of the unbelief of Moses in choosing rather to lean on Aaron than trust on the word of the Lord. His brother was the first one to bring lawlessness and disobedience amongst the people of God (see *Exod. 32. 1-4*). And Moses soon found out to his sorrow that Aaron was an hindrance instead of a help amongst God's people.

Finally, brethren, let us trace the footsteps of another man of God, who appeared with Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration (*Mark 9. 4*). James tells us he was a man subject to like passions as we are. He prayed earnestly, and prayed again, and God answered both petitions. Truly the secret of this stern man's power and might was from spiritual intercourse with God (*1 Kings 17. 20-22*). It is true a prayerless Christian is a powerless one, and a prayerless pastor can only lead the saints to spiritual poverty and carnal weakness; also a prayerless evangelist will be a fruitless one.

But let us follow Elijah, and humbly learn that without God's help we can do nothing. In the first book of Kings, chapter 18., we find him mocking at the altar of Baal in wild bravado. "And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked" (ver. 27). Is this the prompting of the Spirit of God in Elijah? Surely not. Verse 22 shows us he is occupied with "I" in-

stead of Jehovah. "I, *even I* only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty." And ere long God lovingly teaches him that He could do without him, and at his call and bidding there were seven thousand men who had not bowed to the image of Baal (Rom. 11. 4). Truly the next chapter shows us Elijah is not in communion with his God. He is seen fleeing for his life from the face of a wicked woman, and thence he takes a day's journey into the wilderness, and sat under a juniper tree. And he requested for himself that he might die (1 Kings 19. 4). This is a sad despondency, and prevalent amongst unhappy Christians. If Christ is not enjoyed, Satan and the flesh are at work in us. Hence in our hearts there is darkness and misery. The pleasure and prosperity of the world may illuminate our hearts with earthly joy, but, alas! prove to be bitterness and vexation to our souls. Jonah rejoiced in a gourd instead of leaving himself in the care of the Almighty God, and soon found to his sorrow the plant vanished, and left him a sorrowful man. He then wished to die, so as to be freed from hardship and humiliation. He had not sought enough grace to put the sentence of death in himself, or to die daily, so that God could be glorified in him, living or dying. It was not so with Paul. He knew it was far better to depart and be with Christ, but was willing to abide in the flesh, to spend and be spent in the service of Christ.

Self-gratification pervades Jonah's mission to Nineveh from the beginning to the end of it. He thought he did well to be angry, because Nineveh, with its thousands of souls, was not deluged in judgment. Ah, how like a cold-hearted child of God! His thoughts are always self first, and the glory of God last.

And how unlike another godly prophet who was in the wilderness! He was willing to decrease, whilst the Lord Jesus increased (John 3. 30). "Behold the Lamb of God," he

cried, pointing to the Lord Jesus. Then quickly the two disciples left him alone to follow their Messiah. The short, self-sacrificing life of John the Baptist teaches us what true service is. Christ was his object. Christ was his ambition. Christ actuated his heart, so that "I" was kept in the place of death.

"I am not the Christ," he said, when men asked him who he was. "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." And again he said, "I am not worthy to unloose His shoe-latchet." What self-denial! How Christ-like! The wilderness preacher was a precious trophy of the grace of God. He was unlearned in the wisdom of the world, but a high scholar in the school of God. If, then, whilst meditating on the weakness of some of God's servants, we learn to have no confidence in the flesh, man has failed, and ever will. The godliest saint or man of God must fade into insignificance when compared with the Son of God. From the manger to the cross His life was fully surrendered to God. He did not His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (John 6. 38). Selfishness could never enter His heart. Every miracle He did, and every word he spoke was for the glory of God. When suffering pain and anguish, others are thought of, not Himself; and when enduring awful anguish in Gethsemane's garden, He seeks to energise His slumbering disciples to watch and pray; and on the cross, when the pangs of death compassed Him, He prayed for His adversaries (Luke 23. 34). Then again, whilst resting on Sychar's well, being tired and weary, His heart of love yearns for the conversion of the sinful woman of Samaria. Everything He did or said was in perfect harmony with the mind of God. Man could not enter into the heart and feeling of poor humanity as He did.

True it is He associates His servants with Himself, and makes them partakers of His glory (Matt. 17. 3; John 17. 22). But when sinful flesh and blood intrudes upon holy

ground, God's voice is heard saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Matt. 17. 5).

Elijah's exodus from earth to heaven in the chariot of fire was more than he had asked God for. Under the juniper tree, in weariness of heart, he desired to die, and said, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers." But God's eye was upon His weary servant. He can never forget His people. They may wander from Him, and bring disgrace upon His holy name, but He changes not. Overcome by fatigue, Elijah laid his weary body down to rest, and whilst in unconscious slumber God lovingly provides his sustenance for him, and when awoke by his angelic visitor to arise and eat, he looked, and behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head, and he did eat and drink, and laid him down again (ver. 6). Surely the loving kindness of God here ought to have made him realize that Jehovah was the God of Elijah still. He never failed him at the brook Cherith. The ravens brought him his sustenance morning and evening. The widow of Zarephath's handful of meal diminished not, neither did the cruse of oil fail.

But, alas! the tender mercies of God are nearly always forgotten by cold-hearted children of God. The prodigal son, when in the far country feeding swine, measured his father's love by his own. Satisfied he was with a servant's place in his father's house; but his parent's love went beyond a master's love to a servant. "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him" (Luke 15. 20). What a welcome! None but the Lord God can draw His erring children away from themselves and the pleasures of the world. We see this fact in the restoration of Job. His two friends argued with him day

after day, and neither of them could convince him of his self-righteousness. He boasted in his integrity until brought into the presence of God. He had heard of Jehovah by the hearing of the ear, but when his eyes saw Him, he abhorred himself in dust and ashes.

After a journey of forty days and forty nights, Elijah came to Horeb, the Mount of God. And he came thither into a cave and lodged there, and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts, for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenants, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword, and *I, even I*—oh, that evil I!—am only left, and they seek my life to take it away.

Then straightway God speaks to his heart, not in a voice of judgment, but with a voice of love. A mighty rushing wind is heard. Then the mountains and rocks are burst asunder and the earth quakes. Then the Mount is enveloped in fire. But the Lord's voice is not in them. In a still small voice He touches Elijah's heart, that makes him wrap his face in his mantle and then go from the presence of God with a lowly and a contrite spirit to do the Lord's work and to learn that he was not alone, and that Jehovah had seven thousand in Israel—all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal and every mouth which hath not kissed him (ver. 18). Well might one in a certain place exclaim, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou visitest him. For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Ps. 8. 4, 5). Blessed be our God for His beloved Son, who delights in the sons of men.

Soon, soon He will come for His purchased possession. Then we shall be like Him, and see Him as He is.

A. LAWRENCE.

NOW AND THEN.

(1 COR. 13. 9-12.)

IN the valley of the shadow,
 Under sin and death's domain,
 We see many things but dimly,
 And so much we can't explain.
 In the *now* of our life's hist'ry
 We as through a mirror see,
 And now know, but in part measure
 What we'll yet both know and be.

"*Then!*" both clouds and mists all vanished,
 In the clear and cloudless sky
 Of our Master's blessed presence,
 We will know wherefore and why.
 Not in part *then*, but in fulness,
 That that's perfect, then will come,
 What was mystery once unravelled
 In the light and view of Home.

Purposes and ways so wondrous,
 Oft misunderstood before,
Then their wise and perfect object
 We shall wond'ringly explore.
 All the way the Lord hath led us,
 To our raptured vision shown,
 Calls forth worship, adoration,
 Knowing *then* as we are known.

DAVID SMITH.

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.

DEAD TO THE LAW.

IN chapter 6. of Romans we saw the sinner, through union with Christ, to have died to sin. From verse 12, the saint is instructed not to let sin reign in his mortal body, and it is there pointed out that he is no longer under law, but under grace. And this settles another difficulty that would have stood in his way.

The law was added because of transgression, that sin might become exceeding sinful. The penalty for breaking the law was death, and he that offended on one point was as guilty as though he had offended on every point. And although the saint is dead to sin and alive to God, the holy law is not dead, so how has it to be kept? If the saint does sin, will it not simply reduce him to his former lost estate? Will he not again have incurred the doom that the law pronounces, and be again in need of salvation?

Chapter 7. shows how grace has made provision for all this. In chapter 6. we were shown that our old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be done away with. Chapter 7. verse 4 says: "Wherefore my brethren ye also are become *dead to the law* by the body of Christ." This settles it. If we are dead to the law then the penalty of the law can not overtake the trespassing saint. Thus it is that sin shall not have dominion over us, for we are not under law, but under grace (chap. 6. 14).

We are no longer under the power of sin. It can no longer drive us in despair to deeper depths, and for the reason stated in these words: We are dead to the law.

