

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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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
ADOPTION	40
ALONE WITH GOD	216
APOSTOLIC GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS	106
BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD	104
BIBLE WOMEN	166, 190, 211, 227, 257
BOLDNESS	65
BUILDING OF THE WALL, THE	193
BUILDING ON THE ROCK	253
CHRISTIAN, A	233
CHURCH OF LIVING GOD	73
CIRCUMCISION NOR UNCIRCUMCISION	109
COMMUNION	90
CONSIDER THE LILIES	143
CONTENTMENT	20
CORRESPONDENCE	58
CORRUPTIBLE CROWN, A	49
CRY OF THE CAPTIVE, THE	279
DEPARTURE FROM GOD	258, 274
DEVOTEDNESS	116
DOERS OF THE WORD, BE YE	104
DOING GOOD	46
DOUBTING	251
EAR, THE	71
ENVY	142
ESTHER	130
ETERNAL LIFE	167
EVE	166
FAITHFULNESS	160
FEAR	200
FELLOWSHIP	41
FRAGMENT	111, 250
GIFT	180
GIVING, ON	7
GOD IS LIGHT	44
GOD OF ALL GRACE, THE	183
GOD OF COMFORT, THE	14
GOD OF GLORY, THE	112
GOD OF JUDGEMENT, THE	229
GOD OF LOVE, THE	207
GOD OF PATIENCE, THE	67
GOD OF PEACE, THE	137
GOOD, GREAT, CHIEF SHEPHERD, THE	248
HAGAR	227
HITHERTO AND HENCEFORTH	118
HOLINESS	205
HYMN (<i>See also Poetry</i>)	153
IDLENESS	225
IN ALL LABOUR THERE IS PROFIT	187
IT IS WELL	47

	PAGE
JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF OVERSEERS IN NEIGHBOURING TOWNS	121
JOY AND JOYFULNESS	254
KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN	266
KINDNESS	271
KING EDWARD VII., RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD TO KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH	81 96
LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK	191
LIFE, THE	237
LIVING TESTIMONY	120
LORD AND MASTER, THE	169
LOT'S WIFE	257
LOVE	272
LOVE OF GOD, THE	163
LOVE ONE ANOTHER	163
MIDNIGHT SONG, THE	236
MURMURING	145
NEW COVENANT, THE	154
NIBBLINGS	52
No	92
ON GIVING	7
OUGHT	241
PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK, LET	191
PILGRIM'S PORTION, THE	260
POETRY 18, 47, 96, 97, 129, 143, 153, 167, 191, 216, 236, 246, 260,	279
PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	214
PSALM 2.	4
PURPOSE OF HEART IN SERVICE	212
QUEEN VICTORIA (<i>see</i> CORRUPTIBLE CROWN)	49
QUESTION AND ANSWER	37, 54, 58, 222
	PAGE
John 3. 7	38
1 Cor. 11.	58
Gal. 2. 7, 9	37, 89
Titus 1.	87, 88
RELATIONSHIP OF CHILDREN OF GOD TO KING EDWARD VII.	81
REMNANT TIMES	1, 32, 59, 86, 98
RUTH	277
SARAI	211
SERVICE	261
SHEPHERD, THE GOOD, GREAT, CHIEF	248
SONG, THE MIDNIGHT	236
SONG IN THE NIGHT, A	97
SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY	217
THOU ART WITH ME	18
TIDINGS DEAR	129
TIME, THE VALUE OF	23
TO OUR READERS	53
TRUTH <i>versus</i> ERROR	159, 246
VALLEY OF DRY BONES, THE	25, 103, 151, 176
VALUE OF TIME, THE	23
VIRTUOUS PERSON, A	278
WALL, THE BUILDING OF THE	193
WAY INTO THE HOLIEST, THE	30
WOMEN IN THE ARK, THE	190
WORD BECAME FLESH, THE	162

NEEDED TRUTH.

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REMNANT TIMES.

I.

THE portions of the Old Testament which were written after the return of the remnant of Israel from the Babylonish captivity ought to be of special interest to, and are likely to contain helpful instruction for, all who in these last days seek to contend for the Faith once for all delivered to the saints. The portions to which we allude are the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. Some portions of the book of Psalms, particularly the songs of degrees, beginning with Psalm 120. and ending with Psalm 134., give us the experience through which the emancipated remnant passed ere they reached the place where Jehovah had chosen to cause His name to dwell; whilst Psalm 137. and portions of the book of Daniel deserve special notice, as they show the condition of Israel whilst they were under the Chaldean power.

It may be profitable, at this point, to enquire why it was that the children of Israel, who at one time were so manifestly favoured by the Lord, ever found themselves captives under the power of Babylon; why it was that Jerusalem, the joy of the whole earth, was well nigh levelled to the ground, and Nebuchadnezzar permitted to burn the temple of God with fire. The answer to these questions leads us to contemplate the condition of God's people at that time, for

it was not God who had changed toward His people, nor was it His desire to forsake His house; but His people had changed toward Him, and by their rejection of His words had compelled Him to reluctantly leave His dwelling-place in their midst. The last chapter of 2 Chronicles contains a solemn tale of the determined rejection of God and His Word on the part of His deluded people—a tale only paralleled in its solemnity by the awful judgments which so soon overtook them. The result was that for more than seventy years God had no dwelling-place on earth; and during those years His people had to learn, with chastened spirit and in bitterness of soul, the enormity of their sin in despising the words of God.

It was not possible during the seventy years of the captivity for God's people to build again a house for Him; and ere it could be possible to do so, God had to overthrow the power of Babylon which held His people in its iron grasp, and had to turn the heart of a mighty Gentile monarch, whose career had long previously been foretold in Scripture (Isa. 44. 28; 45. 1-5) toward His people, so that by an edict from him the way might be opened up for their return. It is important to notice that when God's time arrived for the building of His house He would permit no earthly power to frustrate His purpose, for He caused the mightiest kingdom of earth to be overthrown in order that His will might be accomplished.

But those seventy years were momentous years to many an Israelite. They were brought through the mill of adversity, with harps hung on the willows by the rivers of Babylon and with weeping eyes, to acknowledge their sin in the rejection of God and His Word, and were caused to look desiringly toward their ruined house and forsaken city. Rejection of God and His Word was the dread forerunner of their national fall and captivity, and it is not surprising to find that a return in heart to God and a deep

desire after His Word (as witness Ps. 119.) were as surely the harbinger of brighter days for them. When, therefore, the seventy years of the desolations were ended and when God's time for the building of His house had arrived, there were in Babylon a number of His repentant people prepared in heart by Himself to engage in His work, and none save those to whom He had granted repentance, and whose spirits He had raised, embraced the opportunity that was given them to go up to Jerusalem and build the house of the Lord God of Israel.

This ever characterizes the way of God. If He has a special work to accomplish on earth the people who are to be His instruments in performing it must previously be prepared in heart by Him; and those of His people who are in such a condition often distinguish the Lord's will and respond to His call whilst others of His children who have known no such preparing by God fail to hear His voice or see any necessity for assaying to do His will. Albeit the call of God goes forth, and prepared hearts respond thereto, with the result that the purposes of God are often accomplished through a small and despised remnant of His people. This is clearly seen in the case of Israel at the memorable time to which we refer, for when the mandate was issued by Cyrus the Persian, saying, "Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel," we find that, comparatively, only a very few of His people responded to his call, and that which particularly characterized those who did go forth from Babylon was that their spirits were raised by God. All who had experienced no such raising of spirit disregarded the God-given opportunity of escaping from captivity, and, by so acting, deprived themselves from having any part in the doing of that work which was God's special work on earth at that time; and never again in the ex-

perience of the great majority of them did the opportunity recur of going to the God-appointed centre. We arrive at this conclusion from the fact that it was close on eighty years afterwards before the second company, headed by Ezra the scribe, went up.

The company that went up under Zerubbabel numbered together forty and two thousand, three hundred and three score; and this feeble remnant, escaped as a bird from the fowler's snare, went forth into the place of God's choice in realized weakness; withal their mouths were filled with laughter and their tongues with singing as they made their boast in God, who had done great things for them whereof they were glad. Great things indeed had God done for them in these days long gone past, yet things which are surely surpassed in their greatness by His merciful doings of to-day in the case of many of His people who have passed through an exercise of soul in His presence, known only in its reality to Himself, and who, like the remnant of old, in felt weakness yet with holy confidence in the Lord, find themselves gathered together in the place where He has chosen to cause His name to dwell, forming thus a dwelling-place for God upon the earth.

(To be continued.)

PSALM 2.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY S. J. HILL.

(Communicated by W. Cox.)

THIS Psalm sets forth fully, but in small compass, God's purposes toward this earth in connection with His Anointed. The opening verses had a fulfilment when the Lord Jesus was here upon earth, according to Acts 4. 23-30. There we see, in miniature, the opposition and enmity of the kings of the earth and the rulers against the Lord

and against His Anointed. But there is a fuller and more complete sense in which this Psalm will be fulfilled, which is yet future. What is the object of these nations and kings? It is to break asunder the bands of the Lord and His Anointed One; and to cast away their cords from them. That sheds light on the present condition of this world, which is a scene of lawlessness, where Satan has usurped the authority that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. That usurpation takes us back to the beginning and the garden of Eden. It was there and then that sin entered into the world; that Satan was accepted instead of God.

Psalm 12. gives us the character of the same class of men, lawless men. Their language is "Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?" They think they can do without God. True, God has borne with men, and is still suffering them to do very much as they like, but in the time spoken of in Psalm 2. 6, He will send His own Son and establish Him on Zion's hill as His appointed Ruler over men. He came before, He came to undo the works of the Devil; but what has come of it? Why, the Devil stirred up the kings and rulers, and the people of Israel against Him. They crucified Him, they cast Him out. They did not know that they were working out the purposes of God, they did not understand what they were doing; but the Devil was behind it all, and if they did not know, he knew that God's Son had come to reinstate God's authority, and so he set them against Him. They turned Him out, and gave Him a malefactor's death. There was wonderful jubilation amongst the powers of darkness when the Son of God was locked up in the tomb, and the stone sealed over it. But God's three days came to an end, and the Lord Jesus came out. No one saw Him, that is, no one except His loved and His own, after He was laid in that tomb. The world does not want to believe He has

been raised, for His resurrection ensures His return in power. But during forty days He was seen by His chosen ones, and He spoke comforting words to them, and gave them instructions in things concerning the kingdom of God (see Acts 1.). And He is now patiently waiting at the right hand of God, confiding in His faithfulness. "I will put my trust in Him" (Heb. 2. 13).

There is a big gap between verses 3 and 4 of Psalm 2. This is where the present dispensation of the grace of God comes in, in which He is calling out a bride for His Son. After that He will bestir Himself about the rights and the wrongs of His Son. And this brings us to verse 5 of Psalm 2, and to the book of the Revelation, chapter 5. God will then speak in His wrath, which He is not doing now: He is now speaking in grace, the very opposite of wrath. As the seals are opened there is the interference of heaven with the things of earth, with earth's doings, leading up to His coming as King, whose right it is to reign, to take personally the government of this world. Then shall it be true, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."

Revelation 19. 11-21 brings us to the closing scenes of the period of lawlessness. Then, finally, Satan, who at the beginning usurped God's rights in His own creation, shall be utterly cast out and eternally consigned to the Lake of Fire together with the lawless who have followed him (Rev. 20. 10-15).

ON GIVING.

God is a giving God. How little man enters into this is seen in Acts 17, at Athens. "An unknown God,"—idols of silver, gold, wood, every kind that man's imagination could produce, but not the ablest or wisest of them ever thought of a God that could give them something; they were perpetually the givers. And so to-day, religious men now, as then, even with an open Bible, are still giving, like the Pharisee of old—"I give"—and are still doing like the young ruler, "Good master, what must I do." So Paul told of the unknown God, as "not needing to be served by men's hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He himself giveth to all, life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17, 25).

This subject is of interest to-day amongst many. We may glean a few thoughts from Exodus 25, 1. The Tabernacle—the material for the same—a purely voluntary giving. The willing hearted only were to bring to God. The manner of giving gave value to the thing given, however small its value commercially—the goat's hair—or great, as the diamond or ruby. The latter "of necessity," or compulsion, took from its worth to God. The widow's handful of goat's hair—the thing of least worth—became the diamond to God. A prominence was given to the goat's hair that nothing else had. The goat's hair curtain hung down the front, right across the whole breadth of the Tabernacle, meeting God's eye from within, and man's from without.

There is thus a purely voluntary side in the matter of gift, and this out of a glad heart puts God first, for they brought early in the morning (Exod. 36, 3). "Every morning" the claims of God were first. Then no wonder at the following words, "The people bring much more than enough." As Moses proclaimed, "Let neither man nor woman make any more work." A heart for God, what

will it not contrive? Out of your deep poverty, said God to those "Macedonian Churches." A young girl gleaned in the harvest field, had her gleanings ground, and sold it as flour, hunted amongst her personal things, and parted with jewellery, no longer now needed, realizing £6 in all. She lived in a dark, benighted country village—no Gospel, no light; went to a neighbouring town, to a godly, earnest preacher of the Gospel. "Oh, do come and preach the Gospel! And here is £6; go on as long as it lasts." "But how came you by this? You are poor." She told her story; and now for many years the Gospel has been told out, and many souls saved. The writer has had his share of that joy. If there be the willing-heartedness, what will it not do? But lacking this, there is always a lion in the way. God said nothing to this people as to giving while in Egypt, He had something to say, but it was, Let every man take for himself a lamb, and having taken God's Lamb, now God can take from them. No one, whoever he be, who has not taken God's Lamb, can ever give to God. What scandal and reproach is brought upon the Holy Name by the disgraceful and dishonest way in which money is now got for what is called God's work. Nothing too low or too base.

There are, however, other phases of this question. This same people leave Egypt and the wilderness behind, and come into the land. Now they assume responsibilities hitherto unknown. Deuteronomy 26. tells it all out. Again God must be first. Bring of the first of all your fruit—first of the harvest. Put such in a basket, and confess, Of Thine own have we given Thee, for a Syrian ready to perish was our father, what they were in him. And in Egypt hard bondage and sore trial was our portion. What they were in their father, and where they were in Egypt; and such had yet been their portion had not God come in and delivered them out of that and into this,

for Thou hast brought us into this land. Yes, there is enough here to fill to overflowing a large basket indeed. And we too look back to what we were in our father Adam, and where we were—"a bondage worse by far." No mention of the wilderness, its telling disobedience, murmurings, ill manners. None of these can produce the fruit that belongs "only to the land." And to think of what He has done—out of Egypt into the land—will give occasion for song, fruit of lips, praise continually. Come to the place of the Name, and there present your basket to God. Nowhere else will it be owned.

Then there is the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, the widow. These now you care for. This is not voluntary. "Thou shalt" leaves no choice, no say; it is mandatory. This follows upon coming into the place of the Name. You have lands, oliveyards, vineyards, much cattle, much increase. You shall lay on one side a tenth, a tithe of all your increase, and maintain the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, the widow. All these were in the wilderness under God's own special care—day by day the manna fell. They had no lack, no need. They had no oliveyards or aught else in the wilderness, but now they have, and *must* bring the tithe in the year of tithing; such is not optional.

A young man marries; he enters upon responsibilities and obligations now he never had before. It is not voluntary whether he pay the landlord his rent or not, or maintain his wife. The tithe or tax, as a householder, will follow.

Have you, by God's grace, been brought into the place of the Name, to give Him the fruit of your lips, and had many a happy and hallowed time? Praise God for such a place, but there are obligations now, that those without know nothing of. And it will not do to shirk your responsibilities, and put them on to burial and friendly societies, clubs, and worldly associations. No going back to Egypt, sending your child-

ren with collecting cards—"Please give something for the Tabernacle,"—nor worldly schemes to maintain the poor and needy. Never; it is your own poor and needy. A three-fold responsibility:—Expenses, needy saint, and God's servants!

Firstly, rent, light, and cleaning—a clean respectable meeting-house. Not broken windows; texts hanging by one corner, dirty and dusty. Windows without blinds, so that passers-by think it is empty, and will be just the place for a rag and bone store. Ah me! it is the old thing over again. The lame, and the halt, and the blind—anything is good enough for God—a filthy, rusty stove, half buried in ashes—you would be ashamed to have it in your wash-house—but oh! it will do. This, alas! is not overdrawn. This is simply and purely the assembly's responsibility, along with everything pertaining to the work of the assembly—school, tracts for distribution, and so forth. Expenses include, indeed, every item apart from needy saints and God's servants.

The ministering to saints and servants is a fellowship responsibility as far as the limits of the fellowship are, if needs be. I say if needs be, for an assembly may meet its own needs in this respect, but perhaps *not*. Rent, etc., is all that can be done. Then let the appeal go forth to the county; lay your needs before your fellow overseers of the county, and that may suffice. No need for a broadcast letter all through the fellowship, and yet an entire district may be in most painful need through strikes, short work, etc., and so the whole be sought unto. This will be exceptional. Thus needy saints department is a fellowship responsibility.

In Jerusalem, when the fellowship was one assembly, and great grace was upon them all, houses and lands were sold to meet the need, parting to every man as they "had need," not a communism share and share alike. And go

back to the second of Acts we never shall; that will never be seen again; for a second dire need arose, but Macedonia and Achaia were in the fellowship, and they ministered, out of their deep poverty and beyond their measure. No need for houses and lands to be sold, though such as were able would give according to their ability.

Then the Lord's servants. Another fellowship responsibility without any of the qualifying conditions of needy saints. As the servant is responsible to the whole fellowship, so they are responsible for him to sustain such. None of these are voluntary; they are mandatory. Thou shalt—not optional, not a week's pay for a week's work when the labourer pays a visit, or "a trifle to pay your railway fare," with a very pressing invite to come back.

Now how shall this be met? Firstly, are there the threefold claims? Is this a divine principle? Then now for the simplest, and therefore best way of carrying this out. Like the farmer of old: see him—he is sitting down before God with his tithe—apportioning each. That is for the Levite, and that for the stranger, this for the fatherless, and this for the widow, each made up separately. He comes to the priest and gives each portion, for while the dividing of it is his, the distributing of it belongs to the priest. He does not come with an unknown lump sum, and, without thought or enquiry, say, "Here you are," and give the whole thing loosely into the hands of the priest. No.

Shall this beget in us a similar care before God—seek to discharge our threefold claim, and come to the assembly with the expenses, needy saints and God's servants' portions? But you are at a loss. There is no provision made, only the *one box*. Then you must wrap two out of the three in a bit of paper, and write on what it is for—for in no other way can your desire be carried out. Is this the best way? No; a box of three divisions is a simple matter of detail, so that each can put their portion—ready divided;

so that men who guide are at no loss to know what to do, and each can rest assured their gift goes to its desired purpose. But, say some, where is your scripture for a box of three divisions? If you want chapter and verse there is not one, any more than you have scripture for seats with backs. Seats there are: For if anything be revealed to another that "sitteth by"; and certainly backs—if not too high and too straight up and seat too narrow—are very desirable.

Men say there is scripture for one box. So there is—2 Kings 12. 9, 10. But let me ask, Is not this an extra thing, a special thing for the repair of God's house? Did not the needs of Levite, stranger, fatherless, and widow go on just the same? Certainly; and this was over and above the ordinary fourfold need; and besides the ordinary box of threefold need, there may be one box and one hole for special need occasionally.

Where such questioning is, I fear there is a need that no box, however large, or holes without number can ever meet; for, first and foremost, heart for God and His Christ and truth is the need. Oh! for revival. See 2 Chronicles 31: that wonderful Hezekiah time, when the house was cleansed and put in order. No sooner did he come to the throne, even the "first month of his reign," the doors were flung open and the filth was flung out. This was no impulse of the moment—a fit of zeal and youthful enthusiasm—but for long it had been the desire of his heart, fostered and cared for by a godly mother, in the face of example of a godless father. And in due course there came the details. Nothing was ignored, or thought of as non-essential (31. 5). He commanded the people concerning the portion of the priest and the Levite. No second appeal was needed; for as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel gave in abundance of the firstfruits of corn, wine, oil, and honey, and the tithe of

the field abundantly. How blessed! The heart was right. A blessed revival was going on. They laid them in heaps, and when Hezekiah saw the heaps, he blessed the Lord, and the people of Israel, and questioned. Azariah answered, Since the people began to bring the oblations into the house of the Lord, we have eaten and had enough. They looked back upon hard times and hard fare. Then the king commanded chambers to be made in the house of the Lord, and they prepared them, and over the bounty was Cononiah, the Levite, as ruler, and Shimei was second. Then came overseers, so that distribution was regularly and systematically made, giving by courses. No lack—heaps and heaps. King and princes, priests and Levites praising the Lord.

Side by side with this glowing picture of peace and plenty, we put the pitiable lament of Jehovah Himself in Malachi, and solemn charge: “Will a man rob God, Yet ye rob Me.” Let the empty chambers and storehouses testify, and be a silent but most crushing witness to the robbery. Therefore bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse. Prove Me now herewith, and see, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there will not be room enough. They brought to God. Yes, but what? That which was taken by violence; the lame and the sick. Could they not do better, nor afford better? Yea, they could dwell in their ceiled houses.

Praying this may help where enquiry is sought, and stir up where enquiry is lacking.

G. R. GEDDES.

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 GOD OF COMFORT.

WHAT is more needed in a scene blighted by sin, in a scene of death, of tears, and of desolation, than comfort? God is the source of comfort for His people—He is the God of all comfort. Comfort is something which is brought alongside of us in our troubles to help us to glorify God in these troubles. The word translated "comfort" is also to be found in the New Testament as "consolation" and "exhortation," and these words may be used interchangeably, except where the context shows that some one of the three is best.

God is the source of comfort. He is "the God of all comfort" (2 *Cor.* 1. 3); He is "the God of patience and consolation—comfort—(Rom. 15. 5). His comfort is in Christ for us (Phil. 2. 1); and through Christ it can alone reach our hearts (2 *Cor.* 1. 5). The Holy Spirit is the Comforter (John 14.16); and Acts 9. 31 shows the good results of walking in His comfort.

The means which God employs to minister comfort to our hearts through Christ by the Holy Spirit are varied, and some of them may be indicated as follows:—

The comfort of the Scriptures (Rom. 15. 4).

Ministry of God's Word (1 *Cor.* 14. 3; Heb. 10. 25).

The immutability of God's counsels (Heb. 6. 17-19).

The coming of the Lord (1 *Thes.* 4. 18).

The comfort of the Scriptures. What an inexhaustible treasure-store of comfort is here! In what circumstances can God's people be placed where they cannot derive comfort from the Scriptures? Written aforetime for our learning they are God's provision whereby unfailing comfort may

be ministered to us in all the vicissitudes of life. Are we young in years with life before us? Are we launching our bark to sail that voyage, which each one of us must sail individually? Do we wish to leave a record behind us that others—perhaps, a shipwrecked brother—hearing, may take heart again? Do we ask, Who is sufficient for these things? With what comfort do the Scriptures come to our aid and demonstrate God's faithfulness to His word, "Them that honour Me I will honour" in the lives of such men as Asa, Hezekiah, Daniel, and others. In circumstances of the most trying nature, they were enabled to triumph. They honoured God, and in return God honoured them. Their first thought was the honour and glory of God, and God failed not in looking after their honour. Though dead they yet speak, and speak to the faithfulness of God. Here, then, in the Scriptures is comfort; here is encouragement that can never play us false, for its source is the God of comfort.

Are we, in the furnace of affliction, and is our prayer "Father, glorify Thy name?" Here again the Scriptures come to our succour when otherwise we might almost faint. They tell of others who passed through fiery trials more severe than ours, and how they were sustained by God. Yea, they enable us to view the end of the Lord, and declare how full of pity and mercy He is. Moreover, in all our trials we may hear from the Scriptures the echo of the bitter cry of the suffering Man of Sorrows, when with broken heart and full of heaviness He exclaimed: "I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." His were sorrows indeed, in the light of which ours fade into nothingness, yet no comforters had He. As we contemplate His cross and sufferings we may well say,—

"Soft breezes of the west, that, sighing as ye go,
Bear ever on, with kindly breast, each whispered human woe;

Here droop your wings and die low murmuring at His feet,
Then rise and hear His victor cry up the long, golden street!"

Space would fail us to show how in every circumstance in which it is possible for God's people to be found the Scriptures abound in ministering comfort.

This should help us to appreciate the importance of the ministry of God's Word, and to see that ministry is one of God's special means of comforting His people. All ministry that is from God must be characterized by this—edification and comfort and consolation (1 Cor. 14. 3, R.V). Therefore it is clear that to neglect our opportunities of listening to such ministry, to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, is no light matter. This cannot be neglected with impunity.

Moreover, by the Scriptures and ministry of the Word we may get to know the God of comfort in such a way that the immutability of His counsels is learned with comforting joy. Has He promised—shall He not fulfil? Can His word be broken? He Who has begun a good work in us, shall He not finish it? Ye who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before you, learn the immutability of God's counsels! Let that hope as an anchor of the soul enter within the veil whither the Forerunner, Jesus, entered for us, and let it lay hold of Him Who is there. Having finished His course, He has entered by His own blood, and shall we who seek to follow our princely Leader fail ere we reach Him there? Is our goal uncertain? Can we fail to enter? No, blessed be God, our goal is not uncertain—we shall be with Him where He is. The presence of the Forerunner at God's right hand is the assurance that we shall soon be presented in His presence in exceeding joy. God hath sworn by Himself, and the immutability of His counsels is our souls' stay. Herein is surely a strong comfort, worthy of the God of comfort. Let the road be what it may, rugged or smooth, the end is sure! Heaven is our Home!

“Comfort one another with these words.” What words? “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall, together with them, be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thes. 4. 16, 17). The hope of being caught up at any moment to meet the Lord Himself is an unfailing source of comfort. Indeed, we might almost say that it crowns all else. Comfort from the God of comfort rises around us like a mighty arch, if we are walking by faith; but on the apex of that arch there shines in all its glory the blessed hope—the coming of the Lord. The darker the night the brighter it shines. The rougher the road the more is the hope treasured. The hope which we have as an anchor of the soul (Heb. 6. 18, 19), is that we shall follow where the Forerunner has entered, and be with Him there; but the blessed hope of 1 Thessalonians 4. 13–18, is that the Lord Himself shall come to take us there. Then indeed

“ He and I, in that bright glory
 One deep joy shall share;
 Mine, to be for ever with Him;
 His, that I am there.”

What then is God's object in thus comforting us? He desires that in turn we should become mediums for communicating His comfort to others. The God of all comfort comforteth us in all our afflictions, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God (2 Cor. 1. 4). In nothing, perhaps, is the Lord's servant more cast upon God than in seeking to comfort His afflicted people. Ere God's comfort can reach the hearts of such through him he must first have experienced these comforts himself. He must have had to do with the God of comfort. Other-

wise our proffered comfort will be in vain, if it be not positively hurtful. We shall be comforters like unto Job's comforters. We shall not be able to speak of God the thing which is right.

The connection in which the expression, the God of comfort, occurs in Romans 15. 4, is instructive, and touches an important practical point. The apostle has been dealing with our duty toward those who are weak in the faith. We are there commanded not to despise the weak one, not to destroy him. We are told that the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves. We must all stand before the judgment seat of God, therefore it behoves us not to be indifferent to the infirmities and weaknesses of our brethren, for the weak and the strong shall alike stand there. It should be our endeavour now, like unto the God of comfort, to encourage and comfort the hearts of the weak in the faith.

THOU ART WITH ME.

O LORD, I pray be with me still,
 And quicken Thou my laggard tread ;
 My empty vessel daily fill
 From love's o'erflowing fountain head.
 No other succour, Lord, I crave,
 If Thou art with me—strong to save !

I know not what the year may bring,
 Yet fear I not whate'er betide ;
 My triumph song I still shall sing
 If I but know Thee near my side.
 Love's banner o'er me still shall wave,
 If Thou art with me—strong to save !

Lord, if the path be dark and drear,
And troubles press on every hand,
My sinking soul in Thee I'll cheer,
For mountains melt at Thy command.
No other succour, Lord, I crave,
If Thou art with me—strong to save!

And if life's load of care is great,
At Mercy's throne I'll lay it down;
With joy my soul shall then relate—
My years with goodness Thou dost crown.
Love's banner o'er me still shall wave,
If Thou art with me—strong to save!

If bright should be each smiling hour,
And smooth life's current's onward flow,
Lord, hold me by Thy mighty power,
For then I'm prone to stray, I know.
No other succour, Lord, I crave,
If Thou art with me—strong to save!

'Tis well I cannot see the way,
Far winding through the unknown year,
But I can trust Thee day by day
And live in blest surcease from fear.
Love's banner o'er me still shall wave,
If Thou art with me—strong to save!

Then, Lord, for grace I humbly ask
To hear and heed what Wisdom saith,
To boldly nerve me to my task,
And daily live and walk by faith.
No other succour, Lord, I crave,
If Thou art with me—strong to save!

CONTENTMENT.

"GODLINESS with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6. 6). Godliness must be accompanied with contentment before this gain can be known. Now it often transpires that young Christians who have the desire to live godly in Christ Jesus lack the contentment which would cause them to reap great gain from their godliness. There are few things more common amongst young Christians than dissatisfaction with their lot. Whatever calling in life they may be following, they usually imagine that if they only had tried something else what success would have been theirs. They find it difficult to live for God where they are, and think that if they were in other circumstances it would be much easier to do so. Thus they lack contentment, and this robs their souls of joy and peace. It does more—it actually hinders them from following after the godliness which they so much desire, for the energy that should be expended in this worthy pursuit is wasted in vain dissatisfaction with their lot. Further, their minds and their hearts are not devoted to their duties as they might be, and the beauty which others who are contented may behold in the same work is unseen by them, whilst any unpleasantness which may be associated with their duties is unduly magnified.

"Oh," says one, "if I were only out of that warehouse, how happy and contented I should be!" "Oh," says another, "if I had not to go to that office where the clerks are constantly teasing me about the meetings I attend, how easy it would be to glorify God!" And yet another says, "If I had not to serve that mistress who is so exacting I should be the most contented Christian in the place." And so on; this line of reasoning is endless.

Now we strongly counsel young Christians to give up at

CONTENTMENT.

once all this folly. The whole thing is wrong from beginning to end; there is no soundness in it. No one who goes in for this line of things will long be characterized by godliness; nor will they, in all likelihood, so master their calling in life that they will command by their competency the respect and esteem of all with whom they come in contact. Certainly, if a Christian finds himself engaged in a calling in which he must violate the will of God and deprive himself of a pure conscience, the sooner he is out of it the better. Let there be no hesitation in such cases. The Word of God says, "Cease to do evil." But these cases are undoubtedly few, and as a rule there is not much difficulty with them. The real difficulty is usually in connection with callings which are quite lawful and good, but where dissatisfaction and grumbling are indulged in instead of living a life of contentment and thanksgiving.

What a mercy it is that God hinders us from having our own way at times! Were it otherwise we should often land ourselves in sore straits. We may rest assured that if we cannot lay hold of sufficient grace to enable us to live for God where we are, we should, in all likelihood, find ourselves more helpless still in other circumstances. Do we expect to pass through life without trials? Do we imagine that it would be better with us if the difficulties of this life could be overcome without effort? What a monotonous world this would be if it were always smooth sailing! God knows what is best for man in his present state, and He has wisely ordered that man must toil with his hands and earn his livelihood with the sweat of his brow. And it is in this battle of life that the Christian should shine with conspicuous brightness. Let the worldling become discontented with his lot, and let him be despondent if he will, but the Christian, never! Happy still, in God confiding, let him face the difficulties and trials of the daily life in strength Divine. "My grace is sufficient for thee,"

should enable him to overcome every obstacle, and to triumph where others have to own defeat.

Great men are not born; they are made. It is often the difficulties that surround their pathways through life that make them great. Yet not the difficulties merely, but rather the manner in which they overcome these difficulties. But for life's trials bringing into view the abilities with which some great men were endowed, and of which they themselves were often quite unconscious, they might have lived and died ordinary mortals. But the battle of life gave them the opportunity of declaring what men of resolute determination and unflinching perseverance could accomplish, and step by step they climbed the ladder of greatness until their fame was written large on this world's history.

Is there no lesson here for Christians? Is there nothing for them to emulate? Are there not possibilities within their reach that the great men of the world were—the greater number of them—entire strangers to? Is there not a greatness which they may follow after—yes, and by God's grace attain unto—in comparison with which all that is accounted great in this world sinks into oblivion?

And how is this greatness reached? By mighty efforts? By gigantic undertakings? By means of "iron bars and perspiration"? Nay, verily! By learning to glorify God in the little things of life. By overcoming, in the power of His grace, the world and the flesh and the Devil. By being patient and by calmly plodding along in this unhappy world in spite of weariness and disappointments and hardships. By being so in fellowship with God that His smile may gild the prosaic duties of our daily lives so that these are faced with a cheerfulness and zest that will cause us to find true pleasure in them. By facing every difficulty with resolute courage and calm confidence in God, and by living a life of faith and thankfulness. Here,

surely, is a greatness worthy of the truly great. Here, surely, is a goal that would beacon us on, and would bid our murmurings be for ever stilled. If the possibilities which God has placed within our reach of being great in His estimation were only seen by us, our days would be so occupied with thanksgiving that time for discontent we should have none.

And this greatness is within the reach of all. High and low, rich and poor, have placed before them the same possibilities. To the servant at the washing-tub they are as real as to the monarch on the throne. If these things were only seen a little more clearly we should then be better able to understand the truth of the words: "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

"Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait."

THE VALUE OF TIME.

Few, if any, of us value the present time and opportunity sufficiently. Many are getting well on the road of life, and are nearer its end than its beginning. All of us are leaving well marked stages behind us as the years go by.

How quickly the smiling days of youth pass away; how soon middle age is reached, to be followed as quickly by the decline of old age! And this embraces our little life on earth—the only opportunity we shall ever have of testifying for our rejected Lord in the scene of His shame.

Let us, at the present season, ponder these facts well. Let their importance sink deeply into our hearts, so that lasting impressions may there be made. Ah! brethren, is it not too true that whilst all around us are in earnest and

spending each day to the best advantage for their present purpose, many Christians are found despising the value of their time-treasure? Wasted days, wasted months, wasted years—blanks for God and eternity, filled only with what the moth and the rust will feed upon—shall yet have to be mourned over by many a child of God. How lamentable are such considerations! How humiliating to us: how displeasing to God!

The past can never be recalled by us, and it is idle, in one sense, to mourn over its wasted days. The future is not ours—may never be, so we cannot build our hopes upon it. What of the present? Thank God, that is ours, and its worth cannot be sufficiently estimated. If we have not the wisdom to value the living present now, we shall assuredly learn to do so when it is for ever too late.

What then is God to have from each day of our lives as they pass during the present year? What is our ambition to be? That each day shall be bright with His praise. That we shall serve Him as we never have done before. That the Hope shall hold our hearts set upon the Lord Jesus Christ, so that purity of heart and godliness of life and walk shall characterize us. Look not around for an ideal to follow; be not discouraged though others should fail: there is One who never failed and never will fail. Fix, then, the eye and heart firmly upon the Lord, and learn of Him how daily to serve God, how to tread the pathway of obedience, and how, if necessary, to do it alone.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

NOTES ON EZEKIEL 37. ILLUSTRATING PRINCIPLES OF
SCRIPTURAL UNITY.

"THE hand of the Lord was upon me" (ver 1). There is much of blessed and comforting association with the hand of the Lord as combining power and tenderness, safety and care (see Isaiah 40. 12. and John 10. 28, 29). But there is something further than these here, there is likewise authority and control. Being under and in that hand expressing acknowledgment of such authority, and subjection to such control, while expressing also an absence of the lawlessness of the natural will and energy of fleshly zeal, which but prove a hindrance and obstacle in the accomplishment of the will and work of God, and unfit and disqualify one for being "a vessel . . . meet for the Master's use": such, indeed, who are as the clay *in the hand* of the potter, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Cor. 4. 7).

Relative thereto, we view in Revelation 1. 16 a further expression as well as extension of the same principle.

Therein we find it recorded that He who was in the midst of the seven golden lampstands "*had in His right hand* seven stars"; and again, that He who *walketh* in the midst of the golden lampstands *holdeth* the seven stars *in His right hand* (Rev. 2. 1). "The seven stars" are said to be the "angels or messengers of the seven churches." Symbolically, we suggest, (for this is a book of symbols,) presenting a ministry divinely called, constituted, governed and directed as associated with the God-chosen, appointed and anointed Ruler (Heb. 1. 8, 9), to whom hath been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28. 18). He it is from whom and by whom gifts are given (Eph. 4. 8), by whom such are constituted ministers, and

“called to the ministry” (1 Tim. 1. 12 and Acts 20. 24), by whom such are placed (1 Cor. 12. 28), as well as controlled and directed (Rev. 2. 1). These are *not wandering* stars, moving in isolated individualism and independent course and action; but each and all in the many and varied characters and measures of a divine ministry moving and acting in answer and response to the control and direction of *that one hand*. But this is not all; there is another view of this matter, another phase of this divine, hence perfect and abiding, principle, namely, the actual and practical carrying out of the same, for which, we submit, 1 Timothy 3. 10 gives direct and definite legislation and guidance; “And let these first be proved, *then* let them serve.”

For a fitting example, as well as illustration of this, we would refer to the past (see Exod. 32. 27-29, compared with Num. 1. 50). When the heart and hand of Jehovah are set upon certain ones, as servants to do His service, such as have first been proved and found faithful He can with confidence intrust therewith. We further find that He required the fulfilment of Numbers 8. 9-14: “And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tent of the congregation, and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together, and thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord, and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites, . . . that they may execute the service of the Lord.” What that laying-on of hands meant to such we believe to be an expression of identification and fellowship with them in the service they were about to engage in. In such a light we also view Acts 13. 2-4, 14. 26, Galatians 2. 9. They upon whom the hand of the Lord has first unmistakably been laid, in calling, fitting, and furnishing unto the work before them, have also the expressed identification and fellowship of others accorded to them in this definite manner. Further also in Acts 16. 1-3

compared with 1 Timothy 4. 14, where Timothy, having first of all approved himself, and been proved by others, so that he can be well reported of, is led forth and sent forth into the work, with the identification and fellowship expressed in "the laying-on of the hands of the Presbytery." First, indeed, being in the hand of the One who ruleth and walketh in the midst of the churches; next, and also, the expressed identification and fellowship of others who are rulers in the churches.

"And carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord." First,⁷ it is a relationship to *the hand* of the Lord, next a relationship to *the Spirit* of the Lord. He sendeth none "a warfare at his own charges." "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 4. 6). "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1. 8). "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (chap. 2. 4). "Then Peter filled with the Holy Spirit" (chap. 4. 8). "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And with great power gave the apostles witness" (vers. 31, ~~32~~33). "And Stephen, full of faith and power" (chap. 6. 8). "He being full of the Holy Spirit" (chap. 7. 55).

Clearly and surely, then, the provision of God for His servants, and the power for the accomplishment of His work, is the blessed Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. He it is, said the blessed Lord, "Who dwelleth with you and shall be in you" (John 14. 17). But it is not His presence or indwelling alone that is the thought here. It is His control, His guidance or His energizing. "*Carried out in the Spirit.*" "Be not drunken with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with(in) the Spirit" (Eph. 5. 18). Thus under His influence and energy; speaking as the Spirit giveth utterance; acting as the Spirit leads.

Thus, and thus only, will that be effected which in its results shall evidence "the manifestations of the Spirit" in

those and "that which is born of the Spirit," in contrast to "that which is born of the flesh." For true it is that "the flesh profiteth nothing," whether it be the "wisdom" thereof, on the one hand, expressed in the learned eloquence, the beautiful oratory, or the clever wit, or the energy thereof as expressed in the great and gigantic schemes and organizations which but lead to the exaltation of and glorying in the flesh, and in its results can only be "that which is born of the flesh," which is "flesh." Much, indeed, do these things need to be remembered and pondered by all who "serve the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity"; so that, discarding all such means and methods, and "putting no confidence in the flesh," they may acknowledge fully and count upon unreservedly the Divine resource and provision in the presence and power of the Spirit of God, and thus know and prove, Ezekiel-like, the strengthening of God. "Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. 3. 16).

"And set me down in the midst of the valley, which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about." Another stage in the training of the servant of God is here presented. It is now that of humiliation, which is ever and only the sure path to exaltation. The valley experience is both trying and difficult to nature and the flesh. It is associated with obscurity as well as humiliation, and is akin to "the desert place." Fitting college, indeed, to learn and acquire necessary qualifications and fitness for the service of God. To the sight and to the heart there is everything repulsive and repelling. "Bones," "very many," and "very dry." Circumstances sufficient, and calculated to test any one who looks thereat and is influenced thereby. To such the question, "Can these bones live?" might well seem to be but mockery as well as an impossibility; yet to faith all things are possible, and he who believes God will not readily question

His sufficiency nor limit His power, but, looking above and beyond all these, will answer humbly yet confidently, "O Lord God! Thou knowest." How important and necessary it is to be clear in this matter! How often the servant of God may be led astray from God's thoughts and ways by looking at and considering circumstances, instead of looking to God alone, and walking by *sight* instead of by *faith*, "assuredly gathering" the path of God's choice and the work of His appointment, committing the keeping of himself to Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator, even while suffering according to the will of God (1 Pet. 4. 19).

God will never disappoint faith in Himself, although He does and will try the same; yet even then "will not suffer to be tried above that ye are able, but will with the trial make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it," and "blessed is he that *endureth* temptation when he is tried," rather than resorting to the arm of the flesh, or going down to Egypt for help, to dishonour and reproach of the Lord's name and testimony.

"Again, He said unto me" (ver. 4). Oh! to wait for God's further speakings. How much oftentimes is involved therein, and how much may be missed through the neglect thereof! The ear opened first to hear the message, then the lips opened to speak the message. "So I prophesied as I was commanded." Thus is it the word going forth out of His mouth: which shall not return unto Him void, but it shall accomplish that which He pleaseth, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto He sent it" (Isa. 55. 11).

D. SMITH.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

THE WAY INTO THE HOLIEST.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY C. M. LUXMOORE.

(Communicated by W. Cox.)

“AND Jesus uttered a loud voice and gave up the ghost (spirit). And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom” (Mark 15. 37, 38). That veil intervened (if I might use that word) between the most privileged people of Israel—save one (and for him the exception was only one day in the year)—that veil had been in the way, ever keeping them out from the inmost expression of the Divine Presence in the Temple, as in the Tabernacle which had preceded it. The priestly family went in a very long way, but the utmost of all they could ever see was that veil which hung there, screening the inmost place from all else.

We are not left in any doubt as to what the veil speaks of in particular. It is not only, (as we may say of the Temple or the Tabernacle in general,) that it speaks of Christ, but we may go further than that, for, in the words of Holy Writ, we know that it speaks of His flesh: “The veil, that is to say His flesh.” The one thing to which everything else led up whilst the first Tabernacle had a standing was His flesh. How little we, looking backwards to-day, and having in our hands the Divine record of the days of His flesh! how little we think of that towards which everything pointed—His flesh! How little our hearts are occupied with the mystery of the Incarnation! “The Word became flesh.”

But in these two verses that we have read we are told that the veil was rent, rent in twain by no human hands, from top to bottom. Ere that happened the way into the Holiest was not made manifest. But as we now have liberty for entrance into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

by His death as the atonement sacrifice, it seems to me that in the morning time that we have together on the first day of the week, God's purpose is that we should not forget the veil through which we have entered.

It was, as the Apostle Paul tells us, "in the night in which the Lord Jesus was betrayed" that He took bread, and when He had given thanks He brake it: the very night in which He was betrayed, when the hands of God were ready, so to speak, to rend that veil from top to bottom.

Is it not remarkable that for the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ we are not turned back to any of His great miracles, nor to any of those deep-speaking parables? We are not in particular brought face to face with Calvary; but we see Calvary with a night between; we are brought into the night in which He was betrayed, and for a remembrance of Himself are bidden this to do, which He did on that memorable night. As though it was not the rending of the veil, and as though we might have clearly and unmistakably in our minds what some have not got clearly in their minds, that we do not come together to remember the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. A higher, nobler, better thing have we to do than to remember His death. We are bidden to do this for a remembrance of HIMSELF. While we do it we show His death, we proclaim His death, we remember One Who has died, but we should never forget that the object and purpose of this Feast is for a remembrance of Himself.

So it is remarkable, and it is worthy of our most careful attention, that that which He did, and bids us do, was done the night before He died; was done not in the midst of thousands of onlookers, not at the time when the hearts of His disciples were distracted, and their very love ran cold, and they all forsook Him and fled. But let us not suppose that these men loved not their Lord. There is not a heart

that beat truer to the Lord Jesus Christ than did the hearts of the Apostles Peter and John. Would that we had within us one-tenth of the love to Him that these two men had. But in the terror and confusion of that time—such is humanity at its best—they, too, forsook Him and fled.

The time when He institutes this Feast is when their hearts are still quiet and their spirits tranquil, when He Himself is before their eyes, and He is truly there in their midst. They know but little of what is before them on the coming day: He knows it all: and yet He turns His mind and His thoughts from the coming morrow, and in the most glorious self-denial that has ever been known He makes this provision for them: this provision for us. And, therefore—oh, that we may never forget what we have to do!—He gave thanks. And what did He give thanks for? And what may we give thanks for? He gave thanks for the loaf; He gave thanks for the cup. Let us think how much more we have to give thanks for than the loaf, and let us think what we have more than the cup; for it is not only the loaf but His own body of which it speaks; it is not only the cup for which we have to give thanks—it is better far, it is His own blood of which it speaks. May we never forget that He gave this feast for a remembrance of HIMSELF.

