

NEEDED TRUTH.

They read in the book, in the law of God, distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.—
NEH. viii. 8.

VOLUME XV.

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UNTIL THE DAY BREAK,

UNTIL Earth's shadows flee away,
And that glad morn appears,
Until breaks forth the golden day
When God shall wipe all tears,
And sorrow, sadness, grief and pain
No more the way shall cross,
His smile shall be eternal gain,
All else I'll count but loss.

Until Earth's shadows all are gone,
This, Lord, alone I'd prize,
The sunshine of Thy face upon
My gladdened watching eyes.
And this shall be my life, my joy,
And this my noblest song
When Thou shalt be my blest employ
My portion all day long.

Until Earth's shadows all are past,
This, Lord, this shall be mine,
Each burden and each care to cast
On Thee, my strength Divine.
And oh! how lighter life will seem,
And clearer far the sky;
And still more bright will be the gleam—
Sweet foretaste from on high.

Lord Jesus, when that morn shall rise,
I'll rise to bid farewell,
And evermore with tearless eyes,
With Thee in glory dwell.
Then more and more shall this my heart
Deep gratitude outpour,
When we shall meet no more to part,
Glad union evermore.

D. REID.

NEEDED TRUTH.

VOL. XV. JANUARY, 1903.

SOMETHING THOUGH NOTHING.

THIS title will remind many of that most valuable address "Something or Nothing," delivered in London by Mr. J. Brown, now in pamphlet form, and to be obtained from the agents of this magazine, which cannot be too widely read and pondered over, more especially as the somethings therein referred to are being more and more regarded by many as less than nothings, and the nothings elevated into much more than somethings.

The following thoughts have been suggested while pondering over that wonderful statement of Paul in 2 Corinthians 12. 11: "For in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

What a marvellous balance of truth we have here—two opposites, so blended together as to make a harmony which is fit for the ears of God Himself. Not behind the chiefest, yet nothing. No false humility here, no abominable self-exaltation either. The fullest recognition of the truth that he was nothing as to himself, combined with an equally full recognition of the truth that he was something as made by God. If there is one thing more than another required amongst believers of to-day, it is a clear hold of these two most healthful truths at one and the same time; the clear light of God's word shining on them making them stand out boldly as great sister truths, the complete complement of each other.

Each child of God should be able to say, I am something though I be nothing. To one only was it given to utter the words which we are considering in their entirety, and we shall gladly give him that place and joy as he fills it with the reward due for eternity.

But each of us in our measure should be something, and that by the work of our God in us.

One who is now with the Lord, said to the writer when a boy, "It is true humility to acknowledge what God has made us," and he was right. A false humility is abroad in high spiritual circles, which is ever talking about being Nothing, Nothing, Nothing, without its God-given counterpart, Something, Something, Something. Might we venture into the poet's sphere, praying his forgiveness, and add two lines to the well known passage:

Oh! to be Nothing, Nothing,
 Only to lie at His feet;
 Oh! to be Something, Something,
 For His service high made meet.

Those who are only nothing should do nothing, for they have not been made anything. But alas! although such would be shocked if asked to say that they are something, yet they would assume by their attitude to be not only something, but a great deal more than something, and more than God has made them. The stench of pride is augmented fourfold by the old greasy cloak of false humility through which it reeks out.

That truly great man, John Knox, when in the presence of Queen Mary, witnessed the following good confession, after the example of our adorable Lord Jesus, when before Pilate.

"And albeit I be neither Earl, Lord, nor Baron, within this realm, yet has God made me, how abject soever I may be in your eyes, a profitable member within the same." And each of us should be able at all proper and necessary times

to clearly confess to and take the position of being and doing what God has made us and fitted us for, whether it be that of sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, or servants in the various spheres of service for which we have been fitted, from the least to that requiring the greatest gifts.

Romans 12. 3 is helpful here, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man amongst you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." It is not here a question of recognizing what God has made others, but what God has made himself; self-consciousness is as much a duty as self-abasement. Indeed neither is right without the other; these two are joined together by God, and let not man put them asunder.

Self-consciousness based on self-abasement is truly Christ-like, and will enable us, while taking the place allotted to us by God, to see others more highly gifted than ourselves, to give place to that marvellous variety which God has created, and to know that he has not vested in any one or few all His gifts, but graduated them in infinite gradations from the very lowest to the highest, and made each dependent on the other. One glance at the way of God in the Holy Scriptures, and His way in the material universe should make this clear to all.

What we know is governed by exactly the same principles. "We know nothing yet as we ought," and yet "We know," "We know," "We know." We are at all times to realize that we know nothing yet as we ought, and at the same time to realize that we know something in some degree, and to rejoice in such knowledge.

Here, also, there is an assumed ignorance abroad which is false. Some think it so heavenly to say, We don't know, we don't know, and yet if what through mercy is clearly

known be put forth, they soon assume very accurate knowledge and try to discredit what is known, and to replace it by fanciful ideas which are mere sophistries.

This affected humility of professed ignorance is to be found in every department of life, both regarding things spiritual and things material.

Recently a leading scientific man on an important occasion, exposed it in the following incisive terms, which are so powerful that no apology should be necessary for quoting him in full:—

“He had no sympathy with the lugubrious pessimistic philosophy whose disciples are for ever intent on administering rebuke to scientific workers by reminding them, however much knowledge man may have acquired, it is as nothing compared with the immensity of his ignorance. That truth is indeed never adequately realized except by the man of science, to whom it is brought home by repeated experience of the fact that his most promising excursions into the unknown are invariably terminated by barriers, which, for the time at least, are insurmountable. He who has never made such excursions with patient labour may indeed prattle about the vastness of the unknown, but he does so without real sincerity or intimate conviction. His tacit, if not his avowed, contention is that since we can never know all, it is not worth while to seek to know more, and that in the profundity of his ignorance he has the right to people the unexplored spaces with the phantoms of his vain imaginings.”

How true! how true! and in the things of God to-day how many say “We cannot know, we cannot know,” and yet attempt to fill that unknown with things of their own imaginings which have neither a basis in the types, shadows, and patterns of the Old Testament, nor in the doctrines and practices of the New.

Let us then seek in all lowliness of mind to be something though nothing, and to know something though knowing nothing yet as we ought, in order that what we say and do may spring from what we are, and are before God by His own work in us, and also that our life-work may be based

on what we know as taught by God, that we may not run in vain, neither labour in vain, but run in the “way of His commandments,” which is the way everlasting, and labour in the Lord, which indeed shall not be in vain.

W. J. LENNOX.

“THE GOD OF PATIENCE.”

ROMANS 15. 5.

WHAT forbearance God has! In writing the Epistle to the Romans, Paul, the Gentile apostle, though himself a Jew, is dealing with his nation as under the judgement of the Almighty; and how beautifully he contrasts law and grace therein!

The apostle's mind must have been full of the patience of God with his nation until exhausted, their overthrow in righteousness in times gone by had become an essential act. And, notwithstanding this needed severity of God, as Romans 11. 22, how full of loving mercy and forethought is Jehovah's character shown! His promise in verse 23 of this same chapter attests that they who fell shall yet be grafted in if they forego their unbelief, for God cannot alter the word gone forth from His mouth, “All who believe are justified.” The one unforgiven sin is unbelief. The characteristic of the Jew nationally is unbelief, and God's judgements, as set forth by the apostle, have all that groundwork. They could not enter into the promised land because of unbelief (Heb. 3. 19). Romans 11. 20 says they were broken off because of unbelief, and God sums up in verse 32, by the apostle's mouth, “God hath concluded them all in unbelief,” for what reason? what infinite love! “that He might have mercy upon all,” as, after giving utterance to such words, he further says, verse 33, “Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how

unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past finding out."

How great will be God's mercy to His restored Israel none can fathom, but Himself; truly verse 15 of chapter 11. depicts it: "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world (that is, all Gentile nations through the gospel), what shall the receiving of them (the Jews) be, but life from the dead?"

England as a nation has ever succoured the Jew, and God's blessing has ever been upon them as a people, and lamentably as most Christians disregard the Jew and his future, yet, in God's providence, this nation has been their helper and friend, which God assuredly recognizes.

And oh! the patience shown by God in still holding forth His sceptre of mercy, and awaiting the time when, justly to Gentile as well as Jew, He can fulfil all His holy promises.

Let us ever bear in mind, blindness in part is happened unto Israel, but only "until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in" (11. 25), and then that beautiful 26th verse: "And so *all* Israel shall be saved. . . . There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob," pledged by verse 27: "For this is My covenant unto them," and verse 29: "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Why is it such estrangement is prevalent betwixt Jew and Gentile? We owe all our blessings to them, and their conduct (in ignorance) towards the Lord (Rom. 11. 25); the blindness, notwithstanding, being consequent upon their prior wilful rejection of our Lord.

But consider for a moment—had the Jews as a nation received Christ, what would have been our position? Subordination to them. They would have been the evangelizers of the world, the instruments in God's hands of making known their own riches in mercy, and we Gentiles should

have had to take a second place. Truly, as the apostle says (Rom. 11. 22), we also shall be cut off, if we continue not in His goodness, and let us not boast ourselves against the Jewish branches (11. 18).

Beloved brethren, how much need is there amongst us of humiliation and confession of like nature as the Jew, showing forth how alone it is of grace, free, unmerited, given us of God in Christ Jesus! and that as we have derived every blessing through their unbelief, so we should desire their acceptance of God's Son, Jesus Christ. We shall share our inherited glory through Christ Jesus together; "The wall of partition is broken down, the veil rent" (Eph. 2. 14 and Luke 23. 45), "When they shall mourn for Him" (Zech. 12. 10), and shall own Him "Lord to the glory of God the Father." Rom. 11. 13-22, merit solemn pondering, as indeed this entire commentatory epistle so ably argumentative in relative law and grace.

E. J. OWLES.

A PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE.

(MATT. 24. 32.)

THE fig tree putteth forth her tender figs;
 The vine is gay with promise for the cup;
 Laden with blossom hang its tender twigs;
 And all around fair flowers are springing up.

The birds are singing in the leafy bowers;
 The turtle's voice re-echoes through the land;
 Winter is past with all its biting showers,
 And Spring has touched the scene with magic wand.

But Israel is blind and cannot see
 That buds of promise with the Spring appear;
 Bursting with Hope they hang on every tree
 All telling of her glorious Summer near.

Downtrodden long beneath the Gentile's heel
She sings no more—indeed, has ceased to sigh;
Her heart is hardened that it cannot feel—
She asks no more but leave to live and die.

She hates the Muscove and she dreads the Turks:
She treats as foes all men who would befriend;
Deep in her bosom Gentile hatred lurks—
She scorns the arm that would her cause defend.

Man is her foe and she the foe of all;
Earth is her battle-field, earth her yawning grave;
Where shines the sun her sons in exile fall—
In life determined and in death still brave.

Who shall her blame though hate her heart doth swell?
Her failing—if it be so, who deride?
Does not the echo of her kingdom's knell
But pour contempt upon the Gentile's pride?

She fell—Ah! yes—she fell by her own hand;
She hewed her tree with many a mighty stroke;
Long ages did its strength the axe withstand,
Till in the end it bent and, bending, broke.

And Gentiles boast as if by their own strength
The might of Israel had been laid low;
Yet do they err—for they shall learn at length
That Israel but reaps what she did sow.

And from the ashes of her splendour great
The nations rise as rush-lights in her stead;
Vain in their pride they seek to imitate
The glory that o'er earth her radiance spread.

Vain, vain indeed—'tis tinsel 'stead of gold!
And jarring are the discords that we hear;
They dress but in the garments that of old
Great Israel cast off and would not wear.

Proud Gentile, know that God has made thee stand,
A place in Heaven's purpose thou dost fill:
Thou'rt but an earthen vessel in God's hand,
And He can make and He can mar at will.

Thy pride then humble for thy guilt is great;
Heaven's goodness thou hast trampled in the dust;
Thy boast in armed hosts and princely state
Is vain, since thou hast made not God thy trust.

Thy fall is certain and thy time is nigh:
The cup thou'rt mixing thou must surely drink;
Then softly tread, and yet for mercy cry,
For thou dost blindly sport on ruin's brink.

Nor scorn the fallen though they humbled lie—
A stronger Hand than thine the blow has dealt!
Lest He who smote shall lift them up on high
And fill thee with the terrors that they felt.

The Most High rules o'er earthly kingdoms all
And giveth them to whomsoe'er He will;
A nation's doom is but a sparrow's fall
To Him Whose word can make alive or kill.

Whom Israel now shields His grace shall spare,
But others He shall smite with chastening rod:
The nation that to mar her now would dare
Though great on earth is marked by Israel's God.

Ah! tremble ye, for retribution nears!
Ye trod upon the reed that God hath bruised!
No eye shall pity when have come thy fears,
Since mercy in her anguish ye refused.

And God has destined that His King at length
Shall sit on Zion's hill and reign in power;
Righteous in rule, omnipotent in strength;
And Israel awaits that blissful hour.

Though she has sunk so far there yet remains
Her root in all its freshness in the ground ;
And watered with the tear-drops of her pains
Her shoots shall spring and fruit shall yet abound.

For God shall overturn the powers that be
And set earth's diadem upon the head
Of Him who suffered on Golgotha's tree
And for the Jew and for the Gentile bled.

Then Israel shall sing her triumph song,
And, gathered in her strength, shall bless the day
That God in pity looked upon her wrong
And swept for aye her widowhood away.

Great was the glory of her former state ;
Greater by far her future still in store ;
Nations shall bow and, crouching at her gate,
Beg for the favour that they spurned before.

O Israel wake!—thy raptured hour is nigh!
Thy King shall come and for thy help appear!
Lift, Zion, lift thy pale and languid eye,
For Spring has come and Summer must be near.

But frosts far on in Spring-time oft lay low
The blossom and the verdure of the vine :
One night of tribulation thou shalt know
Ere thou dost drink earth's cup of new made wine.

And dark shall be that night, and sore the blast
That then shall beat upon thy wounded breast ;
The Gentile's rage in fury on thee cast
Shall vex thy soul that ages have oppressed.

Ah! Israel beloved, thy heart shall bleed
When that dark night shall climax all thy dread ;
Who shall thy grief assuage, thy horror heed?
Who in that hour shall shield thy naked head?

But fiercest storms their fury fastest spend:
And darkest night precedes the dawn of day;
Soon for thy succour God in grace shall bend:
The Gentile He shall smite with dire dismay.

Then shall the Gentile's time for aye be past:
Earth's sceptre he for ever shall lay down;
And Israel in glory great, at last
Shall wear upon her brow a fadeless crown.

Creation in her glory shall rejoice;
Earth's wastes shall bloom and blossom as the rose;
All nature lift a glad and cheerful voice
When Israel has triumphed o'er her foes.

Her kingdom then for ever shall endure—
Its glory and its greatness who shall tell?
When God shall plead the portion of the poor,
And earth shall own one King—Immanu-El.

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.

“SUBJECTION IN THE LORD.”

1 PETER 5. 5.

WE understand it to be the distinct will and purpose of our God and Father that the life of the younger and of the elder should together, so to speak, make one life—that is, that the experience of the elder gained over a period it may be of nearly a life-time, should be at the disposal of the younger, and that in this way the younger may be saved many of the mistakes in the pathway of life which they, through their necessary ignorance of that life, are apt to make. The position of the elder among the younger is not by any means confined to present times, we have them in *Genesis* 50. 7, mentioned for the first time in Scripture, and through Old and New Testament we find mention of them continually; also in the early history of our own country, in the days of the Ancient Britons, when they ruled with a strong hand, making that rule felt with severity against any who opposed them. We find the same thing again, among the various tribes of the earth to-day.

If the younger will not be guided by the experience of the elder they will need to gain experience for themselves, and this too often at bitter cost—it may be by a ruined life, disappointed hopes, and even an early grave. But the reply may be made to what we have said, that some elders, neither by life nor lips, prove themselves fitted to lead the younger. Alas, that this is oftentimes but too sadly true, yet its truth by no means sets the principle of our text aside, but Scripture does set aside those unfit for the guidance of the saints, and this in the most definite manner, as we see in 1. *Timothy* 3., for it is the purpose of

our God that those, and *those only*, in whom His will is being done should carry out His will in spiritual power in the assembly, Gal. 6. 1.

The age in which we live is depicted in 2 Tim. 3., it is a day in which men are rebelling against authority, and the spirit of the age finds its way into the assemblies.

Elders are found seeking to carry their own will, and lording it over the saints, 1 Pet. 5. 3, while younger ones often are found rebelling against the elder, because they see or think they see in them failure. All this should make the child of God consider the pathway he treads, and be warned lest that spirit which is working in the children of disobedience lead him in any measure aside from walking in the pathway of obedience to his God. As this spirit of lawlessness is working in the world, seeking to break up everything that has a vestige of authority, so likewise would it do in the midst of the assembly. In all the relations of the assemblies there must be godly subjection one to the other, in the fear and love of God. As well might you try to run the most beautifully constructed machinery without oil, as to seek to carry out the will of God without Divine love—disaster in both cases will be equally certain. Dear young believer, in all these things have an ear and an eye sanctified from the lusts of the flesh, to hear and see what the will of God is, learning to walk before Him in the light of His presence, for the one thus abiding in Him will not be easily moved, either by the flattery or the frown of those around, for oftentimes the flattery of the Christian walking in the flesh has caused many a one to fall, when they had borne the frown of the world with godly steadfastness.

Before passing on we would again repeat the words of our text: “Let the younger be subject to the elder, yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility, for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to

the humble; humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" 1 Pet. 5. 5. Failure there is, and failure there will be, but failure will never warrant the setting aside of that which is of God. If we study our great Example we shall find a marvellous combination of faithfulness and yet subjection to the authorities by which He was surrounded, even up to the hour of His submission to the will of Pontius Pilate and recognition of his authority (John 19. 11). In this country many believe there has been recently a sad failure of justice, on this account they have petitioned the king to release one whom they believe was unjustly condemned, but this failure on the part of one magistrate to carry out justice by no means sets aside the law of Great Britain, it is a failure to carry out the law, not a fault of the law of Great Britain. Neither because man may fail in the church of God to carry out God's will aright can we set aside the rule of God, as He has revealed it, and substitute some device of man's in its place. Rather, if we see wrong done let us beseech Him who is the living God over His own house to put that right, that we have not power so to do. Our activity should be directed to the building of what is of God, not in seeking to destroy that in which there has been failure, for it is not, we repeat, God's principles that have failed, but men have failed to carry them out according to the mind of God, and in His love and power. Appearances oftentimes deceive old and young, but more especially the latter, whose experiences are confined to but a few short years. The only safe pathway for the feet of all is the abiding in Him, the walking in the light of His presence. Then we shall see things as He sees them; then shall we know things, at least in measure, as He knows them.

J. A. BOSWELL.

(*To be continued.*)

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XXVII. JANUARY 11.

PASSAGES FOR HOME READING,

MATTHEW 14. 13-21 ; MARK 6. 30-44 ; LUKE 9. 10-17 ;
JOHN 6. 1-14.

A COMPARISON of the four Gospel records shows that there is scarcely an incident in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, from His baptism till the evening of the last passover, that is narrated in each of them, except this exemplary sign of the feeding of the five thousand. Doubtless, therefore, the Holy Spirit has desired to lay special stress upon it. !

The shorter gospels, Mark and John, give the longer accounts and the fuller particulars of connected matters, John recording a comparatively long discourse arising out of the sign. The narratives of Matthew and Luke are briefer, and Luke makes no mention of the walking on the sea that followed.

All the gospels tell us that the multitudes followed Him ; Matthew and Mark say on foot. The Greek word is used to signify either walking as opposed to riding or driving, or travelling by land as opposed to going by water. The corresponding verb is used in Acts 20. 13, see text and margin of Revised Version in the three passages. As, however, Mark tells us that they ran, it seems clear that the journey was by foot.

He comes forth and sees them—a great multitude—and He is moved with compassion. The King, the Son of David, heals their sick (Matthew). The perfect Servant of God is grieved that the sheep have no shepherd, and begins to teach them many things (Mark). Observe this carefully. He does not tell them merely to believe and be saved, as might a modern Gospel preacher. Many are the things they need to be taught, and He begins ;

WHO FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS?

Compare here from Acts 24. 25, how he who filled up on his part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ, reasoned with Felix of righteousness and temperance and the judgement to come.

Luke tells us how the perfect Son of Man welcomed the multitudes, and spake to them of God as a King, and healed those who had need thereof.

The day wore on, and still they continued to come, for when the disciples came to Him in the evening, to send the multitudes away to buy food, He sees a great multitude coming to Him, and Himself asks Philip whence they could buy bread to feed so many. Compare John with Matthew, Mark, Luke. Philip, and the rest, all agreed that two hundred pennyworth of bread (say about £7 worth) would not be enough, but Andrew said that a lad had five barley loaves and two fishes. What good were they?

Note how Matthew tells us that when the King says: "Give ye them to eat," they object, that they had not enough. He replies, "Bring them to Me;" whilst in Mark their question, "Shall we go and buy," is met by the reply, "How many loaves have ye?"

Then He bids that they be all seated in order, on the green grass, in rows of fifties and hundreds. Preparation being now made, it is for Him to show His kingly bounty; to do His work as the Perfect Servant; to manifest the association of His divine power with the compassion of His human heart; to show Himself indeed to be the Sent One from God.

Taking into His blessed hands the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up into the Heavens He blessed and He brake the loaves, and gave them to the disciples. Let it be noted that He did not at once put into the hand of each of the twelve sufficient bread to feed 400 men, this would have been an impossible load for them to carry.

They must have come back to Him again and again ; for what a disciple received from the Lord he could give to the rank of hungry men on whom he was waiting—no more ; so it is now. The Lord Himself alone had the inexhaustible store. As He brake up the loaves (to freely translate the *κατέκλασε* *katēklasē* that Mark uses) there was always bread in His hands. Here was worthily fulfilled the word of truth :—

“There is that scattereth and yet increaseth.”

So great was the multiplication that bread enough for 5,000 men, besides women and children, passed through the disciples' hands, besides broken fragments with which twelve baskets were filled, for future use. The two fishes also were divided, and every man had as much as he would.

In the present day many who profess to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ seek to account for His miracles by natural causes. Many dignitaries of professing Christendom are in the most wretched quandary ; endeavouring to keep pace with the times, they feel bound to reconcile what they believe with what are supposed to be the teachings of science as to natural law. They must needs, therefore, explain all the miracles of Scripture as being brought about by what are called natural causes, except perhaps a few that owe their place in the record to some mistake on the part of the writer, for it is thought rational enough by so-called Rationalists that the Scriptures, though they have come from God, contain many mistakes, both of fact and of doctrine. But if too many mistakes were thus admitted, not only the Scriptures, but themselves as spiritual guides would be discredited, and their craft would be in danger. (Witness for instance the recent utterances as to the virgin birth of the Holy One.)