To see this, let us take a very simple example of the sin to which we are dead. Colossians 3. says that, as risen with Christ, we must not tell lies, nor be angry without

cause, nor malicious. Now before we were saved we could refrain from telling lies, from losing our temper, from speaking a malicious word, from stealing, and so on. The law said, "Thou shalt not" and we did not. But the law went deeper than merely to check the act; it got down to the root of the thing, and laid its cold seal of judgment and death on the deceitful tongue which prompted the lie, on the murderous heart which gave rise to the anger, on the mouth full of bitterness, which was an incentive to malice, and on the inherent covetousness which would have led to the theft; and so we were dominated by sin. It was no use striving against the "motions of sin or passion in our members." That was where the law gripped us and, in spite of ourselves, sin lorded it over us, and we were helpless under its yoke.

But we learn in chapter 6. that our old man was crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, so we are delivered from the law that being dead wherein we were held, and upon which the law could work. Thank God that it is so. The lie may rise to our lips, the anger may almost burst forth, the malicious word may almost be spoken, and the hand may be stretched forth to commit the theft, but in the power of our new life they are kept in the place of death, and the law can not touch us for God counts already dead the old man, the source of these abominations, that utterly corrupt nature which held us under the yoke, and from which there was no deliverance but death—we are dead to the law.

So throughout his life the saint will find the passions of sin working in his members, and warring against him. He would wish himself not only incapable of doing a deceitful thing but incapable of thinking one, not only incapable of doing a malicious act, but incapable of conceiving one; yet the deceit is there, and the malice is there, and all the other passions that his flesh is heir to, and they will continue to

be there until the Lord shall change this body of humiliation; but through it all he has the blessed assurance that he has been delivered in Christ from the law that pronounced death on it all, and exacted death from the spotless body of Christ when God made Him to be sin for us. For with Christ he has died and with Christ he has been raised, delivered from the law he can serve in the newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, and there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

ADORNMENT.

IN the days when the Lord Jesus Christ walked on earth it is recorded that the disciples called His attention to the manner in which the temple in Jerusalem was adorned with goodly stones. These stones were, many of them, of huge dimensions and, doubtless, of beautiful design. They adorned the temple; they added to its magnificence and splendour. Onlookers were overwhelmed by their grandeur, and had to acknowledge the greatness of the people and the glory of the God who possessed such a temple.

God's house to-day is a spiritual house. He dwelleth not in temples made with hands. The stones which compose His house are living stones. Fitted by God for the place He intends they should fill in that building, it is their honour, like the stones in the Jerusalem temple, to adorn God's dwelling-place. This should be the desire of every Christian who is a living stone in God's house, namely, to adorn His temple.

This adorning must first be effected in the individual soul. The eye of God must first behold it in the inner man. 1 Peter 3. 4 speaks of this, where we read of the adorning of the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which, in the sight of God, is of great price. This adorning, the poorest

saint on earth can have in as full a measure as the wealthiest. Its value can never be reckoned aright by man. It is for God's eye, and He alone can estimate its worth. In the sight of God it is of great price. The ornament, then, of a meek and quiet spirit is worth striving after. Its value in God's sight is so great that it will repay any Christian to give everything which is esteemed amongst men in order to possess it. It is incorruptible. It is eternal. The possessing of it is the first step toward adorning the house of God. No living stone in that house can shine as an adornment there who is not possessed of it. Therefore God says and repeats, "Take heed to your spirit" (Mal. 2. 15, 16). Greater is he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

God works from the heart outward—from the inner man to the outer man. There should first be that inward adorning which His eye beholds with such pleasure; and following that there should be manifested in the lives of all who are living stones in God's house an adornment of the doctrine of God, our Saviour in all things. In every relationship of life this adorning should be seen. It should be manifested in the behaviour of husbands and wives toward each other, of parents and children, of servants and masters, and so forth. Each should give heed to all that God has caused to be written in His Word regarding the duties and responsibilities that devolve upon them. The servant living for God at work, labouring as under the all-seeing eye of God, adorns the doctrine, adorns the house. What a precious privilege! What an honour to be conferred upon us! It will not be difficult to adorn the doctrine before men, if the inner man is adorned before God as He would have it to be.

Christians who are thus adorned within, and who are adorning the doctrine of God before men, will have a conscience exercised before God as to the adorning of their

persons. They will not be guided by the world's fashions, but by the Word of God. There is an outward adorning which Scripture forbids. When the manner of life of a Christian is characterized by outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel we may well fear there is a lack of the inner adorning which God so desires. Women are commanded by the Lord to adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold, or pearls, or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works (1 Tim. 2. 9, 10; 1 Pet. 3. 1-6).

Many Christians are not alive to the terrible evils of the world's fashions. The drunkard who is mastered by the craving for strong drink is overcome by lust and passion in one direction. The gaudy worldling whose soul pants after the frantic rush of fashion is as truly mastered by lust and passion in another direction. The evils of strong drink are apparent to all—even to the drunkard himself in his sober moments; but the subtle, soul-wrecking evils of fashion's circle are little dreamt of. The latter lead men and women into temptations and snares, and foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition.

Christians need to have their eyes opened by the Spirit of God to see this. Having learned this, and having also learned the manner in which Scripture demands they should adorn their persons, it becomes each individual to have an exercised conscience in God's presence about the matter. Here the word holds good, as well as in the matter of meats: "Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth." If, after exercise of soul before God and in the light of His Word, Christians have a shadow of doubt in their minds as to whether their apparel is well-pleasing to the Lord it would be sinful to

wear it—"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Therefore cast it off. To cling to it must result in defilement of conscience. There, perhaps, never was a time when fashion was running riot as it is at present, and it behoves the Lord's people to be on the watch-tower.

GETHSEMANE.

MIDNIGHT her vampire wings has spread
 O'er groaning earth and surging sea:
 And awful stillness fraught with dread
 Broods o'er thy shades, Gethsemane!

No moonbeams cheer the night of wrath;
 Dumb nature gazing silently
 Beholds the Master tread His path
 Athwart thy shades, Gethsemane!

Lone in His anguish, lo! He bends—
 All else is still, all sleep but He—
 Whilst conflict dread His spirit rends
 Within thy shades, Gethsemane!

God's eye alone can view that sight,
 No human gaze His woe can see,
 Nor other note the blood-like sweat
 That marks thy shades, Gethsemane!

The dreaded hour has come at last;
 His troubled soul in agony
 Tastes of wrath's cup, now filling fast,
 In thy dark shades, Gethsemane!

Ah, night of woe!—the morrow shed
 No hope of brighter beams on thee;
 On to the Cross His pathway led
 Through thy dark shades, Gethsemane!

The deep'ning darkness denser grows;
 Tumultuous swells wrath's surging sea;
 In dread array He views His foes
 From thy dark shades, Gethsemane!

God's glory still His steadfast goal:
 The cruel Cross His choice must be;
 And denser shades must shroud His soul
 Than thy dark shades, Gethsemane!

FOOTSTEPS OF THE FLOCK.

SURELY the longing desire of every one that has received Jesus as his Saviour should be to please Him, Who at an infinite cost has saved him from an Eternity in the Lake of Fire.

How fittingly the words that fell from the lips of the boy Samuel, in the stillness of yon evening scene, when the voice of Jehovah, that for some time was a stranger in the House of God, once more broke the silence, may find their place in the heart and on the lips of every saved one, viz., "Speak, thy servant (*i.e.* thy slave) heareth"!

There is only one way we can please Him Who has made us His own, through the giving up of Himself for us, and that is by learning His will and doing it.

The Holy God can alone find delight and pleasure in that, that is of Himself. The child of God who is careful to walk in the footsteps of the flock, or in other words to do the will of God, will fill the holy heart of God with delight; and he who thus gives God joy, will have his own heart filled with joy (John 13. 17).

In seeking His glory and the good of those who are begotten of Him, I would like to call the attention of God's children to one of the footsteps of the flock; a step which is sadly neglected on the one hand and seriously misused on the other, yet lying as it does on the threshold of the believer's pathway, viz., "believers' baptism."

When the Lord Jesus was about to ascend to His God and Father, He gathered the eleven disciples around Himself and said: "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."¹ When we come to the Acts

¹ Matthew 28. 18-19, R.V.

of the Apostles we see how faithfully they carried out the command of their Lord. From Acts 2. right on wherever the Gospel was preached, the baptism of believers was also preached.¹ In Jerusalem, in Samaria, in Galilee, in Philippi, in Corinth, and in Ephesus, men and women, hearing God's glad tidings, believed and were baptized.