REMNANT TIMES.

II.

DEEPLY interesting and instructive is the Divine record of the doings of the emancipated remnant on their arrival at the place where Jehovah had chosen to cause His name to dwell. First, would we note the condition of heart manifested by the chief of the fathers in offering freely for the

House of God, and giving after their ability gold and silver, and priest's garments (Ez. 2. 68, 69). This manifests the desire of their hearts towards God's dwelling-place, and shows clearly that they gladly owned the Lord's claims upon all that they had. Presently they gather themselves together as one man to Jerusalem and seek at once to the law of Moses, the man of God, for guidance ; and, having builded the altar of the God of Israel, they offered burnt offering thereon, as it is written (Ez. 3. 1-6).

It is important to note here that the Word of God, then, as now, is that alone which can guide aright any who seek after the old paths, and separate themselves unto the doing of the Lord's will. The appeal of the returned remnant was at once to the law of Moses, which was given "for all Israel" (Mal. 4. 4). It is also worthy of special notice that the altar, raised to the God of Israel at Jerusalem, and sacrifices offered thereon as the law of Moses demanded, did not suffice for God or for a people in fellowship with Him. Something more was needed. We find, therefore, that in the second year after their arrival at Jerusalem they betake themselves to the work of building the house of the Lord, and its foundations are laid (Ez. 3. 8). Then was witnessed a scene of mingled joy and sorrow. The ancient men who had seen the first house wept as the foundations of the second one were laid, and others shouted aloud for joy. Some evidently wept as they thought of the insignificance of the house which was to be built, whilst others rejoiced that the Lord in His goodness had privileged them to undertake the building of a temple for Him.

It is evident, however, that at this point the returned remnant understood clearly that the work to which God had called them was not merely the setting up of the altar and the offering of sacrifices thereon, but that His desire was to find once more a dwelling-place in their midst, so that the altar from which He would continue to receive

sacrifice might be associated with His house. This important matter, we fear, is not now fully apprehended by God's people; yet, Old Testament Scriptures show clearly that from the time that God gathered His people around Himself in the wilderness, the altar which He acknowledged as His was ever connected with His dwelling-place in the midst of His people on earth. When, in the days of the temple which Solomon built, we find altars raised at Bethel and Dan it is a clear indication of the apostate condition of God's people; and he who raised these altars, thus rejecting God's house, is known in Scripture as "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." These facts are profoundly instructive: would to God that His saints would lay them to heart; for to-day, as of old, God's altar is associated with His house.

It might be advantageous, at this juncture, to look a little more closely at the remnant at Jerusalem, particularly with the desire to determine the character of the people which surrounded them. First, we would remember that they had left behind them the people of Babylon. In order to do this it was absolutely necessary to leave behind them likewise all of their brethren who still chose to remain in a sphere where the will of their God could not be carried out, and who had turned a deaf ear to His call, "Go up." There was a third people, however, who played a most important part in the fortunes of Jerusalem, and in the building of the house; and they were neither Babylonians nor Israelites still in Babylon's snare, but a people who were in and around Jerusalem previous to and after Israel's arrival there. The origin and training of this people, which are very important, are given us in some measure of detail in 2 Kings 17. There, we learn that, after the captivity of Israel by Assyria, the empty towns and villages of Samaria were populated by people from the Assyrian kingdom, and one of Israel's priests was brought to Bethel, where he

dwelt and taught those strangers how they should fear and worship the Lord. The special characteristics of this people are to be found in the thrice-repeated statement that they feared the Lord and served their own gods. They were a people, therefore, who had learned much of God's will, but still clung to their own gods; and it is evident that after many years, during which they had intermixed and intermarried with the Israelites who were still in the land, their descendants copied much of the worship of God and made a loud profession of doing sacrifice to Him, even declaring that they sought the Lord, as the returned remnant did (Ez. 4. 1, 2).

It is important that we should determine clearly the characteristics of these men who are termed by God "the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin," for people with such a loud profession of respect for the will of God are not readily recognized as adversaries. We find no record of this people acting in any way contrary to the welfare of the returned remnant during the first year of their sojourn at Jerusalem, when they had *only an altar* raised to Jehovah. What was there in an altar to find fault with? Had they not altars to Jehovah themselves? Indeed they had, and sacrifices were offered thereon to Jehovah; and over an altar only they could shake hands with Israel and be at peace. The moment, however, that the remnant set themselves to God's work, namely, the building of the house, the harmony was hopelessly broken. Toward such work, despite their professed eagerness to co-operate, they had nothing but enmity, and in such work they could have no part, for God's dwelling-place could only be built by a separated and prepared people.

At first, the adversaries offered to co-operate in the building of the House of God, but no sooner was the proposition made to Zerubbabel than it was met with an uncompromising refusal, which at once manifested the real object under-

lying the offer to help. The unswerving pathway of clear separation to the Lord manifested at this time is very beautiful, and well worthy of imitation, though it will ever result in God's spirit-raised ones having to experience persecution and troubling from the enraged enemies of the truth. The refusal to accept the proffered co-operation led to the people of the land weakening the hands of the people of Judah, and to their troubling them in building. Not content therewith, they schemed in secret against them, and hired counsellors to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus, king of Persia, even unto the reign of Darius, king of Persia. Meanwhile, events had transpired in the Persian empire which seemed to favour the cause they had at heart, for both of the sons of Cyrus had met their fate, and an impostor occupied the throne of Persia. Eagerly grasping the opportunity which was thus given them, the adversaries wrote a letter to this king—the Artaxerxes of which Ezra 4. 7 speaks—in which they condemned the doings of the returned remnant, and attributed to them motives which certainly they never cherished.

This letter is worthy of special notice, as it appears to show that the opposition of the adversaries was having an effect upon the work of God at Jerusalem, so that the building of the house was proceeded with in a half-hearted manner, whilst many had turned from that which was really God's work to the building of the city. There is no reference in this letter to the building of the house, but seven times the building of the city is referred to (Ez. 4. 7-16). It is also worth remembering that the mandate of Cyrus, which was their authority for building, referred only to the house, and made no mention of the city. When this letter was read before the impostor king, he, having no respect to the policy pursued toward God's people and God's house by Cyrus and his son, at once issued a decree to cause the building to cease; and eager to get such an

opportunity, the enemies caused the Jews to cease building by force and power. So the work ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius (Ez. 4. 24).

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 160.—*Please explain the difference between the Gospel of the Uncircumcision and the Gospel of the Circumcision as found in Galatians 2. 7.*

By the gospel of the Uncircumcision and of the Circumcision we must not suppose two gospels differing in character, of which the latter maintains the necessity of Circumcision, while the former lets it drop; but only two circles of hearers of the same gospel. The gospel is the one gospel of righteousness through faith in Christ alone, and Paul and Peter were engaged in preaching it; but to each the Lord had assigned a different mission: to the one, that of the Gentiles, and to the other, that of the Jews. The work of the apostles Peter and Paul is meant, therefore, not the gospel as to its contents, but the preaching of the gospel among the Circumcised, the Jews, and the Uncircumcised, the Gentiles. God had been operative for Peter in the one, and for Paul in the other direction, and from this they concluded that God had given the one to the one, and to the other the other calling.

W. S.

QUESTION 161.—*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?*

If a church of God were independent of other churches of God, it would be impossible for it to subsist, if there were none in it scripturally qualified to do oversight work. But no church of God, however strong or weak it may be, is

shut up and limited to its own local resources. The unity and economy of the Community forbid this, and, at the same time, make provision for a church of God in the condition indicated by the question, for the resources of the whole are at the service of the least. That churches of God did subsist, in the days of the Apostles, for a shorter or longer period, without local overseers doing oversight work in their midst, is clear from Acts 14. 23 and Titus 1. 5. Such a case gives opportunity for the help of the neighbour that is near. A church of God does not subsist on local overseers, but on God and the word of His grace.

W. S.

QUESTION 162.—*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?*

The sense of the word "must" in New Testament Scriptures is always determined by the connection, wherefore it has been variously rendered "should," "ought," "behave," "must needs be," etc. In the Lord's momentous words, "Ye must be born again" (John 3. 7.), no room is left for either deprivation or extenuation of what is necessary. This, however, is not due to anything in the meaning of the word itself, but is entirely due to the nature of what is needed. Without the new birth a person remains "dead in sins," whatever he may be or do, and is, consequently, unable to enter into the kingdom of God.

The same sense cannot hold good in Titus 1., because human frailty and limitation have to be taken into account. Room is left there for extenuation, but not for absence of the necessary qualities. The qualities required in a steward in God's house, are, in the highest sense, possessed by the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls only, as Lord over God's house. Further, overseers are by no means the sole proprietors of these qualities in the church; they ought to

be, in some measure, the distinguishing characteristics of every one that nameth the Name of the Lord. It behoves all to be thus and so.

W. S.

In John 3. the words "except" and "cannot" lend weight to the imperativeness of the "must"; while the "must" of Titus 1. appears in the sense of "ought" as found in Romans 12. 3; 1 Corinthians 8. 2; Ephesians 6. 20; 1 Thessalonians 4. 1, leaving room for failings or failure in Galatians 2. 11; Peter 5. 1.

G. T.

The word "must" in Titus 1. has not the same definiteness, but may be rather read, "should be," whilst that in John 3. 7. is an absolute "must," both essential but not both paramount.

E. F. O.

QUESTION 163.—*What does the right hand of fellowship mean as found in Galatians 2. 9?*

The right hands of fellowship in Galatians 2. 9 means the heartiest fellowship with Paul and Barnabas in the ministry God had committed to them.

F. V.

The giving of the right hands of fellowship, as found in Galatians 2. 9, means a mutual agreement in the will of the Lord, founded upon the full persuasion that a Divine calling had been given equally to Peter and to Paul, the former to preach the gospel among the Jews, and the latter to preach the gospel among the Gentiles. By the formation of this agreement, which was by no means an agreement to differ, those concerned rendered obedience to the recognized will of the Lord, into a knowledge of which they had come by hearing one another (conference, verse 2), and by seeing the power of God working effectually in each in His own appointed field of labour. The giving and receiving of the right hand was the outward sign of this inward agreement of these fellow-servants, who were serving the "One Lord" according to the analogy of the "One Faith."

W. S.

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.

ADOPTION.

“FOR My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith Jehovah.”¹

These words of the living God find most happy example in the matter of His adoption. Adoption, according to man, is, “the act of receiving and regarding the child of another as one’s own.” Whereas God adopts no one, save such as is His own very begotten and therefore born child. And, remarkable as it may appear, God has not yet adopted any one.

The young Christian will find much help by reading and considering *Ephesians* 1. 3–14 in connection herewith.

Let there be prayerful dwelling upon the words “having predestinated us UNTO ADOPTION, through Jesus Christ to Himself.”

Unto the attaining of this, God sent forth His Son made (born) of a woman, made under law to redeem (buy out) those under law, that we might receive the *Adoption*.²

“And because ye ARE SONS,³ God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Ab-ba (that is, *My Father*) Father (that is, *THE Father*).

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage, again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of ADOPTION, by Whom ye cry ‘Ab-ba,’ also ‘The Father.’⁴

“The Spirit Himself bearing witness WITH our spirit that we ARE *children* of God.”

Besides, “We who have the firstfruit of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves,

¹ *Isaiah* 55. 8.

³ Note well here *Gal.* 3. 26, R.V

² *Gal.* 4. 4, 5.

⁴ *Rom.* 8. 15, 16.

WAITING FOR

ADOPTION ; that is, the redemption (even the setting free) of our body."

Then, and not till then, as thus, and not else than thus, shall we, His children, even His sons, receive our SON-PLACE, and be as and where He has purposed we shall be.

For His ADOPTION is, to set *as sons* in the SON-PLACE such as are His own children. JOHN BROWN.

FELLOWSHIP.

THERE are few words more frequently used amongst Christians to-day than the word fellowship. Although this is so, it is to be feared that few know the blessedness of fellowship with God from day to day as He desires that they should know it. The word doubtless conveys the thought of intercourse or partnership, as Ephesians 5. 11 shows.

If we go back in thought to the garden in Eden and behold man as God created him, we learn that man found his greatest joy in God, and that God found pleasure in man. The Creator and the creature held sweet intercourse with one another, and in this is seen a beautiful example of perfect fellowship. In that scene all was harmony and peace, for the thoughts of the man were at one with the thoughts of God. But this fellowship was conditional—it depended for its continuance upon the obedience of the creature to God's will in all things. Soon by one transgression that fellowship was marred, that harmony was broken ; soon God lost His pleasure in man and man ceased to find his joy in God. As we follow man's course as revealed in the Scriptures, how soon we find that God is well-nigh forgotten altogether, and man, ignoring the claims of his Creator, seeks with a high hand to do his own will in utter independence of God. And this is human nature still as Ephesians 4. 17, 18 declares. Truly "God is not in all their thoughts."

But how blessed is the thought that it is possible for those who have been reconciled to God by the death of His Son to enjoy that fellowship with God which sin had marred! for all who have been recipients of eternal life through the grace of God have received the capacity to know and to enjoy God (John 17. 3). The Apostle John, by the Spirit, says, "Our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ"; and his object in writing is that those to whom he writes might share with him that fellowship, so that their joy might be full. Captivating surely is the grace which makes such fellowship possible for us—even fellowship with the Father Who has manifested His infinite love in sending His Son into the world that we might live through Him, and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ Who so willingly said: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

It is God's desire that this fellowship should be the constant experience of all who are His. By this alone shall we be enabled to live to His glory. It is the secret of true happiness and the power for service. If communion between the believer's soul and God be interrupted, the joy of God's salvation will be lost, and all power to live for God and to serve Him will vanish. How important, therefore, it is that we should learn how such fellowship can be maintained, so that our opportunity on earth of giving pleasure to God may not be lost!

Believing that God's way in the past is His way for the present, we may learn that absolute subjection on the part of man to God's will is indispensable if fellowship with Him is to be maintained. With what jealous care, therefore, ought we to search our hearts and see if all our ways will stand the gaze of the God of light! How important it is that every sphere of our lives should be brought under the searching light of God's Word, so that nothing might be allowed by us which is contrary to the Divine will! It

is also imperative that we should learn the disastrous effects of sin, so that we might not only seek grace to stand in awe and sin not, but, if conscious of having sinned, that we might at once avail ourselves of God's gracious provision, even the blood of Jesus His Son, which cleanseth us from every sin. If this be neglected, and if sin remain unjudged, we shall be found walking in darkness; and though we may assume to have fellowship with God, He declares that we lie and do not the truth.

Would to God that we might learn better the God with whom we have to do! Though He has manifested Himself to us in all our dire need as a God of love and grace, He is still the unchanging God of absolute holiness, Who can have no compromise with sin. May we, therefore, learn to hate sin and to value all that is according to His holy will, so that by implicit obedience we may work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

The result of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ is seen in 1 John 1. 7—fellowship one with another. This is the outcome of each one being in subjection to one Will and being obedient to the Word of God alone. Thus, those who learn in fellowship with God that all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vain-glory of life—is not of the Father, find themselves separated from the world, for, having no place for God, it has no place for those who are in fellowship with God. Yet it is God's desire that all who are thus separated from the ways of the world should be found together in happy fellowship one with another, yea, in fellowship which is of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus all speaking the same thing, and being perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment, we may be a mutual help and comfort one to another, as we shine as lights amidst the increasing darkness.

Truly how good and how pleasant is God's way for His

saints to-day! By dwelling together in the unity of the Spirit they can manifest on earth at present what shall soon be in the glory, when the Lord Jesus shall be the centre of attraction for every heart. Yet if fellowship amongst saints would be maintained on earth to God's glory to-day, it can only be by individual subjection to the Word of God both in regard to doctrine and to practice. All who walk with God must learn that it is equally as imperative that they should prize all the doctrines of Scripture as it is necessary that they should guard against moral evil. Evil doctrine will hinder communion with God as truly as evil practice. Alas! this is little understood. A Christian cannot maintain fellowship with God and treat as non-essential anything which is enjoined as a commandment of the Lord.

DAVID WILSON.

GOD IS LIGHT.

God is light. Man's natural state is darkness. Thus there is a great gulf between God and man. But as light ever struggles to dispel darkness, so God, Who is light, ever seeks to reach man and to illuminate him. In order to do this the light must come to where the darkness is. So we read: "Through the tender mercy of our God the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness" (Luke 1. 78). He Who is light, and Who dwelt in the light unapproachable, came down to this scene of darkness. The only begotten Son was revealed. The Lord Jesus Himself said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me shall not abide in darkness." Thus the test as to whether men are to abide in darkness or not is their attitude toward Him Who is the Light. That Light shineth in darkness, and nothing can

hinder its shining, but men may refuse to be illuminated thereby. They may rest satisfied in their darkness, and they may reject Him Who is the Light.

That which placed man in darkness was sin. The Lord Jesus came to earth to remove the cause of darkness, to atone for sin. On the cross this was done. Nowhere is the character of God, as a God of light, more clearly revealed than at the cross of Christ. If the Lord Jesus undertakes the mighty work of atoning for sin, He must bear the penalty of sin. If He befriends the sinner, then He must bear the sinner's doom. If He makes it possible for God in righteousness to cause light to arise on man's darkness, then He must enter the darkness Himself. In view of His cross we hear His solemn words: "This is your hour and the power of darkness." For a little while He was subject under the hands of wicked men; for a little while the Prince of Darkness triumphed over Him. But denser darkness still must shroud His soul ere sin can be put away. God must righteously deal with Him; and in so doing the God Who is light must withhold His shining. Then was it that

"The Holy One did hide His face—
O Christ, 'twas hid from Thee!
Dumb darkness wrapt Thy soul a space—
The darkness due to me."

Concerning that dread hour His bitter cry was heard: "Thou hast laid Me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps"; "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?"

The Lord Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. This is proof that God has been glorified in the work of the cross. He has entered again the light unapproachable. He has been glorified with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. 'Tis true, as we often sing:

"'Tis past—the dark and dreary night,
And, Lord, we hail Thee now,

Our Morning Star, without a cloud
Of sadness on Thy brow."

From the throne of God light now streams upon man's darkness. The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ seeks an entrance into his heart. It tells that He Who was once low in death is now exalted as a Prince and a Saviour upon the throne, and that all who believe in Him shall not abide in darkness. If men are condemned, it must be through their rejection of Him Who is the light; for this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil.

DOING GOOD.

THERE is something sublime in the words spoken regarding the Lord Jesus in Acts 10. 38: He "went about doing good." These are simple words, but their full meaning can only be understood by God.

As Christians we are apt to undervalue the noble exercise of doing good. The fact that we are saved does not discharge us from the obligations to our fellows that devolve upon us as men and women; on the contrary it increases them enormously. The household of faith must be our special care, but to do good unto all men is a command of the Lord.

Do we not sometimes misapprehend our responsibility in this matter? Because we are born again we seem to think that we should be shut in with ourselves and have no intercourse of any kind with the world, save perhaps in business affairs. The circle of well-doing, however, embraces the world, and if we performed our duties here in a more worthy manner, Christianity would not be so often scoffed at as it is.

But doing good unto all men, especially to those who are

of the household of faith, will not constitute any one a busy-body or a meddler in other people's matters. It is difficult to define what doing good means, but it is nevertheless so easily understood that definition is altogether superfluous. The varied circumstances of life make doing good in its details different to each believer.

The perfect example is to be seen in the life of the Lord Jesus. His life was lived for the glory of God and for the highest good of man. Let us trace again and again His wondrous footsteps through life, and let us seek grace to cultivate the noble art of doing good. He suffered, leaving us an example that we should walk in His steps. The measure in which we follow in His footsteps is the measure of the good which we do.

IT IS WELL.

HE hath listened to my moanings,
 He hath numbered all my tears;
 He hath heard my spirit's groanings
 When beset with foes and fears.
 Storms obey His sovereign will!
 He hath whispered, "Peace, be still!"

Surging seas He hath divided:
 Bid the raging waves depart;
 And a path of peace provided
 For the object of His heart.
 His is love that asks no cause!
 Without limit, without pause!

He hath clad earth's waste with gladness:
 With a halo from on high;
 Know, my soul, surcease from sadness,
 Heaven's verdure ne'er can die!
 Verdant nooks with glory clad!
 Seek, my soul, and there be glad!

He hath spread out hidden treasures
 To my soul's enraptured gaze,
 Bid me grasp their unknown measures,
 Mine for time and mine always.
 Truest treasures are unseen!
 Greatest gains unknown, I ween!

All my paths He hath directed:
 He hath chosen all my ways;
 And His grace, when least expected,
 Fills my soul with glad amaze.
 Low I bow at His blest feet!
 Render to Him homage meet!

Light divine shall still surround me;
 As my days my strength shall be;
 Secret foes shall ne'er confound me;
 Sing, my soul, of victory.
 Triumph thou in power divine!
 Wield thy weapons—strength is thine

Flinty rocks their waters giving!
 Barren deserts yielding bread!
 Dying daily, ever living!
 Bound, yet free amongst the dead!
 Oh, my spirit, shout for glee!
 Thine alone is liberty!

Soon at home—the glory entered—
 We shall laud one Name alone;
 Satisfied!—with vision centred
 On the Lamb Who fills the throne.
 Hallelujahs then shall rise!
 Hallelujahs rend the skies!

A CORRUPTIBLE CROWN.

ON the 22nd January, 1901, the Queen Victoria of Great Britain and Ireland breathed her last, after a reign of over sixty-three years, during which she had endeared herself beyond precedent to the hearts of her subjects in the United Kingdom, in the Greater Britain beyond the seas, and in her empire of India, whilst the Anglo-Saxon race in the United States, and nearly the whole of the civilized world, vie with her own people in rendering homage to the worth of one who has displayed in so singular a degree the rarely conjoined qualities of an excellent woman and a noble monarch.

To us who are strangers here, who seek a better country, a fatherland and a home beyond the fleeting scenes of time and sense, there are yet lessons not a few to be learnt from the long life which has just reached its close.

The Princess Victoria was about twelve years of age when it was explained to her that, her late father being the third son of George III., she was the heiress-presumptive to the British Crown, so that if William IV. died as George IV. had done, without legitimate issue, she would be his successor. Said the little maid to her governess, "Now many a child would boast, but they don't know the difficulty. There is much splendour, but there is more responsibility." Lifting up the forefinger of her right hand while she spoke, she said, "I will be good. I understand now why you urged me so much to learn even Latin. My cousins, Augusta and Mary, never did; but you told me Latin is the foundation of English grammar, and of all the elegant expressions, and I learned it as you wished it; but I understand all better now," and the Princess gave her hand to her governess, repeating "I will be good."

It is not too much to say that during the seventy years that have followed the Queen has kept her word. She has studied to be a good woman in every human relation of her life. At quite an advanced age she commenced to learn Hindustani, one of the principal languages of the vast millions of her Indian peoples.

And now there is an almost universal wail of mourning as this beloved lady passes away from the scene. At the foot of one of her statues we noted a laurel wreath "from a sorrowing subject." She has gained, and deservedly gained, her people's affection. She has worked for this and she has her reward. But after all it is but a temporal, a corruptible crown that she has thus gained, like that of which Paul speaks, for the which men of old striving were temperate in all things. As is the sowing, so is the reaping, and her earnestness and zeal in that to which for these many years she has given herself is to us an example and an incentive. But if we work the work of the Lord it is no corruptible crown for which we are striving. The praise and commendation of men is not that for which we are looking. So much the greater, then, should be our steadfastness, so much the more painstaking and persevering we, as the praise of God, for which we look, is better than the praise of man.

From all that it is possible to know, it seems assured that the deceased Queen was a humble believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, that she owned His name and called Him Lord. In a happier day, when the storms of earth are past for us, we shall meet her amongst the myriads of the dead in Christ raised at His shout to meet Him in the air. How poor and mean will then appear the glories of pomp and circumstance which belonged to her earthly reign! How happy for her to return to this earth a humble follower in His train when He shall

come and take to Him His great power and reign! How tawdry and how tinsel will the glories of the Victorian era seem compared with His mighty works! How feeble and vain the humanitarianism of this day beside the goodness and the grace that shall then flow forth from Him!

Remembering, as it becomes us to do, the feebleness and error of our own lives, we cannot but speak gently of any who have passed away, but of the relationship of the deceased lady to Christendom as head of the so-called Church of England and of the so-called Church of Scotland we can scarcely trust ourselves to speak. At least we may thankfully acknowledge that she rather fell into the position which she occupied than sought it of herself. But how great the opportunities that have been lost by eminent persons like the Queen, and the late Mr. Gladstone, and many others whom God has saved by His mercy, if they had but followed on to know the Lord, and do and tell His truth—who can tell? The day shall declare it!

And who are we? And who has made us to differ? And why, why is God so good to us to teach us what He has taught? And how great our responsibility! God Himself help us to know it and be more in earnest.

From this scene, with all its trials, with all its opportunities, the Queen has now gone; she has no longer any share in the work of men in mortal body. She has exceeded the fourscore years which so few attain, and now she rests with God. Her passing is a word to all from the unseen world which she has entered. A word to those who think but little that it is appointed unto men once to die.

May prayers go up to God from His people at this time that from the King, the Queen, the German Emperor,

and the many princes and princesses who are bereaved, down to the humblest peasant and coolie, the voice may be heard by many warning of death and judgment to come.

A word to God's own children to use opportunities while they are present, to work while it is called day, knowing for a certainty that God is not mocked, that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

NIBBLINGS.

A voice! Hark! It is the Shepherd's,
Well we know it. What saith He?—
"Feed My lambs."

"Shepherd My little sheep."

"Feed My sheep."

How near to Him those words of tender care draw me and thee! How dear to our hearts maketh He thus Himself! What exultant joy is in His tone, "My," "Mine"! Yes, indeed! His very own—not another's; no, not even one's own, but His. Let us ruminare hereon. Now satisfied, let us arise and gambol among the tender grass; and then to lie down beside the waters of quietness with Him, let us delight. Our nestling boast, "He loveth me." Our fervent prayer,—

"I am Thine, O Lord, I have heard Thy voice,
And it told Thy love to me:
•But I long to rise in the arms of faith,
And be closer drawn to Thee.
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer,
Blessed Lord."

He responds, *My lambs!* *My little sheep!* *My sheep!*

J. B.

TO OUR READERS.

THE Editors of NEEDED TRUTH gladly welcome help from fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God. They desire this magazine to be a medium whereby those who have received gifts may minister them as beautiful stewards of God's manifold grace. They have especially invited help in the answering of questions from those fellow-deacons of the Lord Christ Jesus who believe they have received light on the subjects of enquiry.

They endeavour, in inserting answers to questions and other contributions, to keep back nothing that may be profitable, but to give approved fellow-workers opportunity of helping the saints as the Lord the Teacher has helped them.

They make no pretence of being infallible in their judgment of what is and what is not in accordance with the teaching of Holy Scripture, and feel therefore at times bound to publish replies to questions and other communications with which they are not altogether and in all points in agreement. In any case they feel bound to solemnly warn their readers against the dangerous habit of accepting without thought all that they may hear or read.

Alike for their own writings and for the contributions of fellow-workers they ask and urge that the teaching may be carefully considered side by side with an open Bible, and with earnest prayer to the Living God for the enlightenment of His Holy Spirit.

That so we may together grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and in the coming glad day as sowers and reapers rejoice together, is the wish and prayer of your friends and servants,

THE EDITORS.

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 164.—*Would it be an unequal yoke for one in the Fellowship to be in a Co-operative Society ?*

A co-operative society, we understand, is a business, the object of which is to make profit by trading, the profit realized being divided amongst the shareholders. Partnership is granted to any one, irrespective of who or what he may be. Generally, the great majority of those who are members of such societies are unbelievers, who have no concern about the glory of God, or the honour of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who mind earthly things, and earthly things only. Whilst those who are in the fellowship are believers, who though in the world are not of it, being “A people for God’s own possession” set apart for holy purposes, whose chief concern ought to be the glory of God, and the honour of the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For these two classes to be yoked together is surely a most unequal yoke, and contrary to the word of the Lord for our guidance, as found in 2 Corinthians 6. 14–15, R.V., “Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?”

D. J. C.

In answering the above question it might be well to say a word or two upon what an unequal yoke is.

By the Cross of Christ the believer has been taken out of the world, and eternally separated (judicially) from it. By the new birth he becomes a child of Light, while the unbeliever, by nature’s birth, is a child of darkness. The one alive in Christ, the other dead in trespasses and sins. To join these two together as sharers in a business concern

is an unequal yoke, as spoken of in Deuteronomy 22. 10, and 2 Corinthians 6. 15, "What part hath a believer with an unbeliever?"

The co-operative society is a company of individuals bound together in a business, sharing responsibilities and profits, hence it is a yoke. If composed of believers and unbelievers, to the believer it is an unequal yoke, which his and her God forbids in Deuteronomy 22. 10, and calls upon them to come out from, in 2 Corinthians 6.

It is most inconsistent for saints professing to be separated from the world, and gathered unto Jesus only, without the camp, to be sharers in a co-operative society, or anything else of a like character. The Lord Almighty of 2 Corinthians 6. expects us to be separated all round.

(And see below.)

F. V.

QUESTION 164.—*Would it be an unequal yoke for one in the Fellowship to be in a Co-operative Society?*

QUESTION 165.—*Is it right for a Christian to be in a Trade Society?*

QUESTION 166.—*Would it be right for one in the Fellowship to be in a Friendly or an Insurance Society?*

The three questions as to Trade Societies, Co-operative Societies, or Insurance Societies belong much to the same class, though we must carry out the principle of *some making a difference*. The first has a compulsory phase; the other two have not, these being purely voluntary. None of these things are wrong in themselves; they may be wrongly managed, but that does not make the thing itself wrong.

The whole question is, Is there an unequal yoke? For the Word of God is very explicit, "*Be not* unequally yoked together with unbelievers." This again suggests another question, What is a yoke? Paul had such in Philippians 4. 3, "True yokefellow." Timothy, one who was like minded as a son with the father; their aims and

interest were one, a pulling together, one in mind, aim, and purpose—having a common cause, this constitutes a yoke. Whether religious, political, or commercial, one pulling one way, the other another way is unequal, or one who does not pull at all, having little or no interest or concern.

Though a believer be in a trade society, is he yoked with the unbeliever? *He may be, he may not be*; he may throw all his energies into the society, having the same aims and objects before him, and working together with unbelievers, who for the most part are socialistic. "*The terms co-operation and socialism are synonymous.*"¹ Such are yoked in deed and in truth: but, again, others have no interest in the Trade society. One must pay a contribution to get work, and does so; but as to the society's aims being his aims, or its objects his objects, never were things further apart. The tyranny of compelling men to join, and persecuting those who will not, is on a par with the religious persecution of the Papal Inquisition, and is degrading. Such are not yoked; they may be *in* but not *of*, like the men in the Epistle of John, and let such not touch the benefit. Having got work, they have got all they want. If in the fellowship of His Son, the need, when such arises, is the privilege and responsibility of that *in which and of which* they are to supply. When shall we blush to think of those in need, going with cap in hand to ungodly associations for help at such a time?

Co-operative societies stand altogether on another footing. This is a commercial enterprise, every *member of such societies is a partner*, and profit is the aim of such. The more business, the more profit—3s. in the £1. This is a yoke, and that into which each deliberately puts his neck.

¹ "The devastating evils of intemperance have weighed upon the minds of the leaders of co-operation and socialism (as will have been gathered, these terms are almost convertible)."—From *The Co-operative News*, October 27, 1900.

If wrong for one as a Christian to go into partnership with one unconverted, the greater wrong when such are multiplied by hundreds and thousands, a large percentage of whom are Socialists.

Insurance societies differ again from either of the other two. One may or may not be yoked. There are societies *where all are partners*, and share all profits; such are called *Mutual*. But in such as are not mutual, there is no such partnership. A bonus may be given every three years or so, which is not *as partners* sharing the profits, but those who form the company, being satisfied with a certain percentage of profit, as a free gift, divide the surplus amongst the insured by means of bonus.

We refer now to what is called life insurance. As to fire insurance, men in business—a considerable part of whose stock is not their own, payment for which is not yet due (like a householder *whose rent is not yet due*)—to secure their creditors from loss, insure the stock, unless they are in a position to bear such loss themselves. G. R. G.

One answer will suffice for these three questions, as the operating principle in each case is the same. This may be defined as a principle of "union is strength," leading to a combination—a partnership—a working together in common or fellowship, for the purpose of obtaining some benefit or advantage that each member may alike share in. In the Trade Society men are linked together to effect that which is for the common benefit with regard to wages, regulation of labour, etc. In the Insurance or Friendly Society the common object is to provide for sickness, old age, or death; whilst in the Co-operative Society the working together is to obtain foods, and other necessaries, to the best advantage mutually.

In each of these Societies the members are yoked together and work together to obtain some worldly object

that will be for the common good. This, as far as people of the world are concerned, may be all right and proper; but *no child of God should be yoked up with unbelievers* in such Societies. God would only have His children in one partnership or fellowship, *i.e.* "of His Son," linked only with believers, and working with them for one common object, His exaltation and glory.

The yoking together of believers and unbelievers, with one common object in view, in business or social matters, is as much spoken against in 2 Corinthians 6. 14 to 7. 1, as any yoking with them in religious service, the call out therefrom as plain, and the promise as blessed. C. B.

(See also page 54.)

Correspondence.

"Hearken to me,

* * * *

I also will answer my part,

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

REFERRING to NEEDED TRUTH, Dec., 1900, p. 263—QUESTION 158.—*Does 1 Cor. 11. 1-16 refer to the assembly in assembly, or does it refer to the "private and ordinary course"?*

The reply of our beloved brother J. A. B. to the above question is not quite clear to some of us here, *viz.*, "that the whole of this chapter refers to the church as in assembly." If it is so, the apostle appears to allow the "abuse" by legislating for it, *e.g.*, "every woman praying—with her head unveiled"—also "is it seemly that a woman pray unto God unveiled?"

If the whole refers to "in assembly," and the woman is not permitted to speak "in assembly," why should the apostle say, "She shall not pray unveiled"?

I would also ask, to what portion of the first fifteen verses does verse 16 refer, "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God"?

G. T. R.

The writer has always felt some difficulty in connection with this chapter; but if we accept the first portion of it down to ver. 17 as having reference simply to home life, the difficulties to the writer are by no means removed. When speaking about the man's head being uncovered, this can only apply to a time when he is specially in the presence of God as a worshipper; it cannot apply to his ordinary life, surely, for in the East the turban or head-covering would be worn not only outside the tent, but also in his life within, we believe, very much. Likewise, the woman is to be covered. Does this refer to her ordinary life? if so, then our women should have their heads covered when together in that which is called family worship in the presence of the man and of the angels (see ver. 10). These considerations, along with the wording of ver. 2, incline us to the belief that the first part of this chapter has reference to the assembly—but we would welcome any further light that can be given on the subject.

J. A. B.

REMNANT TIMES.

III.

It would appear that the building of the house of God was delayed for about two years at this time, and toward the close of that period God again appealed to the hearts of His people through the words of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, given us in detail in the books which bear their respective names. These books should be read, by the student of Scripture, at the end of the fourth chapter of Ezra, for they deal in the main with the time which elapses between the fourth and fifth chapters of the latter book. The book of Haggai is of special interest, because it manifests the condition into which God's people lapsed during the time that the building of the house of God was

forsaken. They evidently persuaded themselves to believe, and boldly declared, that the time had not come to build the Lord's house. Yet God's thoughts were altogether different from theirs, and He sternly rebukes them in the words: "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" Over this point—the building or the not building of His house—God had a solemn controversy with His people, and in order to cause them to consider their ways, He withheld His blessing from them. They sowed much, but they brought in little; they ate, but they had not enough; they clothed themselves, but there was none warm; and he that earned wages did so to put it into a bag with holes.

What meant this sad lack of blessing? What caused this barrenness and poverty? "Why? saith the Lord of Hosts. Because of Mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house." Self-interests were placed before God's purpose and pleasure, and this led to indolence in the things of God; whilst anything which appeared to advance their own interests was pursued with vigour. Still the results were disastrous, as they must ever be when God's portion in His people and in all that they have is subservient to their own interests. God's claims must first be acknowledged, and His pleasure and His house must receive the best of our energies and abilities, and when this is done our own portion shall be sure and our prosperity, at least in soul, shall be manifested (see 3 John 1-3). In this, surely, there are lessons for God's people to-day of vital importance, and so clear that he who reads may run.

"Go up to the mountain and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord" (Hag. 1. 8). If this work is to be done for God, self must be denied and arduous work must be joyfully faced, for mountains need to be climbed and heavy burdens must be borne. No work this for the half-hearted,

or for those who fear to soil their hands and to bear the heat and the burden of the day. No amount of lip talk will suffice. Work—stern, laborious work—must be faced, and men of God are required to do it; men who, in the secret of God's presence, have learned intelligently what He desires they should bend their energies to, in connection with His house, so that all work they undertake shall further and perfect the building of God's dwelling-place.

This is, indeed, no pleasing work for the flesh, nor is it the path in which nature would lead us to tread; and all who desire to enter on such a pathway need increasingly to have real dealings with God, so that they may know His strength, which alone can enable them to stand in the conflict they have entered upon. Assuredly, they who do not know continually the strengthening of the Lord, when the reality of the self-withering work to which they have put their hands is apprehended by them, will either give all up, in disappointment, and speak evil of what they once professed to strengthen, but the glory of which they never really learned, or settle down in indifference and permit the purposes of God to be accomplished by others without their aid. These considerations, beloved, are stern and real, and may well lead us to covet more thorough dealings with God in private individually; and may also explain in great measure why some who appeared at one time to take up the Lord's work and identify themselves with His house with zest, quickly found their own level and drifted toward more genial quarters and work more pleasing to the natural man.

Yet, to those who have learned what the purposes of God are to-day, and what the work is to which He has called them, the words addressed to the mountain-climbers, in Haggai 1. 8, are fraught with most blessed encouragement and cheer: "Build the house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord." This is surely

enough for hearts that only seek God's glory, and it is the discerning of His glory and pleasure in what they are doing that turns the most arduous work into the choicest pleasure they can know on earth. Further, the words through the lips of Haggai, as the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message, after the building was again commenced: "Be strong and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts," are so blessedly precious, and so powerful in their strengthening worth, that the eye is fixed only on the Lord who is with us, and fail who may, it suffices to know Him near in the work.

Thus, with greater energy than they had previously manifested, did the returned remnant betake themselves once more to set forward the building of the house of God, and with priest and prophet to help, they made it manifest that their heart was in the work. The work which had previously been done had evidently gone to decay—probably the adversaries had thrown it down when they caused the work to cease by force—for, at this time, not one stone rested upon another, and the foundations had again to be laid (*Hag. 2. 18*). Yet they knew the blessing of God in the work, and it soon prospered in their hands.

The apparent quiet and rest from persecution which the Jews had experienced whilst the building of the house was forsaken was soon broken again when they put their hands afresh to the work of God, and to Zerubbabel the adversaries come demanding: "Who hath commanded you to build this house?" But the eye of God was upon the elders of the Jews, and they could not cause them to cease till the matter came to Darius. So to Darius they address a letter, charging the Jews with the building of the house of God with great stones and timber. The impostor king of Persia, who ordered the building to cease, as recorded in *Ezra 4.*, only occupied the throne for something like seven months, when he was ignominiously slain; and from the

wording of the letter which was sent to Darius, his successor, it is evident that the adversaries themselves felt that their hope of persuading him to cause the Jews to cease building was remote indeed. On receipt of their letter Darius caused search to be made in the house where the rolls were laid up in Babylon, and found in safe keeping the original decree of Cyrus with reference to the building and dimensions of the house, and, as might be expected, he adhered to the policy of Cyrus, and intimated to the enemies of the Lord's work to be far from thence, and let the work alone. Moreover, he extended the original edict, and commanded that money should be given to the elders of the Jews so that the work might not be hindered, and that bullocks, rams, lambs, wheat, salt, wine, and oil should be given them for offerings day by day (Ezra 6. 1-12).

Thus does God ever cause the wrath of His adversaries to praise Him, and all things to work together for good to them that love Him. So the Jews builded, and they prospered, cheered, doubtless, oftentimes in their weariness and toil by the stirring words from the Lord through Haggai the prophet: "Be strong, O Zerubbabel be strong, O-Joshua be strong, all ye people of the land, and work, for I am with you, saith the Lord of Hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not" (Hag. 2. 4-5).

Matchless, indeed, and captivating is the grace borne witness to in these words, showing that to this despised remnant in all their realized weakness, the mighty power of Jehovah of Hosts might be known, through His Spirit Who remained among them, as it was known in days long gone by, when the congregation of Jehovah went forth out of Egypt without one feeble person amongst their tribes. Great was the change, doubtless, and mighty the

contrast to the natural eye between Israel's condition in that day ever to be remembered, when in triumph God led His people out of Egypt and gathered them around Himself in the wilderness, and the condition of the feeble remnant now at Jerusalem, but though their condition had altered, their God was still the same. And be it noted also that He had the same object in having His people together, though few in number, and though the great majority of their brethren were not with them, namely, that He might have a house in their midst in which He could dwell. The insignificance of the company and the feebleness of their efforts never hindered Jehovah from finding deep pleasure in them; and on many occasions the lips of His prophets were made the medium through which He expressed the delight of His heart in that which their hands were building. How delightfully precious would God make the contemplation of these things to His people to-day, who find themselves in circumstances somewhat analogous to those of the remnant, and who can discern nothing but determined opposition to the truths relative to the house of God around them on every side! But the joy of the Lord is our strength, as it was surely Israel's.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER,

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.

BOLDNESS.

THE opening lines of the Scottish paraphrase on 2 *Tim.* 1. 12 may fittingly be taken as a healthy outline of, and for, Christian Boldness—a virtue that the young believer shall do well to cultivate and not neglect; even—

“I’m not ashamed to own my Lord,
Or to defend His cause,
Maintain the glory of His cross,
And honour all His laws.”

Decision is an almost indispensable necessity if boldness is to be had, evidenced and increased. The day is not past nor the tribe extinct, that discloses, despite enlistment, drill and the donning of armour, the sore fact that “The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.”¹ The heart must be prepared (that is, FIXED), and the spirit be steadfast with God, if one would be strong and very courageous.

Then—then, indeed—the experiences and exhibition of *Joshua* 1. 6-9 may be realized. True boldness has in it the element of confidence, and may be greatly strengthened by prayer.² It is of the first importance that one have boldness toward God. If this be wanting, there will not readily be real boldness toward men. Witness the forceful example of this in the heroes of *Daniel* 3. Significant is the word—“For the people that know their God shall be strong and do exploits.” *Sam* 11-32

He who has waxed strong may lose heart. Hence the words—“Cast not away your boldness, which hath great

¹ *Psalm* 78. 9. ² *Acts* 4. 29; *Eph.* 6. 19, 20; *Phil.* 1. 20.

recompense of reward." Here ye have need of patience, and never more so than when ye have done the will of God.¹

It will afford delightful study and effective teaching if the young Christian will trace out those whom God mentions in the Scriptures as having been bold; observing this too, that the strong points are after all apt to prove but weaknesses. How beautiful and inspiring is the picture of Acts 4. 13. "Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men,² they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that

THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS."

Blessed cause of effective boldness.

It was this kind of companionship that made some of David's men to show that his wish was their law. They needed no command. He weariedly yawned, and they instantly went forth not reckoning life too dear to serve the lord of their heart. See 1 Chron. 11. 16-23. There is also boldness in the sense of "daring and doing"—as to which let Phil. 1. 12-14 be prayerfully considered. Withal, let not Prov. 28. 1 be disregarded.

JOHN BROWN.

¹ Heb. 10. 35, 36.

² NOTE.—These words simply mean that Peter and John were evidently not school-men (equal to college-trained), and not that they were ignoramuses.

THE GOD OF PATIENCE.

“The mills of God grind slowly,
 But they grind exceeding small;
 Though with patience He stands watching,
 With exactness grinds He all.”

THE writer of these words had learned a little of the God of patience or endurance. It is no cause for wonder that perfect patience should be combined with almighty power, that the Almighty God should be the God of patience. Indeed, it is this very fact, that He is possessed of almighty power, which enables Him to exercise a patience with sin and with sinners that causes His redeemed to marvel and to adore His grace; whilst, alas! it often leads His enemies to revel more wantonly in their sins and emboldens them to more daring defiance of the God of Heaven.

Yet God is working all things for His own glory, and the issue is so certain that He can in patience wait the moment when His glory shall be eternally secured and His wisdom clearly vindicated. The working out of His purposes may occupy ages, His counsels may appear again and again to be hopelessly thwarted, but the God Who spake light out of darkness, Who modelled a world that He could pronounce to be very good out of chaos, is patiently working toward the consummation of His purposes when a new heaven and a new earth, in which righteousness shall dwell and in which He shall be all in all, shall eternally utter His glory. Then shall His power and the wisdom of His patience be revealed to a worshipping creation. Then shall the God of patience rejoice in the fruit of His patience.