We, therefore, may note that this Desert Breaking of the Loaves was a definite and unmistakable manifestation

of divine power. It stands on record in each of the four Gospels. It is true unless they are false. If they are false here, why should we trust them anywhere? But they are true, and this is true, and no explanation of this sign by what are called natural causes is possible. It was a manifestation, clear and simple, of the Divine power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

XXVIII. JANUARY 25.

PASSAGES FOR HOME READING,

MATTHEW 14. 22-36; **MARK 6.** 45-56; **JOHN 6.** 15-71.

IMMEDIATELY after the desert meal, that is somewhere about sunset, the disciples at His bidding departed by boat, and He then dismissed the multitudes and went into the mountain to pray. When the fourth watch of the night came they were still in the midst of the sea, tossed about with waves. If, as is supposed, the night was divided into four watches, this was the last, which just preceded the dawn of day, when He came to them walking on the water.

What a night of fruitless labour—twenty-five or thirty furlongs in perhaps nine hours!

Note Peter's impetuosity, but beware of despising him for lack of faith. The moment the Lord joined them the wind and waves were quiet, and they were at the land, whither they went.

So will it be with us in our little boat, storm-tossed in this our weary journey. The night is wearing away, and it may be in the fourth watch (the morning as it is called, Mark 13. 35), that He will come, and when He is present

“Then we shall be where we would be.”

The next day the multitude follow in boats, and come to Capernaum, seeking Him. “Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?” they ask. He replied, “Ye seek Me not because

ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled."

He sets before them a worthier aim, and tells of a gift He has for them, but they reply, "What must we do?" He plainly sets before them this first needful work, to believe on Him whom God had sent.

Then these very people who had eaten of the loaves, who had seen the manifestation of His power say: "What then doest Thou for a sign?" and speak of the manna given in the wilderness. What madness! What blindness! Alas, how like to this are we!

But He does now speak of a "greater sign, for He tells of Himself as the Bread of God, the Bread of Life; but they saw and believed not.

Note how in this gospel of the Sent One eternal life is so often spoken of. "Every one that beholdeth the Son and believeth on Him, should have eternal life."

The Jews murmur. They thought of Him merely as a man, a son of Joseph. How could He be come out of Heaven? How like to the many of to-day, who willingly admit the beauties and glories of the Lord Jesus Christ as a man, and use concerning Him no stinted language of adulation, but have no conception of Him as the One who came from Heaven!

Again they strive because He spake of Himself as Living Bread, "If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever." "How," they asked, "can this man give us His flesh to eat?"

Yet the truth abides, that except one eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, one has not life in oneself. Some comments on this passage will be found in *Needed Truth*, volume 6, pages 65-70; we need therefore add no more here.

BIBLE WOMEN: HELPS AND HINDERERS.

(THE GREAT WOMAN OF SHUNEM.)

WE find it written in 1 Corinthians 1. 26, "For behold your calling, brethren, how that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble have part therein." A lady of high position is reported to have said that she thanked God for the letter "M," for it might have been "not any noble are called." As we look back on the history of the present dispensation we see how God in His grace and mercy has led great women to a knowledge of the truth, and used them in His service in caring for His servants in times of trial; and often at the risk of losing their own lives have godly women been known to take the Lord's tried ones into their homes and minister to their bodily needs.

In 2 Kings 4. 8, we have a great woman of Shunem brought before our notice. It fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman, and she constrained him to eat bread. And so it was as oft as he passed by he turned in thither to eat bread. As Elisha passes in and out partaking of the continued hospitality of this great woman she perceives that he is a holy man of God. Blessed testimony this! How the Lord desires such testimony to be borne regarding His servants in this day in the carrying out of 1 Timothy 6. 11-16!

Perceiving thus by his manner of life that Elisha is a holy man of God the woman's heart is moved to show further hospitality toward him, so she proposes to her husband to make a little chamber on the wall for him and to provide him with a bed, a table, a stool and a candlestick. No ostentatious display here, a plain room with simple furniture indeed, but it was sufficient. Elisha

quickly manifests his approval of what had been done for him, and at once begins to consider what he could do for the one who had shown such kindness toward him.

“Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?” he asks of this great and kind-hearted woman. What an opportunity for her, many might think. Had she been ambitious and desirous of vain glory how easy to have her name and doings rehearsed in the ears of the king and other great ones. But her answer makes plain that she had learned the great virtue of being content. “I dwell among my own people,” is her simple but expressive reply. Covetousness had no place in her heart; contented with the circumstances God had placed her in, she only desired to abide there, and do all the good that God enabled her to do where she was. For the good she wrought she asked or desired nothing in return; she simply did what she could. But the God of Israel would be no one’s debtor, not even the great ones of earth, and He gave to her exceeding abundantly above all she asked or thought.

Surely these things should teach christian women to-day how highly God esteems any kindness they can show toward the stranger and His servants, and should lead them to think of the coming day when the Lord will say to those who so acted, “I was a stranger and ye took Me in.” “He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me,” are also words that offer great possibilities for labour and reward on the part of godly women.

How wondrous are all God’s ways! How infinite the wisdom with which He deals with His people! Like the poor woman of Zarephath this great woman of Shunem is brought face to face with death. The child whom God had miraculously given her is suddenly taken ill and dies upon his mother’s knees; yet in her sorrow she is able to give an answer and counsel of peace (verse 23).

She at once sets off to the man of God and when met by his servant Gehazi she is able to say

“IT IS WELL.”

Yet in the bitterness of her soul she takes hold of the feet of Elisha and cries: “Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?” Gehazi is then sent with Elisha’s staff, but this did not satisfy the great woman. She knew that such means were of no avail, that none but the living could restore the dead.

Through faith women received their dead by a resurrection (Hebrews 11. 35). May it be ours, like this great woman, in the hour of trial to be able to give an answer of peace, and to say, “It is well,” even while we pour out our sorrow-stricken hearts at the feet of the Son of God, cleaving closely to Him until He bring back our beloved dead in resurrection, 1 Thessalonians 4. 14.

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

I.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THE SCRIPTURES of the Old and New Testaments were written at the direct bidding of God, and under the immediate and plenary direction of the Holy Spirit.

This was clearly taught by the Lord Jesus Christ; He habitually referred to what was written therein as the direct revelation from God to man. See in particular Matt. 22. 23–33, and compare “Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures” (verse 29) with “Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?” (verse 31).

Peter also says that “no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1. 21), and in the end of the same letter

(2 Pet. 3. 15, 16) he refers to the letters of Paul, and puts them on the same footing as "the other Scriptures."

Paul himself speaks with no uncertain sound in his second letter to Timothy (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17, R.V. margin). "Every scripture is inspired of God and is profitable," and so forth; whilst in his first letter to Corinth he definitely asserts what is, alas! so often denied even by children of God, namely, the verbal inspiration of the original writings, saying, "which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2. 13).

From the above named and other scriptures, it is clear that the authority of Scripture is absolute, that from it there is no appeal.

The Scriptures have in the providence of God been transmitted from one generation to another since they were written, and have been subjected to the ordinary dangers of errors in copying. We therefore should avail ourselves of the best means of arriving at what was the original reading of the manuscript Scriptures. We have much cause to be thankful for the labour of textual critics who have given us, especially in the New Testament, a far more accurate text than was available a century, or even half a century ago.

The Holy Scriptures having been originally written in Hebrew, Syriac, and Greek, we are thankful to make use of the Authorized and Revised Versions; but recognizing that these are after all but human translations, we are glad to use other means of arriving at the sense of the original Scriptures.

In the interpretation of Holy Scripture the foregoing considerations must be borne in mind. Our need and desire is to know what God saith in the Scriptures. The

Scriptures contain many types, parables, allegories, and so forth, and for the interpretation of these due heed must be given to the analogy of the Faith, and to principles of interpretation contained in the Scriptures themselves. We must especially beware of that so-called spiritualizing of Scripture which obscures or evades the first simple truth of historical passages, like, for example, the early chapters of Genesis.

In view of the many difficulties which unquestionably surround the meaning of some passages of Scripture, it is of the greatest importance that we should study the divine writings with genuine "lowliness of mind, each counting other better than himself" (Phil. 2. 3). "Every man . . . not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith" (Rom. 12. 3).

Whilst every one should individually be exercised to know the mind of God as revealed in Scripture, it is also needful to pay due heed to the considerations which have weight with others with whom God has joined us in the bonds of His service. That which is sometimes called the right of private judgment is often a mere excuse to maintain one's own opinion from a spirit of self-will. We have to seek grace from God to recognize and preserve the due relation between our accountability to God and our responsibility to fellow saints.

“ REMNANT TIMES,”

THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND PURPOSE.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY MR. DAVID SMITH.

(Continued from vol. xiv., page 286.)

WE have been looking at scriptures bearing upon the last days of a past age, and God's dealings with His people at that time, showing clearly and unmistakably that even for that time God had a purpose.

The people said, “ The time is not come that the Lord's House should be built,” but the purpose of Jehovah was expressed in language so definite and clear as neither to be mistaken nor misunderstood, namely, “ Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the House ; and I will take pleasure in it and I will be glorified.” Thus we see that neither the altered condition of matters nor the change that has taken place as to the testimony of God in the once united tribes of Israel, to the small and feeble remnant, has in any way affected or altered that purpose.

No! Amid the change of times and circumstances Jehovah's wish and purpose to have a dwelling-place remain unchanged, and in the words through His messenger (Hag. 2. 4) there was very much to encourage the hearts and to strengthen the hands of His people in the good work of God ; and although this House lacks much of the greatness and grandeur of the former, yet He can and will make up for all the lack ; as He says, “ I will fill this house with glory ” (verse 7), and “ The latter glory of this House shall be greater than the former ” (verse 9).

How true are the words of Malachi 3. 6 to this same people at this very time, “ I am Jehovah : I change not.” The character in which He presented Himself to the people in the first days of their history is that in which He presents

Himself to them in the last days. His purpose also, as we have seen, remains unchanged, and so does His provision, namely "My Spirit remaineth among you," and "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel" (Hag. 2. 5. (margin) Mal. 4. 4).

In due time that greater glory came from the heavens—He, as the Babe in the arms of Simeon in the Temple in Jerusalem, was spoken of as "The Glory of Thy people Israel." We behold the outshining of His glory at the age of twelve years as He sat in the midst of the doctors; and when asked by His mother, "Why hast Thou thus dealt with us?" He answers, "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's House?" Another time, standing in that temple, He says, Make not My Father's House an house of merchandise."

Thus do we view Him, in the integrity of His heart and the skilfulness of His hands, seeking to maintain the characteristic and the honour of God's House. He purges out what never should have been in.

Again for the last time we see Him there, as we find in Matthew 23. 37-38, "Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you . . . but ye would not; behold *your* house is left unto you desolate." No longer is it "My Father's House"; that glory has departed. No place for Him, no ear to His words. He is rejected and refused, so He leaves desolate that which up till then had been owned and acknowledged by God as His House. Back into the heavens that Glory has gone, the Glory of God manifested in flesh; and now He is Son over God's House, Whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm to the end (Heb. 3. 6).

Never since that time has God owned as His House any building made with hands. The time was when He did dwell in a temple made with hands, but His presence was

not appreciated, and consequently He withdrew His presence from it.

Has God then no House now? He has indeed, and what and where this is, the Scriptures clearly show.

Turn to 1 Corinthians 6. 19, "Know ye not that your body is temple of the Holy Spirit." I can as little explain this mystery as I can explain the mystery of godliness: He who was manifest in flesh; yet most surely do I believe it. How blessed, yet how solemn! Holiness indeed becometh those whose body is "temple of the Holy Spirit." "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4. 30). "Glorify God in your body." "Do all to the glory of God."

From 1 Corinthians 3. 16-17 we learn that there was in Corinth that concerning which the Apostle could say, "Ye are temple of God." This was that of which He had previously written "Ye are God's building" (1 Cor. 3. 9).

In Acts 18 we read of the Apostle as a master-builder laying the foundation in Corinth. He preaches Christ. Many hear, their hearts are won, they believe and are baptized. With them he remains eighteen months, preaching "the word of God." What is the result? A foundation has been laid, and upon this foundation there is material laid; living stones are builded together according to the Divine pattern, and thus, just as in connexion with the Sanctuary of old, material was brought and made according to the pattern given by God to Moses in the Mount, which became His dwelling-place, His House, so saints of God in Corinth, gathered together and builded together, became "a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2. 22). "Ye are God's building" (1 Cor. 3. 9).

Only of such companies as are in material and workmanship according to the Divine pattern may such words be spoken; these alone does the Lord thus own collectively.

Further, we have seen in the light of 1 Corinthians 6. 19,

“temple of Holy Spirit;” and of 1 Corinthians 3. 16, “temple of God.” Now in Ephesians 2. 21 we have “a holy temple in the Lord.” What is this? It is “each several building,” one in Corinth, one in Ephesus, and others elsewhere, all “fitly framed together.” A building together of material. A framing together of buildings. The result is “a holy temple in the Lord.” Not “holy temples” but one “holy temple.”

In the Temple in Jerusalem there were many buildings, one House of many buildings. So is the House of God over which Christ is Son. Not “Houses of God” but “God’s House; Whose House are we if we hold fast the boldness and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” “Wherefore, take heed lest there be in any an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” The House of God is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth (1 Tim. 3. 15).

Acts 20. 25–32. We hope to link this scripture with others that present to us some of the characteristics of remnant times, in order that we may be helped to understand the times and to know what we ought to do.

We have just considered the purpose that applies to the present times (expressed in the words of Jude, “The faith once for all delivered to the saints”), in contrast with the times past in association with God’s testimony connected with Israel.

In the presence of the Messiah, their opportunity came, but they misunderstood the times and the purpose of the times and “crucified the Lord of Glory.” Instead of the kingdom they gave Him the cross; into His hand instead of the sceptre they put a reed; and instead of a crown of earthly glory they put on Him the crown of thorns.

He was rejected as the Messiah and King, and refused as Son in connexion with God’s House. As His refusal and

denial were both in His character as King and Son, so now the acknowledgment of Him is of a two-fold character ; He is Son over God's House, and Lord in relation to the Kingdom of God.

As we have seen, consequent upon His rejection by the people, God withdrew His presence from that which at one time He owned as His, and now He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, but still there is that upon the earth of which He speaks as "temple of God" (1 Cor. 3. 16).

Not thus of anything and everything does He speak, but only of that which is of Himself, and in its material and workmanship answers to the Divine pattern. "See that ye make all things according to the pattern," were His words to Moses. No alteration, no addition, no improvements. God is as particular to-day as He was then, and His word to-day is as binding upon those who are His to make all things according to the pattern.

But some may say to-day, "Oh yes, we admit that in the early days of the Church's history there was an assembly of God in Corinth, also in Ephesus and elsewhere, and that these together were, as Eph. 2. presents, 'a holy temple in the Lord,' but the times are different now, and circumstances have changed. The Church is in ruins." Just so may many have spoken in Ezra's days, but the Word of God was clear and definite, "Go build the House." Why has God preserved on record the history of His past people in remnant times if not that in the light of the past His present people may learn therefrom? Further, if as some tell us, the collective testimony of God has passed away and we are now only responsible to live godly as individuals, why is it that not only of the past but also of the present God has spoken and written of a collective testimony right to the close of the ages?

In Mal. 3. 17, 18 it was not an individual matter, it was

“they” and “them,” something collective, that God acknowledged. The “special treasure” here spoken of connects itself with Ex. 19. 5, 6, “If ye will obey ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me,” but, when the nation of Israel as such apostatized from Jehovah and refused to keep His commandments, He was robbed of His treasure in them. Yet in that remnant, upon which He lays the responsibility to “Remember the law of Moses given . . . for all Israel,” does He find His expectation and His joy.

Thus again in New Testament times, the apostle Paul, speaking in the Spirit of God, foresees coming days of difficulty and trial and seeks to forearm therefor by forewarning thereof. He was able to tell of an unfailing resource; men and things might and would change, but there was One Who would prove in those trying times what He is, even

FAITHFUL,

1 Cor. 1. 9, and thus he commends them to God and the word of His grace. Acts 20. 32.

No matter how different the circumstances, how difficult the times, it will ever be possible for us to do God’s will, for “our sufficiency is of God,” and

“In the desert, God will teach thee
What the God that thou hast found.”

He Who called Israel into the wilderness proved Himself faithful, and sufficient for their every need; and at the end of their long wilderness experience Joshua testifies, “Not one thing hath failed of all that He hath spoken” (Jos. 21. 45).

In the Fellowship of His Son, God will teach and prove us; and there, too, we may prove Him. With this purpose in view has He legislated for our being there. It is His school of training for us; that we may learn to know our-

selves on the one hand, and to know Himself on the other. Do we know the importance of this in our experience? Why are we where we are? "Thou wentest after Me" God spake concerning Israel of old (Jer. 2. 2). Is that why we are where we are? The path and the trial thereof will test the why and the wherefore of our being where we are and the motives will be made manifest.

Our faith and hope should be in God *Who* is faithful. If they are in the dear brother or the dear sister, the nice meetings, or the nice ministry, the brother or sister may go and the circumstances may change and the nice addresses not be forthcoming, and disappointed and discouraged we may turn aside from the path of obedience.

Turn to 1 Tim 1. 3, 4, 18-20. These are words of a later day than Acts 20, and reveal the evil foretold actually in existence. False teachers have arisen in that assembly in Ephesus, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. It is not a question of immorality, this. No; it is not evil of that character, that which especially touches them, but it is of that which more particularly touches the honour of the Lord.

Some pretend not to see anything very seriously wrong in holding and teaching error, and whilst they would condemn and expel the person guilty of moral iniquity, would tolerate, condone, and retain the holder and teacher of error, though unquestionably this more seriously affects the character, the honour and the place of Him Who is Son over God's House.

These things should be nearer our hearts than aught else, and if we are not jealous for the honour of His Son, God is, and as in the past He withdrew His presence from that in which His Son was refused and set aside, so will He do still.

The Apostle had already judged in this matter, but those upon whom he laid the responsibility of giving practical

effect to this judgment refused so to do. The false teachers are accepted. The ear is given to good words and fair speeches of men, unto the marring and wrecking of that which God had owned as His (2 Tim. 2. 17-19).

In spite of all the efforts of men and demons to blight and blast God's testimony, He abideth faithful, and a way of escape is opened up for all who honour Him, and will to do His will. This scripture is sadly misused when applied to the matter of one's salvation from the wrath to come: the whole surroundings showing that it refers to a collective testimony that God may own as His. Compare Ex. 32. 1-9 where those concerning whom Jehovah had sent to Pharaoh saying, "Let My people go," are in His later speaking to Moses designated "Thy people." Such was their condition then that God refused to acknowledge them as His.

In the call, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me," there was opportunity given to those who sought the Lord to manifest themselves, and no ties of nature, however dear, were allowed to interfere with their acknowledgment of Jehovah's claims (Deut. 32. 26, 27).

Being gathered into the Name of the Lord involves very much, and it is in circumstances such as these that appreciation of that Name and subjection to the authority thereof are tested and revealed.

In Rev. 2. 1-3, in the message to the church in Ephesus, we find the Lord's acknowledgment of those that are His; first, by His presence in their midst, and next, by His expressed appreciation of that which they had done "for His Name's sake."

Ezra 7. 27-8. 34. We have considered the purpose of the times of Ezra in regard to the 'building' of the House: we now wish to look at the further purpose of those times as associated with the 'beautifying' of the House.

There is ever a danger of being satisfied with that whereunto we have already attained. Much may have been

accomplished for which to be thankful, for a House built is better than no House at all, but yet there are fuller purposes to be grasped and there is ever need to

PRESS ON,

if so be that we may apprehend that for which we have been apprehended by Christ Jesus.

May we ever be in that condition that we shall

"Go on to know the Lord,
And to practise what we know."

Associated with the purpose of Jehovah for beautifying the House is the recovery of the vessels pertaining thereto, and upon those who were minded of their own free will to go to Jerusalem for this purpose (Ezra 7. 13) is the solemn obligation laid to keep and guard those vessels, and deliver each and all of them safely in the House of the Lord (Ezra 8. 29).

If any of those vessels were lost or marred, God's purpose for the beautifying of His house would be affected, perhaps blighted. There were robbers in the way, too, so that it was no light charge they received to "Watch, and keep them." Their appreciation of the One Who had committed this trust to them would be seen in the manner in which they carried out His will. Loving Him, His things would be dear to them, and if the enemy came they would contend for them, even at the risk of their lives.

Read 1 Tim 1. 5-7. 6. 13, 14, 20. 2 Tim. 1. 13, 14, 2. 2. Jude 3. We have in these verses that which answers to the vessels of God's House in a past day. In Psalm 119. 72, the law of the Lord is compared to gold and silver: as these are valuable in the estimation of men so is that in the estimation of God.

We often speak and sing of our love to the One "Who loved us, and gave Himself for us," but the real test and evidence of that love is this,

“IF YE LOVE ME, KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.”

The poet has rightly said :

“Actions better things than words are,
Deeds are mightier far than boastings.”

The time is assuredly coming when actions will be weighed and rewarded, or otherwise. Many now say, “I do not think this is essential, and I do not think that is essential.” The Lord Jesus Christ thinks all His commandments are essential, and will undoubtedly require at our hands all that He has committed to our trust.

1 Tim. 1. 5. “The end of the charge is love, out of a pure heart.” That is the root of the matter: appreciation of the Person who has spoken and love to Him.

In the commandments given unto the apostles during those forty days between His Resurrection and Ascension, when He was seen of them and was heard by them speaking of things pertaining to the kingdom of God, He told them what to do (Acts 1). When He was gone, they thought of Him; they spoke of Him; yet unbelief was in their hearts. “Oh foolish men and slow of heart to believe in *all* that the prophets have spoken” shewed that they had only believed part. Their hopes had been centred in Him, but now they seemed blighted and blasted. Thus does unbelief darken the mind and cloud the memory, for did He not say while yet with them “After I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee”? (Matt. 26. 32).

These words carried them beyond the cross and beyond the grave, yet to the sepulchre do they come seeking Him (Matt. 28. 1-5). His words are brought to their remembrance by His messenger: “He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him”; yea, as the Risen One, He Himself saith “Depart into Galilee, there shall ye see ME” (Matt. 28. 7, 10).

They “went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus

had appointed them ; they saw Him, they worshipped" (Matt. 28. 16).

He did not disappoint them this time, and when they kept His appointment they came to be with Him, and around Him ; at one with God in His appreciation of and purpose concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only Person unto Whom, His the only NAME into which, God now gathers His people :

THE PRECIOUS, PEERLESS LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Such as have been gathered into His name are "House of God, Church of Living God, pillar and ground of the truth," and to teach good behaviour therein was the first epistle to Timothy written (1 Tim 3. 15).

In Ps. 29. 2, we read of the "beauty of holiness." Holiness is becoming, and ever marks a characteristic of the House of the Lord, and in the measure in which this is characteristic of those who are in the House of God will the purpose of 'beautifying' His House be accomplished.

1 Peter 2. 1-6. In these scriptures we learn much as to the characteristics, purposes and privileges of the House of God. The primary purpose truly is a dwelling place ; "a habitation of God in spirit." There is a sense in which the individual believer is "temple of Holy Spirit," but the individual believer is never "House of God," for this ever expresses that which is collective, and not individual ; material brought together, and builded together.