How beautiful the order! The poor guilty sinner, with death, which is eternal, hanging over his head, is led to Calvary; there he beholds the spotless Lamb of God dying in his room and stead. He believes, and God accounts Christ's death as his death, and makes him alive with Christ. Then he is commanded in the name of Jesus Christ to be baptized, and thus in a shadow to tell out the infinite reality that has taken place.²

As by the hands of another he is taken and buried through baptism into death, and raised again from the watery grave, he thus declares to angels and men his identification with Christ in death and resurrection.

What grace from God! What honour conferred upon the obedient one, as the Name of the triune God is put upon him or her! Baptized into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The triune God thus claims the risen believer's spirit, and soul, and body. The soul for God, the body for the Lord, and the spirit for the Holy Spirit.

When Israel passed under the cloud and through the sea, they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. So says God in 1 Corinthians 10.³ While in Egypt they owned Pharaoh as their leader. They were guided and controlled by the word of his mouth, but as they passed under the cloud, and down between those walls of water, they bade good-bye forever to their old lord and leader, and

¹ Acts 2. 41; 8. 12; 16. 15, 33; 18. 8; 19. 5.

² Acts 10, 48.

³ Exodus 15.

were baptized "unto" Moses as the one who was to guide them in the wilderness pathway. A new leader.

Even so the Christian who, when in his sins, was a slave of Satan, has, in his baptism, been baptized "unto" Christ Jesus (Rom. 6. 3, read "unto" Christ Jesus, and "into" his death), as his new Lord and Leader.¹ He, to Whom God has given all authority in heaven and on earth, is the one unto Whom in our baptism we are set apart, to bow at His feet with the words of Saul of Tarsus on our lips, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Baptism is set forth in its teaching under the figure of a mould into which the molten metal is cast, and the believer, who with his heart filled with love to the Lord is baptized, will take on the impress of that mould, that is, death and resurrection.² Dead to sin, the world, and Satan. Alive unto God in Christ Jesus our Lord, to live a new life. A life which has the glory of God as its object, and the life of the Lord Jesus as its example. In the world, but not of the world. A stranger passing through to his native country.

Perhaps some of God's dear children may be at a loss, through the much false teaching they have read or listened to, to know who are fit subjects for baptism. Surely in a matter like this, the Word of God should be heard before the reasonings of men. Then let us turn to Acts 10., and hear what God said to the first Gentile converts. Cornelius and those with him heard the gospel from Peter's lips; they believed and received the Holy Spirit. Then said Peter: "'Can any one forbid the water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?' and he commanded them in the Name of Jesus Christ to be baptized." From this it is plain who should, and who should not, be baptized. The

¹ Acts 26. 18.

² Romans 6. 17.

reception of the Holy Spirit is the fitness for Christian baptism. *Every one* who has received the Spirit is commanded by the Lord to be baptized in water, but the persons who have not received the Spirit have no command nor word of the Lord to be baptized, whether they be infants or adults. The Spirit can alone be received by faith (Gal. 3. 14; Eph. 1. 13). Moreover, the very teaching of baptism itself would decide who should be baptized, for does it not set forth the believer's identification with Christ in death and resurrection? ¹ Surely this is true alone of those who are saved by His grace through faith, and hence none others are fit subjects for baptism.

When should baptism take place? is also a question that has troubled the minds of some. From the preaching of Christ crucified in Acts 2., right throughout the ministry of the apostles and others, we find that upon the reception of Jesus as Saviour, they were baptized unto Him as Lord. The Philippian jailor and his house are one amongst the many illustrations of this.² He believed in God, with all (that is, with each individual one) his house, and that same hour of the night he was baptized with each one of his. They all believed; they all rejoiced; they were all baptized. Need I cite more? as almost every case in the Acts proves that baptism in water followed "immediately" upon reception of Jesus as Saviour. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find one baptized into the name of the Trinity, before belief in Christ.

Dear fellow Christians, if you have never obeyed your Lord in baptism since you believed, even yet, though it may be years since you did believe, He will receive at your hand obedience in this matter. May you hear the voice of Ananias ring in your ears: "And 'now,' why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized." And may the

¹ Romans 6, 3-4.

² Acts 16.

answer of your heart be the words of the Psalmist: "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments."

How should the Christian be baptized? is another question that has agitated the mind of believers, and filled many a page with controversial matter. Again we would turn to Holy Scriptures for the how, as for the who, and for the when. The word itself, according to scholars of the greatest ability, means to immerse. But our God, who knew that the most of His saints would be common folks, has not left us to the opinions of scholars (solid though that may be), but in plain and unmistakable language has told us how a Christian should be baptized (Rom. 6. 3-4). "Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized unto Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Buried with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in the newness of life." Then in Colossians 2. 12: "Having been buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with Him, through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead."

How plain it is when God is heard! Baptism is a burial into death,¹ so when the eunuch believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and desired Philip to baptize him, they went down "both" of them "into" the water, and he was buried through baptism into death.

Baptism in the Spirit into the Body is into life; baptism in water is always into death.² The blessed Lord Jesus said: "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened until it be accomplished!" Here He refers to the sufferings of the Cross, when, in the words of the Psalmist, He sank in deep mire, and all God's waves and billows passed over Him.³ Buried beneath the overwhelm-

¹ Acts 8. 36-37-38.

² 1 Corinthians 12. 13, R.V.

³ Psalm 69. 2; 42. 7.

ing flood of God's wrath, the Saviour was thus baptized in death for the believing sinner, and the believing one is buried in water, telling out this mighty truth, by way of a shadow. Baptism by sprinkling is unknown in the Scriptures, and hence not in accordance with the will of our God.

Dear fellow saints, do not let any one deceive you, by saying that the baptism of Christians is non-essential. There is nothing in the range of the will of your Lord and Master non-essential. To say so, is to brand Him with failure. Read 1 Peter 3. 21, where it is set forth as the demand of a good conscience toward God, no Christian can be saved (as a Christian) apart from a good conscience towards God. Surely it is enough for you to know, that it is your Master's wish and will, that you, as a believer, should be baptized in water. Remember His word in John 14.: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me, and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." The aged apostle John said: "I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children walk in the truth" (3 John 4). Surely, beloved fellow saints, this is but the echo of the feelings of a greater heart, even His, whom we delight to call our God and Father. "My son, be wise and make My heart glad," is His expressed wish in Proverbs 27. 11, and in nothing will our wisdom shine out more fully, than in a whole-hearted obedience to His commandments. "In the keeping of them is great reward" (Ps. 19. 11).

F. VERNAL.

HIMSELF.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY C. M. LUXMOORE.

(Communicated by W. C.)

Scripture read, Hebrews 3. 1-6. We were singing "Oh, precious blood! Oh, glorious death!" And the question might arise, ought to arise, from us each, What makes the blood precious, so precious? Peter tells us that the blood of a lamb is precious; how much more precious, then, the blood of the Lamb of God! The scripture in 1 Corinthians, to which we often refer at such a time as this, in connection with the feast of remembrance, gives us those pregnant and weighty words, "Do this for a remembrance of Me."

It is absolutely impossible to exaggerate the importance of contemplating the Person with whom we have to do. There used to be an old saying—it was first used in connection with politics—that we might quote for the sake of contrast, it was this: "Measures, not men." For us it is the very opposite of that. The whole virtue of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the whole virtue inherent in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (and the blood speaks of His death), depends upon who He was, and who He is.

These verses in Hebrews 3. carry the mind back, and are meant to carry the mind back, to the second chapter, and that again to the first chapter, of this same epistle, and for that reason I have read them. In those two chapters we have the testimony of not a few witnesses as to who and what manner of person He was. But He Himself spake in another scripture, as it is written, "Before Abraham was, I am." Or yet, as another witness speaks of Him (John 1.), "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

All that should but take us, as it were, introductorily, into that upper room on that night when He was betrayed, and see Him there with that loaf between His two hands, and methinks, while those two hands encircled that loaf, there was no power in heaven above, or upon the earth, or under the earth—no power that could break that loaf as He held it with those two Almighty hands. And as He brake that loaf there was no power that could hinder His doing so. And what did it speak of? This is My body, which is given for you.

What a happy, happy thought, to take that scene and bring it side by side with another scripture which tells of another body, a body that never hanged upon a tree, and yet was, and is, as truly His, that which He has Himself in His hands, that which He holds—"The Church, which is His body." There is no power in heaven, or on earth, or in Hades beneath, can sever that which He has joined

together. He has joined it; it is of God, and man cannot break it asunder. And yet we have not come to the end of God's revelation, even as this will speak to us thereof.

When God, in the day of Genesis 1., planted that garden in Eden, He made therein many beautiful things, glorious things, living things—plants and animals—incapable, from the way they were made, of sinning against Himself. But it pleased Him out of the dust of the ground to form a man, and to put that man in a place of responsibility, where he might stand, and, therefore, where he might fall; not secure against the possibility of falling, but with the opportunity to be faithful to his God. And is there nothing answering thereto here? In this third chapter to Hebrews we are firstly (and it is God's order) directed to One whom we are to consider "The Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus, who was faithful to Him that appointed Him, as was Moses in all His House (that is God's House)."