In few things does man reflect less of the character of God than in the matter of patience. Christians in particular need to learn of the God of patience. Endurance is that in which they most signally fail. Many start out on the pathway of the truth and make fair progress for a while, but when trials and sufferings abound they often

fail to endure and so forsake God's pathway. Still there is a sense in which it is true to-day that only those who endure to the end shall be saved. Saved from the wrath which is to come all who are in Christ shall be, but only such as endure to the end shall know the gain of having a saved life. Therefore patience or endurance is a vital matter for believers. In eternity alone can the full measure of its fruits be reaped by those who have exercised it; and then only can those who have failed in endurance learn the magnitude of their loss.

The Epistle to Hebrews is from first to last an earnest exhortation to endurance. In the days of the writer of that letter many were going back. In former days, after they were enlightened, they endured a great conflict of sufferings, they became a gazing-stock, and took joyfully the spoiling of their possessions. But the burden was heavy, and the time seemed long, and many had given up, and others were discouraged, and were ready to go back. And what said the Spirit to those who had ears to hear? "Cast not away, therefore, your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience. For yet a very little while, and He that cometh shall come and shall not tarry. But My righteous one shall live by faith: and if he shrink back, My soul hath no pleasure in Him." Here, then, is exhortation to patience blended with most solemn warning to all who would shrink back. Here also is clearly indicated that by which alone patience can be sustained—faith, faith in God!

Faith brings the soul into touch with God. Faith enables the believer to lay hold of the strengthening grace of the God of patience. Thus by getting to know the God of patience the Christian becomes patient. He reflects the character of the God Whom he adores. This, however, is not reached without effort, and the way in which it is reached is clearly indicated in the Scriptures, to which we

do well to take heed. If patience is sustained by faith, on what does faith feed, whence is its source of supply? The answer is GOD! Faith cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. Therefore he who would know the God of patience must learn Him in the Word.

It is written that by faith Moses endured as seeing Him Who is invisible. So far as appearances went, Moses and the people whom he led courted disaster at every turn. How could they be delivered from Pharaoh's grasp? How could they find a pathway through the sea? How could they subsist in the wilderness? How could they overcome the inhabitants of Canaan? Man would say impossible; abandon the idea; remain where you are. But by faith Moses endured as seeing Him Who is invisible. He saw One Whom others did not see; and because his faith was in God, he endured for forty years under the leading of the God of patience.

Is the path in which God leads His saints to-day as dangerous as Israel's of old? Are the difficulties as formidable as the sea and the desert and the giants? Shall we, therefore, say that God's way is impossible? Shall we remain in bondage when He calls to liberty? Or having heard His call and entered His path, shall we shrink back when the sea roars and the desert burns and giants threaten? Where, then, would be our endurance—where our faith—where our God? Let the God of patience be known, let His presence be realized, let His power be felt, and all questions as to the possibility of doing His will are thereby answered. Our challenge then becomes, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" We endure as seeing Him Who is invisible.

God sometimes permits tribulations to overtake His people in order to work patience in them. These trials are a proving of our faith. Tribulation worketh patience. It is, therefore, often God's blessing, though it may be in

disguise, conforming us to the image of the God of patience. Patience worketh probation—a putting to the test. Thus in the trial God puts us to the test, He tries us to see what is in our hearts, whether we will keep His commandments or no. If we endure unto chastening—if we neither regard lightly God's dealings, nor faint under His reproofs—then, through such exercise we become partakers of His holiness, and are thus enabled to better reflect the character of the God of patience.

In the letter to Hebrews, the Lord's coming is presented as a stimulus to patience. The burden will require to be borne but a very little while longer. He is coming, therefore endure! In the Epistle by James the same blessed hope is seen to be the only limit to patience. Be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Here also the God of patience—the Husbandman—is presented, as waiting for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receive the early and latter rain. Therefore be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

The Scriptures abound with instances of individual endurance. We might well take for an example of suffering and of endurance the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. What did many of them not suffer? What did many of them not endure? Behold, we call them blessed which endure: ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity and merciful. In the Lord Jesus we behold the perfect pattern of endurance. Throughout His life He constantly endured the gainsaying of sinners. Nor did He for one moment faint beneath the weight of His burden. He set His face steadfastly toward the fulfilling of the Father's will, and, in spite of all around Him, though not indifferent to it, He pressed on toward that goal. Darker and darker His path became, fewer and fewer were the number of His faithful followers, fiercer and fiercer be-

came the world's hate, until with lawless hands they nailed Him to the tree. Still He endured—He endured the cross, despising shame. What glory to God resulted from that endurance eternity alone can tell!

Seeing, then, that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, Who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

THE EAR.

THE ear is the highway to the heart. It is like the helm of a ship, by which the whole vessel is turned about. God associates the greatest importance with the possession of the ears of His people. Whatever the condition of God's people may be, the possibilities of recovery are great so long as their ears are open, even in measure, to His voice; but if the ears are deliberately and definitely closed to God recovery is an impossibility. God's usual way of reaching the hearts of His people is by His Word having an entrance through their ears. Should this means fail, however, God often falls back upon other methods. An instance of this is seen when Israel misused His prophets and despised His Word: He handed them over to the king of Babylon, in order that they might learn in his bondage what they refused to learn from the Word of God. The condition of the church of God in Corinth is sometimes referred to as a reason why evil should be tolerated amongst the assemblies of God's people. The condition of the Corinthian assembly was doubtless very serious, but one important point that must be noted is this, that they had an ear open to God's voice. No sooner is the Word of God heard pointing out the evil than it is repented of and departed from.

It is of the first importance then that Christians' ears should be open to God. It is also of the first importance

that they should be found where His voice can be heard. "Blessed is the man," says Wisdom, "that heareth Me, watching daily at My gates, waiting at the posts of My doors. For whoso findeth Me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord" (Prov. 8. 34, 35). It is absolutely necessary that we be here if God's voice is to be heard—not listening to the conflicting opinions of men so much as listening to Wisdom's voice, which is to be heard in the Word of God.

The Hebrew servant gives a beautiful illustration of what the Christian's attitude should be. When the time of his release has come he refuses to leave his master's house. Love has bound his heart to his master. He therefore declares his intention to remain, and his master takes him to the door of the house, and bores his ear to the door-post with an awl. There the servant stands with his ear firmly fixed to his master's door-post, which declares in language more eloquent than words that he is his master's servant for ever, that henceforth he has an ear only for his master's commands, that he will obey none other but him.

This should be our attitude at Wisdom's gates. We should be there with our ears bored. If we are not there we shall fail to have the bored ear, and we shall fail to hear Wisdom's voice. Her voice is so sweet, and the wisdom She speaks is so captivating that the ear of him who hears is perforce fixed to her door-post. The little he hears enriches him so that he longs to hear more.

But are we there? is the vital question. Are we found daily at Her gates, waiting at the posts of Her doors? How long during each day as it passes are our ears closed to every earthly voice, and opened to God's voice at Wisdom's gates? Alas! it is to be feared that in these days of haste and bustle Wisdom speaks in vain to many a Christian. They are so far from Her door that they cannot hear Her voice.

CHURCH OF LIVING GOD.

NOTES ON AN ADDRESS ON 1 TIMOTHY 3. BY C. M. LUXMOORE.

THERE was a saying in connection with the French armies under Napoleon I. that every soldier carried a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack. That is to say, there was not a single soldier but what, if he had sufficient purpose of heart, and sufficient ability, might rise till he had attained to the highest rank in those vast armies.

Something akin to this is true amongst the people of God. And a thought of this sort is the key to the beginning of the third chapter of 1 Timothy.

If anyone desires oversight work it is a good thing. Ambition well directed is a virtue, not a vice. Let not any be content with the past. "The path of the just is as a shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Young man, do you yearn after the work of oversight? It is a good work, a beautiful work. Go on yearning; that is God's way of giving encouragement. Some things God commands; some things God is pleased to entreat us to do; but to some things the Spirit of God would lure us by showing, as He alone can show, the beauty that belongs to them. So the work of oversight is presented. But to do this beautiful work there must be fitness in the worker.

There are many things we see that we admire, but that we cannot make. We can spoil them, but we cannot beautify them; we cannot improve them, we can only injure them. Why? Because we have had no education, that is to say, no special training either of eye or hand. God having given us this picture showing the beauty of oversight work, as God accounts beauty, tells us something about the fitness of the person who is to do such

beautiful work. The fitness is partly a moral fitness: the overseer must be temperate, he must be a man who can control himself, he must not have too high an opinion of himself.

He must also have an acquaintance with the Word of God; it does not say he must be eloquent, or a fluent speaker, but he must be apt to teach; that means that he has some capacity to stoop down to people whom he thinks more stupid than himself,—a thing in which an overseer is generally most deficient. Those are most apt to teach who have the most vivid recollection and most vivid conception of what childhood means. Therefore it is a good thing for the sake of overseers that we can get converted as often as we want to: get converted and become as little children,—a very different thing to not growing, and remaining little children, stunted because of being fed on worthless pap.

Being apt to teach, of course, means that he is apt to learn. Apt to teach truth that comes from the living God, Who has things to say to-day that He did not say yesterday; and therefore he must know something of what the Great Overseer of souls knew when He said: "He waketh me morning by morning; He openeth mine ear to hear as the learner."

He must rule well his own house, and have his children in subjection. And last, but not least, he must have a good testimony from them that are without; he will be seen and known, and his character will be put to the Credit or Debit, as the case may be, of the company of which he forms a part. If he has not a good report his place is in the background.

Then follows what God requires in deacons. A young man with a great idea of his abilities may say, I don't want to be a deacon, I want to be an overseer. A soldier in the ranks might as well say, I am not going to be a corporal or a sergeant; give me a commission, and put me in charge of

a regiment. Why are deacons mentioned here? I do not know whether you could prove it out of this scripture,—God pity people who need to have it proved to them,—but the reason is because no one can be an overseer without being a deacon first. What is a deacon? Simply a person who waits on another; the nature of the service may vary: it may be to wash a person's feet, or do some other service; a deacon may have to do with things temporal, or with things eternal and spiritual. He is a minister (not "The Minister"), he is a person who waits to serve, and serves as he waits.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus which He spake: "Him that serveth Me, him will My Father honour." I spoke of ambition. Here is an ambition. Let us look forward with glad joy to the day when the Father will decorate the deacons of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Queen of these realms is pleased to bestow decorations upon persons who serve her well. These proceed from an earthly monarch, and have their value, verily; but a time is coming when decorations will be distributed for service to the Lord Jesus Christ, and His word is pledged that not a deacon shall be forgotten. Then shall every man have his praise from God. This is an ambition beside which the glories of this world fade into insignificance. Think of it when getting tired and weary, when there is anything that would hinder our serving with full purpose of heart our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Not more sure is the sun in the heavens above us, than this; not more sure is our eternal life, than this; because equally sure are both by the Word of God. What will God be able to look down upon and say, From a loyal heart to My Son you did this or that? It will never be forgotten. Our sins He has cast behind His back; God Himself has forgiven them, and will never remember them against us any more; but not one single word or deed done out of a loyal heart to the Lord

Jesus Christ will ever be forgotten by Him. Sisters, too, come in here, as see verses 8-13.

What are these things written for? "That thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God." No one, from this, ought to behave himself or herself idly in the House of God. If any wish to be idle in God's House I do not know where to go for guidance as to their behaviour. What is this House of God?—"Which is Church of the living God." And let no one confuse Church of living God, with church of God, because they do not mean one and the same. If there were no other difference there is this, namely: that in this place or in that place there is a church of God; there was, for example, in the day when Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, a church of God in Ephesus, there was another a few miles away, another in another town; and if scripture shall be quoted to give definiteness to what is now stated, the first and second letters to the church of God in Corinth may be cited. We may speak of churches of God, each one in some several town or city: companies of people together in the Lord, serving the Lord together as a whole, unitedly, an assembly of God among assemblies of God, one here, one there, so that we speak, as God speaks, of churches of God. But we do not thus speak of Houses of God; for we do not read, as God speaks, of Houses of God, but of House of God; and side by side with House of God we read of "Church of living God"; so that the Church of the living God is an expression that is not limited, as church of God is, to one particular town or city or such-like place. The scene, then, in which we are called upon to behave ourselves, the sphere to which allusion is made, is the sphere that is called "House of God, which is Church of the living God." A house always means a dwelling place, but the thought is distinct from that of a temple, though the same building may be denoted, for Temple of God is where God dwells to be

worshipped, whilst House of God is where God dwells and rules. And the rule of God is not circumscribed by the boundaries of town or city.

The expression church of God limits the mind's thoughts to one town or city, because it is the smallest unit of administration; but here we have a broader thought altogether; God ruling in His House: the place where God dwells, and dwells to rule. This is identified with called out company, (for that is the meaning of the word Church) of the living God. Church of living God suggests the direct, definite recognition of God as the living One to-day in the Company to which that name is given. The Church of living God connotes that in that company (which is not limited to a city or town), in that company God is known as the living One; they go to Him, they speak to Him as to a living God. He speaks to them as a living God in His Word. The Word of God comes to them, not as a book written many hundred years ago, and sealed up; but it comes to such as from the living God who sits upon His throne to-day. And God as the living God from His throne on high, through the Holy Spirit, speaks to the hearts of His people—speaks to the companies, the churches of God, in words for the time that now is. Church of living God: God known amongst them, God living amongst them so that nothing in connection therewith should fail to speak of the living God, and nought should raise the suspicion, that alas! may be raised where faith fails—the suspicion on the part of those who know not God, that God is dead. If this be so, we shall understand the words which follow; for the Church of the living God is pillar and ground of the truth. The pillar to adorn; the ground whereon the truth may rest.

We have here what has been well called the characteristic use of this word; it is not "*the* Church of living God," or "*the* House of God," though I would not

make a point of omitting the definite article. These things, the Church and the House, are here shown forth as having a certain character, and the character they have is the character of God Himself stamped upon them. This house is God's House, and this Church bears the impress of the living God. It means that they who compose them are not satisfied with the knowledge that God gave a revelation of Himself in days gone by, but that they know Him to-day as the living God. It means that the impress of a Person, none less than the living God, is manifest in this House, manifest in this Church. What is the outcome of that? What goes side by side with that? It is pillar and ground of the truth. What a searching word this is as to our manner of behaviour, as God gathered companies in the present day! What do we know of the living God? What we know of the living God will be the measure of our answering to this further description—pillar and ground of the truth.

I would fain bring this to a very close and practical issue. The Book, the Bible, the translation in our hands of Holy Scripture, is being assailed on every hand by enemies, and by so-called friends; perhaps worse by friends than by enemies; that is to say, on the one hand we have those who would hold up the Book to open ridicule, those who would deny everything, or, taking the agnostic attitude, they would doubt everything, which comes very nearly to the same thing. Then we have, on the other hand, persons who defend the Scripture; and the way they defend it is to try and explain all the supposed mistakes that the Apostle Paul and others came to make, and how natural it was that they should make such strange mistakes, and how you must not be very hard on them for making these mistakes. That is the line taken up by persons who pose as defenders of the inspiration of Holy Scripture, as against its opponents.

This being so, looking at the countless hosts of enemies of God and His Word, whether they pose in the guise of friends, or as open and avowed enemies, one may look with interest sometimes to see what armies there are ranged on the side of the truth, if it be only in a broad and general way, who can be found to say, I take the Book as it stands, as from God, and thank Him for it. A sad and melancholy fact is the very small degree in which the Word of God is spoken well of in the hearing of the world at large, by those who perhaps know it best, and are most interested in its teachings, and most anxious to carry them out. Is it not humiliating, and should it not cause searching of heart to know why it is that though we are as assemblies of God, where we are, together of God, and separated from the sects of Christendom, as a result of searching of Holy Scripture, and acceptance of what it teaches, understanding that God means what He says, we are doing very little indeed for God in this respect?

Not that we need enter the lists against those critics, who may be left to fight amongst each other; they will do that as the enemies of God's heritage have done in days gone by. Pity the man who thinks it is left to him to defend the Word of God! God will do that, but we are called upon to a larger extent than we have any conception of at present, judging from our actions, to proclaim and endeavour to make known, fully, clearly, unhesitatingly, that which God has committed to us in the Holy Scriptures. Is it, or is it not, a fact that God associates the House of God with the pillar and ground of the truth? And where would a man of the world go to hear the Scriptures read; where would he go to hear them expounded? If he came here he would hear them no doubt. But how little there is compared with what should be?

The book of Exodus speaks of the building of the Tabernacle, that God might dwell among His people. At the end of Exodus we read that when the Tabernacle was built and put together God took possession of it. Leviticus then begins by God speaking forth from that House where He dwelt. It should cause exercise of heart and exercise of conscience with us, that God may in these latter days speak forth from His House in power.

Going back to the previous verses of 1 Timothy 3, it would seem that this will be brought about when they who are now growing up adequately realise what God calls upon them to do. Occupation with the Word of God, with the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures, is of first importance. Speaking deliberately and candidly, there is too little fitness amongst the men in the assemblies of God for the work which they ought to be doing as deacons of Christ Jesus, and it becomes every one in the House of God to consider:—Am I exercised as to my responsibilities not only for service to-day but in preparation for service that may yet be mine in a day to come? Earnest, prayerful, painstaking study of the Word of God surely becomes us who have had so much from God in Holy Scripture unfolded to us. Think of what we have received. It is a blessed thing to receive, but it is more blessed to give. There is need of preparation—preparation in the way of study of Holy Scripture—not merely to meet the immediate present need, not merely to get an answer to some momentary difficulty, but because He Himself who cannot lie has said—“All Scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable”; so that the man of God by means of all Scripture, and only by that means, may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. How solemn, if the opportunity comes, peradventure it may be the opportunity of a lifetime, when the servant of God, with all earnest longing to serve God, is not furnished, is not ready for the

opportunity. Let me urge then, that we take to heart more and more the value of God's holy Word, His Word coming from Himself, the living One, that thus the Church of living God manifestly may be pillar and ground of the truth, by the help and blessing of our God.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD TO KING EDWARD VII.

God has lately been speaking loudly to those of the British Empire, as well as to every nation under heaven, and none ought to have more sensitive ears than the children of God. The tragic death of the King of Italy and that of the French President a little while ago were reminding us that "He removeth kings" (Dan. 2. 21) "and doeth according to His own will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. 4. 35); and now the quiet and peaceful end of Queen Victoria, full of years and honour, again bids us and all to take heed to the voice of God. The occasion, too, seems opportune to speak of the relationship of the children of God to the King who now sits upon the throne of these realms.

For the first time in the history of nations the God of heaven, the Most High God, put all people, nations and tongues under the rule of one man, Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 2. 37). God put him over them, and they under him. Amongst such nations Israel was, so far as Judah was concerned.

This exalted position, however, fills the man's heart with pride, and he assumes a position God never gave him. He makes an image all of gold and commands all peoples, nations and tongues throughout all the earth to worship this image—a *spiritual power*. This the Hebrew youths resent. No, say they; we only know a God in heaven: as saints

we worship Him. Your authority over us is as men ; as such we bow to you ; as saints we bow to God.

As *captive Jews*, strangers in a strange land, they had no songs of Zion to beguile the weary days of exile. They had *no king*. He with them was in the same *captivity*. Like the sojourners of *Pontus*, they were strangers and pilgrims ; also of a dispersion. They are to honour "*the king*," not *our king* (1 Pet. 2. 17) ; for Hosea says, "They shall be many days without a king" (Hos. 3. 4). For them those many days still run on : restoration to their own land did not give them this. They did not proceed to make a king—set up a throne. Oh, no ; they were subject to Gentile rule. The altar, the house, the wall, their place *as saints* in connection with "the name," was their business, under Ezra and others ; here was a sphere in which the Gentile monarch *had no say*—he did not control their worship.

As men, along with every other subject of King Nebuchadnezzar and his successors of whatever people or tongue, they were *alike* under his rule, paying into his exchequer. As saints, they stood alone, no man as such being with them ; but as men they occupied a common platform of subjection to the power that then was.

We, too, occupy much the same place. We are saints ; we are strangers and sojourners, and we are men ; and let us be in touch with God as regards each of these spheres in which we move.

As saints God has put over us the Man at His right hand. The Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord, is the language fitted to our lips as saints ; not our King. No earthly potentate, however he (like Nebuchadnezzar of old) may assume spiritual power, can hold that from God ; and saints of God, instructed as the saints in Babylon were, will never own such power. The only authority for the child of God is the one to whom God has given all power—the Lord Jesus Christ. Only a negative position could be maintained in Babylon. "We

will *not* bow to your image." No positive collective testimony so as to give effect to the truth "We worship the God in Heaven," could be in Babylon. To do this, they must go to the place of the Name, Jerusalem, where we find them with altar, house, and wall. Godly troubled ones there were still in Babylon, so that a second exodus took place under Ezra, and even a third, though small, under Nehemiah.

A negative position to-day for saints is not enough for God if the Man at His right hand is to be owned as Lord. There must be on the part of saints a very pronounced and positive position: a going forth unto Him; a gathering together *into* the name, *unto* the person, and *under* the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the fellowship of God's Son, and into churches of the fellowship which are churches of God. *Here and here only* is the sphere in which Christ as Lord has control; albeit there may be many outside yet in Babylon much troubled and concerned, who have put their hand to the plough. May they go right on, and may an Ezra be raised up of God, and lead them on into the place where His will is owned and sought to be carried out. May such not turn back and prove themselves unfit for the kingdom of God; not an unbaptized one in the ranks; not a voluntary society to be joined and left as we please, or into which we can introduce a friend for the day, but that into which He has called us—to the giving effect unto the doing of His will as he shall be pleased to reveal it to us.

Then as *sojourners and strangers* in a strange land. We are to be subject to *the King*—a law-abiding people, taking no part in its rule, nor politics: the polling booth is not our place. Many Americans were in the country during the last election on their way home from the Paris exhibition, but they did not vote—did not stand as candidates for political honours. They were strangers. Did they say, God

bless *our* Queen? No, they had no Queen: their citizenship was elsewhere; their seat of power was *Washington*, not London. Yet what a peaceable, law-abiding people they were; and no British subject would excel them in respect for *the* Queen.

Being saints, and in touch with God as to this, let us be the best of men, the most law-abiding, maintaining our strange character. They think it strange we do not vote, and, it may be, revile us. Well, let us not revile again. They think it strange we do not enjoy ourselves at sports, especially those got up for religious objects, seeing we are also religious—and taunt and jeer. Well, never mind; suffer as Christians.

But even *children of God* think it strange we do not go heart and soul into the simultaneous aggressive gospel movements, and say we are narrow and bigoted. Never mind; suffer for the Name, the highest order of suffering, and so misunderstood and misrepresented—not known; quite a puzzle to all around you. There is One who knows you, and quite understands and *fully appreciates* your separate walk; commit yourself to Him.

Not only then as *saints*, as *sojourners and strangers*, are we here, but also as *men*. We occupy a position in common with men. Though men are not with us in the two former things, we are with them in this: they with us are governed by the same laws, subject to the same kingly rule, pay into the same exchequer. The collector of taxes never cares whether you are a saint or not; it is as a man he has to do with you, whether it be imperial taxation or local city rates and burdens.

As king, then, Edward VII. is over us as men, not as saints; as saints we are over him, that is above him. Pray for kings. We are mediators between God and kings; as saints above him, as men under him.

But the king also assumes a *spiritual power*—head of the

“Church,” defender of the faith; but we no more own this than the Hebrew youths owned that of their day? *knowing* the Man at God’s right hand is our salvation as saints from this and all else.

Dark, terribly dark, days are coming for those who shall then be the saints on the earth, for in those days the Church will be gone; for a king will reign who will arrogate to himself a spiritual place beyond anything ever known or attempted; for he will not only have an *image* made to be worshipped, but he *himself* shall sit *as God*, and command under death penalty all to own him in this. He will exalt himself higher than God, for our God has an equal—has a fellow, even His Son, for He saith unto the Son, “Thy throne, O God.” Not so this man; he will *not allow an equal*. He will be above all that is called God—slaying, maiming, and *torturing*. Another inquisition; and many will suffer all this as saints rather than deny their God, as the Hebrew youths did the fire. But this terrible tyranny will be brought to a close by God in judgment, for he shall be cast into a more terrible fire than that into which the Hebrews were cast. Then you will see the *maimed*, and the *halt*, and the *blind*, who have suffered to *torture* rather than *deny Him*, enter the kingdom of God as saints under the peaceful and happy days of the Lord Jesus, when HE SHALL REIGN, and saints shall own him as saints, and men shall own him as men, for all will be brought under *His rule* in that day.

Zion the city of the great King, bright with His glory—the greater Solomon.

Jerusalem vocal with praise day and night (Zech. 2. 10–13) Many nations shall join themselves to the Lord in that day. Yea, many peoples and strong nations shall come and seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to entreat the favour of Jehovah. (See also Isa. 56. 3–8.)

GEORGE R. GEDDES.

REMNANT TIMES.

IV.

WE judge it would be about the time to which we referred at the end of our last paper that the words recorded in Zechariah 2. 1-10 were spoken by God through His prophet. These words make known the desire of God's heart toward His people, and His city, and His house, and declare how that He was to be a wall of fire round about Jerusalem and the glory in the midst of her. Further, they show clearly that it was no desire of His that one of His people should remain in Babylon. So we hear Him calling aloud to all who had not gathered themselves to the centre of His appointment, and saying what we would desire that He should cause to re-echo in the ears of every one of His children who are not found to-day in His house, but who still remain with the daughters of spiritual Babylon: "Ho, ho, come forth and flee from the land of the north," saith the Lord. "Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon." Spiritual Babylon is a seducing harlot, and her daughters are little better, who in our days are visibly drifting one by one to the old familiar home of their whorish mother. Deliverance it surely is, known only in its magnitude to God Himself, when His people escape from their awful influences. Babylon and her daughters are to be destroyed (Ps. 137. 8), and the cup of their iniquity is surely filling whilst their destruction slumbereth not, for yet shall their sins reach unto heaven and God shall remember their iniquity, and in one day, yea, in one hour, shall their judgment come, for strong is Jehovah God who judgeth them (Rev. 18.).

Therefore does God in mercy cry aloud in the ears of His beloved people, who are, alas! often fascinated with Babylon's gorgeous allurements. Flee! Deliver thyself! Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins.

And to those who respond to His call and go forth to the Lord Jesus without the camp would He clearly show that there is no resting-place for the soles of their feet until His house is reached, where He is a wall of fire round about and the glory in the midst. He called not His emancipated people in the days of which we write to the borderland between Babylon's influence and Judah's domains, where an intermixing and a passing to and fro at pleasure could be freely indulged in, but to Jerusalem city, to be identified with the house of God there, and to know the rule of Jehovah according to the law of Moses, the man of God, which was given for all Israel. This being unquestionably so, according to the analogy of the faith, apart altogether from the many definite portions of New Testament Scriptures which speak to the point, we might expect to find His will the same for His people to-day. And so it surely is; for neutral ground between the House of God and spiritual Babylon there is none, and those who have never reached the former must certainly learn sooner or later that they are still in some of the various domains of the latter.

The House of God was finished in about four years after the building was commenced the second time, being a little over twenty years after the arrival of the remnant at Jerusalem; and they dedicated the House and kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful (Ez. 6. 15-22). From the book of Haggai we learn that its appearance, contrasted with the house of Solomon, was as nothing, and so far as we know no visible cloud of glory filled it as at the dedication of his. Any who cared to do so might well have reasoned that this diminutive building was not God's house. Some, perhaps, even at that day were present who had seen the first house in all its glory, and afterwards had gazed upon its charred walls, but did they reason that because the first house had been ruined another one could not be built which God would

own? What is the meaning of the thoughtless cry of to-day: "The house is in ruins!" Is it not too often in order that they who raise it may claim liberty to do that which is right in their own eyes? The House of God is the place where God's authority must be known and acknowledged; therefore many seek to belittle the vital truths connected with His House.

It is well that God's people should be reminded of this fact, which all will surely admit is uncontrovertible, namely, that a feeble remnant of God's ancient people who had escaped from Babylonish captivity built, at Jerusalem, the place of God's choice, a house for Him, which, though bereft of all the glory of Solomon's temple and in comparison to it "as nothing," was as truly the house of God as was Solomon's, and again and again did God declare His pleasure in it. Moreover, it was of this house that He said: "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former." This, doubtless, has had at least a partial fulfilment in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the effulgence of God's glory, when He walked, so far as was permissible for Him, in the temple in the days of His flesh; although ere that time the temple of the remnant had in great measure been re-built. But how few discerned God's glory in Him! Was He not to the many as a root out of a dry ground having no form or comeliness? Still, He was the glory of God's House, and those who were enlightened from on High could say, "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." Another, with ravished heart exclaimed on beholding Him: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation . . . a light for the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel."

But it required a revelation from God to enable any one to behold the veiled glory of God in the Lord Jesus Christ; and on one occasion He went outside the temple in Jeru-

salem, after seeking in vain to cleanse it, and left it desolate, for He Who was the glory of the house had departed from it. Yet that temple stood to all appearance the same as before, and the ritual connected therewith continued as of old, still all who knew Him to be the glory of God's House might plainly discern God's dread Ichabod inscribed over it all. And soon they were to know themselves gathered together to another centre than the temple in Jerusalem, even round the person of Him who presented no attraction to the multitude of His people. Ah! this is truth which should stir our hearts and speak loudly to God's people to-day. If in the eyes of any of His people God's house to-day seems an unattractive, uninviting place, is it not because their eyes have never been opened to behold the hidden glory of that house in the Person of the One unto Whom we are gathered, and in Whom we are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit? It is indeed so, for God can add no greater glory to His House than that which He has placed there, and if His saints knew more of intimate fellowship with Him many more would behold these veiled glories, and would find their greatest joy on earth in being identified with the House of God.

The outward appearance of the house built by the remnant gave them no occasion to glory in it, and to point to magnificence and splendour; and perhaps this very fact would enable them to glory all the more in the God of the house, having learned that whilst He and His house were everything, they themselves were nothing. This is a hard lesson for many of God's people to learn to-day, it would appear. Could they but have the unity and power of Apostolic days restored, could the cloud of glory again be so manifestly seen that all who believe would be together and the people magnifying them, how gladly would they associate themselves with such a manifestly triumphant

scene—which in the past so quickly faded away, like the morning's mists before the rising sun. But when the path of reproach and of rejection in which God leads, and when the unattractiveness to the natural eye of the place to which He gathers are seen, many are not prepared for the suffering and the loss which the doing of God's will would entail. Like the great mass of Israel of old they choose to remain in a sphere where the offence of the cross is little known, and where men speak well of them because the truth of God is compromised. Withal, to those whose hearts have been won by the Lord Jesus and who have been gathered by the Spirit around His person without the camp, the place of rejection with Him, is so captivating that with one of old they gladly exclaim: "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of God than dwell in the tents of lawlessness."

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

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.

COMMUNION.

WE desire to present this holy theme—communion—in its two great aspects or views. Each of these contains the root idea of the word so translated, namely, "*To be,*" or (and) *to have* "IN COMMON."

The young Christian can scarcely give too much attention to this definition.

Probably it is essential to the matter in all its bearings that one should seek to ever maintain "the communion of the Holy Spirit."¹ What breadth and length and depth and height are here! Verily if He has us at His call as was he of old, who by a lock of his hair (the merest cord of what by nature grows) was borne whithersoever the Spirit listed, it shall be well with us.²

¹ 2 Cor. 13. 14.

² Ezek. 8. 3.

Here are living waters of encouraging and inviting measure. Wade in and on, beloved of God. Fear not; He will measure, and thus He will bring: so shall thy communion be.¹

To be and to have in common with the Holy Spirit is surely to know very heaven upon the earth. Yet this may be, nay, ought to be, ours who are the Lord's. But Christian, is it? is it? is it?

That condition is probably the moral fitness for one's being able to realize and worthily to respond to "God is faithful by Whom ye were called into communion,² that of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."³ By these words is evidenced that there is a being and having in common for saints to know and show themselves as in to-day. This, too, not of their devising, but rather that which is of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. Established is such fact, by the prior fact, that He as yesterday is the same now. Neither He nor His Word has changed since the day when justified, baptized and added ones CONTINUED STEADFASTLY in the doctrine and in the Communion, the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Was ever communion of saints more real?

Can any communion be real that is not the counterpart of this?

Little wonder that when question of Preaching arose, certain gave to others the right hands of communion.⁴ As little wonder that when opportunity occurred a whole church of God was found gladdening the labourer's heart and strengthening his hands by their communion in the Gospel.⁵ How very far-reaching and practical this communion must be!⁶ the crowning and perfecting of which

¹ Ezek. 47. 1-6.

² "Communion" is as a word from the Latin tongue, and signifies the same practically as does the old Saxon word "Fellowship."

³ 1 Cor. 1. 9.

⁴ Gal. 2. 9.

⁵ Phil. 1. 5.

⁶ Phil. 4. 15-20.

may well be what Philippians 2. 1 speaks of. “. . . If any communion of the Spirit fulfil ye my joy,” and so forth.

An aspiration and goal not to be accounted unattainable, but, on the contrary, to be striven after and laboured for by each one in His communion being stimulated by Philippians 3. 15, 16.

It is surely most obvious that communion in all the foregoing is to manward; whereas that of which John speaks in his first Epistle is to Godward.

This, as has been well observed by another, is not so much *How* we walk as it is *Where* we walk. Read prayerfully 1 John 1. to 2. 2 (R.V.). Note well “. . . and truly our communion is with the FATHER, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” Consider too the absence here of “the Lord of us” or “our Lord,” as presented in 1 Corinthians 1. 9. Reverently enter into the “Why” thereof. His words are seven times tried. “Hold fast the form of sound words.” Who teacheth like Him? “. . . But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have communion one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all, even every individual, sin.” Hallelu Jah.

JOHN BROWN.

NO.

SOMETIMES Christians find it rather difficult to say No. It is not that this little word is of itself difficult to utter, but in certain circumstances it requires a good deal of courage and determination to say No, and to mean it. “My son,” says the book of Proverbs, “if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” In other words, say No. What sorrow and trouble many Christians would have been delivered from in their life’s journey if they had had the courage to say No at some point in their career!

It may be they were treading the path of life in fellowship with God when some, who professed to be friends—they may have been Christians—enticed them by fair speeches to diverge from that path in some little way. They loved their friends or their brethren, and did not like to hurt their feelings by refusing to do what they desired, although at heart they would rather not have done it. Their consciences told them they were doing wrong, and that they should obey God rather than men, but then they were unwilling to offend their friends; so they turned aside in some little thing from God's path. In a little while some other friends enticed them further from the way. Well, they had gone somewhere or they had done something before which they knew was not quite right, and the results did not appear to be very serious; so rather than refuse the seeming kindness of their friends they again consented.

Look at them in after years. You would not now recognise them as the Christians who used to sing with such joy:—

“Take the world, but give me Jesus;
All its joys are but a name;
But His love abideth ever,
Through eternal years the same.”

No, the Lord's song has long since ceased to occupy their lips, for the Lord Himself has, alas! ceased to occupy their hearts. Perhaps the world's songs are now oftener on their lips; and sure it is that the world now holds the throne of their hearts, where the Lord Jesus once reigned supreme. And they appear to be so happy in company with the world that we wonder if they ever think of former days, when they used to tread the path of separation in fellowship with God's people. But are they really happy? Are their hearts satisfied? As well expect the prodigal to be happy and satisfied when he laboured with the swine in the far-off country! He would fain have filled his belly

with the husks which the swine ate, but he was still unfilled and famishing ; whilst ever and anon the memory of a happy home and a father's love filled his soul with bitter remorse. Happy and satisfied? No, they are miserable! Could we but tear off the outward mask and see them as God sees them, we should find them miserable indeed.

Perhaps the world smiles upon them, but their souls sadly miss the smile of the Lord. Perhaps earthly riches are being accumulated, but their spiritual state is one of abject poverty. Surrounded by earthly friends and admirers, they often find themselves in a loneliness which is awful to contemplate. And this but causes them to drink deeper of the world's broken cisterns. They cannot bear to be alone. They cannot bear to seek quiet and to give themselves to thought. What sorrowful shipwrecks! Alas! how many lie stranded as warnings along the sands of time!

And when did they begin to go wrong? That night when they failed to speak boldly for their God and say No! That night when they were too timid to obey the voice of conscience and stoutly refuse to be enticed from the path of life. The vacillation of that moment is bearing awful fruit now! They sowed then what they are reaping to-day! That night with unseen fingers the devil stole the compass and rudder from their vessel, and soon they drifted to certain shipwreck.

Would to God that we were only painting an imaginative picture ; would to God that we were merely playing with words. But no ; the sorrowful fact has to be faced that to-day, as of old, they be many whose carcasses fall in the wilderness. If these considerations are so sad for us to contemplate, what must they be to Him Who gave Himself for us in order to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto Himself a people for His own posses-

sion, zealous of good works? Alas! in this respect many receive His grace in vain.

Shall we then be wise, and deliver ourselves as a bird from the fowler's snare? Shall we seek from God eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to perceive, so that we may learn when to boldly say No? Yes, to say No and to mean it, though it offends our dearest earthly friends. What does it matter though earthly friends be offended if God's heart is made glad? It should never be our desire to give offence to any one, but if our faithfulness to the truth of God should cause any one to take offence, so be it. A conscience void of offence toward God and toward man is our rich possession in such circumstances.

Then let young Christians never be ashamed to say No when God's will demands that they should say it. Let them understand that it is easier to say No the first time any one tries to tempt them than it is after they have yielded in some little thing. Let them also learn that it is better to boldly say No than to excuse themselves in some other way. If we merely excuse ourselves, we shall in all likelihood live to be tempted by the same person and in the same way at a future time when it may be difficult to find a suitable excuse. If we boldly say No at the first, and are prepared, if needs be, to give an answer concerning the hope that is in us with meekness and fear, we shall never likely have the same temptation thrown in our way again—at least, not by the same person. This may cause us to suffer reproach for the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is the only safe way to meet temptation. If we go in for hiding our light by excusing ourselves, whether it be in connection with temptations thrown in our way by Christians or by sinners, we shall require to be making excuses at every step of our journey; but if we meet them boldly with a decided No at the first, they will, in all probability, cease from troubling us.

*

KNOWLEDGE AND FAITH.

How sweet it is to seek to know
 The wondrous workings of our God ;
 To try to trace the treasures rare
 Which ornament the Word of God !
 To sit at Jesus' feet and learn,
 While love within the heart doth burn !

Knowledge is good, when by her side
 Stands meek Humility—her friend.
 Their songs in richest harmony
 And sweetest tenderness do blend.
 Ah ! God, and God alone, doth know
 The fruits eternity will show !

But many truths within the Book
 Are greater than our minds can grasp ;
 We understand *so far*, and then
 On "God hath said" we simply rest.
 Here baffled Knowledge quits the field,
 And Faith her choicest fruit doth yield.

I do not know the reason why
 All bathed in mystery it lies !
 Far higher bliss it is for me
 To trust the God who never dies !
 Where God hath spoken Faith can rest,
 Nor knowledge needs to make her blest.

O wondrous, healing, happy Faith,
 That bids the storm-tossed weary soul
 Rest sweetly on God's holy Word,
 Nor heed the waves that o'er it roll :
 Above the storms that work God's will
 Faith hears His whispered "Peace be still !"

A SONG IN THE NIGHT

TUNE—"Heber."

O GRACIOUS God our Father, through Jesus Christ the Lord,
 In Spirit we approach Thee, according to Thy word,
 Through Him Who now is seated within the holy place
 We would draw near with boldness unto the throne of
 grace.

O gracious God our Father, we seek Thy face in prayer,
 We bring our need unto Thee, our burdens and our care,
 We tell to Thee our trials, our sorrows and our woe ;
 We keep back nothing from Thee, for Thou dost love us so.

O gracious God our Father, we would confide in Thee,
 And trust Thy perfect wisdom, though now we may not
 see

That all our tribulations, afflictions and distress,
 By Thee allowed, appointed, are only meant to bless.

O gracious God our Father, our hearts joy in Thy love,
 Thy tender heart yearns o'er us, surpassing far above
 A mother's strong affection, a father's loving heart ;
 We know Thy love and bless Thee for all Thou dost and
 art.

O gracious God our Father, on Thy strong arm we lean,
 We trust Thee for the future because of what has been ;
 Thy power for us is working, Thy wisdom knows what's
 best ;

Thy love withholds no blessing, therefore on Thee we rest.

O gracious God our Father, through Jesus Christ Thy Son,
 We bring to Thee our praises for all that Thou hast done,
 For all that Thou art doing, for all that Thou wilt do,
 Thus whilst our prayers we bring Thee, we bring our
 praises too.

A. F.

REMNANT TIMES.

V.

IN the reign of Artaxerxes, king of Persia (Longimanus), a little over fifty years after the completion of the building of the house of God at Jerusalem, a third decree affecting the people of God was issued by him and was addressed particularly to one named Ezra, who is described as a ready scribe in the law of Moses which the Lord God of Israel had given (see Ezra 7.). To this Ezra the king granted all his request and said: "I make a decree that all they of the people of Israel, and of His priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of *their own free will* to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee." Ezra the priest had known what real dealings with God meant, for of him it is written: "Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra 7. 10). One who had thus to do so directly with God and His law could not fail to learn what was well-pleasing to the Lord; for faithful are the words: "If any man willeth to do His will he shall know of the teaching" (John 7. 17). Consequently Ezra's heart was stirred up by God to seek unto His house and His people in the distant city of Jerusalem, for though the house of God was indeed built, there still remained much beautifying work to be done which wise hearts and willing hands could be helped of God to accomplish.

Having received permission from the king, and having been granted every facility for discharging the work which God had laid on his heart, Ezra first blesses Jehovah, God of his fathers, who had put such things in the king's heart; and knowing the strengthening hand of the Lord his God upon him, he next sets himself to gather out of Israel chief men to go up with him. It is important to

notice that this decree, like the one issued by Cyrus, affected only those who were minded of *their own free will* to go up to Jerusalem. None were compelled to leave Babylonia or to seek unto the city of their God. It is important, we repeat, to discern this, for it manifests that which ever characterizes God's dealings with a remnant of His people who know His deliverance from bondage brought about by apostasy from His will. At such times God never seems to deliver the entirety of His people, but in grace He makes it possible for whosoever will to do His pleasure by returning to the place where His name dwells. In these circumstances some respond to God's call and gladly avail themselves of the opportunity thus given them, and others who are content to remain in captivity are allowed by God to have their choice. This principle of God's dealings also holds good in present remnant times. The opportunity given by God to His saints to-day to deliver themselves from the bondage of tradition and to escape from the influences of spiritual Babylon is as real and as precious as was Israel's in the days to which we allude. Nevertheless God compels none of His saints to-day to obey His call: "Come out—be separate." Therefore by choice the many are pleased to remain in bondage where no house for God can be built, and only the few deliver themselves when God's opportunity is given.

Ezra and the company that went up with him, like their brethren before them, passed through deep exercise of soul before the Lord and were fashioned in spirit by Him for the work to which He called them. We therefore find that before setting out on their difficult journey Zionward they proclaim a fast by the river Ahava and afflict themselves before the Lord, to seek of Him a right way for themselves, and for their little ones, and for all their substance (Ezra 8. 21). This surely shows clearly that they and all that appertained unto them—children and substance

—were bidding a long farewell to Babylon; that never more did they desire to be found in touch with that from which God was granting them deliverance. Israel of old when brought out of Egypt went out with their young and their old, their sons and their daughters, their flocks and their herds—not a hoof was left behind. So with the company that went up from Babylon with Ezra. This has the ring of God-given deliverance about it. This is no half-hearted passing over from one thing to another and leaving the way open for stepping back whenever difficulties arise. How strikingly this contrasts with the ways of many of God's people to-day who profess to be gathered into the name of the Lord, and who, though they meet to break bread on the first day of the week, are as closely allied with the sects of spiritual Babylon as these sects are with one another. Alas! the Name is lightly named in this our day to the dishonour of the Lord.

When the second company under the leading of Ezra arrived at Jerusalem they found plenty of work awaiting them there. Besides the work of beautifying the house of God, for which they brought with them gold and silver and desirable vessels, the condition of their brethren demanded immediate attention. The fifty years which had elapsed between the finishing of the house of God and Ezra's arrival had given opportunity for much that was contrary to God's will to manifest itself; and the eye of one who was in touch with God as Ezra was quickly detected it. He therefore found his brethren in the right place and doing in great measure the right things, but their condition was far otherwise. Though at the time of which Ezra 6. 21 speaks it is recorded that the children of Israel had separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen of the land to seek the Lord God of Israel, Ezra found them in solemn touch with the abominations of the people around them, and the separation previously mani-

fested was fast fading away. Though delivered from Babylon they linked themselves with evils of another nature which were dishonouring to God. This should have a voice for God's separated people to-day. To respond to God's call and to deliver themselves from spiritual Babylon is glorifying to Him, but to continue to His pleasure necessitates that the path of separation from the world in its every phase be diligently pursued.

Such was the condition of things which confronted Ezra on his arrival at Jerusalem, and taking a firm stand for God he betook himself to the rooting out of this evil which would soon have brought God's displeasure upon them. Note well how he proceeds. He lays himself low before God with garment and mantle rent, with the hair plucked from his head and his beard. Speechless for a time he lies in the presence of the Lord against whom they had sinned; and soon unto him were gathered all who trembled at the words of the God of Israel. Then as the evening sacrifice ascended and in virtue thereof he seeks, in company with those gathered with him, the face of God in deepest confession and supplication. This was no light passing over sin, even though the princes and the rulers were chief in the trespass; nay, there was real work here; and very sore weeping and great trembling before God tell of the reality of their guilt being borne home to the consciences of the trespassers. Would to God that we might learn in this how that which dishonours the Lord in us should be dealt with, and how we should neither excuse in ourselves nor in others that which is contrary to His will. Such real and honest dealings with sin, such commendable faithfulness to God and His word, such exemplary humility and identification with the people in their trespass on the part of Ezra were richly and speedily owned by God. Soon those who had sinned come and acknowledge it before Him and before their

brethren and express the desire that their sin should be dealt with according to the law, and this was duly accomplished as the last chapter of Ezra declares.