Then the house must be built according to plan and specification, and if it does not answer to these it will be disapproved. Jehovah has ever been very particular about His dwelling place, and will refuse to own everything that is not according to the pattern.

(To be continued.)

A LAMENTATION.

A star has set!

'Twas one whose silvern lustre pierced the dark,
And I the brightness from that shining spark
Can ne'er forget.

What mourning now!

Since there we see a once strong hand revealed,
For yonder lies, amid a half-turned field,
A rusty plough.

List to the cry!

How are the mighty ones falling to-day,
Leaving the battle and leaving the fray,
Leaving to die!

Tread softly now,

As in the presence of a lifeless frame;
The atmosphere of death surrounds again
A manly brow.

Oh, mighty one,

That thou shouldst have been marked for such a doom,
While in the ranks of war' there yet was room
In which to run!

What grief to see

That weighty armour once for all laid by,
Seemingly without a thought or sigh,
But to get free.

Untimely fate

Has caused the sword, that thou didst wield with might,
So oft to guard and smite for truth and right,
To have no weight.

A heavy test
Hath laid thee low, in death, upon the sand ;
Thou canst not come with us into the land,
Or enter rest.

The Lord is true !
Then we with Him, will brave whate'er betide ;
For we are not of those that turn aside.
Adieu adieu !

J. McNAUGHTON.

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

“Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them ; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness ; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—1 *Tim.* 3. 13–17.

II.

GOD THE FATHER.

THERE IS one God, the Father, of Whom are all things, the One Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the eternal Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He seeketh worshippers to worship Him in spirit and truth (1 Cor. 8. 6 ; Rev. 1. 4 ; Eph. 1. 3 ; John 4. 23).

Those who believe on the Name of the Son, who have been born of God, know Him also as their Father, Who loveth them and careth for them (John 1. 12, 13 ; Matt. 6. 6–34).

He is not the Father of all men, for though all men are in the words of the heathen poet “the offspring of God,” yet having fallen in Adam from the relationship to God

which he originally occupied, they are not children of God till they have been born from above (John 8. 41-47; Acts 17. 24-29; Luke 3. 38; Rom. 5. 12-14).

III.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE SCRIPTURES testify to the birth and life and death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and clearly declare Him to be the Son of God, the One sent from God. He is in the fullest sense God's Fellow, His eternal Equal (John 1. 1-14). He became flesh, so truly a man that He knew in His own experience the realities of hunger and thirst, of weariness and of sorrow (John 4. 6, 7); and yet unlike poor sinful man in that He was essentially holy, for there was no sin in Him, and He always did the things which were pleasing to His God and Father (Luke 1. 35; John 8. 29).

Delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, He was crucified and slain by the hands of wicked men. God raised Him from the dead, and He was seen in the body by many of His disciples, to whom He manifested Himself before He ascended up into Heaven, where He is now seated at the right hand of God. Thence we look for Him to come, first to the air to gather His saints to Himself, afterwards with His saints to come to the earth and reign (Acts 2. 23, 32; 1 Thess. 4. 16, 17; Rev. 20. 4-6).

IV.

THE ADVOCATE, THE HOLY SPIRIT.

HE WHOM the Lord Jesus Christ before His death promised to send, the other Advocate, who is the Holy Spirit, came to earth in an especial sense, in fulfilment of the Lord's promise, on the day of Pentecost, when His presence was manifested by signs and wonders; and He still abides

indwelling each of the children of God (John 14. 16, 17; 16. 8; Acts 2. 1-4).

That the Father, the Son, the Spirit are each eternal, equal Divine Persons is clearly taught in the passages alluded to and in other Scriptures. None the less we are told that Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah, and whilst this is a mystery beyond human comprehension, it is the part of a disciple to believe what God saith in the Scriptures (Deut. 6. 4).

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.

“SUBJECTION IN THE LORD.”

1 PETER 5. 5.

(Continued from page 14.)

BUT often we are conscious of lack of fellowship with our God, and the pathway becomes dreary that once was bright with His smile. What is wrong? When it is thus with us the child of God too often strays further from God or becomes active in the flesh, in other cases falls into open sin. We have said becomes active in the flesh, for, alas too! often increased activity arises, not from increased communion with God, but rather from the conscious loss of something, and the increased activity is an effort of the flesh to regain that conscious loss. Much of a saint's life may thus be spent in seeking to regain an experience of God once enjoyed, it may be for but a brief period at the time of their conversion, when for a space the spirit entered into the enjoyment of things eternal, and fellowship with its God; His Spirit witnessing with his spirit that he was a child of God (Rom. 8. 16).

This blessed fellowship and sense of nearness is soon lost in the life history of very many of God's saints, yes, we

fear we might say of the larger part of them. Much of our life is spent in vain regrets, and looking back at the past; also in seeking to regain by an effort of our own will and our own activity what we enjoyed at the first, when we at that point of our Divine life ceased our own efforts, and allowed the will of our God to be wrought out in us by that Spirit that indwells us, and which desires to possess us wholly for God (Jas. 4. 5., see R.V.), that Spirit that worketh in us both to will and to work for His good pleasure (Phil. 2. 13).

There is little difference often, outwardly, between the saint seeking to regain lost communion with his God and the sinner seeking to gain salvation from his sins. We say outwardly because in the sight of Him who knoweth the thought and intents of the heart, the difference is immeasurable—the latter, in the midst of all their vain efforts after salvation, are but seeking to merit more or less that which God can bestow only as a free gift. “The gift of God is eternal life” (Rom. 6. 23). Being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and that He in infinite mercy has found a way of being just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly (Rom. 4. 5), they are going about to establish their own righteousness and not submitting themselves to the righteousness which is of God (Rom. 10. 3). While in the case of the former (the Christian), he is one whom the Word of God, in Gal. 5. 1, more or less describes, he has fallen from grace, that is, one who having begun in fellowship with God, and having known His Spirit’s power working in him, instead of reckoning the old nature as that which has been judged and is dead (Gal. 2. 20), is seeking in its power to apprehend that for which he has been apprehended of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3. 12), seeking, that is, in the power of his own will, to rise above himself, and attain again to a lost fellowship and light. It was only when we ceased from our own efforts as sinners, and cast

ourselves without reserve on the mercy of God, that we experienced His power to save us from our sins, and it was then we became conscious of the witness of His Spirit with our spirit (Rom. 8. 16), that we were children of God, and it was then that the peace of God filled our hearts.

It is when thus in fellowship with our God, and walking in the light with Him, that the operation of the Spirit is carried out in us, as described in 1 Thess. 5. 23. And thus the to-morrow and the days, weeks, months, and even years that may intervene between the present moment and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ are bridged, and the spirit lives in the happy momentary expectation of His return.

Whenever, dear young child of God, there is a consciousness of lost communion with the Father, and the enjoyment of His love in our hearts begins to decline, a halt should at once be called, for it is at this point so many begin to tread a pathway of darkness, spiritually, which may end in complete loss of the witness of the Spirit of God with our spirits, that we are children of God. Often this early loss of fellowship arises from some sin we are conscious of, and which still remains unconfessed, maybe we have asked pardon for it, but still there has been no deliverance. It is quite possible to ask pardon for sins into which we feel sure we shall fall again the next time we have the same temptation presented to us, in fact we ask for pardon often with a sort of half intention of doing the same thing again; and when the temptation arises, instead of throwing ourselves at once upon God, that we may know His power in our weakness, there is a sort of half hearted effort of our own will, that ends in failure. Now confession is a far different thing from this, it means a real desire to forsake sin and to cast ourselves upon God without reserve, so that we may know the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward that believe (Ephes. 1. 19), and thus find our

God is able to do for us far more abundantly than we ask or think (Ephes. 3. 20).

But it is here the decline from God so often begins: there is not the real willingness of heart to forsake all and follow Christ, the taking up of the cross daily seems too heavy a burden, eternal things seem dim, while the things of a passing world gain increased power, the eye that once looked off to Jesus in the race becomes occupied with the glitter of that which is passing away; and the child of God may backslide so far that for a time he or she loses all knowledge of their salvation from the judgment of their sins—they become blind, and cannot see afar off (2 Pet. 1. 9), even to the mercy-seat, which is before God. They may have cried for pardon and been in an agony on account of their sins, yet there has never been a true repentance, confession and forsaking of them.

It is then that the child of God, with the Spirit of God grieved in him, goes about striving and struggling in the experience of Rom. 7., but not in the enjoyment of Rom. 8.; and it is then, as we have already said, that our efforts to regain a lost fellowship may end in despair and darkness of soul, or in an increased activity, seeking to supply in service what we have lost in fellowship, and it is then the life of a saint walking in darkness and seeking lost light so resembles a sinner seeking light he has never known. The one condition drives the sinner to all sorts of mortification of the flesh, knowing nothing of the power of the new nature to put the flesh in the place of death; it is this which has driven men into monasteries and women into nunneries, for many truly earnest and seeking souls have thus sought relief from their sins, only to find the world there, and sin oftentimes in its worst forms, and to find to their despair their own sinful natures still unsubdued.

Thus Luther and a host of others struggled and prayed through years of darkness; and thus, too, Christians

struggle on through years of darkness, no joy in their own souls and no power for God in the world. What is the secret in both these cases which outwardly resemble one another, but only in outward appearance? One is a child of wrath, never having known the work of the Cross as sufficient for all his need, while the other is a child of God that through unforsaken sin has lost the joy of God's salvation (Ps. 51. 12). In the first case God demands repentance or a change of mind towards Himself (Acts 20. 21); it is the goodness of God that leads to this repentance (Rom. 2. 4). It is the laying down on the part of the sinner of the opposition and rebellion of his heart, his own efforts and his own merits, and the acceptance of that which has satisfied God—the finished work of Christ. And with the backsliding saint it is likewise repentance, a turning back to the God he has strayed from—a ceasing in both cases from their own works, a listening to the voice of Him who willeth not the death of a sinner, and whose will is that His saints should walk with Him and know the joy of His salvation. For real restoration of heart and the knowing of His forgiving love afresh, there must be the unconditional surrender of our wills, the yielding ourselves fully to Him and confessing our sins. We shall find "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1. 9). These words, be it remembered, are spoken to saints and not to sinners.

The saint needs release from the power of sin, and to know a risen Christ as the source of this power. The sinner needs release from the judgment of his sins, and to know the all sufficiency of the work of atonement. There is no pathway of joy for the child of God but to walk in the light with Him who is light, and as thus we walk with Him, and our eyes are familiar with the brightness of His glory, the things of earth will lose their hold on us, the fading glory of this passing scene will have no attraction for us, we shall be occupied with things eternal that can never pass

away. There will be a quietness and rest amidst the disquietude of earthly things, a peace that this world cannot give, and thank God cannot take away; yet a peace, dear young believer, that we may part with by allowing unjudged sin in our hearts until we lose the joy of the Lord, which is our strength.

To again refer in closing to the words submission, humility, at the head of this article, oh, how contrary to us are these things by nature, that nature in us which is ever rebellious and proud, ever seeking to carry out our own will or seeking to be something that God has not made us. Beloved reader, if, while reading these lines, you are conscious that there has been a hiding or an effort to hide, even from yourself, your real condition of soul, and if a ray of Divine light has struggled into the darkness of your heart, showing you your state as God knows you, do not seek to shut it out, go and confess all to your God, so that there may be restoration of heart, restoration of joy, and power to live for Him afresh, power to be what He would have us to be in this present evil age, soon to be passed for ever, and we soon to be with Him, who loves us and has given Himself for us.

J. A. BOSWELL.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XXIX. FEBRUARY 8.

PASSAGES FOR HOME READING,

MATTHEW 15. 1-16. 12; MARK 7. 1-8. 26.

DEFILEMENT FROM WITHIN.

THE LORD appears to have been in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida and Capernaum on the north-west shores of the sea of Galilee, whither He returned after the sign of the feeding of the five thousand.

It was natural that the Pharisees and scribes should seek

to incriminate as a transgressor of their tradition one who shamed them by His care for the multitude, and His kindness to them. The people might starve for all they cared, but there must be no eating with unwashen hands! It will be noted that the Lord gives no explanation, makes no excuse. We may be assured from Scriptural evidence that cleanliness had its due place in His teaching and practice. But it was not cleanliness for which the Pharisees cared. In the original law of Moses we may see, side by side, provisions for securing the health of the people (sanitary regulations as we might call them), and teaching by figure as to the defilement of sin and the Divine remedy. But the traditions that were so dear to the Pharisees were not in any real sense in conformity with the law of Moses, either on its hygienic or its typical side.

On the contrary, as the Lord clearly showed, they encouraged their disciples, for example, not to honour their parents. And this for the sufficient reason that their hearts were far from God.

As to defilement the Lord spake clearly; it comes from within and not from without. Evil thoughts and other evil things come from the heart and defile, whilst food taken into the belly does not defile. It may be more or less good; there may be various reasons for eating or not eating. But the Lord who spake with authority took this opportunity to make all meats clean (see the end of verse 19). It is instructive to find this definite statement in Mark if we connect Peter in any way with the writing of this gospel, and compare Acts 10., "That which God hath cleansed."

CRUMBS FOR THE DOGS.

So much for the cleanness of all meats. The Lord having now gone far away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon (see map), a Canaanitish woman, a Greek, but a Syro-

phœnician by race, comes to Him and desires the blessing of healing for her daughter. To this she had not that claim which the lost sheep of the house of Israel had, but these were careless of their crumbs, wasteful of the heavenly bread that had come to them, and by taking the place of a dog she secured a blessing from Him who honours faith.

THE SECOND DESERT MEAL.

Again we find the Lord surrounded by a great multitude in a desert place. Whether it was in the same place where the five thousand were fed or not, we cannot say. Matthew speaks of many signs being done, whilst Mark gives particulars of one case, that of a deaf man with an impediment in his speech, whom He privately healed; so that they said, "He hath done all things well; He maketh even the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

The feeding of this multitude has points of resemblance to that of the five thousand. But there are differences which are not unimportant.

Though the Lord could feed five thousand with five loaves, He made use of all the seven loaves to feed the four thousand; a lesson to us to use what we have. (Compare the sad confidence expressed in Joshua 7. 3.) Note then that He took the seven loaves.

DOCTRINAL LEAVEN.

Again the disciples find themselves short of bread as they are crossing in a boat, and this occupies their minds to the exclusion of the scene that just preceded their embarkation. The Pharisees and Sadducees had been tempting Him, and He had made fitting reply, and now proceeds to warn His disciples against a threefold leaven of evil teaching.

The leaven of the (1) Pharisees and (2) Sadducees.

The leaven of the (1) Pharisees and the leaven of (3) Herod.

But how hardened were they not to remember the five loaves among the five thousand, and the seven loaves among the four thousand, and how hardened are our hearts to forget the bread He gave us yesterday, and that we had the week before, because the cupboard seems empty to-day!

The healing of a blind man at Bethsaida, and that of the deaf stammerer in the borders of Decapolis, are only recorded by Mark.

XXX. FEBRUARY 22.

PASSAGES FOR HOME READING,

MATTHEW 16. 13-18. 35 : MARK 8. 27-9. 50 ;

LUKE 9. 18, 9. 50.

AT CAESAREA PHILIPPI.

FOR reasons which we may perhaps surmise, but which are not, I think, clearly stated, the Lord now went to Cæsarea Philippi. This seems to have been the extreme limits of His journeys in the north, east of the Jordan, as Phœnicia was in the north-west. We have commented on the Lord's word at Cæsarea Philippi, as recorded in Matthew, in *Needed Truth*, volume 10, pages 25 and following, and need add no more on that subject here.

We desire first to point out that the three passages named above clearly refer to the same period of time, and in general to the same events. This comparison of the gospels becomes in many ways more interesting as we approach the dread climax of His life.

With important variations we get in each gospel, first, the discourse that is commenced by the query, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" (Matthew) "that I am?" (Mark and Luke). Second, the scene in the mountain of transfiguration, to which a fourth testimony is borne by Peter in his first letter. Thirdly, the cure of the

epileptic boy who had a dumb and deaf spirit. Fourthly, His words of prediction, "The Son of Man shall be delivered up." Fifthly, an account of their dispute as to greatness, and the Lord's reply.

THE GLORY.

Perhaps the scene in the Mount of Transfiguration first calls for a word of comment. It is evident that the Lord's face took on it some of that brightness that belongs to Him as the Eternal One. His face shone as the sun, that is with its own light, so that His very garments glistened as they noticed when they withdraw their dazzled eyes from the brilliancy of His countenance. Compare Revelation 1. 14, His eyes as a flame of fire. How all the lights of this universe will pale when we see His face in the glad morning of His presence!

This view of His glory seems to have done much to make Peter, James, and John know who He really was, as we gather from their inquiry as to Elijah.

The story of the didrachma only Matthew gives, and he gives in connexion with the story of the little child the Lord's words as to assembly discipline, and His presence in the midst of such as have been gathered unto His name.

This scripture has also been alluded to in these pages, and we will only refer for the present to the articles in volume 4, page 80, in connexion with which may be mentioned those in volume 4, page 26, and volume 5, pages 252 and 278.

We ask our young readers to specially note the order and place of the incidents of these passages, because of the place they occupy in the Lord's life as given us by the different narrators.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES IN ASIA.

WHAT thou seest write in a book, and send it to the seven churches. We know from verse 4 these were in Asia. So spake the angel or messenger of Jesus Christ to John in Patmos.

Paul, writing to Ephesus, writes to the "saints which are in Ephesus"; as saints they belonged to Ephesus. John to the churches. As churches they belonged to Asia; no isolation or independency as saints; such cannot do all God's will; neither is there isolation of churches, for a church isolated and independent cannot do God's will either. Peter writes to provinces, of which Asia is one; Peter sees provinces; John sees churches; Paul sees saints, and speaks to the elders of Ephesus regarding their care of such, for the disciples will be led astray.

Peter writes to elders not to lord it over their allotted portions. He sees five provinces—nothing less than a province, Asia being one of the five—and thus elders of Asia caring for the assemblies, elders of Ephesus caring for the saints, Peter writing to the men to whom Paul was speaking at Miletus.

These seven churches were as much gathered as churches in Asia as the saints were in Ephesus. "And having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands, one like unto a Son of Man." "He that walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands." (Rev. 2. 1.)

John was told to send one book to all the seven churches, not each separate assembly its own book; one Lord, one book, one will, one fellowship in all Asia, one assembly in each city.

Such churches may be seen, as in the case of Jerusalem, in their saints—120, 3,120, 5,000 men—multitudes both men and women; and James says there are myriads—at least

20,000. You get such numbers nowhere else ; it is peculiar to Jerusalem. In Corinth the church is seen in its churches of the saints : " let the women keep silence in the churches." The church in Ephesus is seen in its elders—the elders of the church ; but whether Jerusalem in its saints, Corinth in its assemblies, or Ephesus in its elders, the church of God in each place is one ; there cannot be two churches of God in one city any more than there can be two Lords.

John wrote to the churches—but how ? To the angel of the church in each case. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the whole of these stars are in the right hand of Him in the midst. I suggest ministries—many and varied—as seen in the messengers with their message, all in one hand, that which belonged to all the seven together ; so whatever there was in Ephesus was for the whole, reaching out as far as possible with what each had as belonging to the seven churches. And through some channel of such ministry, the book sent by John found its way into each assembly. What a safeguard in this day of pernicious letter-writing and printed matter that the saints can be protected and safeguarded !

In the sevens of Scripture there is a distinct line drawn between the first four and the last three, whether seven feasts of Leviticus 23. or the churches, seals, trumpets or vials of Revelation. We shall seek to point this out as we go on with our subject.

We have before us seven assemblies, with a sevenfold need—no two alike—and a sevenfold Christ presented to each according to, and answering to, its need. Thus there is a present application to us. Let our need be ever so great and varied, there is in Christ a fulness that can never be lessened, much less exhausted ; for it is out of His fulness we have received, whether individual or collective, and fulness yet remains,

EPHESUS.

Who speaks to Ephesus? He who holdeth the seven stars, and walketh in the midst of the seven lampstands. This was indeed what Ephesus needed, for from amongst themselves stars (once as stars in the right hand) men arose leading away the disciples, each making a following for himself, and of himself a centre. Taking from the real and only centre Christ as Lord in the midst, they and we need ever to be reminded of first principles—of our gathering into the name, unto the person and under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ gathered *into* one, *unto* one, and *under* one, principles as yet by some feebly grasped and feebly held.

“Thou hast left thy first love.” What a revelation, indeed; so full of works, toil and patience! Watching the door, trying those who say they are apostles, and hast found them liars. But it is not that which is present and seen so much as that which is absent that marks the declension. Love to Himself as Lord and Christ—that gives value to what is seen. He did not die for their works or ours; He died for their love, and less than that will not satisfy the heart. It yearns for what externals cannot give—love to Him who is in the midst; and there may indeed be the most untiring zeal and incessant toil in the gospel, giving Him His Saviour place, but no more. You will not get twenty shillings for a coin that has no gold about it; there is the absence of that which makes it worth the twenty shillings; and so there was the absence of that which gives value to the toil, patience and works, namely, Love, though Ephesus, alas! did not know it.

There can be declension here unperceived. Dazzled by the outward show and much applause of men, flattery and testimonial—that is often the hindrance of a man of promise, keeping him from the narrower path of discipleship, or taking him away from such into the popular path, as he

may suppose "a larger sphere of usefulness." To such we may say, "Remember from whence thou hast fallen." Repent, retrace thy wayward steps; but though we say this, we have little hope for the recovery of such an one. God knoweth.

What are we to Him? If not indeed a very paradise, then we are a desolation, a wilderness—the "Paradise of God," a very garden of delights. Hear Him say, "I have come into My garden. I have eaten of My fruits." Yes indeed they are His fruits. "Of Thine own have we given Thee"—fruit of His lonely toil and patience, devotedness to Himself; He prizes this.—Oh that the One in the midst of those seven churches may be to us a very tree of life. "I sat down under His shadow, and His fruit was sweet unto my taste."

SMYRNA.

Suffering imprisonment—possibly death—and poverty withal; yes, if faithfulness to the One speaking in Ephesus means anything, it means a Smyrna suffering. Sooner or later discipleship is costly. So we have left all and followed Thee. What shall we have? Suffering and death now, but the crown of life by-and-bye. An open public suffering; an open public crowning. He who speaks to Smyrna is the very One who suffered as none other ever did or will. Faithfulness to His God brought Him into death, but the faithfulness of His God brought Him out of it. "I am alive again"; and He speaks words of comfort and cheer to those who at such a time sorely need it. Words as much in season for Smyrna as warning was for Ephesus.

No blame here. Is it not often so that suffering drives us nearer to God? And we are then never so blameless. What a rich rare fragrance often goes up from a bed of suffering! no bed of roses more fragrant than such a bed of pain. Thank God for a diversified sky, cloud and sunshine; for perpetual sunshine means *desert*. But take

care; don't make your own way out of trial, and be the loser; rather let God sustain you in it and bring you through it. Such is meant for our profit whether personal, family or assembly. Trial, alas! how much we suffer, how little we gain!