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, when here upon this earth, was placed in a position of responsibility; but in that position of responsibility, unlike our great forefather, He was faithful, and He stood for God. And then we are told how that "He hath been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by so much as He that built the house hath more honour than the house"; for He was Moses' Creator. He was greater than Moses, just as the man who built this place in which we are met is greater than the place.

There is not a more unequivocal and unmistakable statement of the proper Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ in Holy Scripture than we have here. He was the Creator of everything, He that built all things; and He that built all things is God. That is the testimony to the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ as God speaks.

"Whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end." I want to direct our thoughts to Him, whose greatness, whose love, whose kindness, whose power whose every attribute raises Him mountains high above every other, the peerless Son of God. What is it that gives the value to His death, to His blood? Those who boast themselves in riches, none of them can by any means save his brother, or give to God a ransom for him. Neither could your blood nor mine serve as a ransom to God for the soul of another. But He shed His blood, that precious blood, the blood of the incarnate Son of God. What gives value to His death is that it was His death.

And then, again, He says: "This do for a remembrance of Me." I would point out this, that whilst the death of the Lord Jesus has its value and worth because of what the Lord Jesus is in Himself, there is something more than His death. In Himself are to be found all those blessings, all those benefits, all those advantages that we enjoy,

which we know, and the many that we might know but do not, and the many that it will take us years and years to fathom, besides many that we shall never know. They are all bound up in Himself, for in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Therefore it is a remembrance of Him. Our puny hands can only grasp Him in part; and yet, paradox as it may seem, we cannot grasp Him in part, because He is whole and undivided. And grasping Him, we have Him and all that He is for us, and all that He is to God. But that is not only true as regards His atoning death; that is not only true as regards His place at God's right hand, and all that that means. That wondrous blood by which He sits on the throne of God, not only gives Him the right and title to sit there, but by God's abounding grace, it is true down here upon the surface of this sin-stained earth, true in every relationship of life, that Christ is all.

You see sometimes in the newspapers an account of the meeting of some public body, such as a Board of Guardians, and you see a list given of the people who were there; and, if there is not a certain number present to form a quorum, the meeting comes to nothing. On the other hand, you may read a report of the Queen holding a Privy Council meeting, and you read, "Present, the Queen's Majesty in Council." What gives value to that meeting is not the presence of the Lord Chancellor, nor the presence of any other of the high officers of State. What gives efficacy to that which is done in Council is the presence of Her Majesty the Queen. How many does God look down upon and see when gathered together into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ? The Lord's word is, There am I in the midst of them. Present, how many? Thank God each one for himself, and thank God for one another if we find ourselves here; but,—Present, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Oh, if we only realized that!

For the remembrance of Himself! That is strictly confined to the Lord's Day morning. But what have we in these verses in Hebrews 3? "Christ as a Son over God's house, whose house are we if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of the hope firm unto the end." Are we holding that fast? It is not here His holding of us. Trust Him for that. "None shall pluck them out of My hand," He has said. But are we holding fast? And are we prepared to hold fast? To what are we to hold fast? Is it holding fast to one another? What the holding fast here is, is plain. Our boldness and the glorying of our hope. What gives us boldness? Going back to the figure previously used of the Queen in Council,—if some of us were present,—we should be bashful. But suppose the Queen's son or daughter were to go in, or some one else who was accustomed to be there, they would be able to go in with boldness, they would feel at

liberty. So here, it means liberty, freedom, to do what is right. And that depends upon relationship to Himself.

Let us each ask our own hearts and consciences this question, Why am I here? Is it because I like to be where Mr. So-and-So is? Is it because I am fond of going to the meeting with somebody else? Is it because I like what I hear? Remember, if it be so, you will soon be shaken off. People talk about trials and difficulties; there will be a great many more yet. I shall not be surprised if we have a testing time such as we have not had yet. Who will fall? Why, those who are holding on to Christ second-hand. If the person they are holding on to slips, then they slip, and must slip. Oh, to have a heart true to Himself, to think only of pleasing Him, to know the value of having hold of Him! Thank God He has got hold of us. That means eternal security in the glory, world without end. But what have you got here in this present life? What are you holding to down here? Are you holding to Himself? What is the chief joy, the chief treasure of your heart? Is it Himself?

How kind, how thoughtful, of Him, to have given us this,—“This do for a remembrance of Me”! What goodness that He should have given us this, that He should be brought before us thus week after week, to see Himself as in that night He took that loaf in His hands and said, —“This do for a remembrance of Me”! Think of His faithfulness to God; think of His love to us. If anything can make our hearts true to Him, it is the remembrance of Himself. It will put us right in our relationship with one another, if we sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts. Being true to Himself is our security in times of shaking. Many have been shaken off in the past; and many a bitter tear has been dropped over those who have fallen; but we shall never do them any good by following them. May God keep us true to Himself and to the word of His grace; and we shall be so kept, if we rightly value the Lord Jesus Christ. The many things that perplex and distress us will, in comparison with Him, be only small things, for the sizes of things become big or little by what we compare them with. If we compare them with Himself, with His preciousness, with His value, we shall estimate them aright; we shall then weigh things in the balances of the sanctuary, and estimate them by the shekel of the sanctuary,—the Divine standard. May God help us to know His value, and to cling to Him. The feeblest saint, with his hand upon Him, will know His value; and He Himself will help and succour those who cleave to Him, even as good old Barnabas exhorted us, that with purpose of heart we should cleave to the Lord.

THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

(Continued from page 189.)

XV.—JOSIAH.

(2 Chron. **34.** and **35.**)

WE now come to consider the last of the kings of Judah of any great importance, one whose life stands out in the annals of Old Testament history as exceptionally pleasing to the Lord.

For convenience we might subdivide his history thus:—

- I. His boyhood,
- II. The finding of the Book.
- III. The keeping of the Passover,
- IV. His mistake and early death,

I. BOYHOOD.

One of the most striking things in connection with this king is the age in which he is brought before us as doing those things which were highly pleasing to the Lord. It is more than likely that his mother was a godly person; and as Amon reigned only two years, Josiah was a little lad contemporary with his grandfather Manasseh for six years. Is it too much to suppose that the grandfather warned the little boy lest he should walk in his own early steps, or in the steps of his wicked father, and, moreover, taught the little lad how he might walk in a way positively pleasing to the Lord? However it may have been we know this, that his life was a beautiful one, remarkable for piety and devotion to the God of his father David.

Some things in this reign bear a resemblance to that of Hezekiah. Verse 2: "And he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father." This is almost identical with what we read of Hezekiah (2 Chron. **29.** 2), but the additional words, "and

turned not aside to the right hand or to the left," are not said of him, nor could have been in any complete sense; we have seen that on his part there was a turning aside toward the middle or latter part of his reign. Again, in this reign, as in that of Hezekiah, a Passover was kept, but even more perfectly.

There is another matter which appears to me peculiarly interesting at this period, that is the mention of the ten tribes or children of Israel. They are mentioned at least six times in the course of these two chapters.

We have already observed that in the sixth year of Hezekiah the kingdom of Israel came to a close; and no doubt the greater and wealthier part of the people were deported into Assyrian lands, but it may be that many of the poorer people were allowed to remain. It is certain, however, that Josiah exercised a fair amount of control over those who were left. It is interesting to remember that in the New Testament we read of certain of Israel; "Anna of the tribe of Asher" (Luke 2, 36).

II. THE FINDING OF THE BOOK.

We have in this event an illustration and demonstration of the truth which the Lord enunciated in those memorable words: "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7, 17). While the men were doing faithfully what they knew to be right—walking up to the knowledge of the will of God which they possessed—more light was given. "In Thy light shall we see light"; 8th verse, "He purged the land, and repaired the house of the Lord"; 12th verse, "And the men did the work faithfully"; 14th verse, "And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiyah the priest found the Book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses." It may be to this event that Jeremiah (who was contemporary with Josiah; Jer. 1,

2; 3. 6) alludes in chapter 15., verse 16, of the book that bears his name,—“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of mine heart.”

But there was another deeper sense in which the words were found and eaten by Jeremiah. There is that expressed in eating which each one must do for themselves. So with the words of God there must be an appropriation of the same to the individual heart and soul of the believer. In proportion as there is this, so will there be the joy and rejoicing of heart which Jeremiah experienced.

Verse 19 tells us that when Shaphan read therein before the king, and the king heard the words of the law, he rent his clothes. Here there was a trembling at the words of the Lord, for therein they found where they had done those things which they ought not to have done, and omitted to do those things which they ought to have done. The like occurred in the time of Ezra. “Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the trespass of them of the captivity” (Ez. 9. 4). How very little of this sort of thing there appears to be to-day! “Trembling at the words of the Lord,” we read. “But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.” “Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word” (Isa. 66. 2-5).