In all of this we may surely again be reminded that to be in the right place and to be doing in great measure the right things do not of themselves prove that we are well-pleasing to the Lord; for though we believe that to be in the God-appointed place—and that to-day is the house of God—is necessary before we can give Him the pleasure He seeks in us, we may be there in such a condition of soul that He has little pleasure in us. Holy is His name, and holiness becometh His house for ever; therefore we can only be a pleasure to His heart when our ways in every department of life are ordered according to His word.

It is interesting to note in Ezra 9. 9 that he in his supplications makes mention of the entirety of God's purposes in these days with His people and His city and His house: "To give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us a wall in Judah and Jerusalem." We therefore see that God had further purposes in connection with His testimony. When the house was built His work was in no wise finished; He had further truth to reveal. Perhaps the repairing of the desolations of the house lay specially to the hand of Ezra himself, and the building of the wall, which was equally part of God's purpose, forms the special subject of the book of Nehemiah.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

NOTES ON EZEKIEL 37. ILLUSTRATING PRINCIPLES OF
SCRIPTURAL UNITY.

(Continued from page 29.)

SUCH training and controlling of the messenger of the Lord has ever had a primary and important place in the way of the Lord; and we feel and fear it is much overlooked and underestimated in these days of much service, when the quantity rather than the quality is held in esteem, approved and applauded.

The human element but too often predominates, and the place and work of the blessed Spirit of God is ignored or limited, with the result of a superficial, emotional and short-lived effect, rather than deep, real and abiding effect characteristic of the work of God.

The twofold result is here seen (see *vv.* 7, 10) of conviction on the one hand and quickening or reviving on the other. This will ever be characteristic of God's work, and the former will ever precede the latter. "A noise" (or voice), "a shaking," "bone coming to bone," "sinews, flesh and skin"; but no breath (spirit). But the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (*Heb.* 4. 12).

This is not the soothing, pampering and entertaining preaching that is so prevalent and so much desired in these days. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully," God requires; and yet the faithful preaching alone is not sufficient. God, the Spirit, must work; He alone can create; He alone can give life. "Come, O breath (Spirit), and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as I was commanded." There is a speaking to the bones; but there is also a speaking to *God*, an

acknowledgement of, and a counting upon, His power and operation in effecting what no one and no thing else can effect. And doubtless, if there were more of this, greater results would be seen than have yet been seen.

“They lived”! but that is not all; “they stood upon their feet, an exceeding great army.” It is not a question of life simply, but a question of life’s purposes as well. These are many and varied, and unto the understanding of them and effecting of them we hope to get help from the further consideration of this subject.

DAVID SMITH.

(To be continued if the Lord will.)

“BE YE DOERS OF THE WORD.”

“And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ teaching.” Thus it is written concerning the early believers, and this pleasing testimony is said of them while under most adverse circumstances.

In these days many Christians seem content to learn nothing more than deliverance from wrath to come. Having received this blessing, they settle down rejoicing with cause in the Saviour, yet know not the depth of meaning in the words, “God hath made Him both Lord and Christ,” in consequence, little joy is brought to the heart of God the Father through them.

Giving heed to the bidding of God (Jer. 6. 16) we may turn to Matthew 28. 19, 20 (R.V.), where we read the command of our Lord to the Apostles: “Go ye and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

The way of God is perfect, and in these words the will of the Lord is made known.

Making disciples means more than simply preaching the Gospel, and sinners accepting the Lord Jesus as their Saviour. We leave others to declare the precise meaning of the word "disciple," with this remark, that the thought of one who sits at the feet of a Teacher to learn therefrom with a view to practise that which is taught, is contained in the word.

They who became disciples were to be baptized. No room is left for any to set this aside as not essential, much less to introduce any form such as the sprinkling of infants, for it is necessary for a disciple to do what he is taught, or his or her discipleship means nothing.

A word here as to what baptism implies may be helpful.

The Apostle Paul (Rom. 6. R.V.) asks a question: "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" The answer thereto (ver. 2): "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" and then refers them to their act in obeying the Lord in baptism, and he points out that passing through the water of baptism is symbolical of having died and risen in 'newness of life in Christ. Therefore to the practice of sin in every form we are to reckon ourselves dead.

It is well to note that the Lord, when commanding the Apostles (Matt. 28.), does not stop at baptism, but adds, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

It is not unfrequently believers are heard to say, "I only want baptism." Yet the Scriptures which teach baptism also make known the fact the act of baptism does not meet all the Lord requires in the believer, nor will baptism alone satisfy the heart of a believer who seeks unto all the will of God.

Cornelius tells out the work of the Spirit (Acts 10.) as he makes known his desire in the words, "We are all here present in the sight of God to hear ALL THINGS that have been commanded thee of the Lord" (ver. 33, R.V.) A

saying there is, what God hath joined together, let none break asunder.

Therefore, they whose spirits God hath stirred up unto deliverance from the systems of men may read and understand the path that He hath marked out in His Word.

W. H. BURDEKIN.

THE APOSTOLIC GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS.

THERE is no portion of Holy Scripture without purpose, and the introductory addresses as well as the benedictions of the several apostolic Epistles claim our attention for the purposed instruction therein. That Christian courtesy and loving interest should characterize our bearing to and communications with one another is so well recognised that it need not here be urged. Indeed, it is so naturally consonant with the spiritual instinct that it hardly requires any exhortation to its observance. But whilst doubtless the record is intended as a pattern for us in this respect, there is somewhat more in the several texts of the benedictions as well as the prefaces of the respective Epistles by the several Apostles which suggest matter for consideration. With a few variations in phraseology, prompted possibly by different depths of feeling on the part of the Apostle, owing to differing circumstances in each case, the Pauline Epistles are marked by the dominant expression *grace*. It is found in *every one* of his Epistles without exception (2 Thess 3. 17), and that the same is also found at the end of the Epistle to the Hebrews would prompt the inference that he also was the writer of that Epistle, the authorship of which is somewhat obscure. How appropriate that the principle of grace, which is the key-word of his every benediction, should be expressed by Paul, who was pre-eminently the herald of the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20. 24)! He was the Apostle to the

uncircumcision who had no covenant claims on God (Gal. 2. 7) and whose calling was essentially that of grace. He would thus continually remind them of the condition their calling is based on, with its immovability the which his other allusions go to confirm them in the assurance of.

The Epistle of James, whilst it is addressed to the twelve tribes, is without closing salutation. Possibly this fact (with others) may have been taken into account in considering the canonical authenticity of that Epistle as it was (which is well-known) sometime debated whether it formed part of the inspired Scriptures. No doubt as to that is here suggested, and the allusion is only made in referring to the exceptional character of the Epistle in the respect named.

The Epistles of Peter are marked by a different style of benediction, and the ruling word thereof is *peace*. This, at least so far as the first Epistle is concerned—as the second finishes instead with an ascription of homage and worship to the Lord. Here again we see how the character of the benediction expressed connects itself with the principles of the *régime* under which the “circumcision” was, and to which Peter was specially the minister and Apostle (Gal. 2. 7). It was found under the claims of the dispensation of righteousness. The demands of that dispensation it never was able to satisfy. This God knew. His reasons for the imposition of that law which man was quite impotent to fulfil are given in Gal. 3. 19–24. At the same time God recognised willingness to conform to the ordinances and requirements of that law on the part of His people (the perfect conformity to and complete fulfilment thereof being the work of His coming Servant), and obedience to His word and the blessing attached thereto was *peace*. The Old Testament abounds in allusions to these claims and the resultant peace to all subject thereto. A few out of the many may be cited. Psalms 34. 14, 37. 37, 85. 10, 119. 165; Prov. 3. 17; Isa. 32. 17, 48. 18, 54. 13; with the converse, Isa. 57. 21,

59. 8 (Heb. lawless). The bulk of the references to peace in the sense of an attitude of complacency on the part of God towards man are to be found in the Old Testament. Beyond a few allusions which are mainly exhortations to the exercise of a peaceful disposition one towards another or to all men, very few like references are to be found in the New Testament. James **3. 18** is one of the very few. It would seem, therefore, that the benison of peace was wholly the guerdon of a loyal and subject adherence to the law of righteousness. So we find that the New Testament dispensation involving Jew and Gentile alike, only takes cognizance of man on the ground of grace, albeit that the Apostle to the circumcision (himself one of them) long imbued with the idea, clings in his benediction to the expression peace. Not that this principle is separable from the Christian's experience as an element of blessing. By no means. On the contrary it is a blessing vouchsafed (Rom. **15. 33**; 2 Cor. **13. 11**; Phil. **4. 7**; Eph. **6. 23**; 2 Thess. **3. 16**).

Singularly enough the Epistles of John (at least the first and second) finish without salutation. It would be thought that the loved and loving one would have excelled in this respect, but it is only in the third Epistle which is addressed to his host and the ministering one to his comforts he vouchsafes a blessing. It looks as if he were too concerned about the honour of his God and Lord and the demonstration of His divinity to think of Christian and social amenities towards his brethren.

Jude finishes with an ascription of adoring worship and reverence to God. This Epistle being scarcely a pastoral or hortatory one (as are the others in the main), but being principally descriptive of a present and future condition of things in the Church and the world and of warning to saints, a benediction does not find fitting place so much as does the doxology expressed, and is the Apostle's counterblast to the world worship and apostasy he gives warning of.

The Apocalypse of John, which sums up the revealing of the Lord Jesus Christ (who is the Alpha and Omega of the whole of the Scriptures of truth), and declares His speedy coming again closes with a commendation to grace as if to show that in the consummation of all things, dispensational and otherwise, the standing of the saved will for ever be reckoned as one of grace only. That will be the theme of the eternal song. The wondrous mysteries, the stupendous events, and the ineffable glories unfolded to the spiritual eyes of the seer in a measure probably not vouchsafed to any mere human being before him, all converge into the recognition of that one idea of grace, though in his third pastoral Epistle the same writer does close with the salutation of peace.

H. W. DAVIDSON.

CIRCUMCISION NOR UNCIRCUMCISION.

GALATIANS 5. 6.

THE former but stamps the Jew in his national character as chosen of God and in covenant relationship with Him, whilst the latter is the national condition of all the Gentile nations not being called of God unto such outward mark; neither availeth anything as to salvation, "but faith working by love."

Also in Galatians 6. 15, "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Repugnant as it is to human nature, and humiliating too, the truth remains unalterably fixed, "Ye must be born anew." This new birth is wrought in the inner man on the heart; 2 Corinthians 3. 3, God says, by His servant Paul, "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone," as the decalogue in Moses' day, "but on ~~fleshy~~ tables of the heart."

Directly this new creation is wrought man becomes dual. The old fleshy man is still there, and will remain as long

as he is in the body, whilst the new man in the spirit supersedes and brings into subjection the old. As on the heart God's impress of divine character is stamped, so on the mind, as in 2 Timothy 1. 7, God impresses soundness, the "spirit of a sound mind being given unto us."

Then also, as declared in Colossians 1. 8, "Who also hath declared unto us your love in the Spirit."

In these divinely given attributes lies the manifestation of the inwrought work, and as Paul teaches from his own personal experience, the flesh, or old man, profiteth nothing, nay, is rather a hindrance, being at enmity. In Romans 7., concluding verses, Paul says even that when he would do good under prompting of the new man, evil is present with him in the prompting of his members in the old man, and the good he would do, he knows not how to do, exclaiming in those thrilling words, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then he thanks God for deliverance through the Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, thanks be to our faithful God, the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (of the flesh), but mighty through the Almighty One. And this warfare has to be maintained, and can only be upheld by resort to the power of God through faith; endeavouring in ourselves to do it, we fall, learning thereby our weakness.

The new creature was wrought in Paul on his way to Damascus, when the Lord accosted him with those touching words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And here we get a beautiful teaching of the purpose and foreknowledge of God. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

In Acts 9. 15 God the Lord tells Ananias Paul was a chosen vessel unto Him, to bear His Name before the Gentiles.

In Philippians 2. 13, also Ephesians 3. 20, we are again taught "it is God who worketh in us."

In John 6. 13, "It is the Spirit who quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing."

In Galatians 5. 17 we are taught that the flesh (natural man) striveth against the spirit (new man), and *vice versa*, so that oft the things we would we cannot do. We need to be strong in faith as Abraham, who staggered not at unbelief, but gave glory to God.

Acknowledgment of our own weakness and faith in God's power will prevail. Faith in God enables us to subjugate our carnal wills to His Divine will, and once yield the will of the mind and heart in His strength unto Himself, the complete victory is ours in Him, "all things brought into captivity to Christ." Nevertheless, the safety of the individual is a sealed matter from the moment of the new birth, though the possessor may be without assurance of his or her blessed heritage, but the conflict may go on unto the end, according to our measure of faith and dependence solely on God and His promises by Christ Jesus. Let us indeed thank God for His unspeakable gift.

E. J. O.

A PRECIOUS FRAGMENT.

Mr. W. Romaine, M.A., wrote to a friend in 1783 :

"You know it is my constant custom to read the Bible without stopping or interruption from Genesis to Revelation.

My constant inquiry is what it reveals. Not why. I study to know it not as a metaphysician, but as a Christian. I seek not so much to comprehend it as to believe it. Nothing appears to me more reasonable than that my reason should submit to God's reason. And therefore I am kept praying for Divine grace to make His words like the light of the sun—clear in my head and fruitful in my heart."—*Communicated by J. B.*

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 GOD OF GLORY.

THE God of glory is a wealthy expression. It occurs but twice in the Scriptures. "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham" (Acts 7. 2); "The God of glory thundereth" (Ps. 29. 3). Men usually associate glory with a place; indeed, many speak of heaven as "The Glory." In Scripture glory is associated with a Person, namely with God. The attributes of God declare somewhat of His glory. It may also be learned from His works. The reason why heaven is a place of glory is because God is there. Wherever He is His glory is.

"I beseech Thee shew me Thy glory," was the prayer of Moses. God replied: "I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of Jehovah before thee; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will show mercy." Thus the glory of God was to be seen by Moses as he learned the name of Jehovah and the attributes of his God. To know God is to behold His glory. The more we increase in the knowledge of God the more wonderful will His glory appear.

The God of glory appeared unto Abraham. Why the God of glory? Abraham was an idolater; he rendered homage to false gods. The spell that bound his heart to these dumb idols must be broken. The only wise God must reveal Himself in such a manner that His own glory may attract the heart of Abraham to Himself and for ever deliver him from the idols. This is exactly what happened in Abraham's case. The appearance of the God of glory wrought a mighty revolution in his life. So great did the attracting power of the God of glory prove that Abraham

ever afterwards followed Him, although in doing so he must needs forsake his country and his kindred and his father's house. When the God of glory is known, nothing else is needed. There is enough in Him to fill the soul's vision. There can be no loss in His company. Such loss were gain indeed.

"The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." Day bears witness to His glory; and night speaks aloud of the same theme when the knowledge of the God of glory that may be learned is more impressive and sublime. All creation, without speech or language, combines in making known the glory of His everlasting power and divinity. Therefore it is that we read, "The God of glory thundereth."

Psalm 29., in which these words occur, is a sublime poetic description of a thunderstorm in the land of Palestine. The God of glory sits supreme above the conflict of the elements. The lightning's flash and the thunder's peal are regulated by His omnipotent hand. The thunderstorm in all its overawing grandeur may supply a glimpse of the glory of God. Who amongst His people has not heard His majestic voice in the thunder's crash? Yet this is but a mere echo of His glory. Who, with admiration dumb, has not gazed upon the flames of fire which His hand divides? Who, with the Psalmist, has not been forced to bow before Him and declare: In His temple every whit of it uttereth GLORY?

Man is said to be the image and glory of God. Made a little lower than angels, and crowned with glory and honour, he was set over the works of God's hands. He was creation's lord, creation's head. How that place was lost, though the shadow of that image and glory may still be discerned, is, alas! well known. Where now is that image to be seen? where is that glory to be gazed upon in all its perfection? Not surely in the man of Eden, not

surely in the glimpse of innocence which we there see. "We beheld His glory," says one; "Who being the effulgence of His (God's) glory, and the very image of His substance," says another; whilst the same writer declares, "We behold Him Who hath been made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." Crowned with glory and honour in resurrection? No! Crowned as a man upon earth! Witness Him in the desert with the wild beasts—Lord of the brute. Witness Him with the tenants of the sea—Lord of the fishes. Witness Him in the tempest—Lord of the elements. This is He Who received from God the Father honour and glory, when from the excellent glory it was said, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." This is the Man who reflects in all their perfection the image and glory of God. O-ye saints, get to know Him! Ponder His worth! Gaze on His glory!

The Lord of glory was crucified, but the King of glory lives. As Lord of glory He went to the cross; as King of glory He took His place upon the throne. "He hath set His glory above the heavens," and true it is that—

"Above all heavens, at God's right hand,
Now sits the King of glory."

Where, then, is the glory of God to be seen? In that One, the King of glory, in whom all glory is centred. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is to be seen in the face of Christ.

It is the purpose of God to conform to the image of His Son all whom His grace reaches. This is in order that His glory might be manifested through them on earth as it was in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ever and anon throughout His wondrous life the glory of God shone forth. Men might refuse to behold it, or they might attribute it to the workings of Satan, but enlightened hearts could say, "We

beheld His glory." This is the high and the holy calling of the child of God to-day, to manifest the glory of God, to represent faithfully the God of glory.

This can only be accomplished by present conformity to the image of the Son. How is this conformity to be reached? Scripture answers: "We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory." Of certain it is recorded that the people took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. Being much in His company, they reflected much of His glory. So will it be with us. If, led by the Lord the Spirit, we behold continually in the mirror of the Word the glory of the Lord, the transforming process will follow as a necessary result. Conformity to Christ is an effect! Beholding Him is the cause! When Moses beheld the little that he was permitted to see of the God of glory, his face shone, and others beheld it though he was not aware of it. Ours is perfect liberty to gaze on the glory of the Lord in order that a perfect image may be produced.

"What liberty is thine!—my soul adore
The love that bids thee gaze upon His face;
With unveiled visage scan it o'er and o'er—
Oh, mercy! depths unknown! triumphant grace!"

The perfect image of the Son will be manifested in each when the mirror by which we often see but dimly is removed, and, with Him where He is, we behold His glory. For the present the God of glory is the enriching One. My God shall fulfill every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. The Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Thus in the God of glory our resources are. Possessing Him we possess all things. It were idle to talk of loss when we have gained Him. It were folly to

be moved by suffering and reproach when thereby the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon us.

DEVOTEDNESS.

ALTHOUGH the word "devoted" is not found in the English version of the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament, yet the truth thereof as expressed in the Old Testament is clearly enough announced therein. The Hebrew word¹ has afforded the learned of all time not a little room for discussion, the general result of which may be summed up as being that, whoever or whatever was or is devoted to the Lord must be so for weal or for woe. When for weal, God is glorified in such. When for woe, He is glorified on such. Further, when devotedness had taken place there was no redemption thereof possible. That is to say the act or gift could not be recalled or altered. When existing it had usually an outward and open manifestation—even an open dedication to the object by or in the separation from all common and profane uses.

We desire to remember that these nibblings are for young believers, which causes us in a word to say that devotedness implies and demands—

Being holy.

Being set apart *for* God.

Being consecrated to Him.

The occurrences of the word *as* "devoted" are Leviticus 21. 21, 28 (three times), and 29, and Numbers 18. 14, with which see the marginal readings (A.V.) of Deuteronomy 12. 17, Joshua 6. 17, Ezra 10. 18, Ezekiel 44. 29, as also Micah 4. 18 where the reading is —

"I will consecrate."

¹ The Hebrew word according to Parkhurst denotes *total separation* of a person or thing from their former state, condition, or the like.

With all which may be compared Luke 21. 5, "Some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and GIFTS." These gifts were evidences of devotedness and were what the eyes could see and the hands handle.

The word translated "gifts" here is the word used in the LXX. to represent the Hebrew "devoted."

The translation of Leviticus 27. 28, 29 by the English divines who fled to Geneva in the reign of Queen Mary runs thus, and affords good drill for the young thinker—

"Notwithstanding nothing separate from the common use THAT A MAN doth separate unto the Lord—FOR EVERY THING separate from the common use IS MOST HOLY UNTO THE LORD. NOTHING separate from common use which shall be separate from man shall be redeemed."

From the foregoing it may be gathered that so far as the Christian is concerned his devotedness must come from heart purpose and effort to surrender himself after the manner and measure of 2 Corinthians 8. 5—

"This they did not as we had hoped (but beyond that far), they first gave themselves to the Lord and then to us by (through or in accordance with) the will of God."

Let the young believer ponder the fact that before this was done those Macedonian believers were not only in Christ Jesus and in Christ, but were actually in churches of God. Thus their devotedness was consequent to the obedience that brought them into such church position, the relationships of which but afforded or made possible to them this enviable devotedness.

Moreover, may you not, young believer, find the spirit and principle of this sacred matter most helpfully set forth in the words of Romans 12. 1, etc., etc., words that express—

"No Reservation."

The comeliness of which is surely felt and enhanced when one dwells upon the—

“No Condemnation,”

“No Separation,”

of chapter 8, which surely is but really enjoyed by him who responds as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing, the reasonable service of such as know and own themselves thus blessed by Him who is worthy to have “all we are and have” so devoted to and for His pleasure.

JOHN BROWN.

HITHERTO AND HENCEFORTH.

As we look back over the past and mark our experience hitherto, failure, serious and oft recurring, is written large against our names. But God has dealt with us not according to what we have been or what we have done, but according to the riches of His grace, and according to the multitude of His tender mercies; and over against our failure we see God's faithfulness, and His faithfulness covers our failures: “According as thou hast forgiven thy people from Egypt hitherto” (Num. 14. 19).

Yet God cannot pass over sin. We shall suffer loss, yet we shall be saved as through fire. Nevertheless we can set up our Ebenezer, saying, “Hitherto has the Lord helped us,” and we can look back not only at our failures, but also at the many triumphs God has wrought for us and in us.

We can further say with the Apostle Paul, “Thanks be unto God, who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest through us the savour of His knowledge in every place” (2 Cor. 2. 14). David also bears witness to the faithfulness of God when he says, “Who am I, Lord God, and what is my house, that Thou hast brought me thus far? and this was yet a small thing in thine eyes, O Lord God; but Thou hast spoken of Thy servant's house for a great while to come” (2 Sam. 7. 18). David looks back over the past, and above all his failure and sins he sees

God's hand stretched out for his help; and although turned aside by passing temptations, his heart turns back to God, its only place of rest, like the magnet to the pole; and thence he looks forward, for God has spoken of his house for a great while to come—even until David's Son and Lord comes to take to Himself His power and reign in righteousness.

Now what we need is that our past experience bear fruit in the present and strengthen us for the future, every failure being a warning and every triumph a stepping-stone to further victories. The Lord has said, "I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee," so that with good courage we say, "The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear. What can man do unto me?"

Israel's history was written for our example, that we should not lust as they lusted. So also should our own past bear fruit that we should no longer live unto ourselves, but unto Him Who for our sakes died and rose again. Wherefore we henceforth know no man after the flesh; for are we not, in Christ, a new creation—the old things passed away and all things become new?

And again, we should no longer be children tossed to and fro; but, speaking the truth in love, grow up in all things unto Him which is the Head, even Christ. We are exhorted to be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil the ministry, until, having fought the good fight, finished the course, and kept the faith, we may look forward with confidence to that day when we shall receive the crown and lay it at His feet, Who alone is worthy, while we enter into His rest with joy.

G. T. REEVE.

LIVING TESTIMONY.

THE object that God has in saving the sinner is that the saved one may be a living testimony to His grace—bearing testimony, or witness, in living power through being in touch with the living God.

Israel singing the song of triumph on the shore of the Red Sea seemed to have grasped the purposes of Jehovah in their deliverance; but, alas! how soon that song gave place to the murmur of discontent.

The apostle Paul as he neared the end of his course on earth, in writing to the young man Timothy, referred among other things to the purpose which had marked his life's journey since the time God met him in grace (2 Tim. 3. 10); and which is expressed so forcibly to the Philippian saints: "According to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1. 20).

Being saved from wrath to comè is not the consummation of God's object, but rather the commencement; for, it is from the cross to the glory that the believers' pathway lies. Let us then, while travelling therein, give heed, to the exhortation: "Cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart" making known to all around, by word and by deed, that He who died on Calvary's Cross for sinners lives in the glory for saints.

Blessed is the believer who enters into the object which God has in view, and makes it the purpose of his life.

W. H. BURDEKIN.

THE JOINT RESPONSIBILITY OF OVERSEERS IN NEIGHBOURING TOWNS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY C. M. LUXMOORE.

I HAVE thought that we shall best get real help in this matter by confining our attention at first to what will seem a very small point. Whilst speaking of the joint responsibility of overseers, I shall seem to say more about deacons than about overseers.

In the first place I would like to point out there has been a little confusion between what may be called the work of overseers, and the work of deacons. I would call attention to the fact that no man can be an overseer who is not first a deacon: and further, a large part of the work of every overseer is deacon work.

While thinking about this I turned up the various scriptures in the New Testament in which we read of deaconry. May I just remind you that there are three words in the original which are translated in a various way. There is the word "deacon," *διάκονος*, *diakōnōs*, which means a particular kind of servant or minister. The word is sometimes translated "servant," sometimes "minister," and sometimes "deacon." I have often compared that kind of servant to a waiter who attends at table. Then there is the noun *διακονία*, *diakōnia*, which speaks of this particular kind of service, sometimes translated "ministry," and sometimes "ministration," and also translated "service" or "serving." Then there is the verb *διακόνεω*, *diakōnēō*, "to minister," "to serve," translated in 1 Tim. 3. 10, "to serve as a deacon."

It is this subject, this particular kind of service called deaconry, that I want to say a word or two about first.

There is one familiar scripture I would refer you to: "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." I believe

the root of everything in this sense is serving the Lord Jesus. And oversight must be put aside until we have got some idea of deaconry—serving the Lord Jesus.

Then, to show what serving the Lord Jesus means, I may remind you of the truth of the One Body which we are often charged with neglecting. I may remind you of the voice Paul heard on the way to Damascus: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Those whom he was persecuting were disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, members of His Body; and so, as by persecuting the members of the Body, he was persecuting the Head, so in a later time by serving the members of the Body he was serving the Head. Here we have, it seems to me, the idea of service directed to the Lord Jesus Christ as the worthy object, when that service is directed to His members down here.

And then there is another scripture, extending the idea of service not only to members of the Lord Jesus but as a deacon of God, a minister of God, we have gospel work brought in under the same head.

In regard to the difference between oversight and ministry we get one of the little sidelights of scripture in Matthew 25, which will show what I mean. In the judgement of the living nations you will remember the Lord Jesus praised and blamed respectively. Read verses 31 to the end of the chapter. In verse 44 the word used by those on the left hand in answering the charge made against them is this: "When saw we Thee hungering, or thirsting, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and have not ministered unto Thee?" The word is: "ministered unto thee as deacons." So here we see that feeding the hungry, and so forth, are all comprised under the term ministry or deaconry; and it is that ministry to which I want to direct your attention. The particular reason for turning to Matthew 25 is that it shows what ministry consists in.

There is one particular person mentioned in the New

Testament who comes before us very distinctly as a minister, a deacon, a servant, and that one is Timothy.

I am trying, by what I have said, to make you think a great deal of the importance of ministry, or deacon work, and then to direct very earnest attention to the commencement of Timothy's deacon work, because there were certain things connected with Timothy being proved as a deacon that are full of just the very teaching that we now need.

Now for a moment, simply from a historical point of view—I do not want to get anything more out of it than the historical fact—but just as a matter of history let us go to the fourteenth chapter of the Acts. We there see Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey as it is sometimes called. In this journey Paul and Barnabas went to various places in Lycaonia; they visited Lystra and Iconium. Then they came to Derbe, and, when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Antioch in Pisidia. What did they do? They confirmed the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the Faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

Now I want to say something about these elders. Please remember that the question of elders being in existence at the present time is not my point at all. What was the actual state of affairs there? Paul and Barnabas came back very probably to these three or four assemblies, which had just been planted. These baby assemblies were composed therefore of very young Christians, but some of these judged by their character, by their status, by their age, by their training, and such like, were really leading men amongst those companies in those places; they were in the broad sense of the term, in the very widest sense

of the term, elders, that is to say, they were leaders, rulers; they might have been, probably, leaders and rulers where they came out from: but were they fit to take charge of the little flock of God? How was anybody to tell? They had had no experience whatever to guide them. But the Apostles had a certain miraculous gift, which was the discerning of spirits, and something more, they looked round on the company, and here they saw a man fitted to be a guide for God in the assembly. How did the Apostles know it? Not from experience. They knew it by the power that God had given them as Apostles, and they pointed to that man. The word "appoint" here means to point with the hand. Whether Paul and Barnabas consulted together, and agreed together, or knowing the mind of the Lord so perfectly, they pointed spontaneously as knowing the mind of the Lord, to the men whom the Holy Spirit would have to be overseers, I cannot say; but they pointed to that one, they missed that one, pointed to another, and so on. They pointed to elders in every church. Every one can see they exercised a miraculous gift. They had no other means of doing it. Here in the beginning of things, you find an exercise of miraculous power to meet this particular need.

They go back to Antioch. The fifteenth chapter intervenes, and then they start out again, and this time not Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas have a strife between them, and Paul chooses Silas. In choosing him Paul is choosing one whom the Spirit speaks of as one of the chief men among the brethren, one who was sent down to Antioch from the apostolic circle at Jerusalem.

Now we have got into the sixteenth chapter. When Paul and Silas had got across from Syria and Cilicia they came to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy. I want you to try and picture this. They are going back to Lycaonia, a place where they

had planted three or four assemblies, and in those assemblies they had pointed out elders; and now they find a disciple named Timothy, the son of a Jewess who believed; but his father was a Greek. Now here was a man who was destined by God to go and work with the Apostle Paul, but he was a young man; this was the very beginning of his career. We know that, because the Apostle Paul says—“As a son with a father, so he served as a bond slave with me in the gospel.” This was the very beginning of his career, as is proved also by the term, “My child Timothy,”—my genuine child Timothy. Here at the very outset of his career, how was Paul to know that this young fellow was fit to go with him? Please to note this. Paul does not distinguish Timothy by means of the miraculous gift by which he had known those elders before. There may have been something about him he liked, but that was not sufficient. Instead of what we get in the fourteenth chapter, we get here,—“The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.” To my mind that verse is full of force and meaning, and has application to the question of deaconry. And why? Because if you turn to the very letter which Paul wrote to Timothy, in which letter he says what a bishop must be, and what a deacon must be, at the end of the account of what a deacon must be he says, “And let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, if they be blameless.” Found blameless by whom? Go back to this incident at the beginning of Timothy’s own career, and you will find that he was well reported of by the brethren of Lystra and Iconium.

It is very curious to remark, and I do not pretend to explain it, how these three towns are mentioned here—Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium. Whether Timothy resided in Derbe or Lystra I do not know for certain; but at any rate the brethren who gave him his character were the

brethren in Lystra and Iconium; not the brethren of Lystra only, nor the brethren in Iconium only; but it is worth noting that they were brethren in more than one assembly of God. Now, here is a Divine principle of immense importance; he was well reported of by the brethren in more than one, in not less than two, assemblies of God. Well, Paul would have him to go forth with him. And then we read about his circumcising him.

I have nothing more to read to you from the Acts of the Apostles, but there are two other places where this matter is referred to. Firstly, in the first letter to Timothy, chapter 4. verse 14, and secondly, in the second letter, chapter 1. verse 6. It will be more convenient to read the 2 Timothy scripture first, it is simpler to put it in this order:—

“For the which cause I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee through the laying on of my hands.” What I wanted you to read that for first was, that you might perceive that the gift came to Timothy by the laying on of the Apostle’s hands, and not by the hands of any other person; that is to say, Paul says that his hands were the means of imparting the gift.

Whatever we read in the first letter, the second is unaltered. “The gift that is in thee through (by means of) the laying on of my hands.”

Now turn to 1 Timothy 4. 14. “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which is given thee by, or through, prophecy”; but now, what beside the prophecy, which is another expression for the Apostle’s hands being laid on him? “With”; everybody knows that “with” does not mean the same as “by.” You may come from one town to another by a train, but you may come with a friend. *By* or *through*, is the means. *With* is that which accompanies. By, or through prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

Now, I do not want to persuade you that there is a pres-

bytery to-day ; that is no part of what I wish to urge on you now. But what I ask you to notice is, that when the Apostle Paul put his hands on Timothy and gave him a gift you see his hands there upon him were not alone ; with the laying on of Paul's hands you see the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Who can fail, when the thing is put before them, to identify this presbytery with the brethren who said to Paul concerning Timothy, " Yes he is a good young fellow ; he has got a good mother, and a good grandmother, and he is obedient to his mother and his grandmother, and he is a well behaved young fellow, and we have nothing against him." And these were brethren not in one town only, but in two. That is my point. Who can fail to identify these brethren in Lystra and Iconium, with the elderhood or presbytery—the group of overseeing men who together put their hands with the hands of the Apostle Paul on Timothy when that gift was given to him.

Now a word or two about that word " elderhood." Looking at it historically, elders and elderhood are not necessarily the same thing exactly. To illustrate what I mean I would remind you of the difference between Parliament and members of Parliament. Parliament can make laws, but members of Parliament cannot make laws. In order to make laws they must themselves be together according to the law of the land. And again, they can do nothing apart from the Queen's decree or Queen's writ, or whatever it is that brings them together. So the word " elders " is a plural noun, speaking of many persons, but " elderhood " is a singular noun, speaking of one thing. Here I wish to remind you of the words of God, given through the Apostle John, " Whatsoever is born of God." (1 John 5. 4). Elderhood is a " whatsoever " that is born of God, and you have a number of elders acting together, acting as a united whole, and acting as a united whole in regard to the bringing into the work of ministry

of this young man Timothy. It seems to me that nothing can be plainer from such a scripture as this. I only hope I can make it plain to you, as it is to me; the absolute need for the co-operation of overseers in more assemblies than one, if we are going to follow scriptural example. I say if we follow scriptural example we shall have overseers in more assemblies than one, acting together, in approval of one becoming a servant or deacon.

It goes without saying, that if we are to have the approval of a circle larger than the circle of overseers in a single assembly when it is a question of deacons, surely we must have the same when it is the question of the recognition of an overseer, which is in a certain sense a further thing, though not a higher thing.

There is a good deal one might say on this question, and the more I have looked at it of late the more convinced I have been that however much there may be to be learned as to the application of this in detail that here you have the nucleus of a truth of a divine order that has been very much neglected; and I would beg you to consider earnestly the subject—the example in Timothy's case that I have been speaking to you of—because if you have here a divine example of brethren from more assemblies than one (you may call it a district, or county, or province—the point is that it is something larger than an assembly of God in a given town), if you have clearly co-operation in that larger circle for a man's being commended as a minister of Jesus Christ, then it is a thing that has been neglected to a very large extent amongst us. And if it is, it follows that we have here something which ought to come home to our consciences. Once we set about correcting that which is wrong, recognizing that Scripture is for correction, we shall expect that the flood of light which is waiting to be beamed upon us as to the order of God's House, which has been very obscure, will break upon us in all its blessed fulness.

Communicated by W. Cox.

TIDINGS DEAR.

Tune—"Abide with me."

HARK! hark! dear brethren, what is this we hear
 From loving lips so wonderfully sweet?
 Surely 'tis tidings very very dear
 That make our hearts with glowing raptures beat!

Yes, it is tidings dear to every one
 Who trusts the truth the Scriptures do contain—
 The voice of Him who's now to glory gone—
 "A little while and I will come again."

This is the tidings that alone can cheer
 Our weary souls while wandering here below—
 That Christ our Lord will some day soon appear
 And take us all where He Himself shall go.

Then farewell, dreary desert, and thy woe,
 No longer we thy tribulation share;
 Farewell, Satanic powers, farewell, each foe,
 We'll gladly sing when mounting in the air.

Is this a dream that I indulge to-night,
 Or vain imagination's utmost stretch?
 Surely this is a phantom far too bright
 For me, a poor defiled still sinning wretch?

Oh, wondrous truth! no dream thou art at all,
 Thou art the blessed words of God our Lord;
 What He has said repent He never shall,
 The heavens may pass away, but not His word.

Oh, wondrous word! my Lord, our God on high,
 Work in us with His blessed Spirit given;
 Reveal the hidden truths that in thee lie,
 And waft our thoughts from earth to glorious heaven.

NOTE.—By repeating the second verse after the seventh this song may also be sung to Tune No. 361 in *Songs and Solos*.

ESTHER.

ONE peculiarity of the book of Esther, which has often been noted, lies in the fact that the name of God nowhere occurs in it. This interesting portion of the Scriptures furnishes striking instances of how God makes the wrath of man to praise Him; and how, in His overruling providence, He often causes man's sin and shame to be a means of salvation for His people. Although God is not mentioned in this book, and though He is not manifestly seen at work, yet it is evident that His was the hand behind the scenes which provided means of deliverance for the Jews who dwelt in the realms of Babylonia. It is ever true of Jehovah that His way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known.

The concensus of opinion amongst men who are capable of judging the historic evidence which exists regarding the point goes to prove that the king Ahasuerus of this book is Xerxes, the son of Darius Hystaspes, of whom Ezra 6. speaks, and the father of Artaxerxes Longimanus, who, in the seventh year of his reign, granted liberty to Ezra to go to Jerusalem, and who repeated the like kindness to Nehemiah in the twentieth year of his reign (Ezra 7. 7; Neh. 2. 1). Between the reigns of those two kings—Darius and Artaxerxes—both of whom very manifestly favoured the people of God, the reign of the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther intervenes. Ahasuerus is not a name but a title, and means "the great king"; and it is evident that it was customary to give this title to various kings (Ezra 4. 6). Apparently Xerxes was a weak and profligate king, and one who bore little resemblance (in his character at least) to his great father, and did little honour to his name. His character and habits, as described in secular history, agree entirely with the Divine record given in the book of Esther.

The deliverance granted to the Jews from wholesale slaughter, which this book records as having taken place in the reign of this king, deserves special consideration, for it shows how God in mercy often protects his people even when their ways are far from being in accordance with His will; how He never forgets them even though they do forget Him. The great bulk of the Jews in the realms of Babylonia at this time had failed to respond to God's goodness when He made it possible for them, through the mandate of Cyrus, to return to Judæa and to Jerusalem. His call, "Go up," was unheeded, and they chose to remain where they were; they were pleased to dwell with the daughter of Babylon. They made choice of their company, and if the company they chose was loved and respected by them, it soon after proved its love and respect for them by arranging for the massacre of them all, and it was only hindered from putting its intention into execution by the overruling providence of God.

The profligacy and vice of Xerxes occasioned the presence of a young Jewess named Esther in the royal palace in Shushan, and she afterwards became his queen, Vashti having been disowned. This Esther was an orphan, and had been brought up with a friend, Mordecai, who instructed her not to disclose her ancestry, with the result that for some time it was unknown in the palace that she was a Jewess. After Esther had taken up her abode in the palace, Mordecai habitually walked before the court of the women's house, and sat daily in the king's gate to learn how Esther prospered. Thus, being constantly in proximity to the palace, he learned of a plot, made by two of the king's chamberlains, to murder the king—which was no unusual thing in those days—and by giving the alarm he was instrumental in saving the king's life. This was duly recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Persia.

Soon after this the changing fancies of the debauched

Xerxes caused him to favour greatly a certain Agagite named Haman, and to set this man high in honour above all the other princes. He became the king's greatest favourite and his chief adviser, and presently he had given to him the king's ring wherewith the laws of Persia were sealed. Thus the king became his tool, and Haman was in reality the ruler. A command was issued by the king that all should bow and do Haman reverence, which Mordecai refused to obey, and so incensed Haman against him that he persuaded the king to permit him to arrange for the massacre of all the Jews throughout the kingdom. It would doubtless have been a very easy matter for Haman to have got rid of Mordecai alone, but in these days it was almost counted a dishonourable thing to take the life of one man when it was possible to act on a grander scale and take the lives of thousands.

When tidings reached Mordecai of the evil which Haman had done he rent his garments and put on sackcloth, and sent tidings to Esther of what was impending. He also charged her that she should go to the king and make supplication for her people. But one barrier stood in her way. The law required that every one who came into the king's inner chamber without being called should be put to death, the only exception being when the king was pleased to hold out the golden sceptre, and permit the person to approach and to touch it. The message sent by Mordecai to Esther when she delayed to enter into the presence of the king is remarkable: "If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou shalt come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Did Mordecai expect the deliverance to arise? Did his faith lay hold of God's promise to Solomon that if His scattered people would humble themselves, and

pray and seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways, that He would hear them from heaven and forgive their sins? Be that as it may, it seems clear that God, who moves in mysterious ways in order to effect His purposes, had permitted Esther to be brought to the kingdom, so that His scattered people might be delivered from death. This was *the opportunity of her life*, and the issues which hung upon her embracing that opportunity involved the lives of many thousands. Little do God's people know at times the purpose He has in them; and often it is to be feared they miss the one great aim of their lives by failing to discern their appointed season.

The crisis Esther was called upon to face at this time admitted of no vacillation on her part. She must boldly risk her own life if she would save the lives of her people. So, clad in royal apparel, she ventures into the inner chamber of the king's house, and when from his royal throne the king beheld her she found favour in his sight, and he held out the golden sceptre which was in his hand, which Esther drew near and touched. Then said the king: "What wilt thou, queen Esther, and what is thy request? it shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom." Here, in the presence of the king, Esther stands—one who is guilty of death, but one whom the grace of the throne has caused to live. By touching the golden sceptre she owns the authority of the throne and of the one who sits thereon. The throne is not compromised though she is permitted to live, for by touching the sceptre she owns her doomed condition, and declares that grace alone saves her from death. Then the words fall upon her ears: "What wilt thou? what is thy request?" This is grace ~~abundant~~ abundant. Herein are lessons for Christians to-day, ~~so~~ that he who reads may run.

Her request at first was a very trivial ~~one~~ ~~that~~ that the king and Haman should come that day to a banquet

which she had prepared, and soon they were seated together at the feast. Here the king repeats his question, "What wilt thou?" and Esther promises to make it known on the morrow if he and Haman would come again to her banquet: With a glad and joyful heart the wicked Haman went forth from the presence of the king and the queen that night, and rehearsed to his friends and to his wife the glory of his riches and his pre-eminence in the king's favour. Withal there was one bitter drop in this vain man's cup, and that was Mordecai, who sat at the king's gate, and still refused to do him reverence; and, at the instigation of his wife, he caused a gallows to be prepared whereon to have him hanged.

That night the king could not sleep. Was this merely a coincidence, or was it the doing of God, who hears the cries of His people? The Christian should have little difficulty in answering. Then were the records of the chronicles brought and read before him, and thus he was reminded afresh of how Mordecai had saved his life. "What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?" he inquires, and receives the reply: "There is nothing done for him." At this moment Haman came into the king's court to request him to permit Mordecai to be hanged, and on the king asking him, "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" he, supposing the king referred to himself, said: "Let him be arrayed in royal apparel, and let the crown royal be set upon his head, and, seated on the king's horse, let him be brought through the streets of the city, and proclaim before him: thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour." ~~When~~ the king commanded him to do so unto Mordecai ~~the~~ Jew, and, having obeyed, he hasted to his house mourning and having his head covered. When he told his wife and his friends what had transpired he had to listen to the ominous words: "If Mordecai be of the seed

of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him."

The truth was evidently recognized at that early date that the Jew must prevail; and the history of the Jews during the thousands of years which have intervened since then bears witness to the same truth. Downtrodden and persecuted by man, for the present cast off and rejected by God, they wander to and fro—a people seeking rest and finding none. Any other people, treated as the Jews have been treated, would long ere now have ceased to exist. Their amazing vitality as a people, and their wonderful power of endurance, have long been the world's greatest marvels. To Jacob God said: "As a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and hast prevailed," and this has ever been true of his seed; and it shall yet be demonstrated in the future as it has never been before. The more the Egyptians afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew; and though for thousands of years that wonderful bush has been burning it is not consumed. Nay, it rather seems already to be putting forth its tender buds afresh, and soon it will clothe itself with a glory and verdure such as it has never known before.

Whilst yet the almost prophetic words of his wife were ringing in Haman's ears, messengers arrived from the king to haste him to the banquet which Esther had prepared. Then when Esther was invited by the king to make her request known, she begs for her own life and for the lives of her people, for said she: "We are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish." Then was the king wroth and demanded: "Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?" and received the reply: "The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman." When the gallows which Haman had prepared whereon to hang Mordecai was pointed out to the king he

ordered that Haman should be hanged thereon, which was speedily done. Well might the psalmist say—

“The wicked watcheth the righteous,
And seeketh to slay him.
The Lord will not leave him in his hands,
Nor condemn him when he is judged.
Wait on the Lord, and keep His way,
And He shall exalt thee to inherit the land:
When the wicked is cut off thou shalt see it.
I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil.
But One passed by, and, lo, he was not:
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.”