There is an eleven days' journey from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea (Deut. 1. 2.), but God took forty years. How little Israel had known of themselves or their God had they gone the well beaten track of the caravan company of traders in the eleven days! No, forty years, and God sustained them; clothes waxed not old, and with "foot unweary" they landed on the other side.

A terrible danger awaits suffering; that is compromise. Weary with long strain, bent under the burden, at last the soul sinks under it; the persecution at home gets more fierce; around all seems a hopeless tangle, and the standard is lowered; split the difference, and the downgrade has commenced, as in

PERGAMOS.

"Thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam" (which is compromise): so speaks He with "the sharp sword with two edges," that which cuts asunder, piercing and dividing—quick to discern both the thoughts and the intents of the heart. The sharp sword is as seasonable to Pergamos as the comfort is to Smyrna or the warning to Ephesus.

Whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning: so may we profit by and give heed to a voice from the remote past.

See the history of this man Balaam from Numbers chap. 22 to 26. There come a people out of Egypt, and spread themselves out in the plains of Moab by Jericho—a vast host; a gathered together and orderly people, with Jehovah in their midst—the pillar of cloud and fire, the

symbol of His presence. This answers to Ephesus; but Balak, the King of Moab fears this people, and becomes their foe. He persecutes, seeks to curse them. This is Smyrna; but like unto it never more blameless. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob!" "He hath not beheld iniquity in Israel, neither hath he seen perverseness in Jacob." Never so near the pillar, nor more under its shade and protection. Seven times Balaam is made to bless, and Balak gives in—not so Balaam. Honour, promotion, silver, and gold. The hire is before him; he teaches Balak how to do it. You are all wrong, you have been trying to turn God from them. You will never curse whom God hath blessed. Now, let us try and turn them from God: Alas! how successful. They exchange the pillar of cloud, with all its hallowed associations, for Baal-Peor and the daughters of Moab—a compromise, a union—a religious union. They bowed down and joined themselves. Oh, what a shameful degradation!

What dishonour to God! but He will vindicate Himself. Phinehas with his javelin is the two-edged sword of that day. We are told that union is strength, not so here. 24,000 dead were left in the camp at that time. The plague broke out—24,000 less for God. Moses, number the *Men of War*; take a census. They had been numbered thirty-eight years before by Moses and Aaron, as they entered upon their wilderness journey. Now, at the end of that journey, how are they 1,820 less than thirty-eight years ago? Will you, reader, look at each tribe separately, as in Numbers 1. and 26., compare their numbers as there given? No standing still; it is either backward or forward, weaker or stronger, more or less. Note very especially the tribe of Simeon: their loss is 37,100, which is more than all other losses put together by 13,180, and more than any other single tribe by 29,100! How is this? See Numbers 25. 14. A leader in the Baal Peor iniquity was Zimri, the son of a prince of the tribe

of Simeon. He got his tribe as a following. Satan used the leader of a tribe to bring dishonour upon the family, ruin upon his tribe, and disaster upon Israel. Men of position and ability, who wield a large influence for good—all that power rightly used under God, becomes disaster under Satan. "Many shall follow their pernicious ways." So much for the policy of compromise—a union not of God. A union that is of God is seen in chapter 31., alive to the dishonour done to God. That must be wiped out; and 12,000 men, 1,000 of every tribe, are armed for the war, and they engage their foes, the result being a grand victory. Much spoil, and not a man lost. "There lacketh not a man of us" (chap. 31 ver. 49), and God got worship. Compromise cost 24,000 men. War to the knife: "not a man of us."

(To be concluded.)

GOSPEL LESSONS FROM JONAH.

THE EXPERIENCES of Jonah, the meaning of his name (a dove), and of his father's name (truth of Jehovah), linked together, remind me of Adam, who for a time enjoyed in innocence the presence of Him who had formed him out of the dust of the ground, even Jehovah Elohim.

"Arise, go to Nineveh," was the commandment Jonah received; but instead of obeying the Lord, "Jonah rose up to flee to Tarshish," and Tarshish means "destruction."

In the garden of Eden Jehovah Elohim commanded Adam saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2. 16, 17).

Adam, alas, turned his back on God, thereby bringing down the judgment of the Lord as unfolded in Genesis 3.; so was it too with Jonah, and at the present time surely

the words of Matthew 7. 13 are true indeed: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."

Jonah's stay at Joppa, meaning "beautiful," suggests to me that there is much in this present world to delight the unregenerate man, and it is only through faith in a once crucified, but now risen Lord Jesus Christ, that it is true of any that they have chosen "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11. 25).

How blessed it is when we can truly say:

"Thou wilt show me the path of life:

In Thy presence is fulness of joy;

At Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

—Ps. 16. 11.

At Joppa Jonah found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it.

God is setting before man a blessing and a curse: "a blessing if ye will obey," "a curse if ye will not obey" (Deut. 11. 27, 28).

"What shall the end be of them that

OBEY NOT

the gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4. 17).

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14. 12). What a solemn word is this to those who have a name to live and yet are dead, never having known the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal Saviour! As for the believer, even though as with the disciples of old in the boat with the Master (Mark 4. 35-41), there may be at times a failing of faith, and thoughts of perishing possess the mind, nevertheless

ALL IS WELL,

for as to them He said, "Let us go over unto the other side," and whilst of the arrival of the "other boats"

nothing is read, it could not be otherwise regarding those in this one than we read in Mark 5. 1, so of the believer He Himself declares, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and

THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH,
and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10. 27, 28).

In connexion with Jonah we next read that "the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea,"

"Stormy wind fulfilling His word" (Ps. 148, 8),

by means of which Jonah is awakened; and although in chapter 2 he makes direct reference to himself no fewer than ten times, yet he comes out all right at the end; for he learns that

"Salvation is of the Lord,"

and immediately he is on the dry land, ready to hear and obey the voice of the Lord.

He is thus like the sinner who as convicted by the Word and Spirit of God realizes that indeed he is far away from the Lord, compassed about with water and with weeds, and in his extremity remembers the Lord, and owns that salvation is alone of Him, thereby knowing deliverance from the pit and standing now in Christ on resurrection ground, through sovereign grace. To such He says, "O My dove, thou art in the clefts of the rock; in the secret places of the ascents (suggestive to me of communion with God). Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely" (Song of Songs 2. 14).

God is now in measure getting from those who are born again what He was deprived of when Adam no longer stood before and walked with Him in innocence; and God's desire is that such, according to the measure of

the grace and ability given, should be His ambassadors, entreating sinners to be reconciled to God, just as Jonah after his deliverance was used to declare unto Nineveh the preaching that Jehovah bade him, and the people believed God, and so were saved from destruction.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1. 3).

ALEXANDER LIVINGSTONE.

Question and Answer.

“If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God.”—*John 7. 17, R.V.*

QUESTION 15.—*Are the seven churches mentioned in Revelation, churches that will be during the time of tribulation, or were they existing when the Revelation was given? If the latter, how could they be acknowledged as churches when sin and error were so rampant within them?*

We understand the seven churches referred to as existing at that period when the apostle wrote. He is told to send that which he sees to those seven churches (Rev. 1. 11). How could this be done if the churches did not exist? Again, in ver. 19, “the things that are,” refer, we believe, to the seven churches. The things that are after these, only commence at the latter clause of chap. 4, ver. 1.

With regard to the condition of these churches, we must remember that it was a revelation, and their condition is depicted not as would be seen by the natural eye, but as seen and known by God. Whilst the threat to remove the candlestick out of its place is made to the church in Ephesus, there are none of the seven churches depicted before us as having had the candlestick removed. The church in Laodicea is addressed in its collective capacity, the spueing out of God’s mouth is still in the future, and the call to

repentance shows that there is the possibility of restoration. And this restoration is a collective one, so that the church in Laodicea, as the church of God in Corinth, might, on repentance and right acting for God, continue in its divine relationship.

Again we would repeat that in its outward aspect—that is, as seen by man—the church in Laodicea and the other churches, in which sin was unveiled, would probably have appeared as prosperous assemblies. We look at it in much the same way as backsliding with an individual: this is oftentimes unseen by those around and scarcely realized by the person; yet if God were to unveil the real condition of such a one as seen and known to Himself, the revelation in many cases would be a startling surprise, the heart having departed from God, while the outward semblance of life and activity are preserved.

J. A. B.

For Young Believers.

“As new-born babes, desire the milk of the Word, which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.”—1 *Peter* 2. 2.

THE REALITY OF THINGS NOT SEEN.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

PLEASE turn to and read 2 Cor. 4. 1-18. A very definite thought in my mind is associated with the closing words of the chapter—the reality of things not seen. God is pleased in the present day to restrict very narrowly and closely His interferences with the ordinary course of events: the days of miracles are not now. Unseen things, which include the operation of the Spirit of God upon the spirits of men, are the real, the eternal ones; whilst those things which we watch passing around us continually, which seem to go on as if in them the God who is in heaven took no interest, these withal are but the things which are tem-

poral, which have but for a few years, a fleeting time in which to exist. The things which are seen are temporal ; the things which are not seen are eternal. Thus and thus it comes about, that there is for every child of God a parting of the ways, a choice which makes the difference to one, himself saved from eternal doom, as to whether his life shall be saved or lost. It is the choice between living the life of sight, living in the light of that which the eyes can see, which the mind itself can grasp and understand : living in the light of appearances, according to the course of this world, its prince and its spirit, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience, that is one alternative. It need not be a steep descent ; it is enough that it is the sight of the eyes ; God is left out of it. His name by ear is heard, and may not be denied ; His existence may indeed be admitted, His claims in some way granted ; walking by the sight of the eyes, and by that which manifests itself to those eyes ; thus the walking will be, like the way in which it is walked, temporal, for at the Judgment Seat of Christ it will be burnt up, and pass away into nothingness. Over against that is the other, the way of those who have the spirit of faith ; for that which is not seen, which the eye can never grasp, which does not manifest itself to the outward senses, that and that alone, is the divine reality.

I was looking at the prophecy of Isaiah, in which, years and years before the event transpired, God turned the prophetic searchlight of His truth upon futurity, and to quote a particular case, when the men of Judah were in sore straits, and there were conspiracies on every hand, the very king upon the throne knew nothing and had no interest in the things of God. What were the words which spake of the unseen that gave might and power to those who were God's chosen and remnant people ? Do this and

that, and what you like ; it will all come to nothing, for with us is God. There was no manifestation or evidence, or sign that He was there : none of that working of God, which, when it comes to manifestation, may be seen and known of the many ; but there was the spirit of faith, and a grasp of things unseen.

You remember the language of 1 Tim. 3. 15, 16, regarding how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, pillar and ground of the truth ; and without controversy great is the mystery of godliness : He who was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory. “ Church of Living God.” “ Church of God ” is an expression which carries you back to God bringing a church into being (I say nothing about other points of it, for there are other points), but “ Church of Living God ” is very parallel with that word “ IMMANUEL ” (With us is God), “ Church of Living God ; ” and God is known in His power and reality, and as a Living God in judgment and application, in the administrations of His hand that go deep. There is that which is the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4. 12).

The Living God. A solemn thought ; and yet a blessed thought. They who are in the Church of the Living God know Him to be a Living God, that they can go to Him in prayer and speak to Him. Not like that of which Elijah speaks : “ perhaps he is asleep or gone hunting ; perhaps he is on a journey and cannot hear unless you speak loudly.” Not like a sleeping god, or an imaginary god, but a real Living God, who loves to hear His people speak, whose ears are bent to hear their cry, who answers them in His love and in His kindness ; not according to their thoughts or desires,

but [who answers in a different way, being able to do abundantly above all we ask or think (Eph. 3. 20).

Are we believers? That seems such a simple thing. A "believer" is looked upon as an elementary Christian, but this should characterize the child of God right through his career. Here is that which the eye cannot see, which has no evidence; that shews itself not in the smallest degree to our senses, as the Apostle said, "I believed, therefore did I speak; we also believe, and therefore also we speak." If there were more grasp on our part of the realities, and if we lived more in the light of that which is not seen, it would unquestionably give power to us as children of God, living in the light of an Eternal God, who hears and answers prayer, and we should be a power for God.

Communicated by GEORGE MCINTYRE.

GOD'S WILL IS BEST.

God's will is best.

How righteous are the judgments of His throne.
His sovereign will, which all at last shall own,
Is ever blest.

One day we'll greet,
Though now awhile we leave e'en those we love;
It may be, not until with Christ above,
Again we'll meet.

God calls again.
That call, we must obey whate'er betide,
If we a crown would wear on yonder side—
A prize obtain.

Thus to obey
Is better far, we know, than sacrifice;
God bids us now, in living faith arise
And hail the day.

Beyond all night,
When we shall stand before that judgment seat,
And view the trodden pathway of our feet,
In shining light.

Then shall we know,
E'en though our race on Earth seems but begun,
If we would hear the Master's own "Well done—"
We'll face the foe.

God's armour light,
Put on aright, at His own blest command,
To bravely fight; and having fought to stand
For truth and right.

God's will is best,
Who bids us now from lawlessness depart,
And wills to guide our feet, that every heart
Might know His rest.

Then would we own
With reverential joy, and godly fear
His will alone, till we with Him appear
To know as known.

For we shall stand
Before that judgment seat and give account;
And thus receive at last, our due amount
From His own hand.

Then let us run,
And not be faint and weary in the way;
But ever from our hearts, with gladness say,
"Thy will be done."

D. REID.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XXXI. MARCH 8.

PASSAGE FOR HOME READING,

LUKE 9. 51-10. 37.

THE PARENTHETICAL SECTION OF LUKE.

COMMENCING, I think, at verse 57 of chapter 9, and ending at chapter 17., verse 10, we have a section of the Gospel according to Luke, in which the historical order is almost entirely set aside. Some of the contents of this section find their parallels in Matthew, chapters 8. to 13., and from the manner of the narration there we conclude that the events occurred in the period between the betrayal and murder of the Baptizer, with which those chapters are chiefly concerned. But very much of this section consists of the sayings of the Lord, and some words which seem almost, or quite identical with these are found in Matthew among what was said within a very few days of the crucifixion (namely in Matthew 22. and 23. ; see 26. 1,2). Again, this section contains much that is peculiar to Luke, and as to this it seems in many cases impossible to tell to what period the incidents or sayings belong.

It may be well at the very first to suggest that in some cases sayings that seem almost identical may have been uttered at different times ; that is to say, under different circumstances the Lord may have said the same or nearly the same words. If this be admitted we must, however, be careful not to abuse the idea by carrying it too far.

The more or less parenthetical character of this section may, we think, be discerned by considering verses 51 to 56 of chapter 9.

The parallel passages of Matthew, Mark and Luke considered in our last Bible Reading first deal with the Lord's sayings and doings in the far-off parts of Caesarea Philippi. He and the disciples then come southward to Capernaum, where the lesson of the little child was given to them, with which Mark and Luke connect John's mistaken zeal in forbidding one who was casting out demons in the Lord's name.

Matthew and Mark both then record the Lord's further journey south first as far as Judæa beyond Jordan and then up to Jerusalem, and Luke 18. 31 is strictly parallel to Matthew 30. 17 and Mark 10. 32, relating the solemn prediction of the impending tragedy.

Tracing Luke backwards we have 17. 11-18. 30 as the parallel of Matthew 19. 1-20. 16 and Mark 10. 1-31, with this difference: that Luke mentions the Lord passing through Samaria and healing ten lepers as He entered into a certain village.

Luke 17. 11 begins: "And it came to pass, as they were on the way to Jerusalem, that He was passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain village."

It seems significant that Luke 9. 51 should tell that when the days were well nigh come that He should be received up He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, He was rejected at one village and went to another. Was this second village that of Luke 17. 11? It may or may not be so. But it seems clear that 9. 51-56 and 17. 11 and what follows belong to a regular narrative of the Lord's last southward journey and that from Luke 9. 57 to 17. 10 we have inserted more or less in a parenthetical manner, certainly in moral rather than temporal order, some of the doings and many of the sayings of the Son of Man.

PARAGRAPH 1. FOLLOWING THE LORD.

Luke 9. 57 commences : " As they went in the way," and then records the incidents contained in Matthew 8. 19-22 (see Bible Reading XVII.) together with a third which Matthew does not mention. As Matthew connects the scribes coming with that crossing to the country of Gadarenes (Gerasenes) which Matthew, Mark (4. 35-5. 20) and Luke also (8. 22, 39) record in the section of those gospels belonging to the period between John's betrayal and his murder we cannot doubt that there is some definite reason why Luke, who sets forth things in order, should give this paragraph the setting which it has.

One reason may be that the force of these sayings of the Lord grew stronger as they went on their way in a path of increasing difficulty, calling for more intense devotion.

The reply to him who would have bid farewell to those at home calls for notice ; it is peculiar to Luke and so is the mention of the Kingdom of God (twice) in these verses.

PARAGRAPH 2. THE SEVENTY.

The sending forth of these seventy suggests more questions of temporal order than there is now time or space to discuss. " After these things " perhaps goes back to the first six verses of chapter 9. which it must be remembered is more or less closely associated with the passage, Luke 8. 22-39, which we have just pointed to as marking the period when the words of Luke 9. 57 was spoken. There is thus a possibility of rather regarding Luke 9. 7-56 as inserted before its chronological place than 9. 57-10. 24 as being put after it. But the subject is too large to deal with here.

The general charge, verses 3-12, is to be compared with

that in Luke 9. 3-6 and Matthew 10. 5-15—but there are differences to be noted.

PARAGRAPH 3. REVELATION UNTO BABES.

The return of the seventy was with joy, and He said nothing to weaken it. But He gave them an added and greater cause, a cause which evoked His own rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, that what wise and understanding ones fail to know because of the veil that is upon them is revealed unto babes.

Note that in the matter of revelation and all else there is most perfect concord between the Father and the Son; and note too the deep significance of this mutual relationship. He is the Son of the Father; and “the Father” by no means signifies our Father; it is His Father to whom and of whom He has spoken.

PARAGRAPH 4. THE LAWYER’S NEIGHBOUR.

This is perhaps the best known passage in the whole of this deeply interesting section. The period is probably quite late if Matthew 22. 35 is really the parallel passage. But what a luminous commentary it is on the previous paragraph!

How glad indeed would David or Joseph have been to have heard the story of the Samaritan! In Matthew 22. 35 perhaps we see that from the Pharisees all this was hidden; in Luke that to the disciples it was revealed. I think this lawyer’s eyes and ears were opened; but by his fruits he was then to be known whether indeed he went and was a good Samaritan. We hear of the Good Samaritan and truly it is a luminous figure of the Son of Man Himself. But it surely goes farther than that, for it was given to the lawyer, who asked for his neighbour, that he might become a Samaritan neighbour to others.

XXXII. MARCH 22.

PASSAGE FOR HOME READING, LUKE 10. 38.—11. 36.

PARAGRAPH 5. STILL ON THEIR WAY.

PERHAPS Martha was the elder sister and a real good woman she was ; but the Lord had no wish that she should spend her time cooking many dishes for Him. A married woman has to be careful, Paul tell us, to please her husband ; and he may be a most difficult man to please. But Martha's heavenly Guest wanted herself, one dish was needful for the body and had she been content in humility to place this before Him there would have been room for her with Mary at the Lord's feet. To serve indeed is well ; to be cumbered therewith is not.

PARAGRAPHS 6, 7. PRAYER.

Here fitly comes in the prayer which it becomes a child of God to pray. "*Father*"—here "*Our Father*" is distinctly implied. He who loves us and cares for us, because He has begotten us.

Hallowed be Thy name. Not lightly to be uttered, not carelessly or for words' sake used, but reverently as a hallowed thing indeed—"Thy name."

Thy Kingdom come. All petitions are included here. "*Thy will be done*" is here implied though not expressed. Let God be known as King whether in the heart, the home, the assembly, the Community, as in Heaven to-day or on earth very soon—and all is well.

Give us day by day bread for the coming day. What that bread shall be we well may leave to our Father ; He knows our need and loves us well.

And forgive us our sins for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. Alas ! for us if we do not.

And bring us not into temptation. Humbled thus on our knees we are less in danger of a fall.

For further commentary see verses 5 to 13.

PARAGRAPH 8. DEMONS AND THEIR PRINCE.

A demon having been cast out from a poor dumb man he began to speak and the multitudes marvelled, but there were those who attributed the power to Beelzebub the prince of the demons. The sign of healing is evidently recorded to introduce the discourse which followed.

Matthew 9. 32-34 records very briefly just such a sign as this as immediately following a healing of two blind men. But an account more closely parallel is to be found in Matthew 12. 22-45—and perhaps Mark 3. 20-30 refers to the same incident. Mark, however, records no sign of healing and Matthew in chapter 12. mentions that the poor fellow was blind as well as dumb. It is not quite clear to us therefore whether Matthew 9. 32 or 12. 22 refers to the incident that Luke records, or perhaps they may both refer to the same.

The use of the names Satan and Beelzebub needs careful study. It needs consideration whether Beelzebub is another name for Satan or whether it denotes another person. Compare the distinction in Ephesians 2. 2 between the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience and the prince whose servant that spirit is (see R.V. or the Greek).

Note the fearful picture of Israel's latter day.

PARAGRAPH 9. BEATITUDES.

Short and full of meaning. Here we have blessedness and greater blessedness.

PARAGRAPH 10, 11. SIGNS AND LIGHTS.

Many were the signs that He did, but alas for those who

sought for signs. Observe how Matthew includes this in the passage 12. 22-45, showing that it was the Pharisees who asked for the sign. But here it is given more generally. "This generation," not some or many, but the generation as a whole.

But what use were signs to them ? In every day matters they were not so foolish as to put a lamp in a cellar or under a bushel for those who enter in to see the light (it is not here the light on a hill for a distant one to see). But with the eye, that is the light of the body, they were less careful ; there was no simpleness of aim in their looking, the light that really was in them, their knowledge of Old Testament Scripture for example, gave them no illumination. They read and knew of Jonah and of Sheba's queen, but they learnt nothing thereby for it was darkness to them. Who has not experienced the possibility of reading even aloud without a thought of what is read because of the pre-occupation of the mind and heart with other things ? So was it with these. Let us see that it be not so with us.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

“Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—2 *Tim.* 3. 13–17.

V.

THE ATONEMENT.

MAN is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin (Ps. 51. 5), and we are subject to death both on account of the transgression of Adam our first parent (Rom. 5. 12.) and on account of our personal misdeeds (Rom 3. 9–19; Ezek. 18. 4). Of ourselves by nature we are utterly unable to please God or in any wise to earn or deserve His favour. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ satisfied the claims of divine justice in regard to the question of sin, for the penalty was borne by the Sinless One (John 1. 29, margin), and He thus manifested the love of God toward the sinner (2 Cor. 5. 19).

They who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are justified because of the merit of His atoning work, which is attested by His resurrection (Rom. 5. 9; 4. 25).