Verse 21. And the king commanded: “Go ye, inquire of the Lord for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the Book that is found, for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the Word of the Lord, to do according unto all that is written in this Book” (see also ver. 30, “the words”).

There are two points here which we do well to note: “words” and “do.” In a day, when comparatively little

heed is given to the "words" of Scripture, it is well for us to keep in mind the injunction to Timothy: "Hold the pattern of sound words." Too many treat the Scriptures as if they contained a general outline of God's Will for man, but, as regards the details, they are immaterial, and, indeed, each one may read them in pretty much as he sees fit. The following scriptures show how far from the mind of God such a thought is: "But we received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given us by God, which things also we speak not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2. 12, 13). The verbal inspiration and accuracy of the Scriptures is clearly demonstrated, as has often been pointed out, from the fact that the apostle Paul bases an argument, not from one word, but one letter of the Scriptures. "Now to Abraham were the promises spoken, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3. 16). Here the omission of the letter "s" makes all the difference. The Lord's own words are sufficient as spoken by Him on earth, "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished" (Matt. 5. 18). The "jot" being the smallest letter, and the "tittle" being only a part of one or more letters of the Hebrew language, as has been expressed "a horn-like projection."

We live in a day when the words of Ezekiel (chap. 33. 31, 32) have, in a great measure, a fulfilment: "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as My people, and they hear thy words, but do them not; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their gain. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant

voice, and can play well on an instrument, for they hear thy words, but they do them not."

How very easy it is to fall into a like condition of things, almost before we are aware of it ourselves! The heart is so deceitful. Let us take heed to the injunction: "But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (Jas. 1. 22).

From verse 27 we learn that Jehovah heard the prayer of the king, because he had heard not only the words of the Lord, but obeyed them. "I also have heard thee, saith Jehovah."

In the book of the Proverbs we read: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination." The converse of this was true in Josiah's case—"the prayer of the upright is his delight" (Prov. 15.).

III. THE KEEPING OF THE PASSOVER.

The greater part of the 35th chapter is a record of the keeping of the Passover, such a Passover as had rarely been kept in Israel, summed up in the following words (verses 17 to 19): "And the children of Israel that were present kept the Passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet: neither did any of the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel, that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

As has been before remarked, the keeping of the Passover in Josiah's time appears to have been in many ways more accurate than the Passover in the time of Hezekiah; but in both cases there is a falling back upon "the law of Moses," the oft-repeated expression, "as it is written in the law of Moses," and the like being worthy of particular notice.

How different the times were from the times of Moses! Yet the legislation of God for His people was the same. This same or equivalent expression occurs frequently during the after-captivity books—Ezra and Nehemiah—at a time when one might think it was impossible to carry out the will of God as given by Moses. In this connection how full of instruction is the fourth verse of Malachi, chapter four, especially when we bear in mind that at this time Israel was in an apostate condition, and in very low state indeed. Few, very few, of Israel were found in any little measure seeking to carry out the will of Jehovah—"Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and judgments."

In like manner to-day those whose spirits the Lord has raised to do His will are not given anything new, but are cast back on first principles (2 Pet. 3.): "This is now, beloved, the second epistle that I write unto you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by putting you in remembrance, that ye should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles."

When these words were penned, that which was spoken before by the apostle Paul (Acts 20.) had come to pass. The apostasy had set in; nevertheless, the truth contained in such letters as first and second Corinthians was as binding on those seeking to do the will of God as ever. Legislation was given to, and for, churches of God, and for none others. The weekly breaking of the bread was within the circle of the church of God, that which was a local expression of the one House of God (read 1 Cor. 11.). Nothing is plainer than that; if there cannot be a church of God to-day, then there cannot be the breaking of the bread to-day. But we know from 1 Corinthians 11. that this is to be done "till He come." God has legislated

for a collective thing. Nothing less than this will do. In the light of such scriptures it is vain for any one to argue that all that God wants is an "individual godly life." How can there be any such thing as an "individual godly life," apart from being in, and of, that collective testimony which is denominated in the Scriptures "the fellowship," "the House of God," "the flock," and so forth, expressed in 1 Corinthians 6. by the "within." Surely a godly life speaks of one who is in the mind of God, and the mind of God for His redeemed to-day is that they should be in the circle of His rule where the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ is paramount. "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14. 37; compare 2 Pet. 3. 1; 2).

IV. JOSIAH'S MISTAKE AND EARLY DEATH.

The closing verses of this chapter tell us of the one mistake recorded of this king, unquestionably a mistake, although overruled by Jehovah, as foretold in verse 28 of chapter 34. : "Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place and the inhabitants thereof." Verse 20, "After all this" is most suggestive. Josiah goes out to battle against Necho, who professes to have a direct commission from God to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates. What is written in verse 22 (spoken not by Necho be it noted) would lead us to conclude that it really was so: "Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho *from the mouth of God.*" The fact of Josiah disguising himself would lead us to suppose that Josiah himself understood, in some sense, Necho's words to be true.

At the same time, from verse 2 of chapter 34., it would appear to have been more a personal mistake of Josiah, not affecting the principles of truth that he was seeking to give expression to; indeed, it was in a great measure his zeal for the truth of God—mistaken zeal, it is true—that led to his being wounded on the field of battle, ending in death. We are reminded here of Isaiah 57. 1: “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.”

It appears to me that we all may learn a lesson from this. Let us not be like one that meddleth with strife belonging not to him. How many things there are around about us that might give place to endless questionings! It is well for us to bear in mind that “a fool’s eyes are in the ends of the earth.” Let us therefore not be occupied with “unprofitable questions,” but rather aim at pleasing our God in the place in which He would have us. Even that which answers to Jerusalem, all that is associated with the name, where Josiah at first was found, and from which place he received no word from the Lord to go forth; even that which is “House of God, which is Church of Living God, pillar and ground of the truth,” for “Wisdom is before the face of him that hath understanding” (Prov. 17. 24).

J. CROSTHWAITE RADCLIFFE.

For Young Believers.

“As newborn babes, desire the milk of the Word, which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.”—1 Peter 2. 2.

THE CHURCH AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION.

I.

WILL the Church go through the Great Tribulation? is a question that often disturbs the minds of young Christians. The diversity of opinion, which has long existed regarding

the subject, makes the problem all the more perplexing. In order to set the matter beyond the region of doubt it is necessary to close one's ears to the conflicting opinions of men, and to betake one's self to careful and prayerful study of the portions of scripture which throw light on the subject. There can be no conflict between this and that portion of God's Word; all is harmony when the Word of truth is rightly divided.

Before the mind of God can be known regarding this question it is absolutely necessary to understand what the scriptures teach on the following points, viz. :—

What the Church is.

What place it occupies in the purposes of God: when it began, and when it will end.

What the Great Tribulation is.

What place it will occupy in the history of earth: when it will begin, and when it will end.

Reference to the Great Tribulation, which is yet to overtake God's people on earth, is frequently to be found in Old Testament scriptures; indeed, it was often the burden of prophetic utterances in the past, when the prophets spake from God to His earthly people Israel. On the other hand, there is not to be found in the Old Testament any direct reference to the Church. Not until the Lord Jesus Christ was rejected by Israel as their Messiah and King, not until He was crucified by wicked hands and raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father, not until God's further offer of mercy to the nation of Israel through the Holy Spirit was likewise rejected did God raise up the apostle Paul, and through him make known unto the sons of men His present purposes regarding the Church. It was then that God revealed that the long record of His favour to the nation of Israel was interrupted; and that a secret purpose—which before times eternal was known to God—was now to run its course. This purpose has no reference to an earthly

people with earthly hopes, such as Israel was in the past, but to a heavenly people with heavenly hopes, who have accepted the rejected Christ as their Saviour.

Every person in the present dispensation who by faith accepts Christ is by Him baptized in one Spirit into one Body. The Church (which is His—Christ's—Body) is the God-given name by which this company is known. Of this Church, Christ is Head, and all believers are members; and in it Jew and Gentile alike find their place as one in Christ. The middle wall of partition which so long existed between the Jew and the Gentile has now been broken down, and both are equally the subjects of God's grace on the ground of sinnership. It is baptism in the Holy Spirit which determines whether a person is, or is not, a member of the Church, which is Christ's Body. All who have been thus baptized by the Lord are in the Body; all who have not, have no place therein.

Although the revelation of the Mystery was not made known to the sons of men till after the conversion of the apostle Paul, it is evident that the Lord commenced to build the Church at, or about, Pentecost. His words in Acts 1. 5, where He declares to the apostles whom He had chosen that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence, appear to make plain that the day of Pentecost was the commencement of the Church.