Thus died the wicked Haman the death of a fool, who dared to harden his heart against God, and to slay men more righteous than himself. Herein is displayed the end of “the prosperity of fools,” so that men may fear and be saved from destruction, as they behold the wicked dashed from the height of his excellency to the depths of the ditch which his own hands had digged for others.

Immediately after the execution of Haman, Mordecai was raised by the king to great honour, and letters were dispatched to every province in the king’s dominion reversing the mandate of Haman to have the Jews destroyed. Then was the city of Shushan glad and rejoiced, and in every province and in every city the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them. Probably in this a picture is to be seen of a future deliverance which shall yet be granted to God’s earthly people, when a more dread persecutor than Haman shall find himself overwhelmed in a sorer judgment than that which overtook him; and the joy and gladness of the Jews as they beheld Mordecai wearing the royal crown and next in dignity to the king on the throne, may dimly foreshadow the time when the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and

come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall be done away. In these days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all the languages of the nations, shall even take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, "We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."

Thus, though the name of God is not found in the book of Esther, His saints may trace therein the workings of His almighty hand—those workings, which in the eyes of the world, seem but the iron decrees of fate—and as these are learned in the sanctuary, where alone they can be learned, well may His saints bow before Him, saying—

"Who is like unto Thee, O Jehovah, among the gods?
Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

This deliverance which God effected for His people was afterward commemorated from year to year by the feast of Purim, which feast is observed among the Jews to this day.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

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 GOD OF PEACE.

"God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints" (1 *Cor.* 14. 33). Disorder and tumult amongst God's people are occasioned by another power than that of God. They must have strange thoughts of the God of peace who could attribute such things to Him.

He who brought unrest and disorder into God's creation in the past was Satan. When creation left God's hand it

was perfect—it was all very good—but soon the adversary turned a scene of peace and beauty into one of direst confusion. But God was then as now the God of peace, and His effort has ever been to restore peace to man and to earth. Ere this could be accomplished, however, God's character had to be vindicated. Sin had questioned His righteousness, His wisdom and His power—indeed sin had questioned every attribute of God—and sin's every question must be righteously answered ere God could fully display Himself as the God of peace. So we read: "To this end was the Son of God manifested that He might destroy the works of the Devil."

In the wilderness and elsewhere throughout His life the Son of God met Satan and overcame his subtle temptations by shielding Himself with the Word of God. But not thus were the works of Satan destroyed. Yet during the wondrous life of the Lord Jesus many of the Devil's works were destroyed or loosed. Every bodily infirmity to which flesh is heir is occasioned by the work of Satan—by sin—and through stretching forth His hand in the power of the Holy Spirit to heal, the Lord Jesus destroyed many of the Devil's works. Many demon-possessed ones He loosed, and even the dead were raised, in all of which the works of Satan were being destroyed. But still the dread adversary himself had to be dealt with, and it was not by all that the Lord Jesus accomplished during His life that this was effected. It was through death that He brought to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.

We can never know the reality of the mighty fight that was fought on the cross; we may stand in awe and behold the Son of God close with the adversary in that last dread struggle, we may learn a little of the mighty issues that were then in the balance, but the distance from which we gaze shrouds all but the dim outline of that great contest. This much we do know, however, from Divine revelation,

that through death He destroyed (brought to nought) him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil. Satan has no longer the power of death. The keys of death and hades are in the hands of the Living One, who became dead and is now alive for evermore. The one who marred the creation of the God of peace has himself been marred, his power has been shattered. Through the death of the Son of God this has been accomplished; and the God of peace has brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep in the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus. Thus has God's holy character been vindicated; thus has His righteousness been declared; thus has every question that sin had raised been gloriously answered. Peace has been made by the blood of the cross, and the God of peace has been glorified thereby.

Satan can no longer hold men captive at his pleasure; he can no longer bind them at will with his cruel chains. A Stronger than he can deliver from his grasp. Men are being turned from the power of Satan unto God; they are being delivered out of the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. Such are justified through faith and are at peace with God. They know God as the God of peace.

“A mind at perfect peace with God,
Oh! what a word is this!
A sinner reconciled through blood—
This, this indeed is peace!”

In the assemblies of God's saints who have owned the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, having been gathered together into His name, the character of the God of peace should be manifested. Peace should prevail there. The characteristics of the kingdom of God into which such are brought are righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Those who are in the kingdom of God have been delivered from the authority of Satan in order that they

might represent the God of peace on earth. The kingdom of God to-day should foreshadow to all onlookers—to principalities and powers, to men and demons—the future perfect and eternal overthrow of Satan's power and the eternal destruction of his works. It should also foreshadow that time when the God of peace shall behold His creation in the enjoyment of His peace and righteousness dwelling there.

It is important that we should understand what God expects of us in this matter, so that we may ever have His ideal before us. We are commanded to pursue peace with all, to pursue the things of peace, to be at peace among ourselves; and all this in order that we may secure the presence of the God of love and peace among us.

Strife, confusion, tumult, and everything contrary to peace are not of God but are occasioned by the flesh. They are occasioned by Satan in measure being able to re-assert his power over us, even though we have been delivered from his grasp by the God of peace in order that the virtues of His character might be manifested by us individually and among us collectively.

There is a word of vital importance in Ephesians 4. 3: "Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Peace is that which binds all together in the unity of the Spirit. Having been brought together by the truth as taught by the one Spirit, all are bound and kept together by the uniting bond of peace. Let peace be taken from an assembly and the uniting bond is severed. Where unity and brotherly love prevailed, strife and sundering of hearts hold sway. In this we may surely learn how very solemn it is for any one to be guilty of robbing an assembly of the bond of peace. The one who creates strife by word or by deed is guilty of this solemn robbery. If the God of peace is known, if the blessedness of peace is enjoyed, if the value of that sacred

uniting bond is rightly estimated, surely every care will be exercised and every endeavour will be made to maintain that priceless treasure which is so difficult to recover once it is lost. It cannot be purchased with gold, human ingenuity cannot manufacture it, but, blessed be God, it can be kept since He has given it.

It is therefore clear that he is guilty of no light sin who creates in an assembly of God, where peace should reign, a scene of strife and discord. Let no one be deceived, such wisdom is not that which cometh from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by them that make peace.

“The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly” is a comforting promise. It should stimulate us to go forth, clad in the whole armour of God, to meet his subtle devices at present. He is a conquered foe, and his ultimate doom is certain, and it slumbers not. The God of peace shall rid His creation of the one who robbed it of peace. The issue then of the present conflict is not uncertain—we shall be more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

The Apostle Paul’s salutation in nearly every epistle that bears his name to an assembly is: “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” Herein is indicated the Source whence peace comes. As the God of peace is known, and as fellowship with Him is enjoyed, conformity to Him is produced in His saints, and His peace prevails amongst them. Grace from God is needed ere His peace can be enjoyed. Moreover grace and peace can only be multiplied as we increase in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

“ENVY.”

THERE are two words of the New Testament translated into the one English word envy. Speaking broadly the one is envy in a bad sense. The other, more generally, is envy that is good or desirable, being almost, if not quite altogether, expressive of PRAISE-WORTHY emulation.

As for envy in its evil sense the young believer shall do well in being zealous to keep himself free therefrom, both in his spirit and actions and aspirations. It is a terrible, yet alas! too common, malady. Apparently reckoned by certain to be a very virtue.

A few examples may suffice to awaken and warn as to the grievous pestilence. See Matt. 27. 18, Rom. 1. 29, 1 Tim. 6. 4 and 1 Pet. 2. 1. This last scripture may well be valued in the light of Titus 3. 3, which describes the awful place and power this has in all according to nature.

A wise writer of other days (1737) pithily inculcates what we wish to instil into our young reader's heart in connection with

DESIRABLE ENVY.

He says, “We ought by all means to note the difference between envy and emulation; which latter is a brave and noble thing, and quite of another nature, as consisting only in a generous imitation of something excellent; and that such an imitation as scorns to fall short of its copy, but strives, if possible, to outdo it.

“The emulator is impatient of a superior, not by depressing or maligning another, but by perfecting himself.

“So that while that sottish thing envy sometimes fills the whole soul, as a great dull fog does the air, this, on the contrary, inspires it with a new life and vigour, whets and stirs up all the powers of it to action. And surely that which does so (if we also abstract it from those heats

and sharpnesses that sometimes by accident may attend it) must needs be in the same degree lawful and laudable too, that it is for a man to make himself as useful and accomplished as he can."

Surely these words are worthy of keenest acceptance and response, since they do but set forth "envy" in its good sense; as to which let the following scriptures be duly fed upon—

1 Cor. 12. 31, "covet earnestly," the best gifts.

14. 1, "Desire," spiritual (gifts).

39, "covet."

2 Cor. 7. 7, "fervent mind."

11, "zeal."

Crowning all by obedience to 1 Cor. 14. 12 (A.V. marginal reading is correct), neglecting not 2 Tim. 2. 1-7, in the light of 1 Tim. 4. 12-16.

JOHN BROWN.

"CONSIDER THE LILIES, HOW THEY GROW."

THE smiling lily on the lea
Speaks of its great Creator's power;
The hand which made the land and sea
Has likewise formed the tender flower.

Consider then the lily's speech—
Cease from the cares of life awhile—
Its silent eloquence may teach
Thy careworn face to wear a smile.

'Tis God who clothes the lily fair
With root and stem, with leaf and flower;
His hand unfolds its beauties rare
In midnight's dews and noontide's hour.

No anxious thought at eve it knows ;
No morrow mars its smile to-day ;
In shade and shine it only grows
And grows in glory while it may.

No toil it knows, no effort makes,
No barn it fills with needless store ;
But morning unto morning wakes
To grow each day as heretofore.

O happy lily on the lea,
Clad in thy wealth from Nature's store,
Thy breath, thy drink God giveth thee,
Contented thou dost ask no more !

This is thy beauty's secret source,
The spring whence all thy verdure flows :
Confiding in thy God—perforce
Sweet fragrance with the zephyr blows.

Poor toiling saint with burdened heart,
With anxious thought and care oppressed,
Learn from a flower the artless art,
The secret of perpetual rest.

The God who clothes by power divine
The lily in its radiance fair
Thy God and Father is!—Ah! thine
Should be a life devoid of care.

The glory of earth's greatest king,
The splendour of man's fairest bower,
Go leave with scorn, and turn to sing
The greater glory of a flower !

MURMURING.

THE workings and effects hereof are of such a character and extent that we judge it indeed no misnomer to speak of murmuring as a "dangerous infection," even that "which taints, poisons, or corrupts," and the presence of which in any company bespeaks "exposure to suffering, loss, or evil."

"To be forewarned is to be forearmed"; and in His knowledge of our inherent weakness and tendencies, even though children of God, He has sought to put us on our guard lest we become victims to this infection, making shipwreck of the faith and involving others in our fall.

The question has well been asked, and need, deep and increasing, exists to-day for its oft reiteration, "Is it not a lamentable fact that the things concerning which God has said 'I would not have you ignorant' are the very things concerning which Christians in general are most grossly uninstructed?"

What hoary-headed traditions of fathers would have to be set aside as but the "commandments of men" were it different with the many in regard to the opening verses of 1 Corinthians 10.! Alas! that the work of Satan should still be so manifest all around, not to speak of his operations in and through the unregenerate, but in and through those who have been delivered from his grasp as sinners, and made to rejoice in the possession of eternal life. But yet is there not herein, saddening though it be, another proof of the inspiration of the Word of God? For does not it, with no uncertain sound, declare, "The time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine will turn away their ears *from the truth*, and turn aside *unto fables*" (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4)?

Should not holders and teachers of baby sprinkling blush

with very shame as they view their faith and practice in the light of this baptism "in the cloud and in the sea"? "Take heed what ye hear" was never more needed than it is to-day. Well do we remember the time, even after we obtained mercy unto eternal life, when on christening days we sang in the Established "Church" of Scotland—

We bring them, Lord, and with the sign
Of sprinkled water name them Thine;
Their souls with saving grace endow,
Baptize them with Thy Spirit now.

But we took so little heed to what therein we heard that we detected not the presence of the fable, the absence of the truth.

In 1 Corinthians 10. we have a people who could look back upon a dark past in an Egypt land under the tyranny of a Pharaoh; but though hated and evil entreated by him and his, they were loved by Jehovah Himself, who in mighty power comes down and secures their complete emancipation. Out and onward they go, led by Jehovah in the pillar of cloud by day, the pillar of fire by night (Exod. 13. 21).

Surely such manifestation of His presence with them will keep their hearts stedfast toward Himself! Not readily will they forget how the strength of His arm has been revealed for them! Alas! alas! though thus it well might have been, far otherwise was it; and what a picture of ingratitude and inconstancy does Israel present as we find them at the Red Sea in the knowledge of the approach of Pharaoh! "They were sore afraid," thus they showed their faithlessness. "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? It were better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." What base ingratitude!

We sometimes sing—

Of His grace have you received?
Still there's *more* to follow.

And such words find fitting application to Israel as now we see them. "Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will work for you to-day," are the reassuring words of Moses; and again He who was *with* them shows Himself *for* them (Exod. 14. 19).

Led by Jehovah. Protected by Jehovah. What unalloyed bliss ought not this to be!

The waters are divided. The children of Israel go into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground. The waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians went in after them. Jehovah looked forth upon the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and discomfited them. The waters returned and covered them, and Israel saw the great work which the Lord did, and they feared the Lord, and believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses (Exod. 14. 21-31).

Thus were all the fathers under the cloud, and all passed through the sea and were all baptized in the cloud and in the sea. Sharers in a common salvation, they were *all* now together in manifested acceptance of God's servant as their leader. *All* ate the same spiritual meat; *all* drank the same spiritual drink. Yet how sad, solemn, and searching the Divine commentary, "Howbeit with *most* of them God was not well pleased, for *they* were overthrown in the wilderness."

What a serious mistake he makes who imagines that, when saved from wrath and hell, that is all the will of God concerning him. The Corinthians to whom the Epistle we are looking at was sent could, and did, rejoice in such salvation, but they did not stop there. In Acts 18. 8 we read: "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." No waiting with them to consider whether they could not get to heaven without being baptized.

Enough for them that the word of the Lord enjoined it. They deemed it essential for them to do whatever He commanded. But there was no resting here even after baptism. Neither may there be with thee, O child of God, *if* God's Word has to guide and God's will to be realized. 1 Corinthians 1. 2: the church of God in Corinth. The saved, baptized ones together. Such was, such is, God's wish and will. And yet together not as an isolated company having no responsibility towards other like companies in other parts, but linked together with all such, and forming the one community (1 Cor. 1. 9). No more can the will of God be effected in and through a church in isolation than it can in and through an individual Christian. He must be, and she must be, joined to and linked with others. See 2 Tim. 2. 22, 2 Cor. 1. 1.

All this, we have seen, was known and enjoyed by the Corinthians. Do we know it and enjoy it? But ah! look again at Israel. God with them. God for them. Yea, God in the midst of them.

Murmuring, we have seen, characterized them as they came *to* the Red Sea. Murmuring characterizes them as they go *from* the Red Sea, but yet again Jehovah manifests Himself in longsuffering mercy, and meets their every need (Exod. 15. 24, 25). We pass on till we find them on the borders of the promised land. Ah, doubtless now, after all the continued goodness and faithfulness of the Lord, they will be turned aside from following Him by no one and nothing.

The spies return with their report. Truly a land flowing with milk and honey. So say all. But ten say: "We be not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we," and the people believe them. What murmuring now breaks out throughout the entire host! From the very verge of the consummation of their longings they would fain make them a captain to lead them back to

captivity. But the darkness of the background but serves to show up with more startling effect the bright characters of a Caleb and a Joshua. "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land. The Lord is with us: fear them not."

But their words found no responsive chords in the hearts of the people. Yea, these two faithful ones but put their lives in jeopardy in seeking to encourage their hearts in the Lord, for all the congregation bade stone them with stones. Ere, however, this wicked purpose could be accomplished the God who honours faith showed Himself on behalf of those whose hearts were perfect toward Him: "And the glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of meeting unto all the children of Israel" (Num. 14. 10).

See the dire results of murmuring in the sore and solemn words of the Lord Himself (Num. 14. 22-35). It is not always that "the mills of God grind slowly," though we question not "they grind exceeding small," for here judgment, swift and calamitous, overtakes the men, every one a prince among them too, who discouraged the people (Num. 14. 36, 37).

What has God not to bear from His loved and His own? When He would that we go forward, we stand still. Would He have us stand, we rush forward. Both alike are disastrous. We have seen Israel standing still when God would have them go forward. We have heard the condemnation of the Lord, and witnessed the lighting down of the arm of His wrath. But now, though He hath said, "Ye shall not enter," they presume in lip confession of their sin so to do. The result is told in few but plain and solemn words (Num. 14. 45).

Surely, fellow saints, there is in all this sufficient—yea, might we not say more than sufficient?—to cause us indeed to watch with zealous, jealous care lest murmuring obtain a foothold amongst us. How rapidly it spreads! How

disastrous its results! But we turn from the inexorable decree to the people, Numbers 14. 30: "Surely *ye shall not come into the land*" to the saddening scene of Moses' fall; and as we turn the searchlight of the Word of God thereon, and behold therein the terrible operations of murmuring in its effect upon others, as witnessed in the hasty words and *uncommanded* action of a Moses with the expressed disapproval of the Lord in the woful words, "*Ye shall not bring this assembly into the land*" (Num. 20. 1-12), do we not, beloved, see reason indeed for the admonition, "Neither murmur ye"?

"Do all things without murmurings" (Phil. 2. 14). "Using hospitality without murmuring" (1 Pet. 4. 9). Such but show that the place of privilege is the place of responsibility, and in a measure tell out God's will that, being *where* He would have us be, it is ours further to seek to know the all-sufficiency of His grace unto our being *what* He would have us. We note peace, tranquillity, contentment as antithetical to murmuring, the consideration of all which affords opportunity of study both pleasant and profitable.

"Why all this talk?" some say. "No danger of our murmuring." God anticipated such; hence, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed."

In conclusion, we suggest as the Divine antidote to this dangerous infection the habitual rejoicing in the Lord. No room for discontent and grumbling where this obtains. Is it not thus the Apostle, in considering the dangers of the pathway, the thousand and one things that are apt to trip us up, seeks to cast us upon the Lord Himself in the very encouraging words, "God is faithful: who will not suffer you to be tried above that ye are able" (1 Cor. 10. 13)?

"If God be for us, who against us?" Himself hath said, "I will in no wise *fail* thee, neither will I in any wise *forsake* thee" (Heb. 13. 5). Thus assured of His *presence*

with us, the exceeding greatness of His *power for us*, surely we will hear and heed "Murmur not."

JOHN P. A. TAYLOR.

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

NOTES ON EZEKIEL 37. ILLUSTRATING PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURAL UNITY.

(Continued from page 104.)

IN the organization, regulation and control which is characteristic of this "exceeding great army," there is the extension of the principles already considered from the individual to the company—principles of divine origin and character which clearly and fully declare that "God is not the author of confusion." These truly the natural "will of man" and "of the flesh" resents and resists, for "it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be"; and such principles and practices as find their expression in words, actions and ways that declare, "Who is lord of us?" are but the result, and prove how many of, and how much, even the children of God are controlled thereby. It is not so here however, and the words "these bones they are the whole house of *Israel*" suggest much indeed when viewed in the light of Genesis 32. 27, 28. It is not the house of *Jacob* who in the strength of natural will and wisdom schemes and plans, and thereafter expects God's blessing; but in the known and acknowledged weakness of the one whose natural will is broken and natural energy paralysed, clings to the Almighty arm of God, and "out of weakness is made strong," and as *Israel* (a prince of God) has power with God and with man. This "exceeding great army" then, as to its constitution and government, presented in parable and figure here, supplies principles of scriptural unity for any and every time, past, present and future.

“The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick then take another stick and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand” (vv. 15-17). This then is the parable which is well calculated to arouse exercise, to cause inquiry and to call forth the question, “Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these things?” and that such a question might yet be asked as evidencing exercise and inquiry after God’s will and way in this present day we would most earnestly and sincerely pray, which we would hail with gratitude and thankfulness as the beginning of a work of God, amongst His much scattered and divided people.

These two sticks present His people of old thus scattered and divided, in isolation and independency, as the sure and certain result of departure from God and His ordinances. These are now joined together! These now become one! How? In one hand—the hand of the Lord God. “I will take!” “I will gather!” “I will bring!” “I will make them one nation!” “One King shall be King to them all.” “They all shall have one Shepherd.” “They shall also walk in *my judgments*,” “and observe *my statutes*, and do *them*.” What a contrast to the days and the condition when there was “no king in Israel,” and “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” and “that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.” Now they are “*together*” in the acceptance and acknowledgement of the one King of Jehovah’s appointment, ruled by Him and shepherded by Him. “*Together*,” likewise in the appreciation of His judgments and the observance of His statutes. One Authority! One Will! One Word!

All this is very simple, very practical and very possible to the company and companies where and when it is firstly true of the individual. What then is the result? “Peace,” and further, “multiplication.” Not a false peace and a false

multiplication. Not peace at any and all costs, and every means and methods to get the numbers; but peace based upon righteousness, and an increase with "the increase of God." Thus, in the realized and manifested presence and power of God, will it be known and acknowledged "that God is in you of a truth." "Happy indeed is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is the people whose God is the Lord." These principles have obtained in the past; they will yet obtain in the future; and they abide for the present.

DAVID SMITH.

(To be concluded if the Lord will.)

HYMN.

Tune, AURELIA.

Where two or three are gathered into My Name, there am I in the midst of them.

GATHERED, O Lord, unto Thee,
 We own none other name;
 The knee we bow before Thee,
 Our heart responds the same.

In spirit we would praise Thee
 For love so freely given,
 Unworthy ones before Thee
 Made meet to dwell in Heaven.

Thou, O our sinless Saviour,
 Who gav'st Thyself for us,
 O risen Lord, we hail Thee
 In adoration thus.

No self, no work, no plea, Lord,
 Other than Thee we know;
 Thy presence here we see, Lord,
 Our hearts with praise o'erflow.

E. J. O.

THE NEW COVENANT.

A COVENANT is a compact; it suggests conditions binding upon the contractors and mutual liabilities. In the covenants which God has made with man there has sometimes been the idea of mutual contract, and sometimes this has been wanting. But generally the covenants have partaken of the character of a promise on the part of God to do something for man altogether apart from any return that man was able to make; so that they are hardly covenants in the strict sense of the English word.

In Genesis there are three covenant promises—the first with creation, the second and third being the two covenants into which the Apostle Paul divides the promises made to Abraham (Gal. 3. ~~1~~ 24)

That made with creation through Noah ensured to man and beast and everything that had life an uninterrupted continuation of these physical conditions which are necessary for the existence of life—sunshine and rain, seedtime and harvest. And be it noted this covenant promise is made when God smells from Noah's sacrifice a sweet savour of the perfect offering of the Coming One who should remove earth's curse and establish all things upon a sure and eternally righteous basis.

The second, made through Abraham, had more of the compact or contracting idea than the first. It promised blessing to all who owned Jehovah as the One God, and although settled in a peculiar manner upon the direct descendants of Abraham contained equal blessing for all who bowed to the Divine will, and was really a covenant with man through Abraham.

The third was with the Seed of Abraham—the Seed,

as Paul argues in Gal. 3., being Christ—promising blessing through Him upon all nations.

The point to be noticed in connection with the Noah covenant and the Abraham covenant is that they were made in view of the coming of One who should establish them eternally.

The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth, but the sweet savour of the burnt offering spoke of Him who already had said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," and in Him were given seedtime and harvest and summer and winter; and never again would God smite every living thing for man's sake.

But more: God would give increase and bless richly and abundantly. Not measure for measure would harvest yield of the necessities of life, but a hundredfold to the righteous. And God gave a standard of righteousness and ensured increase to the righteous one. And again it was in view of Him who alone could do these things and live in them.

These covenants prove how completely dependent man was upon the goodness and bounty of God: that not only did he owe his creature existence to the Creator, but also the wherewithal to support it: that sunshine and rain, day and night, fruitful season and harvest were not a matter of course, but the good gifts of a gracious God secured to man by covenant. Rightly apprehended they should have focussed the hopes of the world on that coming day. And not from the east only, but from north and south and west as well should have flowed to the feet of the Lord tokens of tribute and worship.

But we read of a New Covenant. And the question arises: What relation has this New Covenant to those older ones?

The answer is, none—absolutely no relation whatever.

When the fulness of the time had come, when the

promises and covenants were about to be for ever ratified, the Fulfiller of them all was slain. God had been faithful; but man in his blind wickedness destroyed the hope of the world; the cross annulled every promise and destroyed every covenant.

It is the story of the vineyard; and to apprehend how completely man had destroyed every claim that he had upon God, it must be realized that Christ was in every sense the Heir. It must be repeated then that the covenant made through Noah ensuring to every creature the necessities of life was an earnest of the blessing that should flow to creation when the Seed should come. And it must also be repeated that if the righteous of mankind could count upon increase it was for the same reason. Here then is the Heir; and when the husbandmen had worked their wicked will upon Him there only remained the awful question: What then shall the Lord of the vineyard do?

A New Covenant: the very name tells of unspeakably patient grace—grace beyond all words. The old ones had ceased to be valid; man had destroyed them, and with them, as has already been said, every claim that he had upon God.

It was on the night of His betrayal that the Lord first spoke of it. And He Who held and might withhold everything that creation needed, by whose grace man had been permitted to gain a livelihood from a cursed ground, gave again, and ensured, at any rate to His own, the necessities of life. He took bread and, when He had given thanks, brake it and gave it to them. He took the cup and, when He had given thanks, gave it them to drink, and told them it was the New Covenant in His blood.

Glory to God for His matchless grace, we know it to be true. Having loved His own, He loved them unto the end. What He held in His own right, what was His and His alone to give, He willed to His beloved, and died that the

testament might be put in force, and from bread and wine—meat and drink—to eternal life He has given us all and secured it to us in His blood.

And it is in this act that the testamental aspect of the New Covenant is seen. A Testament and a Covenant are two entirely different things. The former is a legal instrument whereby the possessor of goods and estate makes these over to another to be possessed by him, and only comes into force on the death of the testator. Hence the argument on this aspect of the New Covenant in Heb. 9.: For where a testament is there must of necessity be the death of him that made it for doth it ever avail while he that made it liveth? Well might the Lord say as He gave us the wherewithal to support our life: "This is My body, which is for you."

Lord's Day after Lord's Day we come together round a table upon which are spread

Only bread and only wine

out of all the rich store which the Lord has secured for us, but in which it is His will to be remembered by His own collectively, and we

Glory in the fulness
Of Him Who meets our need.

But day by day, and several times a day, we sit down to tables more richly spread, and of this the Apostle says: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" And are they not? Could they have been ours apart from the *New Covenant*—the testament of grace which gave them to us at the price of His body and shed blood? for in a rejected Christ the world had forfeited everything—seedtime and harvest, sunshine and rain, meat

and drink, everything. Nothing remained but death and judgment.

And on that first day of the week we have been up, as it were, with the firstfruits of the New Covenant—the bread and wine; we have confessed in almost the language of the Israelite: “A Syrian ready to perish was my father,” and tried again to tell out the grace of our God. But God said to the Israelite: “Thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee.” That basket contained only the firstfruits, and for the increase there was to be corresponding appreciation. Do we also discern in our increase the giver and the cost, and rejoice in corresponding degree in every good thing that the Lord our God hath given unto us?

And who shall say that under the New Covenant the blessing of the child of God and the inheritance of the child of God are only spiritual in contrast to an old covenant in which God promised temporal blessing? “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things?” Does not the greater ever include the less?

The epistle to the Ephesians, which opens with the amazing revelation of the exalted and heavenly calling of the child of God, concludes with the fifth commandment: “Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou shalt live long on the earth.”

It is true now as it was in David's day that the wicked flourish. But true also to-day is David's experience: “I have been young, and now I am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” For if some of the wicked do flourish in this day of grace it is certainly not the righteous who fill the workhouses.

In the New Covenant the Lord has given us everything from meat and drink to eternal life; and all that lies between of increase temporal and spiritual is within the

reach of the saint. "This grace wherein we stand" is a large place, and what it holds for the saints of God who go forward in it has yet to be found out by each.

Let us then rejoice the more in every good thing that the Lord our God hath given unto us, that He may have from His redeemed the discernment and appreciation of the grace that gives the sun to shine, the rain and fruitful harvest, the bread and wine, and every good thing, and may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

G. S. McNAIRN.

TRUTH *VERSUS* ERROR.

MAN'S RUIN.

WOMAN deceived by Satan's subtle lie,
 Suggesting, "Yea, surely ye shall not die,"
 Controls the ear, the eye, the heart, the hand,
 To set aside God's plain, distinct command.
 Much mischief further still by him is wrought,
 For man, too, into Satan's snare is brought;
 And consequences dread and dark befall;
 For sin and Satan's power them enthrall.
 Oh! sad and awful consequence of sin,
 Man's heart and hand and feet from God to win;
 And at the will of Satan thus to stray,
 His slave becoming; for such him obey.
 Yet Mercy lingers over earth's dark scene,
 And stays back judgment which had surely been;
 While Cherubim proclaim God's full demand,
 And our first parents outside Eden stand.

GOD'S REMEDY.

Judgment and Mercy, pillars of God's throne,
 By which He wills His purpose to make known;

Righteous in judgment, while He doth display
 Mercy so great to all who Him obey.
 Mercy and Truth, together, now have met,
 While righteousness and peace their answer get;
 Redemption's plan displayeth all combined,
 Wondrous expression of the infinite mind.
 Man's greatest efforts Eden ne'er can gain,
 And all his deeds of merit are in vain;
 God's love provides a sacrifice for sin,
 And clothes the guilty with the coats of skin.
 The Victim dieth in their room and stead;
 For sin, to make atonement, blood was shed;
 A ransom found, which meets with God's esteem,
 Proclaiming He is righteous to redeem.

D. S.

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.

"FAITHFULNESS."

SEVEN times over in the Holy Scriptures God is declared to be faithful. Likewise the blessed Lord Jesus Christ is seven times spoken of as being faithful. There are at least seven heroes of Old Testament days named as having been faithful; as also seven of New Testament times, while one woman's hospitality was accepted under the challenge as to whether she was adjudged "faithful to the Lord." *act*

All which may well inspire the young believer to seek, as beloved by God, to be an imitator of Him in this respect; as also to find stimulation to follow in His steps who has given such example. Then by the fact that men of like passions were indeed such, affords to the young believer as his unceasing "motto," "Never despair," and a continuous encouragement by "Excelsior."

All this moreover as sustained by the spirit of 2 Corinthians 4. 7-10. The exhortation and revelation of Psalm 31. 23 may well be revelled in, "O love the Lord ye His saints, for the Lord preserveth the faithful and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer."

Because some may not have any ready means of finding out the above we subjoin tables thereof. But this in the entreatful hope that every saying shall be carefully perused, as also the context thereof, since the bearings are very, very far reaching.

GOD IS FAITHFUL.

- Deut. 7. 9.
- 1 Cor. 1. 9.
- " 10. 13.
- 1 Thess. 5. 24.
- Heb. 10. 23.
- 1 Pet. 4. 19.
- 1 John 1. 9.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS FAITHFUL.

- 2 Thess. 3. 3.
- 2 Tim. 2. 13.
- Heb. 2. 17.
- " 3. 2.
- Rev. 1. 5.
- " 3. 14.
- " 19. 11.

MEN WHO WERE FAITHFUL.

Moses.	Num. 12. 7.	Timothy.	1 Cor. 4. 17.
Zadok.	1 Sam. 2. 35.	Tychicus.	Eph. 6. 21.
Samuel.	" 3. 20.	Epaphras.	Col. 1. 7.
* David.	1 Sam. 22. 14.	Onesimus.	" 4. 9.
Hananiah.	Neh. 7. 2.	Paul.	1 Tim. 1. 12.
Daniel.	Dan. 6. 4.	Silvanus.	1 Pet. 5. 12.
* Abraham.	Gal. 3. 9.	Antipas.	Rev. 2. 13.
<i>Men</i>	<i>2 Chron 34-12</i>		

The young believer shall do well to earnestly cultivate this venerable habit of daily life. For the importance hereof, see Luke 12. 42.

Observe the PRINCIPLE of true faithfulness, as enunciated by the Lord Himself in Luke 16. 10-13.

Note well the opportune time and place for faithfulness, even—

“HERE,

moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful” (1 Cor. 4. 2, R. V.).

A faithful man may be known. See 2 Timothy 2. 2.

What a happy example thereof is he of 3 John 5: “Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in *whatsoever* thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal.”

Nor should any forget that having obtained mercy of the Lord, it is in the expectation that such an one shall be faithful (1 Cor. 7. 25).

Neither should the possible stigma and reproach of Proverbs 25. 19 be lightly feared, since “Confidence in an *unfaithful* man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth and a foot out of joint.”

They dealt unfaithfully, like their fathers (Ps. 78. 57).

What is, or shall be, the record by Him of thee and me? He taketh note (1 Pet. 1. 17).

JOHN BROWN.

THE WORD BECAME FLESH.

WE cannot with the naked eye look at the sun: its glory and brilliance is too great. We can distinguish nothing of the wealth of colours which emanate from it because in their wonderful purity and refinement these colours blend into one hue, and our unaided senses cannot distinguish them as they proceed directly from their source to us.

We can see them however, but it is only when they fall upon some object near to us and are reflected from it, some object in our own little world; and so they are conveyed to our senses by means of something to which our senses are more accustomed.

Thus the sunlight falls upon a cloud and the cloud glows with orange and crimson; and all the glory of a sunset is but the translation to us in simpler forms of the combined glory of colour which the sun is ever sending out.

It is only in the Lord Jesus that the glory of the invisible God can be understood by us. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Here was something that we could apprehend—"Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we beheld and our hands handled," says the Apostle John. He was a man and we can understand a man. If the glory of the invisible God can be translated into the deeds and words of a man, then that glory comes within the range of our apprehension—"And we beheld His glory full of grace and truth."

Thus in the face of Jesus Christ is to be seen and read and known and understood the glory of the blessed God.

But further, that glory hath shined into our hearts.

The clouds translate to us the colours of the sunlight; but so do the flowers in the hedgerow. Each has a capacity for reflecting certain rays of the light that fall upon it, and as we gaze at and enjoy the varying shades and delicate tints we are only getting again faint reflections and translations of the colour of that blazing orb above us. So we also can display and translate to those around us something of the light that is shining into our hearts.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

THE love of God is an inexhaustible theme. We should never tire hearing of it, nor should we weary in proclaiming it. Well it is for us if it holds our hearts and occupies our thoughts.

There is one thing however that often obtrudes itself and mars our joy. That is our love to God. We often search our hearts in vain to find anything there for God that is really worthy of the name of love. This being so we are cast down and mourn that we can show so little return for the love which He has bestowed so unstintingly on us. It may be also that as we hear others speak we

think that they love God in a manner in which we do not; and we reason with ourselves that if we could truly use the language that they do we should be so happy.

But let us ask the question, How do we know that God loves us? The answer surely is, We know He loves us because of the Gift which He gave—"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." "Hereby know we love because He laid down His life for us." The cross declares God's love toward us. Gazing by faith at the cross of Christ we can truthfully say, "We know and have believed the love which God hath in us."

Now what does God desire from us? Surely He looks for love from us in return for the wondrous love He has bestowed on us. How shall we know if we are giving to God that love which He desires, and which we ourselves long to yield in greater measure? By looking within ourselves and searching there for some feeling which we might call love? No, indeed! God loved, God gave His Son. As we behold the gift we learn of the love that was behind it. So we read, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." The evidence that we love God is this—that we keep His commandments. The Lord Jesus said, "If a man love Me he will keep My word."

So we may thus learn that love is not merely a feeling within us nor a thing of words: it is something that produces works. We should often be happier as Christians were we certain that we loved God more. Then let us bend our energies to doing His will, for it is by this alone that we can know that we love Him. Our love to God is not to be measured by our feeling but by our keeping of His commandments. The measure in which we do the will of God is the measure of our love. Every other standard is false.

G. M.

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

WE are frequently enjoined in Scripture to love one another. Truly love is the fulfilling of the law—love to God and love to our neighbour.

To love our neighbour is sometimes one of the most difficult things we are commanded to do. Possibly it is because of this that God so often urges the necessity of it, and gives it such an important place. Sometimes perhaps we find it difficult to love Christians with whom we are in fellowship. Their ways and words irritate us, and we think we see many things about them that repel rather than draw us to them. We have perhaps to sit beside them on the same seat, and we know that our feelings toward them are displeasing to God. We have mourned over the matter, we have prayed to God about it and tried to put it away from us, but still it rises up again and again.

Now the only way out of the difficulty is to obey the command of the Lord to love our neighbour *as ourselves*. Peter, who exhorts us to love one another, goes on to tell how it is to be done, and says, "Be pitiful, be courteous." So when evil thoughts regarding our brother arise in our mind, let us banish them; when tempted to say something wicked about him, let us by the grace of God not say it. Love is not a sentiment, a feeling; love does certain things, and again there are things that love does not do. Therefore let us act toward others as we would act toward ourselves, let us do to them as we would they should do to us.

The Levite who came and looked on the man battered and bleeding by the wayside possibly thought that he loved him; but he passed by without *doing* anything. Actions speak louder than words. It was the man who proved his compassion by what he did that truly loved him.

In 1 Corinthians 13. there are many worthy things said

about love. One is that it suffereth long and is kind. So that to love is to be long-suffering and to be kind. Now if love were merely a feeling or a sentiment, it would be somewhat difficult to attain to it, and equally difficult to know when we had really attained to it. It is evidently something else, however; something which we can cultivate, something which we all have the power to put into operation. Hence it is possible to love our neighbour, and particularly our brother, as ourselves.

Therefore let us be as kind to our brethren and sisters as we are to ourselves and we will be loving them as ourselves. Let us not say anything to them or about them that would hurt. Let us do them good and speak good of them whenever we have opportunity. Let us exercise the kindness of the love of God toward them and we shall compass all that it is said love does. Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

G. M.

BIBLE WOMEN: HELPS AND HINDERERS.

EVE.

WITH the desire to help sisters in Christ, and particularly the young in Christ, we take up the above subject, so full of interest, seeking the help of the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. We must go back to the beginning and commence with "the mother of all living," who was builded by God into a woman, and brought by God unto the man.

The purpose for which Eve was given to Adam is definitely stated, even

to be a helpmeet for him;

for the Lord God had said: "It is not good for the man to be alone." Before going further, let us grasp the fact that it was God's purpose from the beginning that

WOMAN SHOULD BE A HELP.

Alas! alas! the first woman, instead of being a help, became

A HINDERER,

and was the means of her husband's ruin, as well as being the one who brought ruin upon the whole human race.

"Adam was not beguiled, but the woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression" (1 Tim. 2. 14 R.V.).

Oh what sad failure! Oh what sad results have followed! She who was the mother of all living became the mother of all dying! We see it, we know it, we feel it to-day, although nearly six thousand years have rolled since then, and our hearts might well sink within us but for

Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding.

Ears and eyes, tongue and hands all yielded to Satan! What a lesson there is here to learn! Well may women in Christ cry earnestly

Help me, Lord, that I may be
Ever, only all for Thee.

Then, like Eve, they may know for themselves through grace "The help of the Lord" (Gen. 4. 1, R.V.).

ETERNAL LIFE.

CHILD of God and heir of glory!

Owner of eternal life!

Pressing homeward to God's mansions!

Through earth's sorrows and its strife—

Life eternal!—say, what is it?

Try afresh to grasp the thought:

It is something worth perusing

Since by blood of Christ 'twas bought.

'Tis not like our earthly pleasures

Sweet and lovely while they last:

Yet the very fairest shadowed—

Knowing all will soon be past.

Ah, no! child of light and glory,
 It is something more than this—
 Dost thou know it in its fulness?
 Canst thou fathom all its bliss?

When the ages have waxed hoary,
 Worn-out worlds have ceased to be,
 Fresh with dews of early morning
 Life eternal waits for thee.

As the early flower of spring-time—
 All the summer yet to come—
 So the Spring of life eternal
 Will be as it were begun.

Lift then, child of grace and glory,
 Lift from earth thy gaze above,
 Till thy brimming cup of gladness
 Overflows in speechless love.

Bathe *now* in the boundless ocean
 Of God's love, so vast, so free!
 Since thou'lt drink of Life's full fountain
 Through a glad eternity.

More abundant life possessing,
 Onward press—nor doubt, nor fear!
 Till, thy pilgrimage completed,
 Thou the blissful shout shalt hear.

Rise, my love, and leave earth's shadows,
 Come where Spring eternal glows,
 Where of Life the gushing river
 Clear as crystal ever flows.

From the throne the water issues,
 Which thy parched lips loved below,
 Come, and drinking without measure,
 Life eternal fully know!

THE LORD AND MASTER.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY C. M. LUXMOORE ON JOHN 13.

You will observe from the very first verse that the prominent thought here is not at all the thought of offering for sin, however important that may be—and how important it is no mind can know, no tongue can tell—but the thought here is that He is going to the Father, that He is going to depart out of the world. The Cross, with all that the Cross meant, is (one might almost say) left out of sight: you go beyond the Cross for the purpose of this scripture. He knows that He is going unto the Father; and more than that, He knows that the Father has given all things into His hands; and not only that, He knows that He came forth from God and goeth unto God; that is to say, the Scripture which cannot be broken—the Scripture which was written in words not that man's wisdom teacheth, but in words which the Holy Spirit teacheth—the Scripture presents Him to us in the full consciousness of His eternal glory; it carries our mind back to the words that are written at the commencement of this Gospel according to John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." He knowing this, with this present in His mind, ariseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments, and He took a towel and girded Himself.

He had been reclining at that table amidst His beloved and His own; and though He was a man in the flesh at that table, in the dignity which belonged to Him as the veritable Son of God, surrounded by His chosen ones, He was the-Prince of Peace, the Father of eternity,

Himself the One come out from God, and going back to God. He arises, He rises up for service; He rises up from His seat, His place of honour and dignity; feeble emblem of that other rising up when He came from off the Father's throne and descended to this earth, and girded Himself for service; as then, so here, He, knowing Who He was, and whence He was, and whither He was going, rises up and takes a towel. He lays aside His garments, and instead of garments He takes a towel, and girds with the towel His under garments that they might not impede Him for His service. A constant Eastern custom is here alluded to. The girding always speaks of preparation for service or warfare, or the like. And in this case it was with a towel He girded Himself. And He not only prepares Himself for service, He works, He serves—"He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet." He has no one to do anything for Him. Was there ever a time in the whole world's history that told out what was in the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ more than this did? His actions here show Him in His divine nature, not now doing that which the many can see, but here in the privacy of that upper room, with the twelve around Him, He poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.

So He comes to Simon Peter. He (Simon Peter) saith unto Him, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" Who of us would not say, "Had I been there, I would have liked to have been Peter to have remonstrated with the Lord Jesus Christ? My feet to be washed by Thee! The feet, of me, a poor sinful man! and Thou, the Lord of Life and Glory, Thou, the Great One! Thou art the Teacher, we the disciples; Thou art the Master, we the servants. Dost Thou wash my feet?" Surely the Lord Himself was setting an example to those of whom it was afterwards written, "They

turned the world upside down." So here, He Himself was turning old accepted customs upside down as He, the Master, kneeled to wash the servants' feet.

Jesus answered and said unto him, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt understand hereafter." Peter said unto Him, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." I can never permit that. I can never suffer that Thou shouldst stoop so low for me. I could never allow that Thou shouldst stoop to menial service for me.

Ah, Peter, think not only of that which thine eye can see, of that only which is so manifest now before thine unbelieving face. There are deeper realities to be seen behind that basin of water, Peter; there is a deeper meaning in that towel. Thou knowest not yet what I am doing, but thou shalt understand hereafter.

Jesus answered him, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me."

No part with Thee, no share in Thee! Nought to do with Thee, my Master! "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." How the Lord comes round His children. He would stoop to serve them, and they would remonstrate and say, No. Let Him but make it clear that it is a needful part of all He does; let Him but put the alternative—this or nothing—then we hear the heart of Peter beating true to the Lord. No part with Thee! No share in Thee!—not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Not content to walk as Thou shalt bid, would that my hands too might be clean to do Thy service; would also that my head might be so cleansed that all my thoughts might be clean and pleasing to Thee.

But the Lord has His own way. And it is the Lord Himself Who puts the feet on a different footing to everything else. "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet. Ye are clean, but not all." That is, not each one of you twelve. "For He knew who should betray Him; therefore

said He, Ye are not all clean. So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and had sat down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well, for so I am." The Lord Jesus never threw a shade of doubt upon His place, His position, His character, amongst them. He was their Lord, He was their Teacher. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant (slave) is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Read on to end of verse 20. Then we might omit the next few verses referring to Judas and his going out, and pass on to verse 31, and read to verse 35.

Amidst all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us, while looking at His actings in grace on the one hand, we may forget on the other, how broad, how deep, how full, how wondrous is His love. The Scripture before us speaks of how low He could stoop, how He could gird Himself, and how He could care for the little things which pertain to the welfare of His own. If we look at this incident in itself, it is a very little thing, one might say, whether their feet were clean or not; a very little thing that He should stoop to wash their feet.