Scripture testifies that they who believe not are judged already, because they have not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God (John 3. 18). For such as die as rejectors of God's grace no hope is held out either of salvation or annihilation. On the contrary, as to unbelievers who die in their sins, their part will be in the Lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death (see John 8. 21–24 and Rev. 21. 8).

As to those who die in infancy, never having had opportunity to accept or reject God's mercy, it is clear that they

enjoy salvation from wrath through the merit of the Atonement (see 2 Sam. 12. 23 ; Matt. 18. 10).

It should be needless to say that this cannot in any wise depend on their being or not being made the subjects of the meaningless and unscriptural ceremony known as infant sprinkling or christening.

They who have lived beyond the reach of the Gospel of God's grace will be judged by a righteous and merciful God, as see Rom. 2. 7-11 and Rev. 20. 12-14.

VI.

ETERNAL SALVATION.

THE GOSPEL of God's grace comes to man in his dire need and makes known to him God's remedy and God's salvation. The sinner's acceptance of God's saving grace ensures for him once and for all the certainty of eternal bliss. This is testified by many scriptures, but to cite one alone we shall quote John 10. 22-30. Here the Lord clearly distinguishes those who believe, who are His sheep, from those who, however religious they may be, do not believe in Him (verse 26). The sheep are known by their each individually hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd Who died for them. To them He gives eternal life; He declares that they shall never perish. And He speaks of them as held in His hand, out of which none shall snatch them. In confirmation of their eternal security, He further represents them as in the Father's hand, out of which no one is able to snatch aught (R.V., margin).

“REMNANT TIMES”:

THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND PURPOSE.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY MR. DAVID SMITH.

(Continued from page 35.)

ROMANS 8. 1. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” This is definitely stated, as an unalterable fact, bespeaking the present and eternal portion of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, whether they walk after the flesh or after the Spirit. Their being in Christ Jesus is unaffected by their walk.

The opening words, “There is therefore now,” cause us to consider what has gone before, and looking back at the third chapter we find a very different state of things. We find Jew and Gentile, the whole human race, charged and proved guilty; all under judgment to God, with no possibility of appealing to a higher court, for the Highest has pronounced the sentence.

Between chapters 3. and 8. the gospel of God is unfolded, which tells how and why some of those who were in chapter 3. “under judgment” are now found in chapter 8., those to whom there is “no condemnation.”

Turn now to 1 Peter 4. 17, 18. This scripture is in no way contradictory to Romans 8. 1. Giving heed to the exhortation of 2 Timothy 2. 15 is a necessity unto our understanding the times and proving the things that differ.

Many are in Christ Jesus who are not in the House of God, which, as we have already seen from the Scriptures, whether in regard to the past or to the present, is something that expresses God’s purpose in regard to those who are His, on the earth. Were it otherwise, the words of 1 Timothy 3. 14, 15 would have no meaning to us.

In the past there was no difficulty in knowing what and where the House of God was. Then, too, never more than one House existed at a time, whether in the wilderness, or at Shiloh, or in Jerusalem. So now it is still but one House, and, as we have already seen, the Lord Jesus Christ stands in a twofold relationship thereto, even as Son and as Great Priest, connected with which there are privileges great and many, and also correspondingly solemn responsibilities.

Perhaps the reason the words are on the lips of many as to the House of God being in ruins, is because they are not prepared to accept the responsibilities connected therewith; the privileges would be gladly enjoyed, but the responsibilities are quite another and a different thing, and these will not be accepted.

Our being in the House of God is entirely conditional; in it at one time, we may not be at another. No one can be put out of Christ, but those who are in the House of God may so conduct themselves as to require to be put away therefrom.

Thus we find the subject of 1 Peter 4. associates two things that are inseparable, namely, judgment and the House of God. It is the discipline of God's House that puts the sinning one in the outside place, who has been at one time within; putting him into a relationship that may eventuate in his being again within. Herein are shown the wisdom and the way of God in connexion with His House for maintaining the characteristics thereof.

We find from Exodus 32., when the children of Israel were bowing down to and worshipping the molten calf they had made and set up in their midst, that Jehovah has turned away from His people. He cannot and will not tolerate idolatry. Although He has borne much and long with His people in their murmuring and rebellion, previous to this time, there is no forbearance here. He is jealous

of His place and portion, and will not take a second place from His people.

"Go, get thee down; for thy people which thou broughtest out" (Exod. 32. 7), bespeaks the seriousness of the matter. He will not acknowledge them as His in their present condition and circumstances; and from outside the idolatrous camp Jehovah's word is heard through Moses:—

"Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me."

In response to that call the tribe of Levi drew near, and into their hands, who thus consecrate themselves unto the Lord, is put a sword to do a judgment work, to carry out a judgment purpose, for the fear wherewith they fear Jehovah and for the honour of Jehovah that they hold dear to their hearts. It was in these circumstances that the words of Deuteronomy 33. 8, 9 were fulfilled. They allowed no earthly ties to interfere with the carrying out of Jehovah's judgments. They proved to Jehovah, in the opportunity afforded them, the measure of the appreciation in which they held Him and His honour—doubtless at much cost to themselves—and in Numbers 3. 6 we find Jehovah making good His word that

"Them that honour Me, I will honour,"

and into the hands of those whom He first tested and proved faithful, He entrusts the care and keeping of His precious things, as well as the service of His House.

Look now at Malachi 2. 17. This is surely a very dark day indeed in the history of God's people. God complains that they wearied Him with their words. They were actually saying, "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord," and "Where is the God of judgment?" This condition of His people and the circumstances here described are the occasion for Jehovah to refer again to Levi, who in a past day knew and understood the times and the purpose of the times, and so fulfilled this that Jehovah now testifieth of him, "He feared Me, and stood in

awe of My name. . . . He walked with Me in peace and uprightness, and did turn many away from iniquity" (Mal. 2. 4-6).

Again, in Ezekiel 8. we have a condition of things revealed in connexion with the House of God and the people of God that would make the godly ones sigh and cry; abominations practised that were loathsome in the sight of Jehovah. There is a time for sighing and crying, but this does not continue for ever, and so in chapter 9. we find that another time and purpose have come—even the time when judgment must begin from the House of God. It is not sighing and praying now, but acting—acting in the fear of Jehovah and for the honour of Jehovah. "Begin at My sanctuary" is His word; and the sword of judgment descends, sparing none save such as have the mark (Ezek. 9. 6). A fuller expression of that judgment was seen when the glory of the Lord left the cherubim and went to the threshold of that House, and from the threshold to the city, from the city to the mountains, and from the mountains back into the heavens. What the Lord did to the House at Shiloh He also did to the House at Jerusalem; it also He left desolate.

We have thus looked at the circumstances of a past time and purpose of judgment associated with the House of God. We have also looked at certain purposes connected with the House of God in present times. 2 Timothy 2. reveals abominations akin to those we have in Ezekiel; abominations which so touch the character of Jehovah as to cause Him to leave that which was His dwelling-place in the midst of His people. The call and command of the Lord now is, "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness," and Timothy-like ones, to whom His name and His honour are dearer than aught else outpurge themselves at His bidding and prove Him faithful to His word, "The Lord knoweth them that

are His," so that we have those spoken of in Revelation 2. 1, as "the church in Ephesus." True they were but a remnant recovered from that apostasy which, as we may learn from 2 Timothy 1. 15, had affected all Asia, yet they were His, and in midst of this and sister churches does He find a place for the soles of His feet.

WHO IS HE

who thus walketh in the midst, and in

WHAT CHARACTER

does He do so ?

Revelation 1. 13-16 gives us a vision of His majesty and glory, when, as being in the Spirit, John saw Him, and as there pass before the ravished gaze of the apostle succeeding glimpses of His majesty and glory we cannot marvel that even he who leaned upon the bosom of the Lord Jesus Christ in the confidence of devoted love should now bow before Him in awe and wonder.

Yet again would we ask the question, "Who is He that walketh in the midst of the churches?" and suggest unto answering this, careful consideration of the sevenfold presentation of Himself in the opening words of each letter to the seven churches. Thus shall we get to know more fully and more perfectly Who and What He is and be caused to hold Him in fuller appreciation and greater reverence than ever we have done.

Further may we hear and ponder the oft-repeated words,

"I know thy works."

What does not He know? Perhaps there are things that others do not know; they look on the outward appearance, but He looks deeper,

"All things are naked . . . before the eyes of Him,
with whom we have to do."

It is a blessed, glorious fact, in which we may well rejoice, that "Where two or three are gathered together into My

name, there am I in the midst of them"; but yet it is a very solemn and a very searching fact when we consider who He is who is in the midst. In the light of this how careful we should be lest anything in word or action or way should grieve or offend His holy ear or eye; while on the other hand that precious word that He speaks,

"FEAR NOT;

I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades," may well banish fear and dread, and cause us to be glad and rejoice in Him, as well as before Him.

Please turn now to 1 Corinthians 11. 27-34. Truly here the time has come for judgment to begin from the House of God, and we wish to point out that this is associated with

THE MOST PRECIOUS PRIVILEGE

of the House of God; and we would like to emphasize the point that this privilege is entirely confined to the House of God. We ever find that the table is within the House; never outside the door with a general invitation to all to gather around it. No, it is inside, and if any wish to enjoy the privileges thereof they must first be found within. As in, Acts 2., the order is Divine: Received the Word, Baptized Added, Apostles' Doctrine, Fellowship, Breaking of Bread, Prayers.

In Acts 20. 7 mention is again made of this precious privilege, and adverting to Acts 9. 1 we read of Saul "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." These are they referred to in Acts 2. 42, spoken of here as "disciples of the Lord" in regard to their individual character, but of whom, concerning the same circumstances as are presented to us in Acts 9. the Apostle confesses, "I persecuted the church of God," view-

ing and describing them thus in their collective capacity. (See 1 Cor. 15: 9 and Gal. 1. 13.) What we have in Acts 20. 7 is in reality the church found together in church, in response and answer to the wish and call of the Lord Himself (1 Cor. 11. 18-20). Thus being together at the appointed season, in the appointed place, and for the appointed purpose, even—

THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

it is theirs to enjoy this hallowed privilege, and to manifest agreeably to His will that they love Him upon whom they call as Lord.

Associated with this precious privilege is the solemn obligation: “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat” (1 Cor. 11. 28), so that thus again judgment must begin from the House of God, and further, begins at oneself. My first responsibility is to put oneself to the test, and in the language of Psalm 139. 23, 24, to pray :

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

and, again, as in verse 1 :

“O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me,”

so that thus, laying everything open to His searching gaze, judging and putting away everything inconsistent with His holiness, we may indeed be “set apart” individually, and our coming together may not be unto judgment (1 Cor. 11. 34).

(To be concluded, if God permit, next month).

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST."

(Tune, "Ninety and Nine.")

*"Said I not unto thee, that if thou believedst thou shouldst
see the Glory of God?"*

FROM the Angel host to Shepherds came,

These words of worship meet :

And still re-echoed from souls set free,

They rise as incense sweet ;

Set free from the powers of death and hell,

Glory to God, let the Anthem swell,

Glory to God, let the Anthem swell.

That voice reached Lazarus e'en in death,

As bound in the tomb he lay :

Corruption and death their Conqueror knew,

And shuddering fled away ;

Alive from the dead, by a word set free,

Glory to God, let the Anthem be,

Glory to God, let the Anthem be.

For by Him, in likeness of sinful flesh,

Power o'er all flesh was shown :

That His power to give eternal life,

Might thus be fully known ;

By a finished work, He Glorified Thee,

Victory o'er death, "King of Glory" is He,

Glory to God in the Highest be.

Since God's Highest Glory through Christ is shown

To sinners by Satan bound :

Though dead through sins, by nature corrupt,

They hear the Gospel's sound ;

From corruption and death, by His word set free,

Soon to be like Him eternally ;

Glory to God, in the Highest be.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA.

(Concluded from page 55.)

THYATIRA.

A Jezebel day. Israel's darkest day is every way, temporally and spiritually, trying to find as much as will keep a few cattle alive, and spiritually could not be worse. The priests of Baal, with their altar alongside God's altar, and crying, in God's hearing, "Oh, Baal, hear us," defying God to do His worst. But it is just like Him; He did His best.

From a Balaam to a Jezebel is not far to go. And there is no stopping when God has given one up, for He will certainly blind the eyes of those who persistently close them, and deafen the ears of those who shut them.

Apostasy denies the Son of God His place. These things saith the Son of God. The apostate one of Hebrews 6. 4 crucifies to himself the Son of God afresh, putting Him to an open shame. And he of Hebrews 10. tramples under foot the Son of God. And as such down-grade is rapidly increasing, may a Phineas' zeal ever stimulate us with a holy zeal for God in a Balaam day. "My zeal," says God; but there is a Jehu zeal in a Jezebel day, intense but filthy. Come, says he, and see my zeal for the Lord, and behold seventy heads of Ahab's sons in baskets. Jehu was determined there should not be an Ahab claimant to the throne. Let us blend the purity of the Phineas with the intensity of the Jehu. A scourge of small cords might do at the time, when the disciples, seeing this, remembered the scripture, the "zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up" (John 2. 17); but in a coming Thyatira day the small cords will stiffen into the rod of iron, and He will blend in Himself to perfection all the purity of the one and intensity of the other.

As the days darkened and many turned aside, standard-bearers fell—or grew faint and weary in the fight; such

days manifested the zeal of those who became "the remnant ones." As in a Jezebel day God could say, "I have 7,000 that have not bowed the knee to Baal," so here God can say, "To the rest"—as many as have not this teaching—to such He speaks, "Hold fast that which thou hast till I come"; for when He comes it will be an apostate day, with a remnant whom He can own. The suffering ones of Smyrna became the remnant; the compromising ones of Pergamos the apostate ones.

"Honour to whom honour is due," and "he that honoureth Me I will honour": so for those who overcome in those most trying and difficult times, "to him will I give authority over the nations."

We come now to the division between the first four and the last three of the seven.

EPHESUS.—In the midst.

SMYRNA.—True to Him in the midst of suffering.

PERGAMOS.—Compromise leading to

THYATIRA.—Jezebel.

But no compromise becomes the remnant ones. This is God's testimony to His Son as Lord in the midst outwardly gathered—Sardis and Philadelphia. God's provision *within* for the maintenance of this testimony.

SARDIS.

Ministry which indeed shall "strengthen that which remains"—seven spirits and stars—all in the right hand of Him in the midst, all at His disposal as He wills; but who knows that will perfectly? The Holy Spirit. Oh to learn how to be still in His hands, to be used in the power of an ungrieved Holy Spirit according to the mind of the Lord! Such ministry will indeed build up. What unction, what power, what blessed results! it shall be "very good" as in Creation day, when chaos and darkness reigned; but that mass of material lay passive while the

Holy Spirit moved, and gave shape as the Creator willed, and at the end of those days God could say "*very good.*"

Such ministry will never get "a name" down here to him who ministers; but by-and-by, as he confessed My name, I will also confess his name before My Father and the Holy Angels. The recognition and reward will be by-and-by. What a very snare of Satan popularity has been to not a few. Nothing is more fickle than the multitude: one day crying Hosanna, the next day, Away with Him, crucify Him!

PHILADELPHIA.

A further provision. Within the remnant. Lordship of Christ. The Master of the house. He who has the key. He that is Holy and He that is true, that shutteth and no man openeth, and openeth and no man shutteth. He that is holy shuts the door against all that is unholy, and He that is true throws it wide open for all that is true, and the door that is not open for all that is true is not shut against all that is not holy. To the overcomer. Him will I make a pillar—such position is gained now, and here Peter and John seemed to be pillars, occupying a place of no small importance, associated with the Master of the house in His rule over the house. This is indeed the safeguard, the protection; an unwalled village is open to the ravages of any passers by; but the walled city, how securely can such a people rest with gates shut by night! Walls bespeak government and rule. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down and without walls"; good government the well-being of a nation, of a family, of an assembly—not prison walls, hard, rigid rules, but such rules as God would have.

Note the linen wall, about nine feet high, round the tabernacle to safeguard and keep it, shutting out all that ought to be out and protecting all that is in. There are twenty boards in the house; on the one side with twenty pillars cor-

responding, upholding the linen wall, the privilege place of board and responsible place of pillar, each holding up the curtain in their order and place—not that every place is equal, or responsibilities are equal—at the corners; pillars are two, at the gate they are four—the place of grave importance. Here at the door lies much of the trouble; self-willed people getting in, more concern for the man at the door than for the flock. “How dare you keep out a known Christian, a dear child of God?” asks one. Where is your concern for the flock? are you sure this is not a wolf that will scatter the flock and sow seeds of false doctrine? That very wall is meant to shut out all such; and be quite sure that those coming are not such. Let us avoid slovenly, easy-going shepherd work; don’t be afraid of a shut door, never more needful than to-day. These court pillars stand connected with the without, whilst the inside pillars are to bear burdens, known only to such. Save the saints; spare them these cares. They are not for such. Parents carry burdens and hide them from their children, who enjoy their young life. Elders, burdened as they see one and another grow cold and go astray, in spite of faithful warning and loving entreaty, such pillars, whether outside or inside, corner or gateway, need to be in close touch with that great big pillar—the *Pillar of Cloud*. The Overseer, the Bishop, the Holy One and True of Philadelphia. What lessons of patience to be learnt. Forty years long He bore with their ill manners in the wilderness; He did not resign, and run away, and leave the sheep in the wilderness just at the moment when care was most needed.

The Apostle calls to the mind of Hebrew saints those who once guided them (Heb. 13. 7), whose faith follow; and may those who to-day have such care, have such testimony borne of them in days to come. They are gone, but Jesus Christ remains, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever—the Overseer, Who never leaves us.

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.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XXXIII. APRIL 5.

THE PARENTHETICAL PORTION OF LUKE CONTINUED.

LUKE 11. 37-12. 59.

AT THE PHARISEE'S TABLE.

THE word *ἀριστάω*, *aristaō*, here translated “to dine” (margin “to breakfast”), occurs also in John 21. 12, 15, whilst the corresponding noun occurs in Matthew 22. 4, Luke 11. 38, 14. 12. The words seem to have originally referred to a meal such as we should call breakfast, and this appears to be the meaning in John 21. 12, 15. But a meal not so early in the day is often meant, as for instance in Luke 14. 12 and Matthew 22. 4; this answers somewhat to the modern notion of luncheon (or midday dinner); and is contrasted in Luke 14. 12 with *δείπνον* *deîpnōn*, which is the principal meal of the day, dinner proper, taken sometimes quite late, and often called supper. The washing that the Lord had neglected was evidently a ceremonial bathing. He was the one of whom above all others it had been written

He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.

The Lord's words therefore bear on ceremonial cleanness, and the dictum is “Give for alms those things which are within and behold all things are clean unto you.” “Those things which are within” may mean “within your power,” “what you can,” but it appears to show that almsgiving must be from the heart.

The following words find a fairly close parallel in Matthew 23. Whether they were uttered at the Pharisee's table or in

the temple later, or on both occasions, does not seem certain. But in view of verse 53, we incline to think that these words were spoken in the Pharisee's house.

THE FEAR OF GOD.

The real mischief of the Pharisees was hypocrisy. This was and is like leaven, spreading amongst all who come into contact with its influence, and corrupting them to become in turn sources of fresh infection. The remedy for this evil which the Lord provides is Light. God is light, and the fear of God is the great prophylactic against hypocrisy as well as against cowardice (see further NEEDED TRUTH, vol. xiii., page 200).

RICHES, TRUE AND FALSE.

Covetousness, too, gives way when the ear is opened to hear God speaking; for then may be discerned the difference between having treasure laid up for oneself and being rich toward God.

YOUR FATHER.

As the words to the Pharisees took us on to what is given towards the close of the gospel according to Matthew, so the present portion finds its parallel in Matthew in the charge given to the twelve apostles (chapter 10.).

Note that while in the paragraph (verses 13 to 21) which commences with the appeal of one of the multitude, it is God who speaks to the rich man who was not rich toward God; in the paragraph (verses 22 to 34) where the Lord turns to His disciples the God who feeds the ravens and clothes the grass is named "your Father." This fatherhood of God is limited to those who are born again, and has special reference to His fatherly care for them as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

WATCHFUL SERVANTS.

The following words as to watching find a parallel in Matthew 24. as uttered just after the Lord had gone out

from the temple. Their place in Luke is certainly determined by their close moral connexion with the previous paragraph, which Matthew gives in such a very different context. There may be fear of God in the heart and the Kingdom of the Father may be at one time the object of earnest solicitude; and anon one may become weary, the lamps go out, and the servant be unready. Peter's question elicits clear evidence that the teaching here is not primarily dispensational, limited in its application to these or to those; but moral and far-reaching. Who is a steward let him be faithful and wise; who is a servant, let him be watching; to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.

And, alas! for those who seek for peace at any price. He was first by interpretation King of Righteousness, afterward King of Peace; faithfulness must therefore come first with every true servant, cost it what it may.

TO THE MULTITUDE.

Moreover they were solemn times coming whereof He spoke, and to those who knew nothing of serving Him He turned with at least a word of warning, lest unawares they find themselves beyond mercy and beyond hope.

XXXIV.. APRIL 19.

LUKE 13. 1-17. 10.

NO DIFFERENCE.

THE solemn words with which chapter 12. closed led some to tell Him of the sad fate which befell certain Galilean sinners. How apt we all are to think badly of others' sins and lightly of our own. But He, as the forerunner had done previously, preaches repentance as needful alike for all.

Moreover, what differences there are (the fig-tree parable

shows) are such as to entail greater condemnation on those who have had greater privileges.

THE SABBATH DAY.

Of the three miracles of which a record is found in this parenthetical section of Luke, two are recorded in this gospel only, and both of these were performed on a sabbath day. No other indication of time seems to be given in either case (Luke 13. 10-21. 14. 1-6).

It was the sabbath day; He was in one of their synagogues teaching, and a woman was there having a spirit of infirmity so that she could not stand upright. He heals her and she glorifies God, but the ruler of the synagogue was indignant at this desecration of the sabbath. Note the Lord's reply and what followed. He said therefore, "Unto what is the Kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I liken it?" The similitude of a mustard tree growing from a small seed is first given, and then that of the leavening of three measures of meal by leaven which a woman added. Compare the allusion to the leaven of the Pharisees; the leaven is hidden away out of sight to do its work in the dark.

In Bible Reading XXII. (vol. xiv. page 253), we referred to the seven parables recorded in Matthew 13. and to the parallel passages in Mark 4. and Luke 8., but omitted to mention the scripture now before us. Again we are struck with the way in which these paragraphs are brought in here, and though we fail to adequately grasp the fitness of their placing here, we are constrained to acknowledge that it is very good.

STILL ON THE WAY.

We are next reminded that He was on His way to Jerusalem, and these two paragraphs (verses 22 to 35) seem to belong to the last journey in a special way that

much else does not. But perhaps such verses are put in here and there that we may really recognize that the very things which we more or less clearly believe did not actually take place in this period of the Lord's life, have a very distinct moral claim to the context in which Luke places them in his orderly gospel.

AGAIN IN A PHARISEE'S HOUSE.