A special revelation from God was required to make known the fact that a dispensation was to run its course, which Old Testament Scriptures never indicated—which was hid in God from before times eternal—and that the leading characteristic of that period was the building of the Church, the Body. It likewise was necessary that a special revelation should be given to cause men to know how and when the Church dispensation would terminate. Thus we find the apostle Paul writing in his first letter to the Corinthians: "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all

sleep, but we shall all be changed" (1 Cor. 15. 51-57). 1 Thessalonians 4. 13 to 18 also sets forth clearly that the Church which has been in process of formation during the present dispensation will terminate with the coming of the Son of God to the air to raise the dead in Christ and to change the living in Christ, when they will together be caught up to be for ever with the Lord.

Meanwhile, all who are in Christ when put to sleep depart to be with the Lord, and already it is possible that the overwhelmingly greater number of the members of the Body are in the glory. It is also evident that only a very small number of the members of the Body are living on earth at any given time. Thus it will be seen that to talk of the Church going through the great tribulation is in reality misleading, for only an infinitely small part of it could possibly do so.

We find, therefore, that scripture teaches that the Church, which is the Body of Christ, occupies a unique place in the purposes of God; that it is composed of a heavenly people who are united in the Holy Spirit to the enthroned Christ at God's right hand upon their exercise of faith in Him; that in it there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus.

REDEMPTION.

III.

(Continued from page 206.)

THE thought of power in redemption is illustrated by the avenger, or redeemer of blood (Num. 35.). The divine law was life for life; and as the victim, where life had been taken, could not exact the penalty on his own account his kinsman (*i.e.*, his redeemer, or avenger) did so in his stead.

The Lord said to Cain: "The blood of Abel crieth unto

Me from the ground." So of Adam, it might be said his blood cried unto the Lord from the ground, and with it the piteous appeal of every creature that God had made, as it groaned in the pangs of that death which came as the result of Adam's disobedience.

"The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat," said the woman; and God cursed the serpent, and pronounced his doom. Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.

Israel was redeemed when the lamb was slain, and the blood sprinkled; but Pharaoh still had them in his power. That power had to be broken before they could go out free.

"I will bring you out from under their burdens, I will rid you of their bondage, I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments." The hand of Jehovah fell heavily upon Egypt; the wise men of the land were humbled, its gods were brought to nought, the firstborn were slain, and Israel, from the wilderness side of the Red Sea, witnessed the final overthrow of their oppressor when the hosts of Pharaoh were overwhelmed in its waters. Thus purchase and power were combined in their deliverance.

What was accomplished for God on the cross is only partly seen in the salvation and deliverance of those who believe. It has yet to be manifested that the One who died on Calvary, the One who was crucified in weakness, has been raised in power; and that to Him has been given all power in heaven and on earth. But that power will yet be manifested. In great judgments, culminating in the overthrow and destruction of Satan, and the establishment of everlasting righteousness, will the Lord, the Redeemer of blood, take vengeance on the destroyer.

The book of Revelation gives an account of things almost analogous to what occurred in Egypt. The great men and mighty of the world will be brought to nought; the false Christ will be destroyed, and for a time the world will be

free, even as for a time the children of Israel escaped from the hand of Pharaoh; but even as he gathered his hosts, and had his power crushed in a last tremendous effort to drag the people of God back to slavery and bondage, so will Satan gather together all his forces for a final mighty effort against the strength of God's anointed; and as the waters of judgment overwhelmed the host of Pharaoh the fire of God's everlasting judgment will destroy the forces of Hell; and the Devil that deceived them will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20. 9, 10).

Thus with a stretched out arm and with great judgments will the Lord put a redemption (Exod. 8. 23), between what He has purchased with His own blood, and all that could contaminate or destroy. Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

But while the day of vengeance waits on the longsuffering of God, the one who has come under the sprinkled blood participates even now in the power of the Redeemer. For him the power of sin has been broken, and he is free in a twofold sense; first, because his debt to righteousness has been paid—he is counted to have died, and he that is dead is freed from sin. Second, because sin shall not have dominion over him, for he is not under law, but under grace. Law is the sceptre of righteousness, and Romans 7. shows how it prevented escape from the bondage of sin. But again, the believer is dead to the law by the body of Christ, and alive where grace reigns triumphant.

Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall death or life, or principalities or powers? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who died that, through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, even the Devil. And now it remains for us to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, who hath delivered us from the kingdom of

darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love; in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins.

THE LORD IS NIGH.

Hark how the tidings ring,
Borne as on angel's wing—

The Lord is nigh!

The night is well-nigh past;
The day shall dawn at last;
Firm to the end hold fast;

The Lord is nigh!

Grasp with a firmer hand
The word at His command—

The Lord is nigh!

Nought shall His steps retard;
Soon shall His hand reward
All who have toiled and warred—

The Lord is nigh!

Louder the echoes fall—
Clearer the waking call—

The Lord is nigh!

Rise then, ye saints, and sing,
Joy shall the dawning bring;
Shout on the morning's wing—

The Lord is nigh!

Sweet are earth's feasts of love,
Sweeter the one above!—

The Lord is nigh!

Each emblem loaf we break,
Each symbol cup we take,
Anew the tidings wake—

The Lord is nigh!

"Nigh" is His word to-day—

"Nigh" in response we say—

The Lord is nigh!

Ne'er may we meet again
To swell the rich refrain.

So let it be! Amen!—

The Lord is nigh!

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS WORK.

“THOU believest that God is One; thou doest well: the demons also believe and shudder” (Jas. 2. 19). James here appears to refer to the oneness of the Godhead as a central point of faith. In Deuteronomy 6. 4 we find this truth made known to Israel: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.” There are beauties in the names or titles of God which are not always apparent in our reading of the authorised version of the Bible. Mr. Newberry’s translation, however, gives valuable help in connection with this matter. Reference to his Bible will show that the word Lord in Deuteronomy 6. 4 is Jehovah; and that God is Elohim. Jehovah is the title which presents God to us as the ever-existing One—the same in the past, in the present, and in the future. Elohim is plural, and speaks of the trinity of the Godhead. How wondrously beautiful this verse becomes when the meanings of these names are kept in view! Jehovah, the ever-existing One, our Elohim, our triune God, is One Jehovah. Here, in words sublime in their simplicity, the oneness as well as the trinity of the Godhead are revealed.

There is nothing in the word Elohim to indicate how many persons the Godhead is composed of; it merely shows that there are more than two. Matthew 28. 19, however, sets this matter at rest. There we find that it is God’s will that disciples of the Lord should be baptized into the name of the Godhead, who consists of three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

“Without controversy,” wrote the apostle Paul, “great is the mystery of godliness—He who was manifested in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3. 16). All who are saved by grace know in their measure the truth of these words. We cannot fathom the mystery of godliness as we fain would.

And if this is true of our knowledge of "Him who was manifested in the flesh," whom men saw with their eyes, and handled with their hands in human form, it must be true in infinitely greater measure of the Elohim of the Godhead. The Godhead must remain a mystery to us, at least so long as we are in mortal bodies. This much, however, we do know, and know from Divine revelation, that God is ONE. The three Persons of the Godhead—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit—are One God. We do not require to understand this; we must not be asked to make plain how it is that the Three are One, and yet the One is Three—equal in power, equal in majesty, equal in holiness, equal in every Divine attribute; it is enough that God has been pleased to tell us that it is so, and faith can believe and worship where reason can only run riot and make shipwreck.

We feel it is quite incumbent upon us to insist on the truth we now refer to, in view of the fact that the personality of the Holy Spirit is very widely denied in these days, and in order that we may learn to think becomingly, and to talk with due reverence, of the blessed Holy Spirit, whose worth and whose work we so little understand. The Holy Spirit, let it be well noted, is God—one of the three Persons of the Godhead. We say not the *third* Person of the Godhead, for we know of no scripture to warrant us in so speaking.

Thus it will be seen that to speak of the Holy Spirit as merely "an influence" is a grievous wrong, which touches the glory of the Godhead. In the scriptures God ever refers to the Holy Spirit as a Person, and would teach us to know Him and to speak of Him as such.

It is written concerning the Lord Jesus Christ that all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that hath been made. This also is true of the Holy Spirit. It was Elohim—the triune God that

created the heavens and the earth in the beginning. Indeed, the garnishing of the heavens is specially attributed to the Holy Spirit in Job 26. 13.

We find the activities of the Spirit referred to in Scripture as early as Gen. 1. 2; and from the time that God remodelled the earth, as there recorded, all down through the past dispensation, the presence of the Holy Spirit on earth and work by the Holy Spirit on earth are spoken of. In the past we read of the Spirit coming upon men (1 Sam. 16. 13), of His having been put within men (Isa. 63. 11), and of His remaining among men (Hag. 2. 5). We also read of the Spirit being vexed by the rebellious ways of those among whom He was, which caused Him to turn to be their enemy (Isa. 63. 10); and that He departed from some upon whom He had previously been (1 Sam. 16. 14).