Whatever else we may learn from it, it shows the care that He had, and that He has, over the feet of His own beloved ones. If we will take it, the simplest, the plainest way to apply it is to something more than the actual literal feet. More aptly and accurately, then, let us apply it to the walk of those who are saved, and to that part of their walk that is nearest the earth. We walk with our feet, and with our legs and with our whole body; but it is the feet that are in actual contact with the earth; and so

it is the feet here that the cleansing extends to. We see the Lord Jesus Christ Himself stooping down to wash their feet; we see no repulsion on His part from whatever there might be repulsive in the dirt. He, the Lord of Life and Glory, deigning to remove those travel stains that were upon their feet. He condescending so to do with gentlest, tenderest touch and kindest love; nor leaving His task half done, nor having any one to wait upon Him and to do that which was unpleasant in the same; but doing it all Himself, from first to last, in tenderest, gracious, kindest love. Such is the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Let this mind be in you,” says the Apostle Paul, who I doubt not had often heard this incident related: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, Who being in the form of God, thought not His equality with God a thing to be grasped at, but humbled Himself.” And oh, how deep He came down! to serve, to wait upon, to be always doing something for His beloved and His own. And now He has gone into heaven, and He is there, thank God, at the right hand of the majesty on high. As God speaks—“Wherefore, God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name that is above every name.” As He humbled Himself, so has God exalted Him. What are the depths of His humiliation? So has God honoured Him. What were the little things in which He showed His love? For every one of those little things there is a mark of approbation from His Father. And, mark it well, the chapter here speaks of Him in connection with the Father: like Father, like Son. He was His Father’s own Son, as the same apostle who wrote the gospel said in another place, He was “the Son of the Father.”

We are taught that He did this, above all things, not only in tender care for their then need, “but,” said He, “that ye should do as I have done to you.” That ye should have the same tender care for one another that I have

shown to you. It was as though He had said, you should hesitate at nothing, no ease or comfort should take the place of this service one towards another. We see Him there getting off that couch on which He reclined, where He had been at that meal that they were eating together; He would not rest when there was something to be done. All that speaks to us that our own comfort, our own pleasure, should never hinder our serving one another.

He laid aside His garments, for the garments would have hindered Him in His work. Oh, how much there is of which the garments speak in regard to us. How true it is as to the manner of life, and habits, and ways that we have, of which garments ever speak, when they would hinder us from helping one another. He laid aside His garments, but mark the difference, it is not here the enemy rending off His garments, it is not here those who would take from Him that which His mother had given Him, and cast lots for it, it is what He did Himself. He laid aside His garments. Oh, if we would be like Him, we will be ready to lay aside our garments.

And He took a towel, and girded Himself; He prepared Himself to serve. And I would say—to young men above all—remember there can be no service for God, there can be no rising to positions of dignity in the Kingdom of God, which God Himself gives, apart from the first humiliation of girding oneself with a towel to serve in the place of the lowly one.

Oh, I would say to young men, covet to be deacons of Jesus Christ, for they that have deaconised, or ministered well, earn to themselves a good degree. There are no honours, no dignities in the Kingdom of God that are not distributed as the result of merit. There are dignities in the kingdom of England: there are “Honourable,” and “Right Honourable” persons, and it is sometimes said there are “Wrong Honourables”; but in the kingdom of God all Whom He honours

are honourable indeed. "If any man serve Me," says the Lord Jesus Christ, "him will My Father honour." And whenever there is a child of God who gets him down from his couch and lays aside his garments in love to his brethren, to wash their feet and to wipe them with the towel, never is there such an one but he is sure of honour from the Father, because that is honouring the Son, and what the Son has done. The Son has set for us such an example as this that all may follow it, and they are sure of honour, they are sure of a place of dignity in the Kingdom of God. We read of the honours and dignities that the sovereign distributes to those who merit them. Remember, then, that our God is a king who gives dignities worthy of the highest ambition, decorations that shall be worn throughout eternity, that shall be given by God to those who serve His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is to be served by His disciples washing one another's feet.

Oh! that there were more ambition to do the lowly things that He doth set an example of. If there was, there would be more fitness amongst God's servants for other things which He may yet give to be done.

God help us then, that as we read, and as we admire, and are thankful for all that our Lord Jesus Christ did and was, we may be ambitious too, like Him, to get His Father's "well done," and honour from His God and Father.

(Communicated by W. Cox.)

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES.

EZEK. 37. (*Continued.*)

ILLUSTRATING PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURAL UNITY.

THE desire for, and endeavour after, unity, was never perhaps so prevalent and widespread, both in the social and religious world, as now. Yet what is the character of that unity that is sought? Is it not, after all, but uniformity? Is it not but the fulfilment, in principle at least, of Isa. 8. 9, 12. "Associate YOURSELVES," "A confederacy," "A confederacy," or again, as of old, "Let us make us a name, *lest we be scattered*" (Gen. 11. 4); that which is *not* for the honour of the Lord, but for the interests, exaltation, and glory of the creature. It evidences the characteristics of the times and betrays principles at work, which are not christian, but antichristian, even "the mystery of lawlessness which doth already work" (2 Thess. 2. 7). These speedily have their development and manifestation in a universal acceptance and acknowledgement of the throne of lawlessness (Psalm 94. 20), and the rule and reign of "the lawless one" (2 Thess. 2. 8) of Satanic origin and Satanic appointment. In very definite and striking contrast to this is God's purpose for those who are his, in this present age, as associated with the acceptance and acknowledgement of His Son, Chosen and Anointed by Himself, as their one and only Lord. Of Him, as well as to Him, God speaks in the words of Heb. 1. 8, 9, in language never before nor since addressed to, nor of, any other one. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom; Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity (lawlessness), therefore, God, even Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." No fuller nor greater expression of appreciation could be

given than has been given to God's Son, in the words here spoken of Him; in the place given to Him; and in the honour thus conferred upon Him. Owned by God as His equal; He who was disowned and dishonoured amongst men, and so lightly and little appreciated on the earth.

Yet, there and then, was that accomplished for God, which He appreciates thus highly and rewards thus fully. That love of righteousness, and hate of lawlessness, ever and always characteristic of Him, has found its answer in the throne, the sceptre, the kingdom, and the fellows, which are now *His*. His, even now, in the time of His rejection. Fellows or companions who share and suffer with Him in that rejection; who have "gone forth *unto* Him, without the camp, *bearing His reproach*" (Heb. 13. 13), and have become companions "in the tribulation, and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus" (Rev. 1. 9). Thus, waiting with, as well as for, Him till "He come whose right it is." The kingdom, again, is here viewed as expressing the answer to that sceptre, for "the kingdom of God is *righteousness* ." (Rom. 14. 17). These are they who are therein and thereof, being "counted worthy of the kingdom of God" (2 Thess. 1. 4, 5). The place of His throne, thus viewed, the answer thereto is, the place of the soles of His feet, where He walks. He that holdeth the seven stars (messengers of the churches) in His right hand, also *walketh in the midst* of the seven lampstands (churches) (Rev. 2. 1). Again it is required that he that hath an ear, may hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (chap. 2. 7), and further it is written, "What thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches" (chap. 1. 11). Thus it is *companies* now, under the authority of One Lord; taught by One Spirit; and learning from One Book. This is where he can and will walk; who at one time "walked *not* in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him" (John 7. 1); and later, walked not on the earth because "the kings

of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ" (Acts 4. 26); who thrust Him from them, and accomplished their will in His crucifixion and death. True it is, "that our Lord is now rejected, and by the world disowned," yet in a future day, "His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives" (Zech. 14. 4), when He comes to assert and enforce and exact His rights as "King of Kings and Lord of Lords"; when "He shall be King over all the earth" (Zech. 14. 9), and "the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever"; but, in the meantime, in this present age is granted the opportunity to all who "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity" to express the same in their acknowledgement of Him as their one and only Lord.

The Holy Spirit sent down from heaven beareth testimony concerning Him, and he who is taught and led by the Holy Spirit will truly say that Jesus is *Lord*. Yet not alone to the person but also to "the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28. 31), does the Spirit bear testimony. "He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16. 14); and it is in connection with "the things," that such expression may be given of appreciation of His person. Of these things, then, we would notice, "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Have or hold not *the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ* with respect of persons" (James 2. 1). It seems almost unnecessary to point out that this is not faith in, but the faith of, our Lord Jesus Christ. Again, "exhorting them to continue in the faith" (Acts 14. 22). Again, "earnestly contend for the faith, which was once (for all) delivered unto the saints" (Jude v. 3), and yet again, "fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6. 12). These scriptures surely reveal an attitude or relationship to *that* which is His, which evidences regard for, as well as due appreciation of, the person of the Lord

Jesus Christ. Indeed we hold that the former will ever be the result of the latter.

"The faith," then "once (for all) delivered unto the saints," presents to us "the whole counsel of God," essential and applicable for His people in and during the present age; and that, as much so for the circumstances and times of these dark apostate days, as it was for the *early* days and circumstances of "the disciples of the Lord," and of the churches of God, and which will remain so until "the end of the age." Then, again, it is "the faith," inasmuch as there is "One faith," even as there is "One Lord" (Eph. 4. 5). Moreover, therewith is *the honour* of the One Lord associated, and to all who hold such dearer to them than everything else is the glorious privilege, as well as binding responsibility, to "earnestly contend" therefor, to "fight the good fight of the faith."

Many in but recent times have, for the honour of Queen and country, fought and fallen; yet how very few, alas, are to be found in these days to do so for the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ, in association with "the faith." On the contrary, how many have made, and are making "shipwreck concerning the faith" (1 Tim. 1. 19); many too "departing from the faith" (1 Tim. 4. 1); others again, have become "reprobate concerning the faith" (2 Tim. 3. 8). These, indeed, are the days of testing; times and circumstances truly both dark and difficult; amid which no human resource nor expedients will suffice, and for which no new legislation exists; but ever and only, as of old, the sure and unfailing provision, "God, and the word of His grace" (Acts 20. 32). Unto the holding and guarding the "noble deposit," the "sacred trust" of "the faith," may we resort thereto and confide therein, more fully and implicitly: may our "faith and our hope" indeed be "in God" (1 Peter 1. 21); then and thus may we be able to "fight the good fight," to "finish the course"; and to "keep

the faith"; so as to win the honour and reward of the crown of righteousness, from the Lord, the righteous Judge, in that day (2 Tim. 4. 7, 8).

Such appreciation of the person, and of the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ amongst saints of God, in the churches of God, finds further expression in relation to "the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," upon which they all in every place together call (1 Cor. 1. 2) into which they are gathered together (Matt. 18. 20), and through which they can be besought (1 Cor. 1. 10); and further still in association with the fellowship (community) of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1. 9), wherein they are found dwelling together. In the oneness of heart and soul, the oneness of accord and purpose, and the oneness of way and work, characteristic of such dwelling together is *Unity*, based upon scriptural principles, and according to scriptural precedent, even "the unity of the Spirit"; "the unity of the faith" (Eph. 4. 3, 11-15); and of the goodness and pleasantness, as well as preciousness and blessedness thereof, Psalm 133 bears testimony.

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.

GIFT.

THERE are perhaps few things that more perplex and exercise the earnest child of God than does the matter of gift. This is specially the case with such as find themselves amid the liberty wherewith Christ as Son over God's House makes free.

To those who, like the beloved of God that were in Rome, are together of God, Romans 12. makes plain that there

should be concern, application in the sense of effort, and conclusion in the fear of God as to what one is. *

Thinking thus to sobriety according to one's faith, so let there be an assaying to possess and well-use gift. Compare diligently what 2 Corinthians 4. 13 says—

“ We having the same spirit of faith according as it is written, I believed and therefore have I spoken ; we also believe and therefore speak.”

With which connect Amos 3. 8. Remembering who and what this Amos was, see 7. 14, 15.

Seven different gifts are enumerated in Romans 12. 6-8—

Prophecy,
 Ministry,
 Teaching,
 Exhortation,
 Giving,
 Ruling,
 Showing Mercy.

Each of these is presented as that which should be cultivated.

Ephesians 4. 7 shows that grace is given for the sustenance of the gift.

How gift is imparted according to the grace given to us is very clearly set forth in such Scriptures as 1 Corinthians 1. 4-7. Here Corinthians are declared to come behind in no gift, being enriched in or by Christ Jesus in all speech and all knowledge. But mark well HOW this was done, even

ACCORDING AS

the testimony of Christ was confirmed, that is, was established, in them. Compare here 2 Corinthians 8. 7. How forcible indeed are such right words!

With the foregoing agrees the injunction of Paul to

Timothy. The things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. The "others" here is a mine of instruction.

Young believer, let me ask here, Are you unable to dig? Are you ashamed to beg?

Moreover the principle of all this is driven home by Hebrews 5. 12. For when for the time ye

OUGHT TO BE TEACHERS ;

ye have need that one *teach you again*; and so forth, see the Scripture.

To crown the matter comes the word through Peter (1 Pet. 4. 10, 11): According as each one received gift, minister the same one to another as good stewards of the varied grace of God. If any speak (let him speak) as (do) the oracles (that is the Word) of God, *not* as being an oracle of God.

If any serve, let him do so as of the ability which God supplies, that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom is the glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.

Gift may be possessed and be neglected. Hence the exhortation of 1 Timothy 4. 14.

Gift may be allowed to smoulder, wherefore the words of 2 Timothy 1. 6: "Stir up the gift that is in thee." That is break it up so that the life and fire thereof may be in vigour and power.

The reader may also to much profit dwell over 2 Corinthians 8. 16, 17. Healthful too for the young believer are the words and doctrine of Job 32. 16-22, with which may be connected John 7. 38 and Galatians 6. 3-10.

JOHN BROWN.

THE GOD OF ALL GRACE.

THESE words contain a captivating revelation of the God with Whom we have to do. Their fulness is calculated to meet our every need, our every desire. The soul that finds its every longing met in the God of all grace knows the blessedness of being led by still waters and of feeding on green pastures. The God of all grace! Who can exhaust the unfathomable depths of such words? Our needs may be great but they are only finite, and here is an infinite supply. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

At all times God has been the God of all grace. When sin entered through Adam's transgression He did not cease to be the God of all grace, although His creature's sin, in measure, hindered the outflowings of the grace of His heart, and His righteousness demanded judgment upon sin. Yet sin was made the occasion of a mightier display of the grace of God than ever innocence beheld. Man had turned rebel; man had sold himself to cruel bondage with no hope of ever being able to deliver himself. But the heart of the God of all grace was set upon him, and He yearned to bless and to save. How was this to be accomplished? How could a thrice holy God display the grace of His heart to sinners without compromising His holiness?

The incarnation is the answer in part to this stupendous question. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." "Ye know," says the Apostle Paul, "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 be made rich." "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Thus the grace of God reached out to man in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matchless is the

grace displayed in the Lord Jesus leaving His riches in glory and choosing the poverty of earth—grace that commands wonder, marvellous to behold. Full of grace and truth He walked this sinful scene revealing the Father, the God of all grace. But not yet was the perfect answer to the claims of righteousness given. His life so full of grace and beauty could not suffice. By the grace of God He must taste death for every man.

The cross is the answer in fulness to the claims of holiness; the cross is the richest display of the grace of God. There every question that sin had raised was for ever answered; there the guilt of sin was righteously dealt with; there the Lord Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The mighty barrier that hindered the outflowings of the grace of God to man has there been removed. Righteousness no longer bars the way but hands to grace the sceptre in order that it may reign. Grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Where sin abounded, grace has abounded more exceedingly.

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

Every one who is possessed of eternal life has received it through the grace of God. It is by grace that we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God. With the Apostle we can truly say, "By the grace of God I am what I am." Through the Lord Jesus alone we have had our access into this grace wherein we stand, where we may even now boast in hope of the glory of God. Here we stand beneath a cloudless sky. Grace shows us our sins righteously dealt with and for ever put

away through the cross of Christ, and points our wondering gaze to the glory of God. Grace has abounded over sin, and the latter can now no longer hinder us from finding our joy in the God of all grace. With holy boldness we may approach the throne of God, where holiness shines bright, and find it a throne of grace. There we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in every time of need. There is not only grace there but exceeding riches of grace—it is limitless as the God of all grace.

God has a double object in bestowing such wondrous grace upon us. The first is indicated in the words of Eph. 2. 7: "That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." In future ages the glory of God will be displayed in all who have been the recipients of His grace, in all who are in Christ Jesus. God will accomplish this altogether apart from any merit or from any effort on our part. The second object pertains to the present, and it is of the first importance that we should understand it clearly. It is that we should now be to the praise of the glory of His grace. Grace asks nothing from the sinner for the blessings it bestows upon him, but grace expects much—very much from the saint. Perhaps no words could more forcibly express this than those of the Apostle Paul: "And working together with Him we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 Cor. 6. 1 R.V.); "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present age; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2. 11-14 R.V.).

Here God's present purpose in bestowing such riches of grace upon us is set forth in language clear and unmistakable. It is nothing less than this: that we should be sober and righteous and godly; that we should be a people for His own possession, zealous of good works; that we should be moulded and fashioned by His grace to the image of Him Who walked this earth full of grace and truth. Like as He which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy," is the kernel of the true grace of God (1 Pet. 1. 15; 5. 12). Well might the apostle entreat that we receive not such grace in vain. God has heard us in an acceptable time, and in a day of salvation He has succoured us: behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation. We may well fear lest we allow such possibilities to slip from us; lest the salvation that may now be known should never be experienced by us; lest the grace that the God of all grace has bestowed upon us should be in vain so far as His present purposes are concerned. —

As we apprehend the object for which the grace of God has laid hold of us do we perforce exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" If so, the answer comes readily: "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." "He giveth more grace." Here is an infinite supply to meet our every need. The throne of grace invites us to approach boldly, and having approached, we find the God of all grace there. God is indeed for us; the infinitude of His grace is at our disposal; the whole fulness of the Godhead accompanies this grace wherein we stand.

But some may say—and say with a measure of sincerity—We know the object for which the grace of God has laid hold of us, and we know that there is sufficiency of

grace in God to enable us to fulfil His purposes; but how are we to grasp His grace, how are we to be empowered in the grace that is in Christ Jesus? These are lukewarm days. They are days when the majority of difficulties of this nature amongst God's people arise from their half-heartedness. Time was when Christians could face the scaffold and the stake by the grace of God. They had only one object in life—the glory of God; and whatever difficulties arose in the way, they found sufficient grace in God to enable them to triumph. There was no question raised as to how they could face this or that—they did it! And in *doing* they found the needed grace.

But in these days the majority of Christians are not much of one thing or another. They are neither all for the world nor all for Christ. They are lukewarm. Let them be out and out for the God of all grace; let them allow their light to shine; let their motto in life be, "For me to live is Christ," and many questions that strip their souls' verdure at present will thereby be answered. It is in doing that grace is grasped.

"IN ALL LABOUR THERE IS PROFIT."

If what shone afar so grand
 Turn to nothing in the hand,
 On again, the virtue lies
 In the struggle, not the prize.

THESE words have often been taken by young men and young women of the world as a motto in connection with the things of this life. They might likewise be taken by young Christians with much profit, not only as applying to the things of this life but also to the things of God. It often transpires that when young Christians are searching in the Scriptures they think they see many precious things there which on afterthought, or perhaps on compar-

ing notes with others who are more advanced in the Divine life, they find to be but the Word of truth wrongly divided. A little more light enables them to see that their beautiful connections of Scripture and their precious thoughts will not stand the test; and what at one time appeared to be so grand really turns to nothing when looked at closely. The structures they found such pleasure in building came to the ground when the wind of truth blew against them, and it is idle to suppose that the fall was not a great disappointment to the builders.

At this point there is a danger of young Christians becoming despondent and thinking that there is no use in their trying any longer to dig in the Scriptures for themselves. They are tempted to give up reading and study of the Word of God altogether because past efforts appear to result in so little. Now this is a foolish view to take of the matter. In the things of this life failure in obtaining what we set our hearts upon usually causes us to nerve ourselves to renewed effort and increased determination to succeed the next time. "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again," are words of wisdom, and he who acts upon them is wise. To become despondent and give up endeavour because we failed to reach the goal we set before us, would be a sign of decided weakness of character and lack of resolution.

As in the things of this life so also in the things of God. We must work for our living in this world, and if we are to be healthy Christians we must in like manner work for our spiritual food. The law laid down by the Apostle that he who does no work shall not eat, may also have an application in spiritual things. It is true beyond question that the Christian who does no decided digging for himself in the Scriptures will have little spiritual food to eat, and his leanness of soul will bear witness to this fact. It is good to get some corn from others, but

it is better to have our own granary full; it is good to get a glass of water from others, but it is better to drink of our own fountain. Prov. 5. 15.

Now this cannot be done without effort. To reap corn we must till the ground and sow the seed; to drink from our own cistern we must dig the well. The Word of God speaks of some who labour in the Word and teaching. Note carefully that before they can labour in the teaching they must labour in the Word. Labouring in the teaching is the manifest fruit of unseen labouring in the Word. Otherwise men may labour in speaking, but the saints will not be taught; their discourses may be eloquent, but lasting profit resulting therefrom will be difficult to discern.

God caused the manna to fall around the camp in the wilderness, but Israel had to go out and gather it morning by morning. Before corn is fit for food Scripture shows that the labour of the ox is necessary to tread it out. The chaff must be separated from the grain. Gideon threshed his wheat in secret, and soon God brought him to the front to be instrumental in delivering Israel from the Midianites.

✧ We may labour much in the Word and get very little corn as the result, but that little will go a long way. He that gathered little had no lack, and he that gathered much had nothing over. Who has not tasted the sweetness of some little bit of truth which we have digged out of the Scriptures for ourselves? Probably that truth strengthened us more than all the supposed feasts we received through the hands of others. And why? Simply because we laboured for it, because it was the result of our own toil.

It is a kind provision of God that we should require to labour for our natural existence on earth. There is nothing for man in his present state like work and plenty of it. And as the laws of nature are the laws of nature's God we may expect the same rule to hold good in connection with the maintenance of our spiritual life. And so it

assuredly does. We must individually gather, we must dig, we must sow and reap and thresh if we are to have spiritual food to feed upon ourselves, and if we are to know the blessedness of giving to others. All of which means that we must be constant and diligent searchers of the Scriptures for ourselves.

Therefore we earnestly counsel young Christians to dig on, to dig deep. Be not disappointed though your labour appears to result in little. If you have toiled much for the little you have gathered, it will be all the sweeter to your soul and it will be your own, and you will guard it with care. A little well preserved is better far than much that is allowed to corrupt. Then learn the truth of the words that

... the virtue lies
In the struggle, not the prize.

The effort of to-day will make the task of to-morrow more easy of attainment. Effort cannot be expended, in fellowship with God, without gain being the result, even though that gain should be undiscerned. Its fruit will be seen in after days. Men sow in hope looking not to the present but to the future. So let it be in our study of the precious Word of God.

BIBLE WOMEN: HELPS AND HINDERERS.

(THE WOMEN IN THE ARK.)

As we pass on let us peep into the ark as it floats above the waters of judgement. There we see four women. What brought them there? God had called them into the ark and they came, not merely because of their relationship to Noah and his sons, but pre-eminently

BECAUSE OF THE DIVINE CALL.

So it is with all who have come to the Lord Jesus, they

came because of His gracious call: "Come unto ME, and I will give you rest." So should it be with regard to every item of the Lord's will. Our obedience should be rendered unto Him: not doing this or that because any other one does it or in order to please any one.

The call or command of the Lord alone must be our guide in everything. If we are to be baptized it must be because He commands us to be. If we seek to be added together with those who are gathered into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ it must be because of the divine call—"called of God" (1 Cor. 1. 9).

A scholar who was saved was once shown by her teacher from the Scriptures that the Lord desired her to be baptized, and she professed to see the Lord's will clearly in the matter. She was led, however, through the influence of other Christians to put it off, and presently wrote saying she would get baptized *to please her teacher*. She had failed to go forward

TO PLEASE THE LORD

in obedience to His call, and had descended to merely seeking to please her teacher.

In the light of these things sisters may well examine themselves before the Lord and ask, Am I doing this unto the Lord? Am I gathered into the name of the Lord?

LET PATIENCE HAVE HER PERFECT WORK.

BE patient, brethren, though the sound
 Of earthly strife wax loud and shrill;
 Though conflict deepens all around,
 Possess your souls in patience still.

Cast not your confidence away
 Though sin assails and foes still frown;
 In patience wait the coming day
 When rich reward thy faith shall crown.

The conflict will not always last—
 “A little while” He’ll come again!
 And then shall end earth’s wintry blast,
 Then thine for aye surcease from pain.

Prize well earth’s suffering for The Name!
 In glory’s light view earthly loss!
 The judgment seat shall deck with fame
 The brows that bear on earth the cross.

See high on Heaven’s eternal throne
 Our Princely Leader’s glorious form;
 He trod the path of faith alone,
 That path which led to Calvary’s storm.

The joy He sought He reapeth now—
 That joy which nerved Him to endure;
 And brightly beams His once marred brow,
 His sowing past—His reaping sure!

Be patient, brethren, bow the neck
 And meekly bear the yoke awhile;
 Still work and war for His Name’s sake,
 While lights earth’s gloom His heavenly smile.

’Tis but “a little while” indeed—
 He comes to set earth’s toilers free!
 We reap the fruit of scattered seed
 Not now, but in eternity!

THE BUILDING OF THE WALL.

IN the divinely given account of the building of the wall, as recorded in Nehemiah 3., there seems to be, typically, much truth of a helpful nature for the present day.

In verse 1 we read that "Eliashib, the high priest, rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the

SHEEP GATE."

Surely in this gate, which in the order of building has the premier place, we have a beautiful and instructive type of Him who said:—"I am the Door of the sheep." We are thankful to the Giver of every good and perfect gift for the many precious truths which He has revived, brought to the front, and enabled a remnant to lay hold of and put into practice, truths undoubtedly foreshadowed in the building of the wall. These truths, to be of any real and lasting value, must be held in communion with Himself; and the priests, who, like Eliashib's brethren, would build in touch with the Great High Priest, must give Him, who is the Door of the sheep, the chief place in their ministry and practice.

"They builded even unto the tower of Hammeah," which means "the hundred." The Lord in speaking of the lost sheep took "an hundred" as the complete number. His heart goes out after all His sheep, and His desire is that they may be one flock, having one Shepherd. If we are in sympathy with His desire, surely we shall be stirred up to do our best, according to the word, to have others delivered from every snare and gathered in Scriptural order to Himself.

"They sanctified it unto the tower of Hananel," which means "the grace of God." If we fall short of His grace we may build, but it will be wood, hay, or stubble reserved for the fire.

THE FISH GATE

is the next part which we read of being built. "Come ye after me and I will make you fishers of men," said our Lord, and the desire of His heart is still that we should preach the Gospel to every creature. He would not have us to stop at preaching the Gospel, as many do, but to go on baptizing disciples, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He commanded; thus they will be found "within."

We notice that on this door, which seems to foreshadow our ministry worldward, there were bolts and bars. God wants nothing short of uncompromising separation from unbelievers, as far as being yoked together with them is concerned.

In verse 6 we read that the

OLD GATE

was repaired. Many say that we cannot now carry out the teaching of Apostolic days. "In every revival recorded in the Word, those whose hearts God had stirred up stood in the ways and asked for the Old Paths." Those in these days who would receive a full reward must do the same, for the Word of God is and will be the unerring test of all our actions.

On the doors of this gate we also read of locks and bars, and those who would walk in the "Old Paths" will inevitably find themselves (perhaps at much cost) shut in with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, and shut out from every company who have set aside the Word of God.

In verse 8 we have a beautiful combination: Uzziel the goldsmith or refiner (Newberry), and Hananiah the apothecary or perfumer. Uzziel, who would use the fire for refining his gold, might speak to us of Truth (for God speaks of His word as being made a fire); Hananiah the

perfumer would, on the other hand, set forth grace. Some saints go in for what generally passes as Grace at the expense of Truth, others again deal out Truth divorced from Grace. Here we have a type of what should obtain—

GRACE AND TRUTH

working in harmony ; and the result is that Jerusalem is fortified. If we wish to be made strong we must hold the two in an even balance.

“ . . . even unto the

BROAD WALL.”

Here we have God's way of arriving at true “ breadth of mind ” foreshadowed. Many, alas ! cast behind them much of God's Truth rather than be called “ narrow-minded.”

In verses 10, 23, etc., we have the record of some who repaired the wall over against

THEIR OWN HOUSES.

Surely this was, and is still very necessary. What havoc is wrought, and how often the walls are even broken down through God's people not repairing over against their own houses ! Our efforts in the assembly, and our testimony in the world will both alike be blighted, and eventually it may be the Lord's name dishonoured, if we neglect to order our home life in His fear and according to His will.

We next read (verse 11) that Malchijah repaired the

TOWER OF THE FURNACES.

Towers were largely used in olden times as places of outlook. God would have us continually on the watch-tower, testing all things by the fire of His word, which the furnaces may suggest. Let us have nothing to do with anything which will not stand this fire.

“ Next unto him repaired Shallum, he and

HIS DAUGHTERS."

The part which they repaired is not mentioned. This is quite in keeping with the New Testament teaching that woman's sphere of work is not of a public character; none the less necessary, powerful, and influential because of its private nature. The curtains made by the women for the tabernacle, perhaps in the seclusion of their tents, had a very prominent place assigned them. The coming day will reveal much that has been done by godly women, even though nothing at present may be heard or known of it.

"THE VALLEY GATE

repaired Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah." The valley may speak of humility, consequently we need often to visit the Valley Gate as individuals. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." This gate had bolts and bars on its doors. This reminds us, in line with 1 Cor. 5., that it is at times sadly necessary to put in the outside place some whom we were accustomed to call brethren and sisters. Such dealing should be occasions of deep humiliation on the part of all, and it behoves us to look to ourselves lest we also be tempted.

They who built the Valley Gate built a thousand cubits of the wall, unto the

DUNG GATE.

Paul suffered the loss of all things, and was enabled to count them but food for dogs that he might gain Christ. It is only as our eyes are on Himself that we shall be enabled to hold the things of this world with a loose grasp, yea, and to count them but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE FOUNTAIN GATE

was next repaired; for the inhabitants of the Holy City

needed their thirst quenched. How often there are thirsty ones in our midst, tried ones, or it may be lambs of the flock who need a refreshing draught, and there is no one to open the Fountain Gate!

It was a covered gate, and he who would be a bearer of the living water must dwell in the secret place of the Most High. There were bolts and bars on its doors, and he must also be much in the closet with closed door, alone with God.

Connected with it was the wall of the Pool Shiloah, which word means "the sent one." He must be a sent one getting his message fresh from the Master, and delivering it consciously in His presence.

"by the King's Garden." Not only must his conscience be tender toward God, but he must be tenderly affectioned toward those who are plants in the King's Garden—God's Husbandry. The Beloved comes into His garden to eat His pleasant fruit; sad it is if there is none there for Him.

"unto the stairs that go down." This may suggest that he who would be used in this Holy Work of refreshing the saints must needs gird himself, and get down at their feet, as the Master did.

Next we have the sepulchres of David,

THE POOL THAT WAS MADE,

and the house of the mighty men. They that dwelt in God's house of old, and have passed through the Valley of Weeping, have made it a place of fountains, the rain also filleth the pools. (Psalm 84. 4-7). God has left us records of the deeds of His mighty men and of their heart-breathings, which are like fountains and pools to the weary travellers, following in their footsteps through the Valley. Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.

In verse 19 we read Ezer repaired another portion over against

THE GOING UP TO THE ARMOURY.

We are here reminded that those who build for God need to put on the whole Armour of God. A moment without the armour which He has provided is a moment of danger, and none are safe from the assaults of the powers of darkness.

Baruch earnestly repaired "from the turning of the wall unto

THE DOOR OF THE HOUSE OF ELIASHIB THE HIGH PRIEST."

Looking at this point typically there is still great cause for earnestness. The way to our Great High Priest is ever open, He never hinders us, but alas! we often allow earth-born hindrances to prevent us drawing near, and through not seeing His face, and hearing His voice, we become like unto those that go down to the pit.

In verse 21 we have an expression which suggests a contrast; for we read of

THE END OF ELIASHIB'S HOUSE.

Our Great High Priest, Melchizedec-like, has neither beginning of days, nor end of life.

In verse 25 we read of the tower that standeth out from the

UPPER HOUSE OF THE KING.

Have we not here a suggestion that our Lord is, as it were, on the tower in the "upper house," looking out over the desert with a heart of deepest sympathy at His weary plodding Bride, and longing for the time when she shall be with Him for evermore.

In the next verse we read of another tower that standeth out, and near it, towards the east, dwelt the

NETHINIM

who were the servants of the Priests and Levites. Here

we have suggested the secret of true service; those who occupy the watchtower, looking for the return of their Lord (as the mention of the east would suggest) will indeed be able to serve acceptably.

The horse in Scripture would seem to suggest strength or power in battle; and the

HORSE GATE,

connected with the priests repairing over against their own houses, may suggest to us that those who would be strong and successful in public ministry must of necessity have things right before God in private life.

In verse 29 we read of the

KEEPER OF THE EAST GATE.

God wants His gates kept, and He wishes them not to be opened till the sun is hot (chapter 7. 3). This is indeed a very important work, and the welfare of the assemblies depends largely on how it is done.

Meshullam repaired over

AGAINST HIS CHAMBER.

(v. 30). Alas! very often this is necessary nowadays. If the closet is neglected barrenness is the result.

In verse 31 we read of Malchijah repairing unto the house of Nethinim (servants) and the merchants to the

ASCENT OF THE CORNER.

In a "very little while" our opportunity of building together with Him will be at an end, for we shall rise to meet Him in the air. Then our Malchijah, the great gold refiner will test or inspect our service (Hammiphkad means inspection), or—looking at it in the other aspect mentioned, that of merchants—we shall have to give an account of how we used our talents. Happy for us if we hear the voice of our Lord saying: "Well done, good and faithful

servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

The wall was repaired up to the

SHEEP GATE,

which completed the circuit. Looking again at this gate as a type of Himself, it reminds us that

Soon His saints shall all be gathered

Inside the veil.

All at home—no more be scattered

Inside the veil.

Nought from Him our hearts shall sever;

We shall see Him, grieve Him never;

"Praise the Lamb!" shall sound for ever—

Inside the veil.

FEAR.

(NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY C. M. LUXMOORE.)

WE are going through an enemy's country. There is danger on every hand, though many may see nothing of it—the danger of cowardice, the danger of surrender—and nothing is more repugnant to a true-hearted soldier than the thought that he should have given in to the enemy when he had no need to do so, when he was not in the extremity he thought he was.

How does the perfect, ever-blessed, all-wise One seek to remove those whom He was instructing from the fear of man, that bringeth a snare? He does it in this way, that we read in 10th chapter of Matthew: He puts before them a greater fear, a higher fear. If He would remove the fear of man, and all other fears equally disastrous, He sets before them the fear of God. I will forewarn you (says

He) whom ye shall fear; fear Him who has authority to cast into Gehenna. Oh, would that the children of God would fear God more; and I say that in more senses than one.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Prov. 9. 10). How little wisdom can there be where the very beginnings are unknown! The fear of God meets us on many a page of Old Testament Scripture. Thanks be unto God, for those who are His children it is a fear that hath no torment, because they who know the fear of Jehovah are also taught that “Like as a father pitieth His children so Jehovah pitieth them that fear Him” (Ps. 103.).

We live in a day much like that day of old when every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Yet in a time of trouble they could cry unto God to save them; but when the trouble was not immediately before them it might be said of them that God was not in all their thoughts.

We shall never hear the still small voice that bids us never fear unless we know what it is to be near to Him, and let His fear withdraw us from the strife of men, from the voice of men, and from the impressions which human influences would bring to bear upon us. The fear of man is not perhaps to-day of them that kill the body, but the fear of them who would depress our spirit and destroy our interest in the things of God, the fear perhaps of ridicule, the fear of man that brings a snare. Remember that the One who never erred, the One who always said the best thing, the One whose lips were ever touched by God to say what God would have Him say, in the scripture that has been read in our hearing spoke to His own loved ones—they were the loved ones of God also—and as a remedy against the fear of man He did not say what loved ones they were. He did not say, Fear not men because I love you, or because the Father loves you; He said, Fear to offend Him, fear Him,

fear to grieve Him, fear to wander from the path of His commandments. "I have" (saith He) "set the Lord always before My face; He is at my right hand, therefore I shall not be moved."

What is one of the greatest, certainly not the least, of the purposes that God has in the weekly feast of the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ in the breaking of the bread? Is it not that of which we read in the 1st chapter of the Gospel according to John, when some came and said to Him, "Where dwellest Thou?" "Come," said He, "and ye shall see." And they came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day, for the day was far spent—it was about the tenth hour. They came to the place where He was, they sat with Him at the table where He was; He who was God manifest in the flesh was then for the first time, I suppose, made known unto that beloved disciple. One of the two was Andrew, and who could the other one have been but the one whom Jesus loved? And they abode with Him that day, and they beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Peter came along the next day and shared the same blessed fare, and perhaps a little bit of a beginning was made in plucking out from him the fear of man, but it was a slow process, for it was some years after that, that even Peter could say, "I never knew Him," and denied Him with oaths and curses. That was some years after he first met Him, and yet, though Peter still knew what the fear of man was, he knew something of the fear of God too. He had begun the lesson, though it was hard to learn. How do we know that the fear of God had a place in Peter's heart? We know it by watching the eyes of the Lord Jesus. We see the Father's pity beaming from the eyes of the Son; and as you see the eyes of the Lord Jesus beaming upon Peter in that infinite pity of His heart,

you have the fulfilment of the 103rd Psalm, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so Jehovah pitieth them that fear Him." And once knowing that, once getting where Peter had now got, the fear of God will grow, and grow exceedingly, as it did in the heart of Peter.

A little while longer, and the blessed Holy Spirit has come down to seal the work, and to bring all these things to the remembrance of Peter; and a bolder, braver man than Peter the book of the Acts of the Apostles does not tell us of. Why? Because Peter had learnt the fear of God. And above all dreads he had learned the dread of doing that which was contrary to the mind and the will of the blessed One who had loved him and given Himself for him.

Another "Fear not" comes to my mind. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you"—eternal life? No. To give you salvation? No. To show you kindness? No. But to give you something that the children of God rebel against, something they do not want to have, the mention of which has caused a whole company to go out of the fellowship of God's Son in the present day. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Oh, the blessedness of knowing the reigning and the ruling of God in our hearts and amongst us! The Kingdom of God, which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Righteousness first, then indeed peace, as James also testifies.

And thus may we learn not to fear man or aught that is not of God, that only our fear of God may grow, and grow yet again. Doth not this word and Peter's example show us, and show us clearly, that this is a gradual process?

And then again, let us be encouraged by the knowledge that our God is a God of patience. Nature itself teaches us that we are slow to learn, and from all things around us in nature on every hand the patience of God may be

learnt. And thus, as through the ages He has displayed His patience, so again and again would He speak telling us of His fear.

Oh, how we ought to fear God when we remember Him of whom this feast of remembrance speaks to us most distinctly; when we remember the One who hanged upon the tree a curse, His arms outstretched wide, and cried, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani"—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He knew why He was forsaken. It was because of what we also read in that same 22nd Psalm: "But Thou art holy." The Holy God could not look upon sin when upon the person of His own well beloved Son; His righteousness demanded that spotless sacrifice, demanded that blood to be shed for the remission of sins. How we ought to fear such a God and tremble in His presence, and yet rejoice and be glad, because "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." He pitieth His poor, erring, stumbling, weakling children.

Thus, in the knowledge of His fear and the knowledge of His pity—fear from us to Him, pity from Him to us—may we know less and less the fear of man; let us learn to fear God and walk in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.

(Communicated by W. Cox.)

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.

HOLINESS.

TRENCHANT and true is the adage—

“APART FROM HOLINESS, THERE IS NO REAL HAPPINESS.”

It will be well for the young believer to hide this in his heart. This, too, in the spirit and purpose, supported by honest endeavour, of the saying—

“THAT I MAY NOT SIN AGAINST THEE.”

Thus treated, this good seed shall take deep and deepening root, and spring up bearing much fruit of the sort that

CHEERETH GOD AND MAN.

To this end it is necessary to distinguish between holiness as *imputed* and holiness *imparted*.

The former is true of every believer as to his standing. The latter may or may not be actual as to his state. The first is the outcome of the act of God. The second is the fruit of the believer's diligence to take heed to himself according to God's word.

We speak now, as may be perceived, not in the sense of what the believer IS so much as what the believer HAS!

Our subject is not “holy,” but “holiness” and “sanctification.” These last two words are not identical in meaning, but we do not here dwell on the difference between them.

1 Cor. 1. 30 declares that of God are we in Christ Jesus, who from God is made unto us wisdom, both righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Therefore we know that *we have* imputed to us redemption, and sanctification, and righteousness. Wherefore glorying, we glory in the Lord, and not in flesh.

All this moreover as being in Christ Jesus.

For this standing (*position*) let Gal. 3. 28 be well pondered; in which exercise may Phil. 1. 9-11 be abundantly granted. But as to our state (*condition*) God seeks to impart holiness to us after the manner and measure of Hebrews 12.

All this is expressly declared to be that we might be partakers of His holiness.

Be entreated, young believer, to linger over verse 10.

Is not this the sanctification apart from (without) which no one shall see the Lord?

Practical and testing with veriest fearfulness is the will of God as wishing our sanctification in the light of 1 Thess. 4. 1-8.

What searchings of heart may fitly be through the plain-tive words of Rom. 6. Especially the patient grace that comes down to our need, as see verses 19-22.

How great too are the incentives to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of God as 2 Cor. 7. 1 bespeaks under the inspiring words of the entire preceding chapter (6.).

Yet "Cui bono"? Who cares to regard such?

How many, alas! in connection herewith, and else make sad mistake. Accounting on the one hand *Promises* to be declarations of fact, and on the other hand reckoning statements of fact to be promises. For which reason, young believer, suffer thyself to be exhorted to consider what is said, for to such as think shall the Lord indeed grant understanding.

The perfecting of all which is doubtless the grace and goodness of the work and power of the Lord the Spirit, as 1 Thess. 3. 12, 13 shows the apostle did earnestly pray might be granted unto his beloved in Thessalonica. As also would the writer for every reader. This also in the hope that from the heart of such he may be given sympathetic reciprocation.

JOHN BROWN.

THE GOD OF LOVE.

“God is Love.” There are few statements of Scripture better known to Christians than this one. There are few truths dearer to their hearts than the one which these words reveal. Yet these are words which have never been exhausted; their depths have never been fathomed. Love is infinite, for God is love. Love surpasseth knowledge, for the God who is love can only be known in part by our finite minds.

“The God of love” is an expression which opens up before our gaze an unmeasured expanse. Here are no ankle depths, nor knee-, nor loin-, but an ocean to swim in, a river that cannot be passed over. May the Holy Spirit lead us into these infinite depths till with one of old we are led to exclaim: “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.”

Love is not merely an emotion or a sentiment; it is something which is intensely practical. Where else shall we look for demonstration of this truth but to God? His love is manifested not in word only but in deed and in truth. It may be known by its fruit—He loved the world and gave His Son. This is love’s choicest gift, but yet the fountain head is not exhausted. That gift does not measure the love which gives it, but only bears eloquent witness to its immeasurableness. In this was manifested—not measured—the love which God has toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him. Wondrous manifestation of the God who is love, whom no man hath seen at any time! The Only Begotten in the likeness of sinful flesh, in fashion as a man—behold the manifestation of God’s love!

God’s object in sending the Son was that we might live through Him. Death was our rightful portion, death was

the wages of our sin, and ere life could be ours the Son must die. Therefore God commendeth His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

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?
 Hallelu-Jah!
 Love shall reign eternally.

The contemplation of such infinite love begets love in our hearts to God and to His children. We love because He first loved us. By nature we were God's enemies and hated Him and hated one another. The first manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in us is love. It is the Holy Spirit alone who can cause the love of God to be shed abroad in our hearts; it is He alone who can direct our hearts into the love of God.

The value of love is forcibly set forth in 1 Cor. 13. Its place is unique; it stands alone. Everything else sinks into insignificance when compared with it. Love's wondrous doings are declared in that chapter, both positively and negatively, in such captivating fulness that he who reads, led of the Spirit, is forced to exclaim: "Draw me, we will run after Thee." This love, however, is not the product of human nature—it is the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore its scarcity. There is much that often passes current for love that lacks the beauty and worth of genuineness.

God's object in making Himself known to us as the God of love is that conformity to Him might be effected in us. "No man hath seen God at any time; if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement; because as He is, even so are we in this world. Thus would

God have our love to be so perfected that it might be true of us, "As He is"—perfect in love—"so are we in the world." Thus would the God of love, whom no man hath seen at any time, be seen in His saints. With this agree the words of the Lord Jesus: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples if ye have love one to another."

There are few commandments so frequently repeated in the Scriptures as the one which enjoins us to love one another. It might probably be also said that there are few commandments so little understood and so grievously unheeded. This shows how little we have learned of the God of love, and how far we still are from being conformed to the image of His Son. "This is My commandment, that ye love one another *as* I have loved you." The "*as*" is worthy of our prayerful consideration. What did the Lord Jesus find in His disciples to cause Him to love them? What does He find in us that His love should be ours in such unstinted measure? As we learn how we are loved of Him we shall learn to love one another *as* He has loved us. Not because of what we find in one another, but because we are His. Would that we might be able to manifest more of this love one to another; for of it, God has said, "Love never faileth." Would that this heavenly fruit of the Spirit might be developed more in us. Then would many of the personal estrangements which too often exist amongst God's people be banished from our midst. Then would the things which are pure and lovely and of good report be taken account of, for love taketh not account of evil. "Love never faileth"; therefore it is the unfailing antidote for all troubles that arise amongst God's people. It covereth a multitude of sins.