Now comes the second of the two sabbath signs peculiar to Luke to which we referred above. He was in a Pharisee's house eating bread on the sabbath, and they, that is the host and the guests invited too, we suppose, were watching whether He would heal a man with the dropsy. This time He first silences them and then heals the sick man. Note that again the ass and ox are used as illustrations. In the former case it was a question of watering them, here of drawing them up from a well on a sabbath day.

The three following paragraphs still belong to the same story; those who had been bidden chose out the chief seats and those who entertained preferred to invite rich folk to their feasts.

Then comes the parable of the great supper, so full, so pregnant of the gospel message.

THE SON OF MAN TAKETH HOLD OF MAN.

Then we have the warning of the cost of discipleship, a passage very like to what we get in Matthew 10., but here it leads to those records which are peculiar to Luke, which, perhaps, reach further down to the heart of man than almost any other portions of Holy Writ. One might perhaps say that if chapters 15. and 16. of Luke were all that was revealed from God, we have in them such manifestation of Divine Grace, such assurance of Divine Love as meet man in his furthest wandering and his deepest need and tell him what he wants to know of God and God's sal-

vation. Of how many may it be said that such and such a man was born here?

FOUND, FOUND, FOUND.

The parable of Luke 15. begins with a hundred sheep; the shepherd seeks the lost one. The woman seeks the lost drachma. The prodigal son who has wandered far from home is met on his return by his father with love and forgiving tenderness. And what is the teaching of it all? The joy of the shepherd speaks of the joy in heaven when the Great Shepherd returns triumphant (see Psalm 24.). The joy of the woman speaks of the joy in the presence of the angels of God at the recovery of the lost treasure. But the joy of the Father transcends all when His son who was dead again lives.

TAKE HEED.

But all this has its sidelight also to throw on the doings of those to whom has been committed trust. For the parable of the Found was the Lord's answer to the murmuring of those who should have been God's messengers in His message. They indeed were far enough away, but lest disciples should tread such paths of unfaithfulness, the parable of the steward follows with its wealth of teaching, direct and indirect.

Time will not allow of comment on much else that calls for earnest heed in these scriptures. A brief note expository of the picture of Sheol given in the end of chapter 15. will be found in NEEDED TRUTH, vol. viii. pages 123 to 126.

The parenthetical portion ends with words of encouragement and words to teach humility also to those who seek grace to follow Him as His disciples in His pathway of obedience and faithfulness.

DAYDAWN.

Daydawn of gladness,
 Dispelling all sadness,
 Rising in radiance, resplendent and bright,
 Its beauties unfolding,
 Its glories beholding,
 So sweet after darkness and gloom of the night.

Glad, golden morning,
 Life's pathway adorning,
 Fairer and clearer than light it doth shine.
 Oh how blessed to be
 For ever set free,
 To know in its fulness the joy that is mine!

How brightly they shine,
 The glories divine,
 The splendours and beauties of Jesus, my Lord!
 What grace doth unfold
 That can never be told,
 Revealed to my gaze through God's precious Word!

'Tis blessed to know
 That still it doth flow,
 In richest abundance a glorious tide,
 Till free from all sin,
 We enter within
 That glad happy home where love shall abide.

Then oh! for the bliss,
 The rapture of this,
 To see Him whom now though unseen we adore.
 In that blessed place,
 We shall gaze on His face,
 And sing of His grace and His love evermore.

THE CROSS.

PSALM 22. JOHN 10.

This Psalm shows us the sufferings of the Lord Jesus while in this life. Read verse 16, "They pierced My hands and My feet"; there is no mention of His side. His side was not pierced till after He was dead.

We have in this Psalm the threefold sufferings of the Lord Jesus :—

Verses 1–5 show us His sufferings from God.

Verses 6–16 show us His sufferings from Man.

Verses 17–21 show us His sufferings from Satan.

Verse 22 shows us His glory in the midst of His brethren.

Verse 25 shows us His glory in the midst of Israel.

Verse 27 shows us His glory in the midst of the Nations.

This Psalm sets forth the Lord Jesus Christ as the sin offering.

I always like to connect John 10. with this Psalm. But there is this difference : John shows us the Lord Jesus in the burnt offering aspect, as we read in verse 11, "I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep." This I apprehend is in keeping with the words of Philippians 2. 5–8, "And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross"; and thus He gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour, as we read in Ephes. 5. 1–2.

In Psalm 22. we see God in His anger against sin. See Lamentations 1. 12–13, "Jehovah hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger." Again in Isaiah 53. 10, "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him"; and in Rom. 8. 32, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." But in John 10. we see God the Father well pleased; John 8. 29, Col. 1. 19–20, "And He that sent Me

is with Me. The Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." This was the climax of His obedience.

If this article falls into the hands of unsaved persons, I would say to such, if God spared not such an One, the Lord Jesus Christ, take heed, lest He spare not thee; but say with us, "Oh what a Saviour, that He died and rose again for me."

We propose to speak of the Crook next month.

A. LIVINGSTONE.

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

"Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."—2 *Tim.* 3. 13-17.

VII.

DISCIPLESHIP.

THOSE who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, receive without merit on their part the forgiveness or remission of their sins, are made possessors of eternal life, and indeed are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. As recipients of such grace they are bounden by every consideration of duty and of gratitude to yield whole-hearted and unfeigned obedience to the word and will of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is indeed no matter of mere choice, for God has decreed that in the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Him as Lord (*Phil.* 2. 10). The authority of the Lord Jesus Christ was

a prominent theme in all the Gospel preaching of the Apostles (see for example Acts 2. 36 ; 10. 42).

Practical recognition of His authority as Lord, and submission thereto on the part of the believing one ensures salvation from what is displeasing to the Lord (1 Pet. 2. 1, 2, R.V.). This aspect of salvation is different from that which we have previously mentioned.

The Scriptures clearly distinguish between these two phases or aspects of Divine Salvation. For indeed a believer in the Lord Jesus being born of God can never cease to be a child of God, nor to possess the blessings that became his on believing ; whilst as to discipleship and obedience there may be, and, alas ! there often is, a drawing back even at a very early stage of the pilgrim's journey. The commission given by the Lord Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 28. 18-20, lays especial stress on this latter aspect of the Divine Work. "All authority," saith the risen Lord, "hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore 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 commanded you, and lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age."

It is clear from this that it is not enough for a disciple to refrain from those grosser sins which are universally deprecated, nor even to occupy himself with religious exercises, or in benevolent practices which seem to him suitable expressions of gratitude to God for salvation. It is needful to learn the Lord's will for himself as a disciple, and to seek to conform his will to the will of God ; to know what it is to be where the Lord would have him, and to do what the Lord bids him.

Failing in this, or wandering from the disciple path, corresponding repentance and restoration are what must be looked for, when God again raises the spirit and warms

the heart of the would-be disciple, whose repentance will be outwardly evidenced by his acknowledgment of the truth.

VIII.

BAPTISM.

IN the scripture quoted from Matthew **28**. 18-20 is found a plain unequivocal word of the Lord charging those who make disciples to baptize them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. The meaning of the word baptism is beyond all controversy immersion or dipping; and for baptism neither sprinkling nor pouring can be regarded as a substitute by those who reverence the Word of God. Nor can the baptism of unconscious infants take the place of the baptism of those who have been made disciples.

The practice of the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in John **4**. 1 and elsewhere, and of His apostles and other disciples as recorded frequently in Acts, is uniformly the baptism of disciples, and from this no variation is permissible. Moreover the precedents of New Testament Scripture clearly show that baptism in water takes the first place in the life-history of a disciple (Acts **2**. 41; **8**. 12, 36-38; **9**. 18; **10**. 41, 48; **16**. 33; **18**. 8).

The important teaching of baptism unto Christ Jesus must here be mentioned. It speaks of burial with Him into death, that as He was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father so the baptized disciple may also walk in newness of life (Rom. **6**. 1-11; see also Gal. **3**. 23-29; Col. **2**. 8-15).

HYMN.

Tune—"WORSHIP."

NEARER, I'd be to Thee ;
 For I would know
 Thy power, to keep me free
 From every foe.
 Lord, here, there still are found
 Foes many all around :
 Sin, Lord, doth yet abound
 While here below.

 Nearer, O Lord, to Thee :
 Hear Thou my cry.
 O Lord, I'd nearer be ;
 Draw Thou me nigh.
 Save now from every ill ;
 This is Thy perfect will :
 Speak, Lord, Thy " Peace be still,
 Behold 'tis I !"

 Make now Thy presence known
 To banish fear.
 Now to Thy lofty throne
 Would we draw near :
 And while we'd bow the knee,
 This all our prayer would be—
 " Nearer still, Lord, to Thee."
 Lord, wilt Thou hear ?

 Then underneath Thy smile,
 Lord, this I long,
 Throughout this little while,
 To banish wrong.
 So that throughout my days,
 Thou shalt have all the praise,
 Till I'm brought nigh to raise
 The endless song,

“REMNANT TIMES,”

THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND PURPOSES.

NOTES OF ADDRESSES BY MR. DAVID SMITH.

(Concluded from page 79.)

THROUGH lack of self-judgment many in this assembly fell under the judgment of the Lord (1 Cor. 11. 30), whilst another, who manifests by his life that he has not been judging his thoughts and desires by the searching power of the Word of God, and has become in character such an one as may not be allowed a place in the House of God, has to know that judgment as expressed in 1 Corinthians 5. 12, 13, carried out by the hand of others. Alas! alas! that too often the discipline of the House of God is robbed of its purpose and object by a supposed kindness in a forbidden companying with the subject thereof. Perfect love and true love, like Divine love, ever seeks the greatest good and the greatest blessing of its object, but such behaviour towards the sinning one is at best, mistaken love. The Lord's will requires, and the characteristic of God's House demands, faithfulness to the Lord and faithfulness towards the sinning one, and the true object of all discipline is only likely to be attained where such faithfulness obtains, even as we find it was in connexion with the particular case before us. See 2 Corinthians 2. 6-8.

We have been looking at judgment associated with the House of God as expressing an action towards some within, and putting out. We wish to look for a little at this as expressing an action towards some that are without, and guarding that which is within against breakers in and creepers in.

The honour of doing oversight work, in the past could not be enjoyed by any one. The conditions are clearly stipulated in Zechariah 3. 6, 7, “*If thou wilt walk in My*

ways, and *if* thou wilt keep My charge, *then* thou shalt judge My house, and keep My courts.”

In 1 Timothy 3. 1-15 we find conditions and qualifications answering to those presented to us in the case of Joshua in the past, and only such as fulfil these conditions and possess these qualifications does God expect and desire to judge His house and keep His courts now.

In connexion with each one who engages in this good yet difficult work we learn from Titus 1. 7 that he must be blameless, as the steward of God, and our minds go back to Abram, who entrusted all that he had to the care and keeping of Eliezer, whom he had proved and thus had confidence in, as his steward (Gen. 15. 2, Gen. 24. 2). In the case of Potiphar, too, he committed the care of his house and of all that he had to Joseph, who was trustworthy and guarded his master's interests with jealous care (Gen. 39. 4). Such characteristics—faithfulness and devotedness—are required in all who would essay to do the beautiful work of oversight.

The Lord Jesus Christ on that memorable day when, as it were, He committed to Peter's care the sheep and lambs of His flock, did not say “Peter, Lovest thou My sheep?” No, it was, “Lovest thou Me,” and in the light of his thrice repeated confession, “I love Thee,” he received the sacred trust, “Feed My lambs. Shepherd My sheep.”

But the vessels of God's House require to be cared for, as well as the sheep and lambs of His flock, for not only are there wolves seeking to devour the flock, there are also robbers who would steal the precious vessels; but there are likewise faithful hands and devoted hearts who regard the things in relation to the Person Whom they love, and thus hold them fast and firm for Him.

In a coming day He will put a true estimate upon such work, when as Chief Shepherd He will give the “Victor's crown of glory that fadeth not away.”—1 Peter 5. 4.

Doubtless the work is difficult and trying, causing many heart-aches and head-aches, and much more besides; a work that can only be undertaken and carried on out of true love for Him: yet for all there is provision in His words—

“My grace is sufficient for thee.”—2 Cor. 12. 9.

Communicated by GEORGE McINTYRE.

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 155.—*In an assembly where there are several brethren who take part in gospel work, what is the scriptural way to arrange who should take the meeting? Is it scriptural for the brethren taking oversight, or for one or two of their number to arrange for all gospel meetings?*

Those responsible for the gospel meetings are those who have made proof of their ministry, men known as acceptable gospel preachers. Let such act together—of course in fullest fellowship with overseeing men—no independency—and act by arrangement and in order, as all things ought to be, so that there is no uncertainty as to the meeting being provided with a speaker. This is the sphere of the men whose gift is in the gospel, and such gift, while found in an assembly, does not belong exclusively to that assembly, but such still acting together as before reach out to neighbouring assemblies; as the gossellers of a group of assemblies as far as possible arrange for the use of that which is for the whole. “From you sounded out” far and wide. Many feeble companies having no special gospel ministry in their midst are thus cared for, and the need is met.

The expansion of such work—summer time visiting villages for open-air and tract distribution—here is the

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

“Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—2 *Tim.* 3. 13-17.

IX.

“MY CHURCH”—HIS BODY.

BEFORE passing on to other subjects which are matters of human responsibility, we tarry to refer to the subject of the Church which is built by the Christ (*Matt.* 16.). Into this believing ones are brought by Him, and in it are kept by Him beyond the power of man, Satan, or self to interfere or mar. In the days of His flesh the Lord spake thereof, “Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” This work of building His Church the Lord began on the day of Pentecost (*John* 7. 39; *Acts* 1. 5) and has since continued. This Church is also spoken of in Scriptures given through Paul as the Body of Christ, especially in connexion with its including believers from amongst both Jews and Gentiles (*Eph.* 2. 11-20; 3. 6; 4. 11-7).

As to entrance thereinto see 1 *Cor.* 12. 13, “In One Spirit were we all baptized into One Body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink One Spirit.” Let it be well noted that it is not baptism by the Spirit or baptism of the Spirit. The baptism is in the Spirit into the Body, and clearly from *John* 1. 33, *Acts* 2. 33 and other scriptures the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is He Who baptizes in One Spirit into One Body.

That believing is the one thing now needed on man's part for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and for baptism by the Christ in the Spirit into the Body, appears plain from *Gal.* 3.

2, 5, 14 read in connexion with 1 Cor. 12. 13 (see also Acts 10. 44, 47 contrasted with Acts 2. 38).

From the letters to Ephesus and Colosse we learn that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the Body and the Saviour, that is the Preserver, of the Body; and we are thus assured that the place and portion of the believer in the Body is secure and eternal in virtue of the sovereign will and unfailing care of its Almighty Head.

We are not oblivious to the fact that manifold responsibilities to fellow-saints arise out of their and our position as co-members of the One Body, but would rather seek grace to fulfil them unto the building up of the Body in love, as the gracious Head may direct and help. This fact, however, in no wise touches the truth that the place of each member in the Body is not in any manner or sense whatever, conditional, but stands immutable because of the good pleasure of Him who has put us there.

X.

THE FELLOWSHIP.

From the early chapters of Acts we learn that the disciples were together in one Fellowship or Community. This Fellowship or Community evidently consisted of all that believed who were together in obedience to the Lord. Commencing as a very small number they were rapidly multiplied. We note particularly the expressions used in Acts 2. 41, 47; 4. 4; 5. 14, whence we learn that they who received the word and were baptized were added. It is clear that the addition is something beyond that which necessarily accompanies believing. It is addition by the Lord and addition to the Lord, and is an addition of believing ones, of such as were being saved. Thus the Fellowship increased in numbers.

We note that the Fellowship or Community of which we read in Acts 2. 42, "They continued steadfastly in the

Fellowship" (so the Greek), and 1 Cor. 1. 9, "God is faithful through whom ye were called into the Fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord," must on no account be confused with that fellowship of which 1 John 1. speaks. For this latter is fellowship, that is, communion (partnership or common possession) with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, first enjoyed by those who knew the Son of God in the days of His flesh, and then enjoyed by others, to whom comes the declaration of what these had seen and heard. In other words the word "fellowship" of 1 John 1. describes the fact of common possession and common enjoyment, whilst the previously quoted passages (Acts 2. 42 1 Cor. 1. 9) describe as a Fellowship or Community those who have and enjoy and work in common as a firm or partnership may do; but all under the headship and control of our one and only Lord.

This Community of believing, baptized, and added ones is elsewhere spoken of as a Flock, or a little Flock.

The company around the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh was comforted by Him in the words, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12. 32). And the word here used for flock, which is by some regarded as the diminutive of the word in John 10. 16, is applied by Peter to the company of believers scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, who, though thus found in many places, were regarded as a united whole, to be cared for as one flock by the elders thereof (see 1 Pet. 5. 2).

And again Paul, in his parting words to the elders in Ephesus, speaks of the flock in the which the Holy Spirit had made or placed them as overseers; the flock which the grievous wolves would not spare. We particularly note that the word flock is used of those who are together in the love and fear of God under the leading of the chief Shepherd.

Though applied to a company together in a single town

yet the word flock is never used in the plural when the gathered saints in different towns are referred to. The governing principle being that expressed by the Lord in John 10., One Flock.

Compare here Song of Songs 1. 5-8, where she who would avoid the flocks of the companions is bidden to go forth 'by the footsteps of the flock, that is, His flock. Though he has many sheep and many, alas! go astray beside the flocks of others, yet He Himself has but one flock, though indeed it be betimes but a little flock.

Most important it is to observe the relationship of the Fellowship to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His place, His portion in the midst of the world that has rejected Him. It is here that even on earth as in Heaven the will of God His Father may be done; and here, the reign of God may be known in the collective obedience of His gathered saints to His will and word (Matt. 6. 10). From Him, through the Holy Spirit whom He has sent, the Fellowship is supplied with power for collective worship of the Father and for testimony to the Name.

The Fellowship must be carefully distinguished from the Body of Christ. Into the Body every believing one of this age is brought once and for all by the sole will and act of the Christ, the Head; from it none can ever be sundered, being kept there by the will of its Preserver; for this is the Church which He builds, against which the gates of Hades never can prevail (Matt. 16. 18; see also Eph. 2. 20; 3. 6).

Whilst the Body of Christ is heavenly as to its membership, for this is unconditional, the Fellowship is on earth, and they who pass away from this scene, though they continue to be in the Body of Christ, no longer have part in the Fellowship, of which, for example, Acts 2. 42, 1 Cor. 1. 9 speak.

Moreover, confining ourselves for the moment to apostolic

times, it was not only death which could sever one from the Fellowship (Acts 5. 5; 1 Cor. 11. 30). We learn from 1 Cor. 5. 13 that one who had been called into the Fellowship had to be put out therefrom as an immoral person, a wicked man. Later on many went forth under different circumstances, as see Acts 20. 30 and 1 John 2. 19. All of these (except any who might have been unbelievers) continued to be in and of the Body of Christ, though they ceased to have any share in the Community or Fellowship.

Nevertheless we nowhere find in Scripture any justification for children of God being elsewhere than with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart, in the Fellowship which is of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the contrary, careful consideration of the whole subject in the light of other passages of Scripture to be mentioned further on, leads us to the solemn conviction that to be in any other association of Christians is absolutely contrary to the word of God and the will of the Lord.

AWAKE OR ASLEEP?

Tune—"RESCUE THE PERISHING."

O THOU Jehovah, inhabiting glory,
Thine is the Name of all honour and might,
Thou art the theme of eternity's story,
Dwelling in Heaven's unapproachable light.

O God of righteousness, Refuge unshaken,
Whom have Thy saints in the Heavens but Thee

Out from Thy bosom, in pity to find us,
Jesus was sent for our sins to atone—
Sent as a lamb by His death to remind us,
Thine is a righteous and merciful throne.

Soon from this world we shall rise and be going—
Soon shall the Morning Star gladden our view;
Dark is the night we have waited well knowing,
Jesus our Lord is the Faithful and True.

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 CROOK.

PSALM 23. JOHN 11.

THIS Psalm shows the character of the Lord as the Great Shepherd, as we find in Heb. 13. 20–21. “The God of Peace who brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will; working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

So the child of God on resurrection ground can say: “Jehovah Rohi—Jehovah is my Shepherd, I shall not want.” “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.” Psalm 34. 9–10.

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.” Then shall be found in us what the Apostle Paul desired in Timothy: “Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and the things that thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.” 2 Timothy 2. 1–2.

But beloved in Christ, if He do not guide us we shall be found in other pasture, as we find written in Hosea 13. 6, “According to their pasture so were they filled; they were filled and their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten Me.”

“He leadeth me by the waters of rest.” “He that believeth shall not make haste.” Isaiah 28. 16. “When He heard therefore that he was sick He abode two days still in the same place where He was.” John 11. 6. It seems to me

from these scriptures that there is no impatience when the Lord is listened to by His disciples.

“He restoreth my soul,” not in the sense of a child of God drawing back according to Heb. 10. 38 (in such His soul shall have no pleasure) but in the sense of God by His Holy Spirit unfolding His mind to His children, as we find written in 1 Cor. 2. 6-16. “But as it is written, eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.”

“He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake.” “But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt. 6. 33. See also Romans 14. 17. If thus led according to these scriptures, he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men.

Then we shall be able to say “Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.” And as we walk through this world our God and Father would ever have us remember what manner of people we ought to be (2 Peter 3. 11, and Heb. 13. 5-6) in order that we may be able righteously to say: “The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man can do unto me.”

“Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.” His rod for correction, His staff to lean on. “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth.” Job 5. 17. “I will be his Father and he shall be My son. If he commit iniquity I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the stripes of the children of men.” 2 Sam. 7. 14. So from whatever source our trials may come the Lord’s voice to us would be: “Hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it.” Micah 6. 9; Heb. 12. 4-11.

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” “When a man’s ways please the Lord He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.” Prov. 16. 7.

“Thou hast anointed my head with oil,” the understanding enlightened by the Holy Spirit, “Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. Psalm 107. 43.

All who have such an experience can say: “My cup runneth over.” “The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup.” Psalm 16. 5-6. “The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” 1 Cor. 10. 16.

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the House of the Lord for ever.”

Now sound the final chord. Praise, brethren, praise, Thrice Holy is our Lord, Praise, brethren, praise. What more befits the tongues, Soon to lead the eternal songs, While Heaven the note prolongs, Praise, brethren, praise.

ALEXANDER LIVINGSTONE.

BIBLE QUEENS.

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA.

OF the queens specially brought before us in the Scriptures, the queen of Sheba comes first. We read in Kings that Solomon sat in all his glory upon the throne of his father David, filled with wisdom and understanding that cometh from God alone; and to that throne so resplendent with glory was attached a name—the name of Jehovah. “And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Jehovah, she came to prove him with hard questions.”

Turning to Phil. 2. and Heb. 1. we read of David's greater Son, the Son of God, who humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow. "God . . . hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds; Who, being the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: having become by so much better than the angels, as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they."