Moreover, the works of the Lord Jesus Christ while on earth, the miracles He performed, were accomplished in, or by, the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12. 28). It was also through the eternal Spirit that the Christ offered Himself without blemish unto God (Heb. 9. 14). Further, the Holy Spirit is omnipresent as Psalm 139. 7 clearly declares.

It was probably in view of the latter fact that the Lord Jesus said to his disciples, ere He ascended to the right hand of God, that it was *expedient for them* that He should go away; for, said He, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart I will send Him unto you" (John 16. 7). The Lord Jesus Christ not being, as man, omnipresent, could not, by His personal presence on earth, comfort the hearts of the myriads of His saints. This, however, is achieved through the omnipresence of the Comforter.

In view of His going away, the Lord had previously told His disciples that the Father would send them another Comforter, who would abide with them for ever (unto the age). It will be seen, therefore, that the presence of the

Holy Spirit on earth, as anticipated in these words, as well as in the words of John 7. 37-39, was to be different from what it had been in the past. He had been on earth previous to this, but He had not been sent down to "abide" as He was now to be—earth had not, in this sense, been the special sphere of His operations heretofore. On the day of Pentecost the promise was fulfilled, and the Holy Spirit was sent down from heaven.

Wonderful visitations of the Spirit had been known by men in Old Testament times, but these were utterly eclipsed by the gift of the Spirit, as witnessed at Pentecost; still even that will be as nothing compared with the pouring out of the Spirit, which is to be known by all flesh in a future day (Joel 2. 28).

One special characteristic of the present dispensation is that the Lord Jesus baptizes in the Holy Spirit into one Body all who hear and believe the Gospel.

The Spirit's work on earth during the present period may be divided into two great branches. He is accomplishing a work in the world—that is among the unsaved, and He is doing a work in Christians—that is among the born-again of the present dispensation. His work in the world is a convicting work—He convicts the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, which John 16. 8-11 will explain.

In Christians His work is vast and varied. Believers are indwelt by the Spirit (John 14. 17), they are sealed with the Spirit (Eph. 1. 13), they are anointed with the Spirit (1 John 2. 20. 27). The Spirit in our hearts is the earnest of our inheritance, and He witnesseth with our spirits that we are children of God. By Him also we are taught to address God as "Abba Father," and to speak of Jesus as Lord. A seven-fold work of the Spirit is presented to us in the words of the Lord, as recorded in the gospel according to John,—

He shall teach you all things.

He shall bring all things to your remembrance.

He shall testify of Me.

He will guide you into all truth.

He will show you things to come.

He shall glorify Me.

He shall receive of Mine and show it unto you.

While the Lord Jesus was on earth He bore testimony to the Father—the unseen God whom no man hath seen at any time (John 1. 18). While the Holy Spirit is on earth He bears testimony to the unseen Lord—the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who dwelleth in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen or can see (1 Tim. 6. 15-16).

From the above-mentioned details of the Spirit's work, we may learn how absolutely dependent we are on the Holy Spirit's teaching in our learning of the will of God. This is further demonstrated by the words of 1 Corinthians 2. 14, etc. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Things to come—that which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man—the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him are revealed to us by the Spirit. Moreover, because the Spirit is the Anointing which we have from the Holy One we are said to know all things; therefore, needing not that any *man* teach us, for the Anointing which we have teaches us concerning all things.

One very important part of the Spirit's work is in connection with the progressive aspect of the believer's sanctification. In one sense believers are perfectly sanctified the moment they place faith in Christ; in another sense their sanctification is a continuous day-by-day work which can alone be accomplished in the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The flesh—the evil nature and the propensity to sin are as real to the believer after conversion as they were

in unconverted days, and apart from the Holy Spirit one is helpless to overcome them. Yet though the flesh is ever present and desires to be active in leading the child of God into bondage to sin, the Holy Spirit is also ever present to enable one to mortify the deeds of the body so that we may not do the things which we would. Thus within the believer a continuous struggle goes on between the flesh and the Holy Spirit, the reality of which must be known to every one who seeks to obey the words, "Be ye holy; for I am holy."

"The works of the flesh are manifest" says the apostle in his letter to the churches of Galatia, and then he enumerates a list of the products of the flesh. Over against this he displays to our gaze the beautiful fruit of the Spirit, in order to stimulate the desire to walk by the Spirit, so that this luscious cluster, which, in itself, is a triple triplet on which God and man and self may feed, may be produced within us. It is solemnly possible for a believer to hinder the work of the Spirit within him, and to live after the flesh which results, meanwhile, in spiritual death. Therefore, how necessary it becomes to give diligent heed to the words, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption"; and to the exhortation, "Quench not the Spirit."

Our power for testimony also is the Holy Spirit. In work or service for God the flesh profiteth nothing. It is only such service as is accomplished in the energy of the Spirit that will bring forth fruit that will remain for eternity. The zeal and the activities of the flesh are worthless; they may produce a profusion of leaves which will dazzle the eyes of onlookers, but fruit unto God there can never be from the flesh. Religious enthusiasm and fleshly clamour are often mistaken by man for spiritual power. The apostles were bidden by the Lord to abide in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. At

Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given, in whose power they bore mighty testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and to forgiveness of sins through His name. The Spirit within the believer is still the power to enable him to testify for Him who is despised and rejected of men.

In all this we may surely learn to better appreciate the infinite worth of the blessed Holy Spirit, and the greatness and the importance of His work.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

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 158.—*Does 1 Cor. 11. 1-16 refer to the assembly in assembly, or does it refer to the "private and ordinary course"?* (See the late F. A. Banks on *Woman's Ministry*.)

As far as the writer has light on this subject, he is inclined to believe that the whole of this chapter refers to the Church as in assembly. He does not understand the 17th and 18th verses as a break. The apostle is dealing with abuses in the first place, and then, in chapter 14. 34, he goes further, and forbids altogether the woman's ministry when the Church is in assembly. If chapter 11. is not understood in this way, we are involved in considerable difficulties as to understanding the first part of it.

J. A. B.

QUESTION 159.—*Is it according to the mind of the Lord that saints should make a display of dress on the Lord's day, or have we any scripture for wearing any special attire on the Lord's day. In Matthew 26. the Lord commended the woman for what she had spent on Him, whilst the disciples could ask, "To what purpose is this waste?"*

In seeking to reply to this question, we would remind our readers that it is the special privilege of the

woman to show forth in her adorning the headship of Christ (1 Cor. 11.). With regard to a special adornment for the Lord's day, we know no scripture warrant for such beyond that which would show the same respect for the presence of fellow saints when in assembly, as we would show to such on other occasions.

It is difficult for us, as Christians, to continually keep in mind the present position to which our Lord has called us, and our relationship to this evil age. There are dangers to which the man is especially exposed, so also the woman; the dress of the man is not specially mentioned in the New Testament, but other matters that concern him are. Young men are exhorted to be sober minded (Tit. 2. 6), and want of sobriety on the part of such may very easily mar their testimony for God. The pattern for elders, if they would be that which God would have them to be, is set forth in 1 Timothy 3. Here we shall find how very much God desires of men brethren. These bodies of humiliation in which we groan are soon to be laid aside; is it to be our first thought then how much we can adorn them? Or should it not rather be how much can we glorify God in them, until the blessed day when we put off this earthly tabernacle and are clothed upon with our house which is from heaven? We would ask our sisters in the Lord that in their adorning they would think, Whom am I seeking to please, and whose eye am I seeking to attract? Is it the eye of the world that has rejected and crucified our Lord? Is it the eye of the husband who, if he has rightly valued the wife of his choice, will have chosen her, not on account of the outward adorning, but on account of that which is of the truest value—the hidden man of the heart. Or, is it to please the eye of Him who is presently going to robe us in His own resurrection glory and beauty? If so, how little, how very little, will the present moment and the changing fashions of a doomed world influence us. We shall seek to

use it, but not abuse it, and strive to lay ourselves and all that is ours at the feet of Him who has loved us and given Himself for us.

J. A. B.

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.

THE CHURCH AND THE GREAT TRIBULATION,

II.

In a former paper it was stated that the Great Tribulation formed the subject of prophetic utterances in Old Testament times. These utterances were addressed to the nation of Israel, and the times of tribulation referred to were clearly to overtake them. Their beloved city Jerusalem also was to be the chief centre of the tribulation and woe. Thus the Old Testament associates the Great Tribulation with Israel in their national character. Ere that can take place the nation of Israel must be the people on earth with whom God is specially dealing, and the fulness of the Gentiles must have come in.