A definition of love is to be found in 1 John 5: "Hereby we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and do His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His command-

ments are not grievous." Thus it will be seen that whilst love taketh not account of evil it cannot justify what is evil or condone pathways which are contrary to the commandments of God. The more perfectly we walk according to the commandments of God the more are we perfected in love, and the less occasion of stumbling shall we give to our brethren or to the world. It is not love to tread in pathways contrary to the will of God in order to please, or to company with, our brethren; it is serious unkindness; it is a positive stumbling-block. This can only be learned in the light.

Finally, brethren, says the Apostle, be perfected; be comforted; be of the same mind; live in peace: and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Thus love and peace go hand in hand; without the former the latter must be unknown. The enjoyment of the presence of God, as the God of love and peace, is altogether conditional. It depends on the conduct of the saints who compose God's assemblies whether He is to be known in their midst as the God of love and peace or not. By failing to walk in love we may banish peace from an assembly, so that it may, alas! reflect little of the character of the God of love and peace.

BIBLE WOMEN : HELPS AND HINDERERS.

SARAI, ABRAM'S WIFE.

WE next turn to Sarai, Abram's wife, and we first see in her an impatient woman, planning and scheming instead of waiting for God to carry out His own purposes in His own time and way. Her impatience also led her to be unkind (Gen. 16. 6).

Are there not many lessons for Christian women to learn in this?—lessons which they are so slow to learn, that God has often to teach them by bitter experience as with Sarai. If they are to bring forth fruit with patience they must let the word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom (Col. 3. 16). If they are to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, they must let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and railing *be put away* with all malice (Eph. 4. 31, 32).

Gen. 17. shows how gracious and forbearing God was with all the unbelief and impatience of Sarai, and He changed her name to Sarah—princess. This promise also He adds: "I will bless her and give thee a son of her, and she shall be a mother of nations."

In chapter 18. we find her busy entertaining strangers. Please turn to the New Testament and read, mark, learn, and seek to practise the following portions: Heb. 13. 1, 2; 3 John 5-8.; Gal. 4. 14.; John 13. 20.

Little did Sarah know the reason for which these strangers had come. Little did she know who she had the honour of entertaining. Little did she think that to this day it would be told how once she kneaded meal and baked cakes upon the hearth. Little did she understand the value of that humble act which was to be held up for all time as an example for godly women to follow.

Soon afterwards the message reached her ears of the purposes of God being about to be fulfilled, and she was

MADE TO LAUGH.

To her it seemed too late—too good to be true. Like the two women in John 11., who thought the Lord had come too late, she had to learn that God is never too late and that “there is nothing too wonderful for the Lord.”

The apostle Peter in his letter is led to say a word of exhortation to wives wherein he refers to the holy women of the past who

HOPED IN GOD,

adorning themselves in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit. This in the sight of God is of great price. These women were in subjection to their own husbands as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

PURPOSE OF HEART IN SERVICE.

It is ever a hopeful and cheering sign to find young believers seeking to do some service for their Lord, be it ever so small.

If such service is rendered in obedience to His will, it will be esteemed by Him as being of equal value, so far as it goes, with the greatest. Whether that which we do may appear to be great or small according to human comparisons, yet we all have the same promise of certain reaping according to our labours: “Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not” (Gal. 6. 9).

How steadfastly the Lord Jesus, when on earth, accomplished day by day the work which the Father gave Him to do! Whether it was teaching His disciples or the multitude, healing the sick or raising the dead, feeding the hungry or comforting the sorrowing, He was ever busily engaged,

until in triumph on the Cross He raised the Conqueror's shout: "It is finished." Amid scorn and contempt He kept His hand to the work; the smile of friends did not stimulate, the frown of enemies did not deter; He continued steadfast to the end.

In the Scriptures mention is made of many of the Lord's servants who with constant purpose of heart continued in the work for which the Lord had fitted them. Conspicuous amongst these the apostle Paul shines forth. Like his Master, he ever sought to be faithful to the trust which God had committed to him. That which he exhorted the Corinthian saints to be and to do was true of himself (1 Cor. 15. 58). When at liberty amongst his fellows, or when in captivity in the Roman dungeon, his object was ever the same: he was ever busy in his Master's service. Adverse circumstances might limit his labours in some directions but never turned him aside from his life's purpose.

If we to-day are in fellowship with our Lord it will not require the excitement of so-called "revival times," to induce us to labour, according to our ability, for our absent and coming Lord. If He really has won our hearts, and if He holds the throne there, our feet and our hands will always find plenty of work to do for Him. The Sunday School will have our attention, tract distributing will not be neglected, and in a multitude of ways we shall find the words to be true:—

"Oh, the good we all may do,
While the days are going by!"

W. H. BURDEKIN.

PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

It has often been remarked that as our privileges increase our responsibilities are correspondingly enlarged. This is true, and we should ever try to bear it in mind.

Our privileges compass all that God *makes possible* for us to be and to do. Anything which it is not possible for us to be and to do, cannot be said to be our privilege, but everything which comes within the range of possibility is our privilege.

Our responsibilities embrace all that God has *made imperative* that we should be and that we should do. The extent of responsibility is determined by the extent of privilege. We have no responsibility toward that which is not our privilege, but wherever privilege leads responsibility most surely follows. Privilege and responsibility are therefore co-extensive, the one determines the scope of the other. Nor can these two be rent asunder. They are so closely allied that to separate them, and yet to maintain the perfection and worth of either, is impossible. They stand or they fall together.

It is important that this point should be clearly understood, for the failing to understand it leads to many foolish notions. The idea which is sometimes expressed in words, that privileges can be embraced whilst accompanying responsibilities are discarded is surely grave folly. Christians may idly dream that they are embracing their privileges when all the time they are rejecting their responsibilities, but the truth is far otherwise.

Do any think that this is a hard saying? That it is not so our souls may be well assured. It is infinitely blessed to find that privilege and responsibility are thus inseparably linked together. To understand clearly that God holds us responsible to embrace every privilege that He gives us is a preventative against privilege being neglected. There is no more common failure amongst Christians than the neglect of privilege, and the neglect of privilege, be it well noted, is culpable neglect of responsibility. Further, to learn that responsibility is truest privilege removes therefrom every thing of the nature of compulsion or law ; and, consequently, we are found discharging our responsibilities not so much because we *must* but rather because we *may*. All sense of compulsion which might otherwise associate itself with responsibility thus vanishes, and instead of reluctantly yielding obedience to inexorable laws we joyfully, spontaneously endeavour to discharge our responsibilities in the light of God-given privileges. Thus privilege and responsibility meet together in most blessed union ; they are inseparable ; they stand or they fall together. Given a list of the privileges of a Christian we may from that same list learn the responsibilities of a Christian ; given a list of the responsibilities of a Christian, we may from that same list learn the privileges of a Christian. What, therefore, God has joined together man can only put asunder at his peril and to his loss.

ALONE WITH GOD.

LET me forget the sweet sunshine and shadows
 Brightening my life or o'erclouding my way,
 Lift me above all the real and the unreal,
 Near Thine own presence, my strength and my stay!
 Alone with Thee.

Far, far away from the din and the bustle,
 Call me apart—bid me rest at Thy side;
 There with Thyself in Thy love bending o'er me,
 I have enough, I am well satisfied
 Alone with Thee.

Beautiful Nature blooms sweetly around me—
 Tell me was Eden more fair than this bower?
 Yet the fair picture—the loveliest vision,
 Let me forget in this sweet hallowed hour
 Alone with Thee.

Let me but see Thee, my Lord, my Redeemer,
 Close Thou mine eyes to the world's empty store;
 Draw me still nearer, fold me more closely—
 Surely I taste of the bright evermore
 Alone with Thee.

Well do I know that Thou lovest me, Father,
 Still do I hunger to hear it again;
 Hearts are but wells of deep longings and yearnings,
 Thou art the Fountain of infinite gain.
 Thou art enough!

More than enough, Lord, my soul's perfect refuge!
 Ne'er from its rest let my wandering heart roam—
 Filled every aching void, stilled every yearning,
 Here would I rest till Thy voice calls me home
 Alone with Thee.

SPIRIT AND SOUL AND BODY.

THE subject now before us needs to be entered upon carefully. There is room here for human fancy and imagination, which has in a degree, perhaps beyond our conception, already moulded the minds of not a few. What saith the Scriptures?

Genesis 2. 7: "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." This is not what man has, but what man is. "Is your soul saved?" is a most unscriptural expression; "Are you saved?" is much better. The soul is the man. In the man there is a spirit; on the man there is a body.

We read in 1 Corinthians 2. 11, "The spirit of the man, which is in him." No one knows the thoughts of a man. We are not thought readers, and cannot know unless the spirit in the man, knowing the thoughts of the man, reveals that mind to us in words. Those thoughts the man himself knows, and none other. He may hide or reveal as he will. So we too may know the mind of God, but only through the Spirit of God revealing that mind to us in the Word of God. And to this end we have received the Spirit which is of God, and not the spirit which is of the world.

Thus we have "soul and spirit" (Heb. 4. 12). The word of God is living, can discern and divide, making a difference between soul and spirit. That is, the man, and the spirit in which things are said and done by the man; how done and how said; the motive that prompted to the doing; the spirit in which it was done—this gives value to the thing done in God's sight. The rebellious spirit of those who would not go up and possess the land, the gracious spirit of the two, Caleb and Joshua, also spirit of boldness seeking to encourage the people:—"Let us go up at once

and possess it, for we are well able to overcome it." "Nay," they replied; "would God we had died in Egypt." Very precious to God was the gracious but courageous spirit of these two men. Soul and spirit. Let us cultivate a right spirit.

Peter says (2 Pet. 1. 13, 14), "The putting off of my tabernacle." He meant his body. The body is on the man. (2 Cor. 12. 2) A man in Christ, whether in the body or out of the body I cannot say, but it is the same man whether in or out of body. He did not need to have a body to be a man; he is that out of the body.

In 2 Cor 5. we have the contrast between tabernacle and house. The tabernacle is that which answers a temporary purpose—as in the wilderness—easily taken down; but Solomon built him a house—the permanent thing—in the land. So our tabernacle is a temporary wilderness arrangement, soon taken down; but the house is eternal in the heavens. The putting off and simultaneous putting on will be when the Lord comes. This is what the apostle desired, but did not get. Nor have any of the departed saints as yet. He and they are unclothed. They have *put off*; they have not yet *put on*. They wait the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they will put on incorruption, and the living will put on immortality. These terms only apply to the body. The living saints will know nothing of the unclothed condition of those who are the dead in Christ. In one short moment they will be instantly clothed upon with their house which is from heaven. The living saints, when Jesus comes, will be entire as to their spirit and soul and body, and will remain so for ever, not in mortal body, but body immortal, never to know weariness nor fatigue, to serve Him day and night. Blessed hope.

Thus we see the soul is the man, the spirit is in the man; and the body is on the man, even as in the case of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ:—"Father, into Thy hands I

commend My spirit." "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hades." And His body was laid in Joseph's tomb.

We now come to Luke 16. 19. Not an imaginary picture. Now there was a certain rich man. Here the veil is lifted and we see into Hades, where these two men then were, though as to their bodies we know one was buried, no doubt with much pomp and show, with outward display of seeming grief.

They can see and hear and speak and feel. Abram has his bosom. The rich man lifts up his eyes. He has a tongue parched and burning. Lazarus has his finger. Long ages ago Abram's literal bosom went to dust in the cave of Macpelah. The eyes and ears of rich man's body were buried. *This is the man*; the other is his clothing put off, and he is naked in the torments of lower Hades. Lazarus, comforted with the comfort of Abram's bosom, in upper Hades. The men are not in the grave. They are here, out of their bodies. From the lower Hades the rich man lifted up his eyes and saw Abram afar off on the upper side of the great gulf fixed. And he knew him, though he had never seen him before. And the faculty of memory is keen, "Son, remember;" as indeed Lazarus could forget all his toil. How real all this. Not sleeping, nor unconscious as to past and present. What a mercy if the rich man could forget! "I have five brethren in my father's house at home." All those home memories revived now, forgotten very likely when in mortal body. "Oh, send to my brethren, that they come not into this place of torment." "They have Moses and the Prophets" in their writings, as we have apostles and prophets in their writings, by which they speak. The *voices* of the prophets are read in the home and in the synagogue; let them hear them. You had the same, and did not and would not hear. Interchange is not possible between disembodied men and those yet in mortal body. These—rich man and Abram—were con-

versing. They were both in the same condition, and could speak. Moses and Elias in the mount had bodies. The former was raised, the other caught up. Theirs was a body condition. The Lord Himself, during His forty days' sojourn amongst them, was in body form, speaking, even eating; and in a coming day "Many shall come from the north and south, the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abram, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God." And they will be in bodies.

We glean no small comfort concerning our loved and departed ones from all this. They see and hear and know and feel, just as with us. They are now very far better with Christ. As yet unclothed, waiting to be clothed upon. And it is only "till He come." Then they and we each shall know a fulness of joy never attainable till then.

"Our outer and our inner man" of 2 Corinthians 4. 16. And this begins the subject carried on into chapter 5. The outer man gets old. Old age creeping on. Not so nimble as we used to be. Whether we like it or no, wrinkles will come, grey hairs, eyes dim, hearing not so keen—all is decaying. Not so the inner man; that never ages. It is renewed day by day. It is not Paul the aged yonder with Christ. There are no decrepit old men going on sticks there.

All that decay belonged to the worn-out outer man, now for ever put off. An eternal youth or manhood. As I said to a dear old saint of God, a widow, "You must not think of John as you saw him last, old and broken down. Not at all. Think of him as you first saw him and fell in love with him, when in his prime." As forty years ago an old man bent with the weight of years bid an equally old man good bye, saying, "Good-bye, John, good-bye; we shall soon be thirty-three." (We were coming from a 7 o'clock in the morning prayer meeting. We never hear of such things now. Saints cannot get together by 11 o'clock.

Sure to be some later.) I said, "What did you mean just now, 'We shall soon be thirty-three'?" "Why, don't you know? We shall be like Him." The dear old men looked forward to their being young again, and that for ever. "We shall be in our prime again," said he with beaming face. The inner man wrinkled and bent with years? No; it is renewed day by day.

Luke 12. 4: "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." Only the outer man killed, or it may be maimed. The inner man, the man himself, is not touched. Maimed ones will enter into the earthly kingdom by and by, but there are none such now with Christ, though they were such down here, and as yet are unclothed. Men have done their utmost. They cannot touch the man himself, that mysterious inner man.

The word soul is also applied to the whole man of spirit and soul and body, as in 1 Peter 3. 20, 21, "Few (that is, eight souls) were saved by water," that is, eight persons.

Soul also has reference to the life of the believer, which life alas! may be lost. Luke 9. 24, "Whosoever shall lose his life (soul in marg. R.V.) for my sake." Again, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose or forfeit his own life?" Yes, such is indeed possible. Alas! many saints of God may look from the judgment seat of Christ upon a *lost life*, wasted and frittered away, yielding little or nothing for God in time, and little or nothing for the man or woman in eternity. May reader and writer be saved from such a dire calamity as that, but rather give Him joy and hear Him say, "Well done."

G. R. GEDDES.

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 150.—*In what way can one desiring to share in the work of oversight with his brethren be brought into fellowship with them?*

Should he approach them in the matter, or should they approach him, in order to be recognized as one taking oversight in the assembly?

This question seems to call for a somewhat full reply. Many younger brethren, we doubt not, are exercised in this matter.

Firstly, we would say, let none entertain the thought of getting into the recognized circle of overseeing brethren in order to do work for God. On the contrary, let all who have a heart and desire to care for others seek to do the work that God has put in their reach so as to please Him. There is a mutual care for one another which all Christians should cultivate, and which we find expressed in 1 Corinthians 12. 25. It is lamentable oftentimes to see the little exercise there is in this matter amongst saints. Christians will be living in the same street or locality, and yet know little of one another. We have often noticed that elder brethren, and men whose lives in many respects are an honour to the Lord, seem to feel no responsibility to look after and care for those around them. Were there more real godly care for one another there would be more development of shepherd gift, and this would naturally lead those who desire to care for the flock in God's way to seek for the fellowship and guidance of their brethren who have been longer engaged in the work.

Again, on the part of elder brethren who are in the recognized circle of overseeing men, there should be a watchful care of the younger, seeking to train them and

guide them in their service for God. We fear there has been great shortcoming in this matter, and the exhortation given in 2 Timothy 2. 2 has been greatly neglected. We repeat, there should be patient education on the part of elder ones of the younger, both with regard to oversight, care and ministry in the assembly. We are convinced that had this been more so in the past, the too common and sad sight of godly elder men sitting year after year in the assembly, apparently feeling no responsibility either to care for fellow saints or to minister the truth that they have received of the Lord to others, would not exist as it does to-day. On the part of younger ones there should be a willingness to be helped and guided in the things of God, in the various spheres of service open to them. Men cannot make elders or ministers; both must receive their gift from God, but likewise both may be helped, and their gifts developed, by the godly care and fellowship of their brethren, and by their waiting on their ministry. (Romans 12. 5, 8.)

We do not believe that there should be any great gap between the younger and older ones; on the contrary, just as we see with ministry and exhortation there are those who can speak the few words to profit or exhort to a godly living out the truth, and who are yet quite incapable of any continuous public ministry, so there will be those who are able to do a little in looking after and caring for fellow saints, yet such for the present, while stretching forth according to 1 Timothy 3. to oversight work, will still be unfit to undertake the more public duties of a recognized elder. If things be thus ordered in an assembly, as we believe it is the mind of God they should be, there will be a happy working together of all who are fitted of God according to their several abilities; and anything like doing oversight work after a contrary spirit will be avoided, and the sad and ungodly condition that we have seen in some

assemblies of the younger men making a party round themselves, setting aside their elder brethren and teaching others to do the same until division of heart leads to open division, will be things of the past.

God wills not that the younger should be burdened with that which the elders alone should bear, namely, the going into cases that call for discipline. These are often saddening and painful even for those who are old in the faith, and for younger brethren to be occupied therewith would probably mean disaster to themselves and to the assembly. Yet there are those who are fitted of God for this work, not only because they are elder brethren (for there are many elder brethren, alas, who have never learned to rule themselves), but because they have been fitted of God for the work of oversight according to the divine pattern as given in 1 Timothy 3. And when such men are together as the elderhood, or presbytery, on them devolves the first responsibility of investigating every matter that is to be ultimately brought before the assembly for judgment.

We have heard it said that all who profess conversion should be baptized, and all who profess to be Christians be received to the Lord's table on their own responsibility; and we suppose that on the same principle all who profess to minister should do so, and likewise those who profess to rule should be allowed to appoint themselves to oversight work; "but we have not so learned Christ," and we believe that the characteristics of an overseer or elder as given in the scripture referred to are not given for the persons to form a right estimate of themselves by, but for others to form a correct judgment of them in accordance with the mind of the Spirit.

Now it is evident that if there are those called of God to go before and care for and rule the flock (1 Pet. 5. 2), they will be responsible to see that only God-added ones are joined with them in their work and company—a company

so definite that they can be called together as they were by the apostle (see Acts 20. 17, as also Acts 15. 6), where we find the apostles and elders together; and let us remember there is no mention of apostolic appointment to the elderhood of the Jerusalem assembly. If there is a together company, called out and called together of God, it is evident there must be a way in which such are brought together, and to suppose that one should measure himself and appoint himself seems to us unscriptural.

This then brings us to the definite question, How is one to be received into the already formed circle of overseers? And we reply, In much the same way that one is brought into the definitely formed circle of the church of God, only that while the bringing into a church of God is a responsibility confined to a local assembly (although such an one brought in locally is brought into the wider circle of the House of God), we believe that the bringing into the circle of overseers has a wider area of responsibility in that the company of the overseers responsible to get together may be and generally are those who come together from various assemblies contiguous to one another.

We might add more, but refrain from so doing. Our readers will find the subject more fully gone into in NEEDED TRUTH for June of this present year in notes of an address by our esteemed brother and co-worker C. M. L.

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.

IDLENESS.

SINCE youth is the time when life-long habits are commonly formed, it is well that the young believer should be on his guard to avoid the thousand and one pleasures of sin by which the enemy persistently seeks to attract and

captivate him; also to earnestly receive and hide in his heart what will grow from within to without if he be but diligent to keep his heart as honest ground for "good seed" which the Friend of friends ever seeks to sow.

Here, as pretty well everywhere else,

"PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE."

The serious dangerousness of idleness is searchingly depicted in the very few scriptures that deal therewith. Where works (compare Eph. 2. 8-10 here) as "things that accompany salvation" are not manifested, and with great delight desired, that soul has gravest reason to inquire at His mouth as to this idleness.

For faith without works is IDLE (see James 2. 14-26, noting for this subject verse 20).

Surely there is but a step between idleness and death. That no believer need be idle, such scriptures as Mark 13. 34-37, Ephesians 4. 12, and Matthew 20. 1-16 show.

By these is taken away the ever ready excuse of the idler. For whoever hath not hired him, the Lord has given to every man his work. Though every member hath not the same office (practice), yet those which seem most feeble are necessary. Yea, the Lord hath need of such. "And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; nor the head to the feet, I have no need of you."

In this no one liveth to himself, and no one dieth to himself. How interesting and profitable the contemplation:

AM I AN INCUBUS, OR A HEALTHFUL ADJUNCT?

The heart application that is necessary if one would escape being an idler is lovingly set out in 2 Peter 1. 1-11, especially the sevenfold things of verses 5, 6, 7, the which if they be in any and abound make him to be

"NEITHER IDLE NOR UNFRUITFUL."

But alas! alas! for the believer who lacketh these things. Oh, the loss in time and eternity!

Dreadful as is the condition of such idlers, with what severity shall *idle words* be judged (see Matt. 12. 36). As the natural body vitiated is too aptly the ready soil for fouler diseases, so with the idler, he is apt not only to be idle, but to become a tattler and a busybody (compare 1 Tim. 5. 13). What a pitiable condition for a child of God to be in, and what malpractices to be guilty of! Consideration for oneself might well suffice to awaken to righteousness, that one might not readily be ensnared. By the sorrows of such be entreated, O young believer, to flee therefrom, and be helped hereunto by perusing Proverbs 19. 15, 31. 10-31. Let Christian women especially note these words, and let all in the House of God regard "that by much slothfulness the building decayeth, and

THROUGH IDLENESS

of the hands the house droppeth through," and thus be stirred to rather be as those of 1 Chronicles 4. 23, "Who dwelt there with the king for his work." Where such dwellers are, then Nehemiah 4. 6 will describe them: "The people had a mind to work" (see the whole chapter).

Be assured then, young believer, that

"Life is real, life is earnest! and the grave is not its goal.

* * * * *

Be not like dumb driven cattle; be a hero in the strife.

* * * * *

Let us then be up and doing, with a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing, *learn to labour* and to wait."

JOHN BROWN.

BIBLE WOMEN: HELPS AND HINDERERS.

HAGAR.

LET us now look at Hagar, the Egyptian bond-slave. As we noticed before, her mistress, Sarai, in her impatience had made her plans, and Abram had hearkened to her voice. Soon Sarai discovered her mistake, and dealt hardly

with Hagar, who fled from her into the wilderness. There she had to learn the solemn yet precious truth,

“THOU GOD SEEST ME.”

This proved that He had seen and noted her affliction. Yet how searching were His questions: Whence comest thou? Whither goest thou? The Lord would have her give an account of herself. Then He bade her return and submit to her mistress, at the same time assuring her of *what He was going to do for her.*

Some suffer in one way, some in another, and it may be that many have uttered the cry of the Psalmist—

“Oh that I had wings like a dove!

Then would I fly away and be at rest.

So, then would I wander far off,

I would lodge in the wilderness.

I would haste me to a shelter

From the stormy wind and tempest.”

—Ps. 55.

Yet all have to learn *to submit* and to remember the One Who, though a Son, yet learned obedience through the things which He suffered (Heb. 5. 8).

“Oh, how will recompense His smile

The sufferings of this little while!”

In Genesis 21. we again read of trouble between Sarah and Hagar. God, at this time, had to speak to Abraham and tell him to hearken to the voice of his wife, and to cast out the bondwoman and her son. In the light of the New Testament we learn that these two women are an allegory. They represent two covenants; one from Mount Sinai, bearing children unto bondage, which is Hagar. Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai, in Arabia, and answereth to the Jerusalem that now is, for she is in bondage with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, which is our mother (Gal. 4. 21–31).

Well may we sing in the freedom with which Christ set us free—

“My chains are snapt, the bonds of sin are broken,
And I am free;
Oh! let the triumphs of His grace be spoken,
Who died for me.”

So Hagar and her son are cast out, and they wander in the wilderness, there to learn again not only that God sees, but also that He hears. “God heard the voice of the lad.” Then He spake words of comfort to Hagar, and opened her eyes to see a well of water, from which she gave the lad drink, and God was with him, and he grew (Gen. 21. 20).

Shall it not be so with the Jerusalem that now is in bondage—the Jewish people—wandering in the world that is indeed a wilderness to them, whose cry is going up to God in heaven? Words of comfort shall yet reach their ears (Isa. 40. 1, 2), and their eyes shall be opened to see in the Lord Jesus their Messiah, the well of living water. Then shall the Fountain be opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness (Zech. 13.).

THE GOD OF JUDGMENT.

WE delight to think of God as the God of love. It is also equally blessed to contemplate Him as the God of judgment. It is because He is the God of judgment that we can know Him as the God of love. Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne, and in this our souls may well rejoice. God has saved us from the penal consequences of our sins, and He has done this in righteousness. He has not passed over our sins, but has judged them righteously. One object for which the Lord Jesus died was to declare God's righteousness, and to enable Him to be just and the Justifier of every believing one.

It is well for Christians to remember that they have to do with One who is the God of judgment. He can by no

means clear the guilty by passing over sin. When as sinners our past life of sin was set in order before our awakened consciences by the Spirit of God, what untold peace possessed our souls when we learned that God had judged sin in the person of the Lord Jesus on the cross! Gazing at that cross we could say with the Psalmist, "The Lord hath made Himself known, He hath executed judgment." There for the first time we could say that we knew God; there for the first time we learned His thoughts of sin as we beheld the judgment which He executed.

The One who thus revealed Himself to us as the God of judgment, when as sinners we stood trembling before the cross, would have us to remember that He is the God of judgment still. He can no more pass over our sins as saints than He could pass over our sins as sinners. If the believer does not examine himself, and judge his sins by confessing them to God, and forsaking them, then assuredly God will judge him. It is not God's desire to judge His children thus; He prefers that they should judge themselves. Therefore He says, "Let a man examine himself."

We cannot be too often reminded of this truth, nor can we have the necessity for self-judgment too solemnly impressed on our hearts. We are too apt to spare ourselves, and to excuse in ourselves what we would condemn in others. The more we learn of the God of judgment, the more must we desire to judge in ourselves all that is contrary to His holy character. The closer we are to God the more merciless will our judgment of ourselves be. To fail to judge ourselves is a sure indication that we are slipping away in heart from fellowship with God. When at a distance from Him we can spare many things which we would hew to pieces were we standing before the Lord. Where He treads is holy ground, and if we are to walk with Him individually, holiness must characterize us, and

self-judgment must be faithfully executed. If we truly love any person, we willingly put from us everything which would hinder our friendship with that person; so if walking with the God of judgment is our delight, we shall gladly judge in ourselves everything which mars our fellowship with Him. It will not be that we reluctantly put from us things which we would prefer to cling to, but all that would hinder our walk with God will be willingly parted with, even though it be as dear to us as a right hand or a right eye.

“If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” Thus it is clear that if we fail to judge ourselves God will do it. Well for us that it is so. Better far to be judged by God than to be left alone in unjudged sin. His loving dealings with us in chastening lead us to consider our ways and to betake ourselves again to the neglected work of self-judgment.

The assembly also is the sphere in which judgment has to be executed. Here man is responsible to judge for God. If self-judgment is neglected by the individual it may be that God will permit that one to sin so grievously that the judgment which he failed to execute on himself will require to be inflicted by others. That judgment may partake of the nature of internal discipline or may reach the extreme limit of putting away. In Revelation 1. the Lord Jesus is seen walking in the midst of the golden lampstands. His eyes as a flame of fire are quick to detect unjudged sin, and everything contrary to holiness comes under the tread of His feet like unto burnished brass. The assembly then is a solemn place. There God's holiness shines in all its purity, and His judgment is manifested in accordance therewith.

A time was reached in Israel's history when it was

said: "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord and He delighteth in them; or where is the God of judgment?" Solemn words! God was taking no manifest notice of evil and was permitting the evil-doer to pass on unpunished; and thus the very opposite of the truth was being spoken, namely, that the Lord delighted in the evil-doer. "If not," said they, "where is the God of judgment?" It had not been so in former days. Then evil was quickly judged and the evil-doer suffered for his sin. A man is found gathering sticks on the Sabbath. A trifling offence, many might say. What is to be done with him? He must die, for he has transgressed the commandment of the Lord Who dwells in their midst. Why were things so different in Malachi's day? Israel was so far from God and God was so far from them that He took little notice, so far as manifest judgment was concerned, of their sinful ways. They were well nigh left alone by God to continue in their sin. How very solemn! Better far that God's people should be where His judgments are known, even though they humble and bow to the dust before Him than that an Ephraim-like condition should exist and God should have to say, "They are joined to their idols, let them alone." Thus for all time it holds good that the nearer God's people are to Him the more manifest will His judgments become in their midst, and the further they depart from Him the less will God have to do with them in judgment.

How important then it becomes that we should ever remember that our God is the God of judgment! How pressing is the necessity that young Christians should be reminded of this in these days when sin is so beguiling. If self-judgment is faithfully executed and everything contrary to God's will put away, it will save us untold sorrow in after days. It is the little foxes that spoil the tender vine.

A CHRISTIAN.

The word Christian is found three times in the Scriptures, namely Acts 11. 26, 26. 28 ; 1 Pet. 4. 16. The second occurrence of the word, where King Agrippa may be heard saying to Paul, " With little persuasion thou wouldst fain make me a Christian," shall receive but passing notice. It shows how near one may come to being numbered amongst the people of God and yet find himself eternally lost.

In Acts 11. 26 we find the origin of the name of Christian: " The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." This does not mean, as is generally supposed, that the people of Antioch called the disciples by this name as a term of derision. It means that God gave the name of Christians to the disciples. The word " called " which the Holy Spirit employs in this case clearly proves that this is so. That word means, to declare by means of an oracle.

From the closing verses of Acts 11. we may also learn who they were who were thus named Christians by God. Consequent upon the martyrdom of Stephen the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ were scattered abroad, and some came to Antioch preaching the Lord Jesus. It is recorded that there great multitudes believed and turned to the Lord. It was these believers, who are said to have turned to the Lord, who were afterward called Christians. It is important that this fact should be clearly kept before us in these days, for there are around us thousands of nominal Christians who have never believed the preaching of the Lord Jesus and who have never turned to the Lord. Though professing to be Christians they have never been called such by God, but arrogate to themselves a name to which they have no real claim. They are Christians in name only ; at heart they are enemies of Christ.

A Christian then is one who believes the preaching concerning the Lord Jesus and who in reality turns unto the Lord ; thus proving that he belongs to Christ, who died in order

that He might purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works. Therefore let none who read these lines lay claim to the name of Christian who have never accepted the Lord Jesus as their Saviour; let none arrogate to themselves that name in time who shall be Christless in eternity.

There is true dignity associated with the name of Christian. James, by the Spirit, calls it

THAT GOOD OR BEAUTIFUL NAME

by which ye were called (James 2. 7). Have we, fellow-saints, in any measure grasped the dignity of our calling? Have we realized the honour which God has conferred upon us by calling us Christians? Is it possible that any one can be ashamed of that name of dignity and of worth? What does the world know us as being? Are we known to our fellows as Christians?

“Let none of you suffer as a murderer but if a man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed; but let him

GLORIFY GOD IN THIS NAME”

(1 Pet. 4. 15, 16). This verse is of immense importance, for whilst it bids us refuse to be ashamed because of showing our colours and owning that we are Christians, it also imposes upon us the most solemn obligation—to glorify God in this name. Let us ponder these words well and try to grasp what they really mean. Is it possible that such as we can glorify God in the name of Christian? Nay, God helping us, we shall not question it, for He has said it; but as those upon whom He has called the beautiful name of Christians we shall bend our energies to that which is at once our highest privilege and our most imperative responsibility, namely to glorify God in that name.

This pre-eminent privilege and responsibility embraces all others. Others there are, in number not a few, associated with the name of Christian, but they will be found one and all but stepping stones to this infinitely blessed goal. Let

us view in the fear of the Lord the standard to which we may attain. Let us lift our gaze on high and learn the dignity of the Christian's calling. What was the goal to which the Lord Jesus Christ attained on earth? Listen to His words: "I have glorified Thee upon the earth." Here His earthly privilege and responsibility ended. They could rise no higher even with the Son of God. So the Christian to-day has the same blessed goal set before him, even to glorify God upon the earth.

Do we reciprocate the grace which has thus been bestowed upon us? As the possibilities of the Christian's calling loom up before our wandering vision, do our spirits swell within us, and do we eagerly reach forth to apprehend that for which we have been apprehend? Has the live coal from heaven's altar touched us and kindled afresh within us the desire to glorify God as Christians? Then let us count the cost; then let us seek to understand what glorifying God entails. This is no sentiment. It is not something to sing and to talk about merely; it entails the doing of God's will and all that accompanies the same. "If any man

SUFFER AS A CHRISTIAN

let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." So to glorify God as a Christian entails suffering, entails reproach, entails loss. Gaze upon the path of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who could say, "I have glorified Thee upon the earth." See how narrow that path was. Ponder His suffering and reproach and loss. Then let us learn that if we are to glorify God as Christians we shall have to walk in the footsteps of the Christ, we shall have to accept the place of rejection which the world gave Him, and

"Misunderstood by all, still dare
To do what God's own heart will prize."

Do these considerations dim the ardour of any and cause their courage to lag? Will some because thereof shrink

back and walk no more with Him? Be it so; there will be others, like unto some of old, who will cling the more closely to Him saying, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

THE MIDNIGHT SONG.

A song in the night is the sweetest song,
 Its echoes eternally roll along;
 Though no mortal ear may its cadence hear
 In the stillness of night and darkness drear,
 It rises on high to the throne of God,
 To the eternal Source from which it flowed.

Who giveth a song in the night but He
 Who stirreth to music the rolling sea?
 When the tempests roar and the billows surge,
 And man's ears hear nought but a solemn dirge,
 Then, melodious rolls the sea's loud ode,
 And its voices are lifted up to God.

From the depths of the ocean's vast unrest,
 From the heaving billows with foaming crest,
 From the stillness of night when the forests sleep,
 Or groan a requiem with those that weep,
 There arises to God a song more sweet
 Than from all earthly songs our ears that greet!

A song in the night when the heart is sore,
 And chords are resounding ne'er heard before:
 Long silent—now waked as by magic call,
 For God's finger touches the heart-strings all.
 Ah! tremulous sweet is the song by night,
 The harmony perfect! 'tis God's delight!

The sigh and the groan and the breaking heart
 In the song in the night have all their part;
 And the upward glance of the tear-dimmed eye
 That beholds nought else but a God still nigh;
 When on darkness dawn His love and His light
 He gives His beloved a song in the night.

My song in the night—let me prize its strain,
 Nor of sorrow or loss or woe complain:
 The darker the night the brighter the morn!
 As greater the calm that succeeds the storm!
 For the memory sweet of earth's midnight song
 Shall live while eternity rolls along.

THE LIFE.

(SEE 1 JOHN 1.)

THE fourfold account of the Lord Jesus Christ given to us by God in the Holy Scriptures demands a degree of attention and an earnestness of study that it is to be feared, alas! it rarely secures.

Every one of the four gospels is itself a perfect and luminous picture of the days wherein the Eternal One tabernacled amongst men as a man in the flesh. These four pictures are distinct from one another, alike in the selection of events which they record, and in the order in which the incidents are narrated. Distinct too are the pictures they present of Him of whom they speak. Yet it is one life which they describe, one death of which they tell, one supreme adorable Lord Jesus Christ whom they magnify.

'Taken singly Matthew or Luke or Mark or John contains enough to fill the mind, enough to ravish the heart and to enthral the affection; but God being rich in mercy has not only spoken to us in one of these. He has caused four men to place on record four distinct stories of the living and the dying of His Sent One, the Apostle and High Priest of our Confession.

The book of the generation as given through the tax-gatherer is accompanied by the gospel written by him who was nephew of Barnabas according to the flesh but son of Peter in the faith; Luke too, the beloved physician of Troas, companion of the apostle of the Gentiles, traced the course of all things accurately, and drew up an orderly narrative; finally, he who lay in the Lord's bosom and knew His truth and love bare witness and wrote, and we know that his witness is true.

Taking the God-breathed character of each of these

narratives as an established fact it is interesting and profitable to compare them one with another.

If man allow himself to become a judge of God and of what God has caused to be done, he will not find it difficult to discover therein what will seem to him to be blemishes. Accordingly the sceptic can point to many differences which he will call discrepancies, and maintain that the existence of these makes it impossible for a reasonable man to believe that the gospel narratives are altogether reliable. Others again dwelling more on the points of resemblance between Matthew, Mark, Luke weave hypotheses of varied sorts to explain the facts and what they suppose to be facts, and thus seek to derogate from the value of the testimony as borne by four distinct witnesses. Other and varied are the comments of sceptics avowed and unavowed, and of weak-kneed and half-hearted believers. All of which illustrate the vanity of seeking to build otherwise than on a firm foundation. From all which building may God in His mercy deliver writers and readers of these pages!

The firm foundation is this, that God hath spoken to us in the Scriptures, that therein the Word of God may be found, neither partially nor imperfectly, but fully and truthfully, in words which though words of human language, are not words which man's wisdom has taught, but words taught by the Holy Spirit.

We return then to this, that as we accept the four narratives as every one of them true and truthful, we believe that both in the study of them singly and in a rightly divided comparison of them with one another that way of wisdom unto salvation may be found which is through the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

It is indeed, we are assured, possible to read and compare parallel passages of the four gospels with but little profit and even to cause obscurity in our minds and that of others thereby. Especially in any attempt to discover from what

is revealed to us the order in time of the varied occurrences; or to so collate two or more accounts of what are or seem to be identical incidents as to get a more ample account than either evangelist records; there are abundant opportunities for us to err.

The very text of the gospels as contained in many manuscripts has suffered grievously through ill-advised and through unconscious efforts at bringing the narratives into harmony or into verbal agreement.

Yet from all such mistakes there is the possibility of salvation, if once we clearly realize the perfectness of each several picture and the unmixed truthfulness of them all.

If in two of the gospels, for example, two events are recorded in a different order, it is clear that this is designed. In each, but especially in the one in which the order of time is reversed, the actual order of narration will be full of meaning. But it must be recognized at once that it often is not easy to tell which of two gospels records first the incident which first occurred. Certainly the question cannot be dealt with in the summary way that those suggest who would say that Mark, for example, records all, or nearly all, that he narrates in the actual order of occurrence. It would rather seem that there are places in each gospel where the order of occurrence is strictly maintained for special reasons. Whilst elsewhere there are passages which, even from the language used in the account itself, are evidently either given out of their temporal order or at least no stress is laid on this.

Compare for example such expressions as "immediately," "on that day," with "it came to pass," and so forth.

Yet again, where two events are recorded in order of occurrence there is at times no mention in the passage of a third incident which it seems clear from other gospels must have occurred in an interval between them.

All these difficulties seem designed to give zest to the pursuit of the subject on the part of such as are in earnest and will be painstaking in their study of these surpassingly excellent portions of the Holy Scriptures. Albeit, they demand that there be no hastiness or undue positiveness in coming to conclusions. Therefore yet again may be seen the excellence of that which will be profitable to the exercise of caution and self-restraint in the consideration and exposition of those Gospel narratives, wherein alone is to be found, true and truthful, the Life and Death of the Lord Jesus Christ as given by God through Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

The above remarks may serve as an introduction to a series of short notes which the undersigned hopes to contribute to these pages during the forthcoming year if God permit and help. These notes are intended to serve as a help to classes of young men and of others who may wish to use them for their help in fifty-two Bible readings on the gospels to be held on the fifty-two Lord's Days or during the fifty-two weeks of 1902.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

N.B.—Any Bible classes or others who may propose to adopt this scheme for the study of the four gospels during the year 1902 are invited to send any suggestions bearing on the subject, if possible, during the first fortnight of November, or as soon as possible.

OUGHT.

In 1 Chron. 12. 32 we read, "Of the children of Issachar, men who had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do, the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment."

These were important men at that time; very few compared with the many thousands mentioned in that chapter, but all their brethren were at their command. Such men are always needful, yet how few there are who have understanding of the times, to know

WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE!

We pray God to raise up many such men, filled with the Holy Spirit, who shall be able to lead, and instruct the saints in all the will of God.

There are a few simple yet important things mentioned in the Scriptures as being things we ought to do; the doing of which will be well pleasing unto God. First,

"WE OUGHT TO GIVE MORE EARNEST HEED

to the things we have heard, lest haply we drift away." This is a very important word for all, especially the young ones in Christ, to take heed to the pure Word of God. Alas! how many drift away, letting slip that which they once believed. Some who did run well are gone back and leading others with them to regret the truths they once held dear. May our God keep His saints, and we pray that each one may so take heed to the Word that there may be no going back, but steady progress in the onward path (Prov. 4. 20-27).

In Luke 18. 1, Jesus spake a parable unto His disciples to the end that they

OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY

and not to faint.

This is another important word whereunto we do well if we take heed. We remember how the Lord Jesus spent whole nights in prayer; what an example for us! If He, the Lord of Life and Glory, as a man, needed to spend whole nights in prayer, how much more do we need to get alone into the presence of God that we may spread before Him all our difficulties, and come "boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help in time of need." We also need a teacher. The disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray," and the Lord Jesus responded to their prayer. He has also made full provision for us in this matter. For

WE KNOW NOT HOW TO PRAY AS WE OUGHT,

but the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us, and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, that He maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God (Rom. 8. 26). Oh that the hearts of the saints may be stirred up, to seek unto God more and more, that we may get from Him that grace, wisdom, and strength that shall enable us to "fight the good fight of the Faith," and be in all things well pleasing to Him! If we go to God first, to inquire of Him, it will save us from the many snares and pitfalls Satan spreads so constantly in our way, and we shall never be turned aside from the paths of righteousness and truth.

In Rom. 12. 3, we read that we ought

NOT TO THINK OF OURSELVES MORE HIGHLY THAN WE OUGHT to think, but so to think as to think soberly; "He that exalteth himself shall be abased"; "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble: humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time"; "Knowledge puffeth up, Love buildeth

up." What a contrast! "If any man thinketh he knoweth anything, he

KNOWETH NOT YET AS HE OUGHT TO KNOW ;

but if any man loveth God, the same is known of Him." May we never be as some who think they have come to such a knowledge of the things of God that they have nothing more to learn ; but let us ever have an open heart and mind to receive the things that are freely given to us of God. We want to have right thoughts of ourselves, right thoughts of our brethren, above all, right thoughts of God and His Word, so that each may have their proper place, and God in all things be glorified.

1 John 4. 11.—"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also

UGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

He that loveth his brother, abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him"; "Love is of God"; "We know we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren"; and this is where love will lead us, "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us, and we

UGHT TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES

for the brethren" (chap. 3. 14). "Let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and truth." Love does not study how much it can get, but how much it can give. May He Who shed abroad His love in our hearts, through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us, enable us to manifest that love one to the other, building each other up in our most holy Faith, and seeking to provoke unto love and to good works.

1 Thess. 4. 1: "Ye received of us

HOW YE OUGHT TO WALK

and to please God." It is by our manner of life or behaviour that we testify for God (1 Pet. 3. 16), therefore how important it is that our walk in the midst of this present evil world should be such that God can look upon with pleasure, and fellow saints and the world around may take knowledge of us that we "have been with Jesus, and learned of Him"! We are to "walk worthy of the calling," to "walk circumspectly," to "walk honestly to those without," to "walk in the light, as He is in the light," "and as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and on the Israel of God." In 2 Thess. 3. 6 we are commanded in the name of the Lord Jesus to withdraw ourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly. "For yourselves know how

YE OUGHT TO IMITATE

us," says the Apostle. There are examples of faith and behaviour given in the Word for our guidance; we ought to follow such, "considering the issue of their lives, imitate their faith" (Heb. 13. 7.).

Following on our walk (or silent testimony) there should be a spoken testimony, that men may not only see our good behaviour, but also hear from us the word of life. To this end the Apostle Paul asks the prayers of the saints that utterance may be given him, in opening his mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel, "for which I am an ambassador in bonds, that in it I may

SPEAK BOLDLY AS I OUGHT

to speak" (Eph. 6. 20; Col. 4. 4).

This needs much prayer, that we may speak as we ought to speak. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one"; "but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord, ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a

reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3. 15).

WE ALL OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO BEAR TESTIMONY

in this way; one of the first things a young believer should learn to do is to give an answer concerning the hope that is in him with meekness and fear, if it be only like the man who was born blind—"One thing I know, whereas I was blind, now I see." "Would ye also become His disciples?"