"Holy and reverend is His name" (Ps. 111). As yet, how very little the hearts of men and women have been exercised concerning the name given to the glorified Man upon the throne of God, He whom God hath made both Lord and Christ.

Many, indeed, have been brought to own Him as their own personal Saviour, but how few follow on to sanctify in their hearts Christ as Lord, 1 Peter 3. 15.

What, Christian reader, have you learnt concerning the name of the Lord? Has your heart bowed in obedience to being baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit? Matt. 28. 19, 20; Acts 8. 16 and 10. 48. Then learning to observe all things He hath commanded, do you know the privileges of being gathered into the Name? Matt. 18. 20. Of being added? Acts 2. 41, 47. And continuing steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, and in fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread and the prayers? Like the apostles you may be counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name, and therein to rejoice. Acts 5. 41, 42; 1 Peter 4. 14. In Col. 3. 17, the believer is exhorted in whatsoever he does to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. And in 3 John 5, 8, he is taught his

responsibility towards those brethren and strangers withal that for the sake of the Name have gone forth taking nothing of the Gentiles . . . to welcome such, and thus become fellow-workers with the truth. See also Heb. 6. 10.

This name shall shed its fragrance still
 Along life's thorny road,
 Shall sweetly smooth the rugged hill
 That leads us up to God.

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe," Prov. 18. 10. "He that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God," Isa. 50. 10.

Let us now return to the queen of Sheba, and watch her journeying on with her long train of servants, and camels laden with spices, gold, and precious stones from that distant land; at last, Jerusalem, the city of the great king, is reached, the queen enters in and beholds the king in all his glory and beauty, then she communes with him of all that was in her heart, for she had come to prove the wisdom of Solomon with hard questions. And Solomon told her all her questions, there was not anything hid from the king that he told her not. The queen is convinced of her unbelief, and there is no more spirit left in her, she has to acknowledge, "It was a true report that I heard in my own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen: and behold the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard."

Then she exclaims, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee and that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: Because the Lord loved Israel for ever, therefore made He thee king, to do judgment and justice." The queen then presents her gifts to the king, and in return the king gives

to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned, and went to her own land, she and her servants.

Is there not something in this God-inspired record of the queen of Sheba that we may learn to profit withal? We have heard of the One greater than Solomon. Like Sheba's queen we may come with all the intelligence God has given us, only to learn how full of unbelief our own hearts are, and how very little we do know. Yet the One upon the throne is not only filled with infinite wisdom, but also full of grace and truth. As we come into His presence and commune with Him, His word will make all things plain to our hearts. "By faith we understand," Heb. 11. 3. And we shall be ready to exclaim in the words of Rom. 11. 33-36.

The time is drawing near when we shall enter into His presence and see the King of kings in all His glory and beauty, and He will fully make known to us of that which filled our hearts along life's journey, and we shall then say, "It was a true report I heard of Thee . . . and behold the half was not told me . . . Happy are these Thy servants." What gifts shall we have to present to Him? What gifts have we to offer Him now?

Nothing by far so costly as a queen could give do we say? Is it so? Have we not been endowed with the Holy Spirit? Then shall we not bring unto Him THE FRUIT of the Spirit? "The love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control?" The meek and quiet spirit is that which is costly in the eyes of the great triune God. And what will He not bestow? Not alone the desire of our hearts and whatsoever we ask, but of His royal bounty shall we receive of Him who hath ascended up on high and led captivity captive and received gifts for men. Will our readers please turn to Ps. 72. in closing?

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XXXV. MAY 3.

JOHN 7. 1-36.

THERE is some doubt in the mind of the present writer as to whether we are given data in the gospels sufficient to fix the length of the Lord's ministry. But there are, as we have already indicated, certain well-marked epochs by which it is divided into periods, and a clear apprehension of these is first necessary if we wish to have a correct general knowledge of the Life.

In previous papers we have indicated the betrayal and the murder of John the Baptist as two events which mark two definite epochs in the history. From the former we can discern the temper of the people of Israel and the state into which they had sunk, and by the latter we can measure the rancour and hatred of the enemies of righteousness who sat in high places.

In connexion with each of these events, the Gospel according to Matthew records that the King of Israel withdrew Himself. In immediate connexion with the latter, we read of the Great Desert Meal, which is therefore the first great event that belongs to the period next after John's murder.

We now find from the Gospel according to John the Apostle that "after these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Judæa because the Jews sought to kill Him." He went up, however, to the Feast of Tabernacles, and subsequently went away again beyond Jordan (John 7. 1, and 10. 40).

After this He took His last journey to Jerusalem as recorded by all the evangelists.

It will thus be understood how we can divide the Lord's life on earth into two main parts, each of which falls naturally into four periods.

- I. The thirty years of preparation divides itself into
1. Childhood. Matt. 1. 18-2. 23. Luke 1. 26-2. 40. John 1, 14. Compare 1 Samuel 2. 18-21.
 2. Boyhood. Luke 2. 41-51. Compare Daniel 1.
 3. Youth. Luke 2. 52. Compare 1 Samuel 16. 11, and 17. 34, 35.
 4. Early manhood. See Mark 6. 3. Psalm 1. Compare Genesis 39.

The close of the thirty years is marked by the Baptism and the Temptation.

Matt. 3. 13-4. 11. Mark 1. 9-13. Luke 3. 21 4. 14. John 1. 15-18, 33.

- II. The public ministry consists of four periods—
1. Contemporaneous with continuance of John's preaching.
Luke 4. 14, 15. John 3. 29-4. 54.
 2. During John's imprisonment.
Matt. 4. 12-13. 58. Mark 1. 14-6. 13. Luke 5. 1-9. 6. John 5. 1-47.
 3. From John's murder to the last journey.
Matt. 14. 13-18. 35. Mark 6. 30-9. 50. John 6. 1-11. 57.
 4. The last journey to Jerusalem.
Matt. 19. 1-27. 44. Mark 10. 1-15. 32. Luke 9. 51-56, 13. 22; 17. 11-23. 43. John 12. 1-19. 27.

Then came the end—

He was cut off out of the land of the living,
For the transgression of my people was He stricken.

CHARACTER OF THE JOHANNEAN NARRATIVE.

It will be observed that John not only records to a large degree different incidents from those contained in the other gospels, but that in particular he gives a fuller account of the first and third periods. The comparison of the four gospels does us at least this good service, that it gives a

more extended view of the Life as a whole. We have already noted that in John we have the deeply interesting account of those early days when so quietly the Blessed Man of Psalm 1., being, as Luke tells us, thirty years of age, commenced to bring forth His fruit in His season; whilst there, too, we have the abundant evidence that His leaf (communion with God) never withered, and whatsoever He did prospered.

In this passage, John 7. 1-10. 42, we have, then, the continuation of the Johannean account of the third period; for John makes no mention of the Caesarea Philippi episode of the transfiguration, nor of the story of the little child. Matthew, Mark and Luke, on the other hand, say nothing of this visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles. Probably verse 1, "Jesus walked in Galilee," includes, in point of time, Matthew, Mark and Luke's accounts of what followed the Great Desert Meal, for clearly it is a northward journey, a journey away from Jerusalem, that they record. But as to the period of Matthew 19. and Mark 10. we will speak later.

XXXVI. MAY 17.

JOHN 7. 37-52, 8. 12-59.

HOW HE WENT TO THE FEAST.

An unworthy suspicion has intruded on some minds that the Lord's going up as it were in secret marked a want of courage, but it will be noted that in the midst of the Feast He went into the temple and taught. The point seems to be that His entry into the city was not public, but His presence there was. He went to teach. The time for His public entry was not yet come. The exact force of verse 8 we hesitate to refer to, because it is not quite certain whether the Lord said "I go not up," or "I go not up yet." If the former, the meaning might have been that He went

not up as to a feast, but took occasion merely of the opportunity of the people being there to go up and teach them.

Note the reference to a sign of healing done on the Sabbath day. This was probably that of which we read in John 5. which had been done in Jerusalem at a feast time.

LIVING WATER.

On the last day, the great day of the Feast, which was the eighth day, a day of rest, the Lord stands and proclaims to those who still sought relief in shadows when the substance of all the types had come, "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink," and then looking on away beyond the suffering and shame of the coming passover time, beyond the cross and the grave, onward to the glory when He would be seated on the Father's throne, He speaks of the Spirit to be given to all that believed in Him.

How significant, that in all these incidents the Apostles are left out of the picture!

Note that the Lord's birthplace had been forgotten; and God permitted this; there was no hint given to correct those who through unbelief had fallen into error. So also as to a further error, and we ask our readers to search and see whether even in the times of the Old Testament a prophet arose out of Galilee.

It does not appear that there is any sufficient evidence to justify the retention of the passage, John 7. 53-8. 11. It is omitted, as the revisers tell us, in most of the ancient manuscripts and versions.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

The Lord now speaks as the Light of the World, not of Israel only—"He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of the life." His life sheds light on our path if we follow Him. This following

is double: firstly it is mental—it consists in tracing His life as portrayed in Scripture, watching His footsteps here below; secondly, it is actual, it consists in walking as He walked, and doing as He did.

Note the way in which the Lord Jesus couples Himself with the Father, "I and the Father that sent Me." Though teaching now, and uttering vital and imperishable truth, His words were virtually unheeded by the many, but some believed on Him.

ABRAHAM'S SEED.

It is a little difficult to understand what follows. Who answered in the words of verse 33? Those who believed? This seems impossible in the light of what follows.

The explanation seems to me to be that though the words of verses 31, 32 were especially addressed to believing ones that they might become truly disciples, the reply did not come entirely or chiefly from such. A believing one or two may have joined in the surprised question, but this came mainly from others; and the Lord's reply was addressed perhaps not chiefly (certainly not entirely) to individuals, but rather to the people as a whole. "My word hath not free course in you," appears to mean what the margin says, "hath no place in you," but this is not quite certain.

Note that though in one sense Abraham's seed, they were in another sense very different, and compare Paul's letter to Galatians. Observe, too, that as the conversation proceeds, the hostility of the opponents increase, or perhaps, rather, the more hostile supplant the others.

Finally, on His part we have the clear statement of His life before the Incarnation; on their part, the futile attempt to stone Him. He hid Himself and went out, and as He passed by saw a blind man. Thus chapters 9. and 10. are very closely linked with chapters 7. and 8.

XXXVII. MAY 31.

JOHN 9. 10.

SIGHT FOR THE BLIND.

The whole of chapter 9. and chapter 10., at least to verse 21, if not to verse 39, are connected with one sign, which, with its accompanying teaching, is recorded by John with that perspicuity which characterizes his writing.

Our first note shall be that other afflictions besides this man's blindness are blessings in disguise, giving the afflicted one such an opportunity of knowing the works of God manifest in him as otherwise he had not had.

The Lord's giving of sight needed light; it could not be wrought in the night time—He in the world was the light, and it was day. The other Paraclete being here now it is still day; alas! for those who pass away in their blindness to the place of utter darkness, unillumined by a ray of Divine light, to that place and time of night when and where none can work the works of God.

This subject of divine grace was obedient, and came seeing. He will be found to be a more intelligent man altogether than the one who had lain at Bethesda, for his answers to the Pharisees compare very favourably with the Bethesdaite's in every respect. It was in vain, however, that he succeeded in winning a verbal triumph over them, for with them was authority, and they cast him out. But here again his misfortune, as it appeared to be, was the very occasion of his blessing. The Lord had previously seen him in passing, but now He looks for him and finds him and leads him into further light.

The scornful reply of the Pharisees to the words recorded in 9. 39, gives occasion for the well-known teaching of chapter 10. This is very important to notice, as it is so customary to read as if chapter 10. verse 1, "Verily, verily," was the commencement of a subject or a section.

They who claimed to be disciples of Moses had so little regard for Moses' teaching that they cast out of their fold a man who had something to say for the Prophet like unto Moses who had come amongst them.

And here, perhaps first in this Gospel, the Lord shows Himself specially in His pastoral character. Because those who professed to be, as we should say, men of light and leading, manifested at this point so markedly their intolerance of one whose ways and words so shamed them, He now clearly states through a figure the true relationship of Himself and of them to the sheep of God.

He had entered in by the door, whilst they as thieves and robbers had climbed up some other way. He was the Shepherd of the sheep. To Him the Baptist had opened, and the once blind man, as an example, had, sheep-like, heard His voice. He had been called by his own name (which none knoweth save he that heareth), and this call was a call forth. To man it seemed that he had been put out, and this was true in one sense, but it was also true that the Lord had put him forth, and presently He would go before and lead those who know His voice.

They understood this not. How could they? Again, then, He speaks; this time as the door of the sheep by whom any may enter in and be saved, and come in and come out and find pasture.

But here further is He, as the Good Shepherd, contrasted with the thieves and robbers who were listening to Him, in that He laid down His life for the sheep at His Father's bidding.

(For notes on the One Flock see NEEDED TRUTH, vol. 4, page 26, and this number, page 104.)

Then was manifested the truth of that which is written of the lights that God sets in the world that they may cause division between the light and the darkness.

THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION.

On the whole we are disposed to think that verses 22-39 refer to a later occasion ; but we are far from certain. The connexion with the previous part of the chapter is very close, and the further teaching as to the sheep and their eternal security will of course be read in the light of verses 1 to 18.

This concludes with the vital statement of verse 30, "I and the Father are one." Evidently the Jews correctly understood the claim which is involved in these words. But blindly oblivious of its truth they sought to stone Him.

When asked why, they replied that He being a man made Himself God. The Lord's reply has been a difficulty to the present writer, as if it seemed to be a moderating of the previous claim. But I think the point is that the Jews were sceptical as to the possibility of the same person being at once man and God. How canst Thou, evidently a man, be God? they ask. Now, it is a vital part of the revelation given in this Gospel that the Lord really was both. He therefore seeks to help them to the incomprehensible mystery of His incarnation by reference to the less matter, that created beings to whom the Word of God had come in a bygone day were addressed in the words "Ye are gods." If in any very limited sense they were called gods, how much more had He a claim, who not in part, but fully, did the works of the Father? This quoted scripture of the Old Testament is not used to substantiate His claim, but simply to show them their unreasonableness, and if it might be, help them to the truth.

Again then He goes away to the place beyond Jordan, where John was first baptizing, and there He abode ; that is probably He stayed there for some long time. Many came and many believed on Him.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

THE FIRSTBORN.

I BELIEVE the prime and main purpose of the whole of the Scriptures of truth is the presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the thoughtful student of these cannot fail to discern therein the person, work and glory of the Divine Son of God, whether it be by direct allusion, obvious type, similitudes, prophetic unfoldings, narratives of events, and the allegories implied in same. Indeed it can with truth be said the whole of Scripture is full of Him.

Whilst that is predicated, however, these Scriptures have also special concern for mankind, to whom this revelation of the person and work of the Lord has been made, and the wondrous wisdom of the Divine Spirit is manifest in the record and narration of the various ordinances and events which so fitly bring out the two-fold allusion.

Of distinct types, that of the firstborn is a prominent one. It has more than one aspect, as will be seen in the instances where the subject is referred to; each of which in their several place unfolds to us God's purpose whether in relation to His Son or to man. These might be indicated generally under the following heads:—

- 1st. Man, in the person of Adam as the firstborn (typically) of the human race placed in the position of dominion and authority.
- 2nd. The status and prerogatives of the firstborn of mankind, so recognized, not merely by nations at large, but especially in the social and family economy of Israel as a people.
- 3rd. This special place and privilege forfeited.
- 4th. The firstborn in their representative capacity (man and beast) devoted to judgment, the execution whereof signified in their appropriation by God as the condition of the redemption of the nation.
- 5th. The satisfaction of that judgment or the release therefrom by the substitution of the priestly tribe,

Each one of these furnishes us with truths of deep spiritual concern. Let us endeavour to view them in their order.

I

As regards the first, God's purpose in the creation of man was that he should have dominion. Doubtless this was one of the features of that likeness to the Godhead in which he was made. That such was marred by the malevolent interposition of the Devil only apparently frustrated the ultimate purpose of God, for in the final issue greater glory ensues to His wisdom in that it resulted in the bringing in of the Divine Firstborn, to whom belongs all dominion throughout the universe, and of whom man in this particular respect is the type. Thus in God's inscrutable wisdom good is brought out of evil. Out of the eater is brought forth meat.

Psalm 8. answers the question, "What is Man?" and the corresponding Scripture in Hebrews 2. shows who is referred to as the One who only has the title to dominion.¹ Psalm 132. gives us the other side, and indicates natural man as simply vanity wholly set aside as such to give place to Him "whose right it is."

II

Under the second heading we note that whilst judicially the status of the firstborn (representing mankind) has been set aside, the literal institution involving precedence, rights, privileges and priestly position has had, as an ordinance, recognition by God in the social and political position of His Israelitish people for purposes affecting rule and government in their midst. Specially was it an appointment of

¹ It may be worth noting the reverse order of mention of the Animal Creation in the several places where referred to, namely:— in Genesis 9. 2, Psalm 8. 7, Hosea 2. 18-4. 3, to that as recorded in Genesis 7. 21-23. May it not suggest to us the reversal of things as they then obtained?

God for them, Deuteronomy 21. 15-17, 1 Chronicles 5. 1, though also recognized as an institution amongst civilized, and even semi-civilized races.

In this as in all the Book records we find teaching, and the maintenance of the literal institution for governmental purposes (which otherwise is seen to be judicially forfeited), gives us typically to discern the far higher place and privilege which the believer now has, and will have, as associated with Him who is the firstborn among many brethren.

III

Under the third heading we have the suggested truth of man's position consequent on the fall, and here it may be noted that we view the firstborn as standing representatively for the human race. In contradistinction to the place of prerogative indicated in the foregoing sections, we may here note the several recorded instances of the rejection of the firstborn. This certainly is not without purpose, for example:—Abel (afterwards Seth) for Cain, Isaac for Ishmael, Jacob for Esau, Ephraim for Manasseh, Joseph (or Judah) for Reuben, Othniel for Caleb, David for Eliab, Solomon for Amnon, etc., etc. Thus it would appear that whenever God had any prominent mission to His people, any office or service for man to execute, or be for Him a representative, the firstborn was put aside. If an exception to this can be found it will also be found to have some special reason accounting for it. Do we not in this see typically the flesh set aside—no rights or claims pertaining to it. God cannot use it as such, nor can any service to Him which is merely that of the suggestions or impulses of man's carnal nature find acceptance. Man's firstborn position is forfeited, and God's purposes can only be effected through the Second Man, or, what in a sense may be considered equivalent, Man in identification with Him.

IV.

In the fourth aspect we see mankind (as represented in the literal firstborn) under sentence of death, which sentence was executed in the actual death of the firstborn of the stranger in Egypt, and typically in the bloodshedding of the substituted lamb on behalf of the Elect Nation, the complement of that execution being the appropriation of the firstborn by God as His spoil (Exod. 13. 1, 22. 29, 34. 20; Lev. 27. 26). They were devoted to judgment the which was thus exacted. Viewed from the standpoint of mankind in common, both, whether alien nation or chosen people, were alike under the judgment, and there was no exception to it either in the persons subject to, or in the completeness of, the judgment. Yet with how different an issue in the two cases. In the appointment of the substituted lamb for the people's redemption, we cannot fail to see the very familiar truth to the Lord's people, the person, figuratively, of the Lord Jesus as man's Substitute to undergo the judgment due to him, and with the consequence that all who have through faith become participants in that atonement cease to have any status before God by nature, but are now a new Creation (1 Cor. 6. 20; 2 Cor. 5. 16-17; Col. 3. 3, etc.).

V.

In the fifth division of our subject we see a further substitution, namely, the position of the condemned firstborn taken by the priestly family (Numbers 3. 12, 41, 45, 51; Neh. 10. 35, and elsewhere). And here we have to note it had to be man for man, every individual firstborn must have a Levite in his stead, and if the numbers of the latter did not suffice for the purpose, then a redemption offering (5 shekels) must be made on behalf of each one lacking such substitute. There could be no compromise.

Man's obligation must be perfectly covered. Satisfaction must be without exception.

Can we fail to see herein the amplification of the truth, already in its measure indicated, of the work of Christ in redemption, and see that it is only in Him as our High Priest we stand and are brought nigh to God. Further, that as each firstborn one was individually represented by a Levite, we have also the truth shadowed forth of our own place as made unto God an holy priesthood.

Reviewing the whole subject, it would appear to show that in the place of privilege and precedence accorded to the firstborn, there is a picture of what God intended for mankind originally—that place was forfeited by the fall. Man was deposed from his high place of honour, but only that in the inscrutable purpose and wisdom of God he might give place to Him Who is the Firstborn of all Creation (Psalm 89. 27; Col. 1. 15–18), and yet through Whom and in Whom man by grace becomes exalted to a station infinitely higher than he could otherwise have attained.

Man is put out of sight that the God-man might be presented, and yet whilst thus God's Son is glorified before the Universe, it is nevertheless with the result that man is immeasurably the gainer (Rom. 8. 29; Heb. 12. 23).

By electing grace Israel as a nation was viewed by God as His firstborn (Exod. 4. 22), and this spiritually we become in Christ. The Jew was reminded of that standing (Heb. 12. 23) as contrasted with his earthly position indicated in the first-named Scripture.

In the maintenance amongst the Israelites of the place of precedence and honour of the firstborn we have typically set forth the place that belongs to the Lord Jesus, and on the other hand the setting aside of the firstborn in favour of the younger is also seen in type that man by nature cannot be acknowledged by God either in service for Him or otherwise.

H. W. DAVIDSON.

SIN.

1 JOHN 3. 9; 5. 18.

WE have in these two verses a depth of truth to be grappled with only with the "earnest of the Spirit" and prayerfully. What is in reality the teaching? Is it that the child of God cannot commit sin, or fall into it? Alas for many a dear brother and sister if their membership of Christ's body is founded on such a truth!

What then? may we construe it: that portion, that new nature implanted of God sinneth not, but the old man, the flesh, still as corrupt and vile as ever, inclines the believer unwittingly to evil, and as James in his 1st chapter, 14, 15, puts it, "Man is drawn aside of his own fleshly lusts, and the lust conceiving, bringeth forth sin"? But then going back to 1 John 5. 18 you will say, "The begotten one of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." My beloved brethren, does he? if so, depend upon it, he is kept in his own keeping by the power of God and not enticed aside by his flesh, whereas if he turns aside from "looking unto Jesus," then is he captured by Satan in his undefended moments, and the old man or nature sins, with which the new is not tainted.

Brethren, beware, as I take heed to myself so I enjoin you to be careful of the enemy's subtle devices. His delight is to cause the believer or child of God to sin, and then to raise the question whether, having done so, he can be His child. But remember that comforting scripture in the same 1 John 3. 20, 21. How thankful should we be, "God knoweth." The spirituality of the begotten one of God is only maintained by the unbroken exercise of faith "looking unto Him," and if that spirituality is latent, it gives the god of this world every advantage over us, and we are bound to relapse into the works of the flesh. The contest

is always going on between the two natures, and if the one does not preponderate, the other does; yet, as the apostle says in 3. 9, "God's seed remaineth in him," and as revealed in 2 Timothy 2. 19, "The Lord knoweth them that are His."