This is exactly what the New Testament teaches will take place. The 11th chapter of the epistle to the Romans shows that God's dealings with Israel have been interrupted, and during that interruption the Church period runs its course. When God's present purpose is accomplished, when out from amongst Jew and Gentile, the Church, which is the Body of Christ, has been builded, and has been removed from this scene by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the air, then God will again revert to His dealings with the nation of Israel, which is ever beloved for the fathers' sakes. Not one member of the Church will be found on earth at that time when Israel, as a nation, will again be the object of God's purposes; nevertheless, thousands of

saved persons will unquestionably be found on earth, comprising both Jews and Gentiles; see Revelation 7. Then shall the Jews be found in great numbers in the land of Palestine, and Jerusalem shall once more be their capital city, where a temple shall be found, and where sacrifices shall be offered to God.

At that time a great political leader will arise amongst the nations of the earth, who, by satanic power, will assume universal dominion over men. This man, who is termed in scripture the anti-Christ, will enter into a league with Israel, which is intended to continue for seven years; and during the first half of that period he will treat the Jews with kindness, and allow them to offer the daily sacrifice to God. After three and a-half years, however, he will attempt what has long been his and Satan's object, namely, to claim to be God, and to demand that he shall be worshipped as God by all who dwell on the face of the earth. In order to accomplish this purpose, he will cause the Jews to cease offering sacrifices to God, and will set up his own image in the temple in Jerusalem. The godly amongst Israel, who know the God of their fathers, as well as others, will resist the impious claims of the anti-Christ, and on them will burst the fury of his wrath, and thus the Great Tribulation will commence.

The Great Tribulation, then, is a future time of unparalleled trial and persecution which is to overtake the faithful of the nation of Israel when the anti-Christ demands universal worship. It will commence when three and a-half years of the anti-Christ Jewish league have run their course, and it will continue for not more than the remaining three and a-half years of that league, although, in all probability, it will be cut short by the intervention of God before that time expires, as 2 Thessalonians 2. 8 to 12 shows.

To sum up what we believe to be the teaching of the scripture on the subject at issue, we find that the Church, which

is the Body of Christ, occupies a unique position in the purposes of God. That is composed of all who have been baptized in one Spirit, into one Body; that it commenced at or about Pentecost, and will end with the coming of the Son of God to the air, when all who are in Christ will ascend to meet, and to be for ever with Him. Thereafter, God will resume His dealings with the nation of Israel; and in due time the anti-Christ will be revealed. The Great Tribulation will be occasioned by the latter when, having assumed the place of God, the faithful amongst the Jewish people, and others, will refuse to acknowledge his impious claims, and will rather suffer tribulation and death than receive his mark. The measure of clearness with which we are able to discern between these things which differ will be the measure of certainty with which we shall be able to answer the question, "Will the Church go through the Great Tribulation?"

THE BELIEVER'S HOPE.

THE coming again of the Lord for those who are His through the precious blood is set before the believer to inspire him with courage in facing boldly and joyfully the many difficulties and trials which may fall to his lot.

If this hope is a reality to us it will cause joy in the heart, though, humanly speaking, things around may be anything but joyful. It will not free us from difficulties and trials, but the fact that we will be with Him who loved us and gave Himself for us will make these lighter to bear. The person of the Lord should be the attraction; and the more we are in communion with Him down here, the more will He be all to us as He is all for us.

Those who first received the promise from the Lord ere He went into the glory ever kept this truth well before the saints; for in the power of the Holy Spirit it leads to

separation from all defilement. To ever remember that the Lord may come and call us to meet Him at any moment will cause the eye and heart to be constantly looking upward and away from the things around.

The world with all its allurements will have small place in our hearts if we are on the watch tower like the Thessalonian saints, of whom it is written, "And how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven."

In this dark and evil day may we pay heed to the injunction "Abide in Him," so that we may at His manifestation have boldness and not be ashamed in His presence.

W. H. BURDEKIN.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

LIGHT and darkness are two extremes. As truly as the flesh and the Spirit are contrary one to the other, so light and darkness are opposed. The condition in which man, by nature, is found is depicted in the scriptures as darkness; whilst that into which the grace of God brings him is compared to light.

In the beginning God spake light out of darkness, and man walked in the light, for then he walked with God. But sin entered; and the darkness that brooded over the chaotic scene of Genesis 1. before God commanded the light to shine was none denser than the spiritual darkness that entered with the fall. Man through sin was alienated from God, who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all. Sin separated him from the source of light, and darkness, real and terrible, ensued. This darkness is none the less real, and is all the more terrible because it is little realized. To the majority of men it is not apparent, therefore its existence is denied.

To a blind man darkness and light are alike. He cannot value the glorious boon of light, nor does he dread the

approach of the darkest night. Though in the world as truly as others who see, there is a world of glory and beauty around him, manifested by light, that he must remain a stranger to. For him to deny the existence of light would be folly. He has never seen it, but myriads of credible witnesses declare that it is. Therefore he is forced to own that it is not the absence of light that keeps him in darkness, but the blindness of his eyes. He owns that he is blind, that he is walking in darkness, and he chooses his steps with prudent care, or finds some one more highly blessed than himself to lead him by the hand. He cannot deny his blindness—it is all so apparent, it is all so deeply felt.

The spiritual darkness in which man, by nature, is found is as real as the darkness in which the blind man lives. There is not one ray of light in him. The darkness is absolute. If left to himself he will never seek after light, but will continue in darkness until the outer darkness is reached, where knowledge of God is impossible, and where light can never be known. Unlike the naturally blind, however, the spiritually blind often deny that they are in darkness, and likewise deny that there is a greater light than that which they know. To them testimony is of no use; witness-bearing is of no avail. The testimonies of myriads of credible witnesses, as with one mouth they declare that once they walked in nature's darkness, but that they were illuminated by the light of God, are scorned as idle tales. Theirs is the folly of refusing to own that they are in darkness, and of denying the existence of light.

When the Lord Jesus was on earth He opened the eyes of some who were blind from their birth. What their thoughts were, when for the first time they beheld the glories of nature, no one can tell. What mingled feelings of amazement, admiration, and gratitude overwhelmed them. who can imagine? By the entrance of light into

their sightless eyes they were translated into a very paradise, compared to that in which they had previously been. Before they had learned of nature's beauty only by the hearing of the ear, but now their eyes beheld, and doubtless their testimony would be, "The half was never told." To them all things had become new—the world was a new world. Light now revealed what darkness had hitherto shrouded. Yet these beauties, which they now admire were always there, and others gloried in them while they groped in darkness. The change was not in the world, but in them.

Like to this is the translation of a sinner from darkness to light. The opening of the eyes of the spiritually blind is a greater transformation than the opening of the eyes of the naturally blind. Once shrouded in nature's darkness, they blindly groped their way with uncertainty and fear. To them the God of righteousness and of love was a dreaded Being. The tidings of eternal things that reached their ears only magnified their terror. A darkness as to spiritual things, more terrible than the darkness of night, shrouded their souls. But the entrance of God's Word giveth light; and the God who spake light out of darkness in the past still commands this wondrous transformation in the souls of men. God speaks; light shines; the spiritual eye beholds an unknown world of wonders, more captivating and glorious than that which greets the newly-opened eyes of the naturally blind. Who can tell the ecstasy of the soul that has been illuminated to behold the glories of spiritual things, to behold somewhat of the glory of God? The vastness of the scene produces, it may be, an adoring bewilderment, and how it all came about they can scarcely tell, but this much they can, with boldness, declare, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see."

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* Articles so marked have already been issued as separate booklets.

Special Notice in Reference to Question and Answer Department of Needed Truth.

THE Editors of NEEDED TRUTH have long felt anxious that others should share with them in the work of replying to questions. To effect this result, they propose in future to print on the cover of NEEDED TRUTH from time to time all questions they receive which appear to them likely to be profitable, and they earnestly invite approved servants of the Lord, who can throw light from the Scriptures on the subjects named, to co-operate in answering them. They do not undertake to publish all answers that may be received, but they will endeavour as far as possible to insert in NEEDED TRUTH all communications which they believe calculated to help the saints.

Answers to some of the following questions by beloved fellow workers are intended to be inserted in NEEDED TRUTH for January, 1901, and following months:—

1. Is it right for a Christian to be in a Trade Society?
2. Would it be an unequal yoke for one in the Fellowship to be in a Co-operative Society?
3. Would it be right for one in the Fellowship to be in a Friendly or an Insurance Society?
4. What does the right hand of fellowship mean as found in Galatians 2. 9?
5. Please explain the difference between the Gospel of the Uncircumcision and the Gospel of the Circumcision as found in Galatians 2. 7.
6. If in a church of God there be none qualified, according to Titus 1. and analogous scriptures, to do oversight work, can such an assembly subsist?
7. In such a case (as in Question 6 above) may some, unqualified though they be, take upon themselves the responsibilities of oversight?
8. Has the word "must" in Titus 1. the same significance as it has in John 3. 7? Is any room left in either instance for failings or failures?