You will almost always find that a dumb man is a deaf man, and he is dumb because he is deaf. Does not this speak to our hearts? Those who are deaf to the voice of God speaking in His Word to them will be dumb when they have opportunity to speak that Word to others. There are many people deaf who are not dumb, so also there is such a thing as having much to say which we have not received from God. There is a great responsibility resting upon all who speak, that they preach no other Gospel (Gal. 1. 6-10), nor teach a different doctrine (1 Tim. 1. 3). May we hear and do (Jas. 1. 22), and so speak and so do, as those who shall be judged by a law of liberty (Jas. 2. 12).

"Seeing these things are thus all to be dissolved,

WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS OUGHT YE TO BE

in all holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. 3. 11). From those to whom God has given much will He expect the more, and so, as we look beyond all these things that are around us to that which He will make: "new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," and knowing that is our inheritance, what manner of persons ought we to be?

Let us examine ourselves in the light of the judgement seat of Christ, and find wherein we fall short of the standard.

“Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect; but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded and whereunto we have already attained, by that same rule, let us walk” (Phil. 3. 12-16).

“They which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize: even so run that ye may attain.” Those who get the crown “must strive lawfully,” those who win the prize must run to the end. May none of us be turned aside from the way, or miss the mark, but ever press on until we enter upon our inheritance, and receive from the Master’s lips the “Well done! enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

G. S. REEVE.

T

TRUTH *versus* ERROR.

(Continued.)

INCARNATION.

“The woman’s seed,” so hath the Lord God said,
 “Shall surely bruise the (wily) Serpent’s head”;
 In promise thus, mankind to make to know,
 God’s purpose, Satan’s work to overthrow;
 And in the One of whom He spake should come
 Shall all His will and work be fully done;
 And, when the time of promise hath drawn nigh,
 Jesus! God’s Son, came to the earth to die;
 When heavenly hosts triumphantly proclaim,
 A Saviour’s born to-day in Bethlehem;

“Immanuel!” “God with us,” is thus seen
In human form; such myst'ry ne'er had been;
“As it was written,” so He doth fulfil,
“Lo, I am come, O God, to do Thy will.”
That body taken, which had been prepared,
Thus is God's purpose now fully declared.

REDEMPTION.

Kinsman Avenger! for this purpose He
Was manifested in the world to be
First, that He might the Devil's works undo,
And bring to nought the mighty worker too.
So, on the Cross, these He both fought and foiled,
There powers and principalities He spoiled.
Kinsman Redeemer He has now become,
Nearer kinsman failing. For there is none
Of human race by means or merit can
Ever redeem himself or brother man.
Right to redeem Christ purchased by His death;
Redemption through His blood, the Scripture saith,
Have one and all who do in Him believe,
And then, and thus, forgiveness such receive;
Wondrous redemption! outcome of God's plan,
One Mediator, between God and man.

D. S.

THE GOOD—GREAT—CHIEF SHEPHERD.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON PSALMS 22., 23. AND 24.

PSALMS 22., 23. and 24., are grouped together; they are all Psalms of David. Psalm 22. speaks of Jesus; Psalm 23. speaks of the same One, but it speaks of Him as The Christ; whilst Psalm 24. speaks of Him as Lord. Or we might put it in this way: The 22nd Psalm speaks of Him as the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep; the 23rd Psalm speaks of Him as the Great Shepherd of the sheep who was brought again from the dead (see Heb. 13. 20). And the 24th Psalm speaks of Him as the Chief Shepherd (see I Pet. 5. 4).

The name "Jesus" gives prominence to His manhood, and to His sufferings at the hands of men, and we might also say, at the hands of Satan.

His title, "The Christ," gives prominence to His resurrection.

Whilst "Lord" gives prominence to His ascension, and to His coming again.

These thoughts help in the consideration of the three Psalms we have read. The blessings of the 23rd Psalm would not have been ours but for what we read of in the 22nd Psalm; then in the 24th Psalm we get mention of "The generation of them that seek after Him"; but we do not get that until after the 22nd and 23rd Psalms. Why? Because the 22nd Psalm speaks of the sufferings of the Christ. And this is in keeping with the 12th of John, where we read that certain Greeks came to Philip and said, "We would see Jesus." They did not know Him as the Christ, they knew Him only as a man—a wonderful man, maybe they thought Him. They had heard of Jesus, and they came to see Him. And the Lord Jesus directs their attention to Himself, not as a man merely, in these words: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it

abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.

And so the **23rd** and **24th** Psalms, and in measure, the latter part of the **22nd** Psalm, are the result, the fruit of the sufferings brought before us in the opening part of the **22nd** Psalm, where He is set forth as the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep; and were it not for that work of the cross that we read of so fully in the opening verses of the **22nd** Psalm, there would be no fruit. God would not have any saints fearing Him, as in Psalm **130**, verses 3 and 4, "If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared."

So we are not saved merely for our own sakes, we are saved that God may have a people for Himself upon the earth fearing Him.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, the first thing contemplated was not their deliverance, but God's purpose was that there might be a people for Jehovah. Of course their deliverance was included in it, and their happiness too, for we cannot conceive of a people delivered by Jehovah that would not be a happy people. But the primary object was that they might be a people for Jehovah; so we read in Exodus **25**., which comes after the **24th** chapter, speaking of the blood of sprinkling, which implies sanctification, "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them," that I may dwell in the midst of them. Of course their own happiness was bound up in it. They were delivered from Egypt, and from the lash of the taskmaster, and all that that implies, yet the primary object in it all was that they might be a people for Jehovah, and that He might be feared.

What a wonderful truth! Calculated to lift us above ourselves, and to lift us even above the blessings that are ours, and make us think of the glory that has been brought

to God, and of the value that God sets upon us as being His. If we have an inheritance in Christ, remember that God has an inheritance in us: "The Lord's portion is His people."

So we see that apart from the sufferings of the **22nd** Psalm we would never have the **23rd** and the **24th** Psalms. The Lord could never have been known as the Great Shepherd of the **23rd** Psalm, or the Chief Shepherd of the **24th** Psalm, if He had not first as the Good Shepherd of the **22nd** Psalm given His life for the sheep.

(Communicated by W. Cox.)

Fragment.

THE LIBERTY OF THE LORD'S SERVANT.

To any who speak the good Word of God it is no small comfort to remember that they are called to speak in the leading and the liberty of the Holy Spirit: A Divine leading and liberty that sets them free from human bondage, trammel and constraint, and that delivers them from the conventionalities of human tradition, custom, and rut. The Lord's servant is the Lord's messenger—not man's—and as such he possesses a freedom that is altogether unknown and unknowable in the systems of men; a freedom which, in the will of the Lord, his Master, sets him at liberty to speak His message, both as to the matter and the form of that message, in fulfilment of God's good pleasure. As to the form that ministry may take, according to the principles above referred to, we understand that at different times it expresses itself variously. Sometimes the ministry may be in the form of an exposition, sometimes an exhortation, sometimes an address, sometimes a spoken meditation; and at other times, again, the ministry takes a more indefinite form, perhaps amounting occasionally to that which is conversational in character.

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.

DOUBTING.,

A CERTAIN writer has said that some men were never conscious of a doubt because they never really believed. How true these words are! It is the believer who is harassed with doubts and fears. It is after a man is converted to God that the unbelief and daring infidelity of his heart manifest themselves and often cause him untold anguish. What is there that is dearest to the Christian's heart regarding which, at times, Satan will not suggest doubts? What is there of clearest revelation in the Word of God concerning which the Serpent does not yet whisper, "Yea, hath God said"? *Gen 3-1*

"Doubting Castle" is still a formidable place, and many young Christians find themselves captives there for some time. Access to it is easily obtained, but how to get free from it is often a far more difficult question. There is nothing that can turn its iron locks and cause its massive doors to open wide but the Word of God! Faith laying hold of God's Word triumphs over it.

As a rule, doubters are occupied with themselves or their surroundings. They look within themselves for evidence that they are God's children, and, failing to find such evidence there, they are at once assailed by doubts as to their salvation. So foolish are they that having begun in the Spirit they expect to be made perfect in the flesh. By the hearing of faith they were born of God and received the Spirit at the first, but now faith and the Word of God, as the ground of peace and assurance of salvation, have, for the time being, been given up. Instead, the presence or the absence of the fruits which should accompany salva-

tion is made the basis of peace and assurance. What can the results be but doubts, fears, perplexities?

"I know," wrote the apostle Paul, "that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Would to God that we could all say that we know this! We understand that the Scriptures tell us that this is so, but in actual experience we too often look for much that is good from the flesh; and when we fail to find anything from the flesh that will bear witness to the fact that we are children of God we bury ourselves in the dark recesses of "Doubting Castle."

What saith the Scriptures? The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God (Rom. 8. 16). And how does the Spirit bear witness? By turning our gaze in upon ourselves to see if we can discern evidences of our birth from above there? Never! The Spirit bears witness by means of the Word of God! In our hours of doubt we shut out the Word of God, and, consequently, the Spirit has nothing with which to bear witness. If instead we allowed the Word of Christ to dwell in us richly, the Spirit of God would be furnished with a sword with which He could slay the giant, doubt.

"These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 Jno. 5. 13). These words were not written so that the sinner at the moment of his conversion might know through them that he possessed eternal life and ever afterwards know it in some other way. No; the Word of God which caused us to know at the first that we were children of God is that alone which can assure us of the fact all the way along. And that Word, blessed be God! is ever the same. We may change, we may fail, we may sin, but the testimony of God's Word is unchangeable. What the Scriptures told us a year ago they tell us to-day and shall for ever. Therefore, "Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope."

BUILDING ON THE ROCK. *Matt. 7.*

DOUBTING and questioning are not always unmitigated evils. On the contrary they often result in much good. If the foundation on which we rest is a solid one it will stand examination, and the more closely we look at it the more clearly shall we be convinced that we are building on the rock. If we are building on the sand the sooner doubts and questions arise the better and boldly assail a position which if continued in might end in eternal ruin.

This is true as to the question of our eternal salvation. In these days of eagerness to swell the number of professed converts it is to be feared that many counterfeits are being manufactured. If one is really created anew in Christ Jesus, when doubts and questions arise, their appeal to the Word of God will only serve to demonstrate more clearly that their eternal security rests on a rock that cannot be shaken. The foundation on which the child of God rests is not shrouded by darkness and uncertainty. It stands in the full blaze of God's light and invites examination. Any position which cannot brook the minutest examination is not worth having. Of course it should be clearly understood that the only standard by which we can accurately test the ground upon which our hope of eternal salvation rests is the Word of God. Let no mistake be made here. Many seek to test it by their feelings, by their attainments, by their supposed joy or something else, but all such tests are absolutely false and misleading. The Word of God alone can give assurance of salvation. There our gaze is directed to the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, the eternally immovable basis upon which every born again soul rests.

This, then, is the foundation upon which we build—Christ, and His work upon the Cross! Here is that which

will stand examination. The proud waves of doubt which beat upon that Rock do so to their own destruction. They recoil and are seen no more.

JOY AND JOYFULNESS.

WHILST to say that Christians generally are morose, would be probably to overstate fact, yet it can scarcely be questioned that in the matter of joy or joyfulness, the children of God do not manifest over much of either.

It is one thing to indulge the "laughter of the fool." It is quite another thing to have and to manifest that joy which the will and way of God afford.

Deut. 28. 47 contains quite an awakening word as to the importance of possessing joy in regard to the manner in which God's will is done.

The young believer may therefore earnestly seek grace to be an imitator of the Three-One God in this lovely needful virtue.

Kind, kind and wise is the counsel that cries—

"Go bury thy sorrow,
 "The world hath its share:
 "Go give them the sunshine,
 "Tell Jesus the rest."

There appears to be a natural tendency to far more readily speak of and to spread sorrow, than to speak of and to be and to do what will gladden and give true joy.

Let any one reflect hereon and see whether there is not both room and occasion for a great revival in this respect.

We not too often sing—

"When their words of love and cheer
 "Fall no longer on the ear."

But seriously, may it not be asked to profit, "Who, who indeed would miss these from writer or reader?"

What an example for emulation is that of 2 Cor. 1. 24—

“But are helpers (co-workers) of your joy.”

How safely Paul could say to beloved Philippians that his being spared unto them would but be a furtherance of their joy and faith.

Thus the very knowledge by them that he would likely come unto them again caused exuberant joy in Christ Jesus for him.

Probably *love* is the great root from which *joy* springs, as *peace* is its guardian.

There is much more in this principle of joy than appears at the first sight. Wherefore, young believer, suffer the exhortation to meditate hereon—comparing in your thinking Gal. 5. 22, Rom. 14. 17, Rom. 15. 13, and 1 Jno. 1. 4.

Would any cause joy to those who are in the mind of God and the way of the Spirit, then let Phil. 2. have most careful study with acceptance thereof. In fact, the whole Epistle to the Philippians savours of and teems with joy,

BOTH CAUSATIVE AND OBJECTIVE.

There are many phases of joy beyond the reach of mention even in these A B C papers.

What a glorious scene is that of Neh. 8! Written too for our learning!

Then sorrow, despite so much to warrant it, was quite forbidden, because of the much in their little that the good Jehovah had found.

For the joy of the Lord their strength was not that joy He gives but that joy he found and finds.

Oh! the captivatingness hereof. Culminating at last in a Sabbath (time of rest) as Zephaniah 3. 16–20 depicts. The fore-shadow of which may well be now *since Christ is the body of all*. See Col. 2. 19–20.

How beautiful too is the exemplary prayer of Col. 1. 9–11.

Can you make this your prayer for others, beloved young saint? Are you ashamed to beg that others might so pray for you? Is it not only thus that you can know and experience 1 Thess. 3. 9?

Joy is an important factor amid trials, diverse though they be. Joy sustains and educates faith, so that

PATIENCE AND PERFECTION

follow until the believer lacks nothing. See James 1. 1-4. Hence the worship of 1 Pet. 1. 3, etc., with its accompanying experience, exhortations, and possibilities.

As to all which, he who is in the mind of Christ will yet be heard to testify:—I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth. For real joy is not mere sentiment but loving and life-glowing actuality. Being the "oil wherewith God maketh a man's face to shine," which man in turn causeth the countenance of his friend to brighten: until not as a Nehemiah evidenced the sorrow of his heart, but is that of a heart exercised in care to avoid "If I make you sorry" and cultivated "who then shall make me glad?"

JOHN BROWN.

BIBLE WOMEN: HELPS AND HINDERERS.

LOT'S WIFE.

“REMEMBER Lot’s wife” (Luke 17. 32). Thus spake the Lord to His disciples; and in these words He uttered a solemn warning which passes down from one generation to another until the coming of the Son of Man. “Then let him that is in the field

NOT TURN BACK.”

What a striking contrast do we see in Lot’s wife to the wife of faithful Abraham who, as a princess, dwelt as a pilgrim with her husband in the tent, enjoying fellowship with God and the promises of God! Of these Lot’s wife knew nothing in the city doomed to destruction, where she must have perished had not the Lord in mercy snatched her as a brand from the burning. But great and gracious as was her deliverance she

LOOKED BACK,

in direct disobedience to the Lord, and she became a pillar of salt. Oh! let us remember Lot’s wife, and let us learn how serious a matter it may be to look back when God commands us to press on!

Israel also looked back after the Lord had delivered them from the house of bondage in Egypt; and the dire results of that act of disobedience to God could be seen for forty years afterwards, and caused the men who should have led the people into the land in triumph to die in the wilderness and their carcasses to rot in the desert.

To-day we also are in danger of looking back. There is a looking back to the world with its many allurements from which the grace of God delivered us. There is a looking back to the systems of men from which the truth of God once rescued us. There is a looking back from the

service to which the Lord has called us. Well may we pause and consider, as in the fear of the Lord we gaze at the pillar of salt, and tremble lest a fate as direful should overtake us through looking back. May we rather gird up our loins afresh and go forward. Prov. 4. 25-27; Phil. 3. 13, 14.

DEPARTURE FROM GOD.

I.

DEPARTURE from God is a most subtil and dangerous disease. Like some deadly diseases which lay hold of the human body it may have very small beginnings and, in its early stages, may be scarcely discernible.

Scripture shows clearly that departure from God is a heart affection: the root of the disease lies in the heart. The heart, because of its functions, is the centre of the vitality and the activities of the body so, figuratively, the heart is spoken of as that part of the child of God which controls his actions and is the source of all his spiritual activities. By nature the heart is estranged from God: it is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. At conversion however the heart is turned to God. It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness. It is impossible for man to be regenerated without his heart being affected and his whole being brought into touch with the Living God. Whether idols claim the homage of his heart or gross sin holds the mastery over him the gospel of the glory of the blessed God being admitted into his heart turns him to God from these vanities to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from Heaven. The Christian's heart has its anchor fixed in the Living God.

That the issues of life are controlled by the continued attitude of the heart toward God, Prov. 4. 23, clearly proves. This being so we are there implored to keep our hearts

above all other things which we keep. The issues of life may be very far-reaching for gain or for loss, but they are all determined and regulated by the heart. Therefore we need not trouble ourselves so much with considering the issues of life as the heart which controls them. Here alas! is where we often fail. Much effort is often spent to keep many things, and the one thing which it is imperative that we should keep above all else is little heeded. No wonder that departure from God is the too frequent result. Could we but say continually with the Psalmist, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed," there would be little fear of the issues of life failing to glorify God.

If we are to be saved from the calamity of departure from God we must learn to keep our hearts with all diligence. We must *take heed* lest there be in any one of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. We must give *the more earnest heed* to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. Drifting from the things that were heard is a sure indication that an evil heart of unbelief has been at work and has loosened our anchor from its hold on the living God. The necessity for taking earnest heed in this matter, yea heed to the length of fear, is forcibly emphasized in the first few chapters of the letter to Hebrews.

The Christian's anchor is faith. Faith is a thing of the heart—"with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Faith therefore laying hold on the Living God keeps the heart, and consequently the whole being, true to God. Let faith give place to unbelief and the heart has lost its hold of God, and He alone knows how far one may drift away from Him, as He alone knows how serious the results may be that accrue from such drifting.

THE PILGRIM'S PORTION.

O God of Abram, Thou art still the same!
 Though times have changed, Jehovah is Thy Name!
 Thou God of glory on our darkness shine,
 And strengthen Thou our hearts with strength divine.

Lead Thou us step by step in Wisdom's ways,
 Though often dark and shrouded is our gaze:
 We ask not to behold the distant road,
 Enough for us, we follow Thee, O God!

Thy call divine our mandate to press on—
 To leave all else and tread where Thou hast gone:
 Not knowing where we go we follow still,
 Since Thou dost lead we fear not secret ill.

When doubting ones look back, in faith we tread;
 When famine rages, eat we hidden bread;
 With Thee we're safe though nought else we possess,
 Nor ask we more, nor satisfied with less!

Though some depart to grasp their worldly choice,
 Still may our ears be open to Thy voice;
 Our footsteps firm, still walking in Thy fear,
 We lack not joy, we lack not heavenly cheer.

Alone with Thee, O God!—this sacred bliss
 Our spirits crave, for Heaven on earth is this!
 No loneliness we know when Thou art near,
 Nor can we beg from earth a portion here.

We onward gaze—on to the glad "Well done,"
 When, conflict ended, victory is won:
 Till then with this our souls are well content—
 Our God, our altar, and our pilgrim tent!

SERVICE.

In September number of NEEDED TRUTH we endeavoured to answer a question concerning the work of oversight.

Since then, we have had brought before us some further difficulties that younger ones have to encounter when seeking to do the work of the Lord. It reminds us afresh of some of our own early experiences in the work.

We would begin by saying it is not well that things should be made too easy for us; we are exhorted to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. The battlefield is where a man's qualities are brought to light and the sort of material he is made of. The comparatively idle life of the barracks will not develop the best qualities of a soldier; yet there are lessons to be learned in the early life of a soldier and in his barrack days which, if well learned, should serve him all his future years.

It is in those early days when first he has enlisted that he has to learn to keep step with others, and to know his place as one of many in a regiment; for a soldier is part of a whole, his responsibilities are not only as an individual but as one of his company, and if he does not learn those responsibilities with his fellow men he will soon be the cause of confusion in their midst.

Solikewise with the young soldier of Christ Jesus. Let him not think time is being wasted in his early assembly life; it is there he must learn to keep step with others, or in other words, to walk in fellowship with his brethren. It is most interesting and instructive to see what sort of men they were who came to David to turn the kingdom to him. Some are spoken of as being of one heart; others, men who could keep rank. And this keeping of rank is of the utmost importance, and it is sad to see the little ability that some have thus to do. A whole assembly may be thrown into confusion by

a comparatively small thing causing a root of bitterness to spring up, and thereby many may be defiled. Thus we may see the work of God hindered and the testimony of the assembly marred. Had there been a better learning of how to keep rank in early days it would have been otherwise.

As we have said, the early training should make the future soldier, and the battlefield will bring still more fully to the front those who have learned their lessons well in the more private life of the assembly. Be it remembered that *all* are called to be soldiers, if they have been called out of darkness into light. The young brother who may have no special gift for more public ministry yet has the fight to fight—"Fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6. 12). All are called to run the race set before them (Heb. 12. 1). The young brother who neglects the exhortation of the apostle (Titus 2. 6) to be sober minded will in an unguarded moment fall under the power of some temptation which is common to all men, which, had he been watchful and on his guard, he would have escaped. The young sister likewise, be it remembered, is called to the battle, and if she spends her early Christian life in lightness and frivolity, spending more time and thought over her outward adorning than the adorning of the hidden man of the heart, she will be probably found one day drawing back from following the Lord, and leading the one who, because of the outward appearance which man looketh upon, has chosen her as his helpmeet, to depart from the living God (Heb. 3. 12).

But as we have said already, training is for future service in the great battle all are called to fight. And again we say a soldier must not expect to find his life an easy one when on active service; and if one day he is to receive honours from the hand of Him who has chosen him to be a soldier, he must so fight, "not as one that beateth the air, but as one that brings under his body, having it in subjection" (1 Cor. 9. 26).

The officers of the army, if they are the men they should be, will not seek to make the young soldier's path to fame as difficult as they can; no, on the contrary, they will do what they can to encourage. They will point out to him, it may be, his defects, but it will be done with the object of helping him to be a better soldier, and the wise man will learn. So will it be in the things of God. There should be a watching for souls, a taking by the hand and leading on in the work of God. The writer well remembers how in his early days elder brethren led him out in the work, inviting him to go with them to preach the Gospel, and opening up doors of service for him according to the ability that God had given. And this was by no means only platform work, but the visiting every house in the place at times, and giving away Gospel papers with an invitation to the meeting at night. This, however, we would say, was only after work had been done at home in a more private sphere.

As in the work of oversight a young brother often finds some difficulty in beginning, and needs counsel from older ones in the Lord, so also in Gospel work, or the helping of saints. There are many assemblies that stand much in need of help, and there are many young men quite able to give this help, having first learned to keep rank in the assembly. For those who came to turn the kingdom to David had already learned this important lesson. But as we have said, those younger need to be helped on and encouraged by the elder. The battlefield is a place of trial, and the word of encouragement and cheer is needed. There are younger brethren fitted of God for service who would gladly give their help to other assemblies where there is need, but they find may be that, what with the loss of time, not being able to get back on the Monday morning, and their railway expenses often to pay, and even sometimes, it may be, their own lodgings, they are quite unable to do the work which they have at heart. What is the remedy for this?

It may be said by some, If God calls to the work He will provide. Let them go out in faith, by all means, we reply, and in so doing they will learn to know God in a way they have never done before ; that is, if they go forth with real faith in Him. But there is another side of the matter. The Word of God to which the labourer responds, and goes forth in service, should also reach others who are able to minister of their substance, and thus help on the labourer and the work of God, "for the labourer is worthy of his hire" (1 Tim. 5.18). And the apostle James shows that a living faith brings forth fruit (James 2. 16, 17). It will not be enough to send out brethren with our blessing. As long as we are in the body, which is the Lord's, it is to be cared for ; and we believe much more might be done in this way than is at present.

There are assemblies with much gift ; there are small assemblies that find it is about as much as they can do to meet the expenses of their hall, and so forth. Such assemblies would often be only too thankful to see the face of a brother able to minister the Word, and hear a fresh voice ministering the truth in their midst. What a relief, too, for the brother who ministers often for months together in the assembly to sit and listen to the voice of another ! It is only those who have been in this position who can thoroughly understand this. And to meet these ends we are convinced much more might be done than is at present. Where it is known that an assembly is not able to bear the expense of even keeping a brother, it may be, for the Lord's day, and paying his railway expenses, a more wealthy assembly might see that one was sent from time to time to their help, relieving them from all or most of the expense, as the case might be ; and this would bring blessing on all, and would also have the much needed result of bringing out fresh men for the special work of the Lord's vineyard, for truly the labourers are few, and open doors are many, and we believe increasing.

In closing these remarks, we would say, let not younger

men expect to find things made too easy for them ; many a one has been spoiled by the foolish flattery of Christians, and being made too much of. It is human nature often to speak more of the gift than the Giver. The writer can look back now over many years and remember many who started in the work of God and bid fair to leave their mark for Him ; but, alas ! where are they to-day ? How many have been turned aside ! Pride has come in, self-seeking and self-pleasing, until at last concerning the faith they have made shipwreck. Beloved younger brethren, fear and turn a deaf ear to the words of the flatterer, to the one who will perhaps to your face admire your preaching, your voice, or your manners. Or it may be that God will have to strip you of all, if He yet in His goodness intends to use you in His vineyard, until, like Paul, you have learned to glory in your infirmities, finding that when we are weak then we are strong, and that it is when our natural strength is taken from us the power of God and His grace is sufficient for us.

Much, yea, very much remains to be done. The committing of that which we have learned to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also implies a knowledge on the part of elder brethren which can only be attained to by carefully watching over and caring for the younger, leading them on and so seeking to form their Christian character that by-and-by, if the Lord leave us still in the place of testimony, and the elder ones are laid to sleep till He come, the younger men and women may better fill our places, and better do the work than we have done it, till the battlefield is passed, and the Captain of our salvation gathers us around Himself to hear from His own lips the word of approval, and to receive from His own loving hands the reward of our service, if we have striven lawfully.

Beloved brethren, the time is short. Let us not be occupied with the difficulties of the pathway, but with the weight of glory that lies beyond. The weariness will soon be over,

and the rest that remaineth will be ours; the din of the battle will have given place to the shout of victory, and we shall enter into the presence of the King to go no more out for ever.

J. A. BOSWELL.

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

IN Exodus 15. 26-28, Jehovah is to be known as "I am Jehovah that healeth thee." "I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I have put upon the Egyptians." In Exodus 16. 12, again they murmur—and God says, "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread; and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God." The Healer and the Feeder—did they know Him? No; "this light bread" showed their little knowledge of the Giver, or appreciation of His gift.

Matt. 15. 30. The multitudes of lame, blind, and dumb, that thronged to be healed, spake of forfeited blessing; they had not obeyed His voice. Yet in grace He is the Healer and He is the Feeder. The multitudes are like unto those of Exodus 16, they are in a desert place, shut up to God, beyond the reach of ordinary supply. They are filled—do they know Him? I will give them bread and they shall know that I am the Lord their God. Again I ask, do they know Him? In Matt. 16. the Lord asks Peter, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" None says a bad thing; they all say a good thing. But no one says the right thing. No; some said Elias, or one of the prophets. "But who say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—a revelation to Peter of the Son by the Father. And now come those memorable words: "upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

"I will give unto Thee the keys of the Kingdom of

heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged He His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Christ." Now please note, "from that time began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up." The gates of Hades will prevail against the kingdom, though never against the Church. They will kill the King. The details of this we have later on. "We have no King but Cæsar." "If thou let this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend."

But in mercy another offer is then made in spite of all this. Peter, you will throw wide open the door they so persistently close against themselves. This he did in Acts 2.—speaking of the multitudes gathered together in Acts 2.—firstly, "Ye men of Judea" (verse 14); then the wider circle, "Ye men of Israal"²²; the devout strangers from every nation under heaven (verse ~~22~~⁵); now again bracket the two together "men and brethren" (verse 29). He is another John the Baptist, crying, "Repent ye"; and in answer to the cry, "What must we do?" "Repent and be baptized, in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins"—the all prevailing virtue and efficacy of that Name. No virtue in the waters, as teachers of error would tell us to-day.

Again the lame man has been healed (chapter 3.); the multitude throng Peter—suppose not that it is any power he had. Nay verily, this man stands before you whole in the name of Jesus Christ, the One Whom your rulers denied and demanded that a murderer be given them, and killed the Prince of Life. Repent ye therefore—and He will send the Christ Who hath been appointed for you, Jesus—Whom the heavens must receive until the

times of the restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.

Clear, simple, plain. Upon their repentance their sins will be blotted out. And God will send back again the Christ, even Jesus, and with Him the restoration of all things that are theirs—their throne, temple, worship, service, their national status,—all lost and forfeited by disobedience. Did they repent? The numbers of Acts 2. are greatly increased—even the 5,000 men, besides women and young people. But the rulers, what is their attitude? Peter and others are before them, and they demand, “By what power, or by what name have you done this? “Be it known unto you” (the peerless Name is again before them), neither is there salvation in *any other name*. This is the door of the Kingdom flung open, full and wide, which they had fast closed against themselves.

Now come to chapter 6. Stephen is the speaker, not Peter, and vastly different is the audience. Peter's was the multitudes that thronged the precincts of the Temple—the populace. Stephen has the nation before him representatively, its civil authority—the sanhedrim, ecclesiastically—its High Priest; as if Stephen were at Westminster addressing the House, if we may so illustrate or express our thought (6. 15, 7. 1).

Stephen is charged with saying very bad things against Moses and God—mark *Moses first*. Chapter 7. is Stephen's reply; he brings a counter-charge against them, ably showing how Moses was treated by them and rejected by his brethren.

Two persons figure prominently in the Scripture—Joseph and Moses. Both had to do with Egypt. Joseph's worst days were there, but Moses' days in Egypt were in a sense his best days. They treated him most kindly. Nourished and brought up as son of Pharoah's daughter, learned in all

the wisdom of Egypt, its greatest honours awaited him. But when about forty years old it came upon his heart to visit his brethren, and seeing one being ill-used by an Egyptian he rescued and saved the Hebrew by slaying the Egyptian, supposing they would have understood how God was giving them salvation; but they understood not how God was doing it. Going to deliver all the Hebrews by the slaying of Egyptians.

Again, the next day, two Hebrews are quarrelling. "Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?" And he who did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, "Who made thee a ruler or a judge over us? Wilt thou slay me as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" And Moses fled, rejected of his brethren, the one who came to save them to rule.

Gladly did Egypt give Joseph the high exaltation and bow the knee, also his brethren bowed down themselves unto him. But not so Moses—his brethren rejected him. Only a short time before the One raised up of God as he raised Moses up, the One of Whom Moses had spoken, stood where Stephen did in his Saviour character to give salvation and deliverance to Israel. But He also was rejected, though Pilate was determined to release Him.

Again a second rejection of Moses; he has gone up into the Mount, is in the presence of God for them.

Again He said plainly, "I will come again." The people grew impatient and said to Aaron, "As for this Moses that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what has become of him; up, make us gods that shall go before us." And so in their hearts they *thrust* him *away*, who had been once down here, now gone up there. So they made the calf in those days, *then* God turned and gave them up. So in like manner, with startling exactness, the blessed Son of God Who stood here and was rejected, has now gone up there into the presence of God.

And Stephen cries, "I see Him at the right hand of God." At this point their pent-up rage broke down every restraint; rushing on Stephen, holding their ears, they stoned Stephen. And again God turned and gave them up. The door is shut a second time, and will remain closed until, like those of the golden calf days, they repent and bemoan their folly, so that God repented and went with them.

Nigh 2,000 years have rolled on and no repentance, though Peter urged that upon them, when (and not till then), they shall mourn for Him and look upon Him whom they have pierced, then He will turn and be their God, and they shall be His people.

Whosoever shall not hear that prophet shall be cut off from amongst his people. Also they held their ears lest they should hear.

Now let me point out that this second rejection of the Lord Jesus was more determined, more cool and deliberate, than the first; it was Israel's own action, the nation in their representative sanhedrim and High Priest. When the Lord Jesus stood where Stephen did before those same men, there were present Herod and Pilate, both watching the interests of Cæsar. Intimidation, pressure, coercion, these men have a deterring influence, they are not free; now they are, those men are absent, all restraint is gone. With fierce rage they rush on Stephen. All kingdom hope is now gone, so far as Israel's place in it is concerned. Instead of being the "royal nation" to whom every other nation shall bow, they are scattered abroad into every nation and are tolerated, and in many cases not even that. From this time Israel as a nation falls into the rear, and Jerusalem suffers with it, hitherto the centre of activity and every blessing. Now Saul and Antioch, the Gentile centre, is prominent, and in Acts 11. the Body as composed of Jew and Gentile is seen, as Peter says (verse 16),

and I remembered the word of the Lord, how that He said, "John indeed baptized in water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit." Strange that Peter remembers this at this interesting point, a double fulfilment, Cornelius and others the first Gentiles in the Body.

Now you may say, What about the Church if they had repented? Well, what about the Church if they had received Him in His kingly character in Matt. 21. "*Thy King cometh unto thee.*" All we can say is, "Known unto God are all his works." Here is the man-ward side of responsibility, the nation's responsibility in this case.

G. R. GEDDES.

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.

K. AND L.

PURSUING our alphabetical lessons, we find ourselves closing this eventful year with the initial letters of kindness and love,

TWIN SISTERS INDEED.

God as the Highest is kind—He would have sons through being like Him.¹ How virtuous is that kindness, since it is lavished on both the unthankful (ungracious), and the evil! Alas, that this is so misunderstood!—these not understanding that the goodness (kindness) of God leadeth them to repentance.²

That believers should be imitators of God as dear children in this respect the command of Ephesians 4. 32 makes plain: even "Be ye kind." The *manner* and *measure* demanded may well be pondered. Moreover, will any young

¹ Luke 6. 35.

² Rom. 2. 4.

Christian do aught but good to himself if he oftentimes challenges and proves his thoughts, his words, his deeds, as to whether or not he is **THUS** kind?

In this manner it may be realized that this grace is no mere passive virtue. On the contrary, it is an energetic dispenser of that which is good. Here as elsewhere the heart may find stimulus by the remembrance of "God loveth a cheerful giver."

"Brotherly-kindness," rather "brotherly-love," may profitably be considered here. We quote all the occurrences of the word and recommend a comparison of the Authorized and Revised Versions.

See Romans **12. 10**; 1 **Thessalonians 4. 9**; Hebrews **13. 1**; 1 Peter **1. 22**; 2 Peter **1. 7 (2)**. This last scripture most fittingly introduces **L—Love**.

ADD IN your love-of-the-brethren **LOVE**.

Love—this holy grace to which grace is given by the truth "God is Love."

This that is greatest of the great virtues.¹ This that every heart would know. This that in its divine characteristics is so unlike mere human affection. As one of other days so aptly said—

Human love is bent on the *enjoyment* of its object,
God's love ever seeks to *bless* its object.

This is a far-reaching educative definition.

Lie down, young Christian, as His lamb, and ruminate in this tender grass, lest, lest in after years you know a sorrow as did a David.²

That Christians ought to be pre-eminent in love, the command of John **13. 34** and **35** makes plain.

The test for our conscience is as obvious (see John **14. 15–28**). But what may one say of the exemplification thereof as given in Him Who that the world may know

¹ 1 Cor. **13. 13**.

² 2 Sam. **18. 33**.

that He loved the Father: and as the Father gave Him commandment, so did He (John 14. 31); and thus showeth us how we may dwell in His love (John 15. 10). The goodness of this grace as so earnestly prayed for may be gleaned by hearkening to Philippians 1. 8-11.

The importance, yea the vital importance, of love may surely be known by what is said thereof in 1 Corinthians 13. This is only enhanced when connected with Luke 11. 42.

How awakening to righteousness all this must be if in deed and truth

the command,
 the test,
 the example,
 the goodness,
 the importance,
 be at all duly heeded.

Yet after all earnest thought and practice one had surely been left in doubt and uncertainty had not God been pleased to define to us

WHAT LOVE IS.

Ay, and not only what it is, but also how one may know whether indeed one really loves God and fulfils by heart obedience in the activities of life "the new¹ commandment"

Hence—"For this *is* the love of God, that we keep His commandments."

BY THIS WE KNOW THAT

We love the children of God, WHEN we love God and keep His commandments.²

¹ NOTE—It is well worthy of remark that the idea in this word "new" is moral rather than temporal. That is to say, it is a *new kind* rather than new as to time.

² 1 John 5. 2-3; see also 2 John 5. 6.

And again—*This is love*, that we walk after His commandments.

This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning ye should walk in it. But do we?

JOHN BROWN.

DEPARTURE FROM GOD.

II.

LITTLE, doubtless, did the people of Israel realize how serious was their sin when they refused to go in and possess the land of Canaan at the bidding of God. Little did they know how far-reaching the results of their rebellion were to be. Unbelief had done its deadly work; they had departed from the Lord; disobedience to His command was the result.

“We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we,” is but the language of unbelieving hearts that have departed from the living God. That day the die was cast which moulded their life’s journey for forty long years; and the issues of their lives, determined that day by the attitude of their hearts towards God, may be witnessed in their carcasses disappearing beneath the desert sand. To-morrow they would fain go up against the inhabitants of the land, but they had lost their opportunity in God’s “To-day” and they assayed to go up but to be driven back and discomfited before their foes. God’s “To-day” for them had for ever passed away, and no returning to-morrow could bring it back.

Have these solemn facts no voice for us? That they have is clearly seen by reference to the letter to Hebrews. There God speaks to us as He did to them, and in view of the possibility of our possessing an evil heart of unbelief like to them bids us exhort one another daily while it is

called to-day. And again: "To-day if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation."

These words, "While it is called to-day," are intensely solemn. What is this "to-day" with which so great importance is associated? Israel's to-day, with its glorious possibilities, is easily distinguished, as also, alas! is their to-morrow, that knew no end for forty years, with its sorrowful history. Our to-day may be learned from 2 Corinthians 6. 1, 2: "At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, and in a day of salvation did I succour thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation." It is a day when God's salvation may be known by all His people whose hearts are right with Him; a day when the power of the living God may be known by each one in such fulness that wherever He leads they may follow fearlessly; a day when the heart may be so fixed by faith on the living God that giants become as grasshoppers and walled cities crumble to dust.

Let us each lay these things to heart. Are there not foes to conquer? are there not lusts to overcome? has not every inch of the land into which God would lead His people to-day to be fought for ere it can be possessed? are not the world, the flesh, and the devil, in their threefold strength, combined against us to cause us to turn back from the path of faith? The danger of an evil heart of unbelief causing us to depart from the living God is greater than many suppose. But to-day God waits to succour and to lead us in triumph into our rest. He needs only a heart in which faith in Himself is steadfast to effect in us all the salvation which His grace has purposed.

Is there not confronting us a danger of faltering and of fearing to face the foes? Do we not at times almost raise the unbelieving cry, "We be not able." Let us, however, think how much may be involved in refusing to go on at the bidding of God. Let us ponder Israel's irretrievable

failure when God's "to-day," with all its blessed possibilities, shone upon them. What triumph, what rest, what gain were within their reach! And our to-day is now—a day of salvation. No weapon formed against us can prosper if our hearts are right with the living God. No foe can hinder us from entering in triumph into our rest. But an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God may cause us to miss for ever the salvation which is possible to us while it is called to-day. Would that God might open our eyes to discern the blessedness of the to-day that is ours and that we might indeed fear lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest any of us should come short of it.

To-morrow will soon dawn for each one of us. It will find us through grace in the presence of the Lord. Will it find us those who triumphed while it was called To-day through our hearts being firmly anchored by faith in the living God, or those whose evil hearts of unbelief caused them to miss, and to miss for ever, the mighty possibilities of the time that still is called to-day?

"Exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day." Not only will the day when salvation may be known soon be past, but the day for exhorting one another will pass away with it. Therefore do we with intense earnestness exhort all to take heed to their hearts, to keep their hearts above all keeping. And exhorting thus would we further cry aloud, Wake, brethren, wake! With renewed faith in the living God let us face the foes within and without fearlessly. We are well able to overcome them in strength divine. Let us lay to heart the cheering words of Joshua and Caleb: "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey."

RUTH.

THE book of Ruth may be passed over by many because it is so little and seemingly unimportant; but all Scripture is not only God-breathed but is also profitable. Although this little book has only four chapters, yet it is a mountain of myrrh and a hill of frankincense to those who have eyes to see and hearts to understand.

It has a dark beginning but a bright ending. It opens with a family of Israel, of Bethlehem-Judah, who were dissatisfied with their surroundings because of famine, and who left their God-given place to seek a dwelling-place of their own choosing. And what a sad and fatal choice was theirs! They found themselves in a land where strange altars were builded, where strange gods were worshipped, and amongst a strange people. What could there be in the land of Moab for the heart of a godly Israelite? Surely nothing! Further, how could they keep the commandments of Israel's God there? It is ever true that those who honour not God by keeping His commandments are lightly esteemed by Him.

Soon they were made to feel the hand of the Living God upon them. First the husband is laid low in death. Afterwards the two sons, who had married daughters of Moab contrary to the will of God, meet the fate of their father. What a lesson! They died where they had wandered, afar from the place of God's choice! Only one of the four was ever permitted to return to the land of their nativity, and she a lonely widow. Well may we fear lest by choosing our own path we fall victims to a death worse by far than that of the body, namely, spiritual death.

Yet this story has a bright side, for, as the result of the widow's sorrow and repentance, she brought back with her a daughter-in-law named Ruth, who made the noble choice to leave behind her people, her country, and her gods, and

to choose the God of Israel, the people of Israel, and her poor friendless mother-in-law. Coming to Bethlehem-Judah in the beginning of the barley harvest, Ruth at once set herself to provide for herself and her mother-in-law by taking the humble place of gathering the scattered ears of barley which were left for the poor.

Thus, labouring from early morn till late at night, she not only provided sufficient for herself and Naomi, but also secured the favour of a wealthy man named Boaz in whose field she happened to light. This man, when he perceived her diligence, gave command to his reapers to let handfuls fall on purpose for her. So will it be with us if we continue steadfast gleaning in the fields of our Boaz, even the Lord Jesus, we are sure to gain His approval, and shall find that handfuls of God's blessing are lying in our way.

JAMES SMITH.

A VIRTUOUS PERSON.

A VIRTUOUS person is characterized by diligence and activity. Of a virtuous woman it is said in the book of Proverbs that she worketh willingly with her hands; she riseth also while it is yet night; she considereth a field and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard; she maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple; she looketh well to her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land. In this she receives the fruit of her hands, and her own works praise her in the gates. Perhaps her untiring efforts and constant attention to her household duties were instrumental in helping to raise her husband to the place of honour in the gate of the city.

The only woman in the Scriptures who is specially named a virtuous woman is Ruth. Her example is worthy

of earnest emulation by Christian women. She found herself and her mother-in-law in abject poverty, and rising to the occasion, says, "Let me now go to the field and glean ears of corn." A humble work was hers surely! No dignity had she to uphold which would make her ashamed to stoop to honest toil of the most lowly nature. From early morning till late at evening she gleaned close by the reapers. Her reward that day was about an ephah of barley. She experienced the truth of the proverb, "In all labour there is profit" (Prov. 14. 23).

Her diligence and perseverance did not pass unnoticed, and soon of her Boaz would say, "All the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman."

This was manifested by the fact that when she found herself and her mother-in-law in poverty she was up and doing, and that which lay to her hand to do was not considered beneath her dignity. Whatsoever her hand found to do she did it with her might. She did not long remain at the barley gleaning, for soon all the wealth of Boaz was at her command; and afterward from her seed sprang Israel's king, the man after God's heart.

Thus in a virtuous person is ever exemplified the truth of the words, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich"; and again, "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule" (Prov. 10. 4-7; 12. 24).

THE CRY OF THE CAPTIVE.

OUR fathers have departed from Thy ways,
And we, their children, bear the oppressor's load;
We groan in irons through life's summer days,
And long to be from fetters free, O God.

We sow, but others reap the harvest gain;
We dig that we may eat an alien's bread;

We labour, but we labour all in vain ;
 We drink not of the wine-press that we tread.
 Hard on our shoulders still our burdens press ;
 Fast on our necks the galling yoke we bear ;
 Loudly we sigh because of our distress ;
 Deep on our brow are marks of grief and care.

“ Where is thy God ? ” our cruel captors cry,
 “ Zion is desolate, her glory past !
 Owls fill the chambers of her temple high—
 Safely we hold her in our grasp at last ! ”

Haste Thou to help us ! break the oppressor's chain
 Free men by birth, we would be free indeed !
 Mounts to our cheek the scarlet blush of shame
 That they who once were free should freedom need.

Yet by the God once to our fathers known—
 Yet by the name our fathers nobly bore—
 We shall prevail, and hush our exile groan,
 Tread down our foes, nor sigh for freedom more.

When shall thy harp, forsaken Zion, wake ?
 When shall thy gilded temple shine once more ?
 Haste, haste the hour when for the fathers' sake
 God shall remember thee, thy toil be o'er.

Prisoners of hope—a hope that must endure !
 Jehovah is our God though far we stray !
 His oath, His cov'nant, and His promise sure
 Await fulfilment at the appointed day !

Here would we wait and meekly bear our load :
 Soon shall the travail of our souls be o'er ;
 Rough is the way, yet know we 'tis the road
 That leads to where the captive sighs no more.