Taking heed to the foregoing, brethren, how solemn and important is the teaching of Hebrews 10. 26, etc., showing that, as children of God saved through the precious blood of the Saviour, if we sin wilfully, that is determinedly, after being sealed of the Holy Spirit, there can be no further sacrifice for sin thus committed, but they await the judgment of God to come upon all disobediences, which judgment to the unbeliever means utter condemnation, whilst to the believer it means chastisement or lesser reward. See also 2 Peter 2. 20; Heb. 6. 4.

Yet is God not unrighteous to forgive us our sins, but as 1 John 1. 9 says, if we confess our sins—meaning an earnest true repentant confession—God is willing to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. God is indeed love; it is not only that He loves, His every attribute is love, He is love. Comforting indeed is the whole 4th chapter of the 1st Epistle of John from verse 7; let us comfort our own hearts through it. May He indeed fill our hearts with Himself and with His promised peace and joy in believing, and may we too give joy to our Father's heart by honouring Him in believing the record He has given us concerning His Son, and by our acknowledgment of the Son.

E. J. OWLES.

RETURNING.

I WILL go and return to My place,
 till they acknowledge their offence,
 and seek My face :
 in their affliction
 they will seek Me earnestly,
saying,
 Come, and let us return unto Jehovah :
 for He hath torn,
 and He will heal us ;
 He hath smitten,
 and He will bind us up.
 After two days will He revive us :
 on the third day He will raise us up,
 and we shall live before Him.
 And let us know,
 let us follow on to know Jehovah ;
 His going forth is sure as the morning :
 and He shall come unto us as the rain,
 as the latter rain
 that watereth the earth.

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

“Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—2 *Tim.* 3. 13-17.

XI.

THE CHURCHES OF GOD.

IN the earliest days following after Pentecost the saints gathered into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and forming the Fellowship, were all together in the one city Jerusalem and are called “the church,” “the whole church,” “the church which was in Jerusalem,” “the church of God” (see for instances Acts 8. 3; 5. 11; 8. 1; Gal. 1. 13 respectively; especially comparing Acts 8. 3 with Gal. 1. 13 and 1 Cor. 15. 9). And we desire especially to draw attention at this stage to the difference between the church of God as mentioned here and the Church of which the Lord Jesus Christ spake in Matt. 16. The difference is sufficiently manifest here, for this church of God in Jerusalem was laid waste, whereas such could never happen to the Church built by the Christ Himself, which is invisible to the natural eye and invulnerable against all attacks.

After the disciples had been scattered from Jerusalem in the persecution that arose about Stephen there was no longer only a church of God in Jerusalem but other churches of Judæa (Gal. 1. 22). Later on as the gospel spread, and especially as a result of the work of Paul and his coadjutors, the churches of God became numerous (see 1 Cor. 11. 16;

1 Thess. 2. 14 ; 2 Thess. 1. 4, for use of plural "churches of God").

The words of Paul to that particular assembly or church of God which was in Corinth, will help to mark the difference between a local church, a church of God, and the Assembly or Church which the Christ Himself builds. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase . . . we are God's workers together, ye are God's husbandry (or tilled land), God's building. According to the Grace of God, which was given unto me as a wise master builder, I laid a foundation," and so forth (1 Cor. 3.). So that here men are builders, whereas in the building of the Church which is the Body, there is but one Worker or Builder, the Lord Christ Himself.

Because that God is pleased to use human instrumentality for the planting of churches of God, for their nourishment, their care, and their protection, it follows that the prosperity of churches of God and their continuance in His favour are conditional, and in this again they are unlike the Church of Matt. 16. That which pertains to churches of God is conditional. Blessing and prosperity are possible, so too wasting and woe are possible. Love to God may abound or it may become cold. There may be times of revival, and, alas! times of sleepfulness may follow.

The church of God in any given city or town we understand to be those who are together of God in that place as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, baptized and added, added to the Lord and added together, and forming a local expression of the Fellowship of the Son of God.

The assembly or church of God in any town or city is one, at however many places the meetings of the assembly may be held; the smaller company of disciples gathered for the Remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ in the breaking of the bread and forming a part of the whole assembly where the whole do not meet in one building is

called in Scripture the church at the house of such a one, a church of the saints (1 Cor. 14. 33, 34; 16. 19; Philemon 2).

We never get the expression church of God used of a smaller company than all who are together of God in a town or city. Neither is the expression church of God ever used of more companies than those of a city. There is no such expression found as the church of God in Asia.

The churches of God in apostolic times were themselves very closely linked together, and in particular thus:—

Assemblies very near were firstly linked in service and testimony (see Col. 4. 15–17 for example).

Assemblies or churches of God in a country or in a province of the Roman Empire are found in Scripture to form a definite group for administration and joint responsibility. As see Macedonia and Achaia in 2 Cor. 8., 9.

The groups of assemblies in contiguous provinces are further linked together, as see for instance Peter's first letter addressed to the flock in what is now called Asia Minor.

Finally all assemblies of God were recognized as forming one united whole; this is the Fellowship and the Little Flock of which we have already spoken. All these terms are applied to those who were together of God and formed His House, His Temple, His place of dwelling and of rule on earth.

We have spoken of what was in those early days. We hope presently to make clear why we believe that God has made provision in His Word for the needs of a remnant in later days, who, turning back from the traditions of men, seek to find all they need in God and the Word of His grace. Assured of this we find ourselves together in a Fellowship which is indeed of God's Son, there, by answering grace, to remain till the Lord come or we become absent from the body and at home with Him.

XII.

THE HOUSE OF GOD.

Ever since Jacob on his journey to Haran gave the name of Beth-El to the place where Jehovah had appeared to him, hearts of God-fearing men have been turned with longing to the place on earth where the Eternal One has had a dwelling.

When in their journey from Egypt to Canaan the people of Israel made for God a sanctuary according to His commandment to Moses, He came and dwelt among them in the plenitude of His condescending grace (Exodus 25. 1-9; 40. especially verse 34). It seems clear, from a comparison of Judges 18. 31 with 2 Chron. 1. 3, that the Tabernacle and the tent of meeting were called the House of God, and indeed, David speaks of the House of God as already in existence, as for example Psalm 52. In a fuller sense of the word "house," however, the House of God was first built by Solomon the king (compare 1 Chron. 17., 2 Chron. 3., and so forth, and Acts 7. 47).

When the people of God turned aside from Him, and Gentile monarchs were allowed to oppress them and carry them away captive, the House shared in the process of wasting and destruction, till it was the sorry ruin of which the book of Ezra tells.

God gave a reviving and turned the captivity of His people, and the House was built again, though not in its original grandeur (compare Haggai's prophecy and note especially Haggai 2. 9, R. V.). Again, later the Son of God Himself stood in the House which was the Temple of God, but He was rejected by His own people when He came to His own Temple and finally pronounced on it and on them the solemn doom recorded in Matt. 23. 38: "Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Yet again, in a future day God will have a temple, a material house, the work of

human hands upon this earth, as 2 Thess. 2. 4 clearly shows. But for the present God owns no temple made with hands, no house of stone or wood. Nevertheless, it is His will to have a House, a Temple on earth, as we proceed to show.

Peter, in his first letter already referred to, addressed the elect who were sojourners of the Dispersion in five adjoining countries, provinces of the Roman Empire, and says to them (1 Peter 4. 17): "The time is come for judgment to begin at the House of God"; referring doubtless to the time of Ezekiel's prophecy, but applying it to the time when the material house had already been rejected, and the House of God no longer meant stones or wood, but persons; for the apostle adds, "if it first begin at us," clearly showing one House of God composed of men in the flesh, as the place for the dwelling of God in the present age. This House is composed of believers, disciples, who have not only come to the Lord once for all to receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life, but are still coming to Him, and are being builded together.

This is confirmed by what is written in chapter 2., which seems to view the House of God especially in connexion with the offering up of worship to God when the saints are gathered together for the Remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ in the breaking of the bread: "Putting away therefore all wickedness . . . the Lord is gracious, unto Whom coming, a Living Stone rejected indeed of men but with God elect, precious, ye also as living stones are being builded (or, be ye builded, for the Greek will carry each meaning, and there is no word 'up,') a spiritual House to be (or for) a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices . . ."

The conditional character of the House of God as of a thing committed to human responsibility is clearly shown in Hebrews 3. First note that Moses was faithful in God's House (verse 3), but this was as a servant and for a testi-

mony of things that were to follow. But over the House of God now is Christ, and that not as a Servant but as a Son. "Whose House," it is said to the Hebrews, "are we if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end." That this "if" is truly conditional is clearly shown by the context and by the construction of the sentence (the subjunctive mood being used here; whereas in such a passage as Col. 3. 1 the indicative mood is used because there is no uncertainty or doubt).

That the spiritual House of New Testament Scripture may as truly be forsaken of God as the material temple was in the calamitous time of Ezekiel referred to by Peter, is clear beyond all doubt.

On the other hand, where there is continuance in the boldness and in the glorying of the hope there is also boldness for collective entrance into the holy place (see Heb. 10. 19-25), and in such entrance He who is over the House of God is known as a Great Priest, as well as a High Priest, able to save to the uttermost them that are coming unto God through Him.

The House of God is in 1 Tim. 3. 15 identified with "Church of Living God, pillar and ground of the Truth." That right behaviour in the House of God may be known the first letter to Timothy was written, and clearly such instruction as chapter 3. especially contains is only of use within the circle of the House of God, which comprises, as Peter's letter shows, the saints of God who are gathered together.

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.

FAITH AND THE FAITH.

In the New Testament we have "Hope" and "THE Hope," "Mysteries" and "THE Mystery"; we have also "Faith" and "THE Faith."

When the awakened sinner hears the Gospel message declaring forgiveness of sins through the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and desiring to escape from the coming doom, he believes the good news, he exercises in a right direction "faith"; that which often is placed in something untrue or valueless.

"Faith" thus being placed in a sure thing, even the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, and hereby actually in the Christ Himself, the sinner is eternally saved, and that "through faith," "not of works" (Eph. 2. 8, 9); so commencing his Christian life by faith, and faith will need to be exercised the whole journey through, for "the righteous shall live by faith"; it is "from faith unto faith" (Rom. 1. 17 and margin), daily faith being needed.

From Eph. 4. 5-13 we learn there is "ONE FAITH." This is a "COMMON FAITH" according to Titus 1. 4, in the sense that it can be common property, being available for all, even as Jude writes of a "common salvation" (see verse 3).

At one time the Faith was a mystery, but it has been revealed and we are called upon—

To hold it (1 Tim. 3. 9);

To contend for it (Jude 3);

To continue in it (Acts 14. 22; see also Col. 1. 23);

To stand fast in it (1 Cor. 16. 13);

To fight the good fight of the Faith (1 Tim. 6. 12);

To be sound in it (Titus 1. 13);

To be stedfast in it (1 Pet. 5. 9).

Moreover we are expected to be nourished in it (1 Tim. 4. 6).

It is—

The Faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 24. 24, etc.);

Your most holy Faith (Jude 20);

The Faith of God's elect (Titus 1. 1).

It is possible—

To fall away from it (1 Tim. 4. 1);

To be weak in it (Rom. 14. 1);

To deny it (1 Tim. 5. 8);

To err concerning it (1 Tim. 6. 21);

To make shipwreck of it (1 Tim. 1. 19, etc.);

To be reprobate concerning it (2 Tim. 3. 8);

To turn aside from it (1 Tim. 5. 15);

To be led astray from it (1 Tim. 6. 10).

Paul said: I have kept it (2 Tim. 4. 7).

The churches were strengthened in it (Acts 16. 5).

All men have not the Faith (2 Thess. 3. 2).

Paul and others preached it (Rom. 10. 8; Gal. 1. 23).

Stated briefly, "THE FAITH which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) includes not only the Gospel message but the will of God as revealed for this dispensation, which, if sought after and obeyed, will make us (like Thessalonians of old) "imitators of the churches of God" (1 Thess. 2. 13-14).

W. H. B. F.

BIBLE QUEENS.

QUEEN VASHTI.

A BRIEF account is given of the Queen Vashti in the first chapter of the Book of Esther containing truly important lessons of a woman's influence.

A WIFE'S INSUBJECTION.

We are introduced to another great king, Ahasuerus,

who reigned from India to Ethiopia over an hundred and twenty-seven provinces, who sat upon his throne in Shushan the palace. In the third year of his reign he made a feast unto all his princes and servants, to whom he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days. After which he made another feast unto all his people that were present in Shushan the palace, both small and great.

Also Vashti, the queen, made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to King Ahasuerus, and thus she acts in harmony with the king in seeking to give others pleasure, to make others glad. But alas, how soon discord came in upon that scene of joyful feasting. The merry-hearted king gives the command for his beautiful wife to be brought before him that he might show her beauty to his peoples and princes as he had done the riches of his kingdom. The queen refuses to obey his command, and the king's anger is kindled; he turns to his princes and asks, "What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to the law, because she hath not done the bidding of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains?"

Her case is discussed, and it is considered that the queen's wrongdoing will not alone affect the king, but all the princes and all the peoples. "For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women to make their husbands contemptible in their eyes, when it shall be reported, the king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. And this day shall the princesses of Persia and Media which have heard of the deed of the queen say the like unto all the king's princes. So shall there arise much contempt and wrath." And Vashti the queen is for ever shut out from the presence of the king and her estate is to be given to another that is better than she. "And when the king's decree shall be published throughout all his kingdom (for it is great),

all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small." Thus the evil influence of Vashti the queen is checked, and the women of the entire kingdom of Ahasuerus are made to learn their place of subjection to their husbands, as Eve had been instructed by her Creator, God: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee" (Gen. 3. 16), and believers also in Eph. 5. 22; 1 Peter 3. We need not to add more, only take heed that ye become not a forgetful hearer of the Word, but be a doer thereof, and God shall be glorified.

THE CROWN.

PSALM 24. JOHN 12.

THIS Psalm shadows forth the glory of Him who is King of glory, as seen in 1 Peter 5. 4. "And when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." One thing we would notice: before He could be thus spoken of as King of glory, He had to become a Man of sorrows; one of His great sorrows was the cross that lay before Him, as we find Him in Matt. 27. 29 wearing a crown of thorns and surrounded with a mocking crowd.

What a contrast between this scene and that found in Rev. 19. 1-10. A multitude of sinners redeemed with His precious blood, ascribing all praise to His name. Surely if the princes of this world had known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Cor. 2. 8)! They mistook the character of their King; they thought He would set up His kingdom at once (Acts 1. 6-7). How blessed indeed it will be when the first moments come of being ushered into His glory, who is the King of glory, God of glory and Lord of glory!

And if we are walking in fellowship with Him we shall be looking for that blessed hope, and the appearing of

the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, (Titus 2. 13). Of such a scene we find a picture in John 12. 13. There we find the man who fell asleep, raised from among the dead, reunited to his two living sisters, as the Master said, in chapter 11., to Martha's question, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Resurrection to sleeping ones and life to the living ones, for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15. 51-58).

And as we further read of this scene in 1 Thess. 4. 13-18, "the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore exhort one another in these words." This takes us back to the family at Bethany, no longer sorrowing over a departed one, but rejoicing, all the sorrow of the pathway over. All seated around Himself. With the pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly (about £9 7s. 6d.), she anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair; the ointment speaks of His glory and her hair speaks of her glory; she laid it down at His feet, and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

This reminds us of the heavenly scene spoken of in Rev. 4. 6-11: "And when the living creatures shall give glory and honour and thanks to Him that sitteth on the throne, to Him that liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders shall fall down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and shall worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and shall cast their crowns before the throne, saying: Worthy Thou art, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the power: for Thou didst create

all things, and because of Thy will they were, and were created." In Rev. 5. 8-14, it seems to be a fuller manifestation of His glory; in verse 12, "Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Then shall be understood in full Psalm 24.: "Who is this King of glory? the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. . . . Who is this King of glory? the Lord of Hosts. He is the King of glory, Selah. Thrice happy who in Him believe, They soon will share His glory; Born of His Spirit, they receive His sacred pledge of glory; Taught by His cross for sins they grieve, He calls them brethren, and they cleave To Him, their hope of glory.

ALEXANDER LIVINGSTONE.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XXXVIII. JUNE 7.

JOHN 11.

Now a certain man was sick, we are told, who was the brother of that Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment. This manner of introduction suggests that they to whom the Gospel came might likely have heard of Mary's anointing but not of the resurrection of Lazarus. The anointing, in point of fact, came later, as John 12. makes plain, for there its exact date is fixed as six days before the Passover.

Matthew and Mark give a parenthetical account of this anointing in the 26th and 14th chapters respectively. After introducing the conspiracy to take Him privily, which was formed two days before the Passover, they go back to that incident which gave Satan his opportunity. For the kindly reproof of the Lord, which was a help against the sin of covetousness to those that were clean, only called forth opposition in the heart of the unre-

generate Judas, who was provoked to fall deeper therein, whilst he bargained for thirty pieces of silver as the price of blood. Thus, God's time being come, the Devil was permitted to work, and the covetous Pharisees agreed to give what the equally covetous Judas asked, whilst he and they alike purchased for themselves endless shame and undying obloquy.

Matthew and Mark locate the anointing at the house of Simon the leper, where Martha, Lazarus and Mary made the supper. But who was Simon, and what was his relationship to this family? we cannot tell.¹ The anointing recorded in Luke 7. 36-50, cannot be identified with this; it must have been another incident altogether. It is curious, however, that the host here was called Simon also; but then Simon seems to have been a common name among the Jews.

On the other hand the feast referred to in Matthew 26. 6-13, Mark 14. 3-9 and John 12. 1-8, is mentioned in Luke 10. 38-42 (see Bible Reading XXXII. this vol., page 68).

We have thus four accounts of the same incident, but with considerable differences, except that Matthew and Mark are much alike.

Matthew and Mark speak of the anointing of the head, but John, whose account is sympathetic in a high degree, mentions only the feet. The lowliness of Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet, is more deeply impressed on John, who himself lay in the bosom of the Lowly One. Thus he noticed the wiping of the feet with her hair, which reminds us of the other woman who was a sinner; and it is meant to remind us of this, for Mary was a sinner too, and knew it, though, unlike the woman of Luke 7. 36-50, her sins she knew to be forgiven before the feast.

Matthew and Mark, however, are not to be regarded as

¹ Some one has suggested that Simon was a neighbour who was better off than Lazarus and his sisters, and hence likely to have had a more convenient house for such an occasion.

inferior to John on this account, for the anointing, as recorded there, partakes of an official character. She anointed the head of the King and of Jehovah's most honoured Servant. Therefore they record the royal decree that the woman's act should be published as widely as the Gospel message. She paid a tribute of loyalty to the rejected King, she owned Jehovah's Servant as her Lord, and He accepted it, and honoured her.

But Luke only touches on the human side. Good, kind, worthy Martha made a mistake to be so anxious and troubled. To many a like woman to-day, in all her womanly energy, this word of gentle pleading correction is sent. May it not be in vain! Then we should not have kind wives and mothers spending the Lord's Day morning in cooking hot dinners for their husbands and sons when they might be at the Remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. For they could find abundant other time and opportunity for doing the service that belongs to them.

XXXIX. JUNE 21.

JOHN 11. (*continued*).

Reverting now to John 11. we are again face to face with the exceeding reality of the Incarnation. Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Not only does Divine love embrace the world, it reaches to individuals, and it takes cognizance of family relationship. They had therefore sent saying, "He whom Thou lovest as a friend is sick." The word *φιλέω* *philōō*, is used here in verse 3 as well as in verse 36. This word signifies that affection which is mutual, and implies some measure of intimacy. Hence the exceeding force of John 16. 27, where it is twice used:—

"The Father Himself loveth you (that is, cherisheth you, is your friend) because ye have loved Me (that is cherished Me)." So, too, in John 21. 15 to 18 where this word is used four times.

The more usual verb in the New Testament signifying to love is ἀγαπάω agapaō, the meaning of which is made clear in John 3. 16, and 1 John 4. 7-11. This word is used in the present chapter in the verse quoted above, John 11. 5.

The Lord loved, but the Lord waited; His fruit was ever borne in its season; and this sickness was for the glory of God.

The disciples marvelled He should go where the Jews had so lately sought to stone Him; but the Lord's only care was to do the will of Him that sent Him. He therefore walked in the light and stumbled not. Compare John 1. 5, 6, 7.

The word used of Lazarus in verse 11 "is fallen asleep." Κοιμάω, koimaō is frequently used of death, as for example in 1 Thess. 4. 13, 15. It must be carefully distinguished from the very different word used in reference to the daughter of Jairus (see vol. xiv. page 279). The Lord Jesus then said plainly, "Lazarus is dead," and when He came He found he had been buried for four days, and weeping and mourning had full place. Martha's faith reached to this, that the Lord could heal the sick. She had to learn a greater thing: "I am the Resurrection and the Life," said the Lord. And in the scene portrayed we have a forecast of the early morning, when many shall hear His shout as He rises from the Father's throne with archangel voice and trump of God, and shall come forth as Lazarus did. And yet not as Lazarus, for instead of being bound in grave-clothes the dead in Christ will be endued with incorruption; and unlike Martha and Mary who in mortal bodies welcomed their brother back to life, the living in Christ shall in the morning of the day of Christ put on immortality. For the Lord Himself has now been raised, and He has immortality, and He is incorruptible, Who is the firstfruits that in all things He might have pre-eminence.

But here at the grave of Lazarus He is manifested to be Son of God by His power to raise the dead. See Romans 1. 4, R.V., and compare the pregnant words of Paul to Agrippa and to Festus (see Acts 26. 2-8, 23, 26, 27, R.V.).

Why with all this before Him then did the Lord groan in His spirit? Was it at the exceeding slowness of His beloved ones; the little confidence they had in Him? And wherefore did He weep? Was it the heartfelt sympathy for those who had lost their beloved brother?

There was sorrow, and there was unbelief; but with Him was power. Many then believed on Him; but not all, for some went away as mischief-makers.

And then began to brood that conspiracy which presently was to be such a dread success. And even now the reality of God's relationship to His own people is manifest at the time when they are so far distant. For at the very outset of this plot God Himself causes the High Priest to utter a prophecy pregnant with Divine truth, telling that One was to die for the nation, and more, that in direct opposition to the false ideas of sanctity that the rulers of Israel had, it was the Divine purpose, by the death of Christ, to gather into His name the children of God that are scattered abroad.

And yet he who thus prophesied, and they who heard, cared nothing for God and His will, but only sought to effect their murderous devices of evil.

But the hour, though now approaching, had not come, and therefore again for a term the Lord departs; and they plot mischief against Him. But still they cannot lay hands on Him till His own familiar friend, in whom He trusted, resents the well deserved reproof that his greed called forth, and hastening to his doom proves indeed that the way of transgressors is hard.

EPAPHRAS.

COMPARATIVELY little is said in the Scriptures regarding the subject of our present article, but how very much there is in this little, and how very exemplary appears to have been the life that he lived !

Whether we consider the different phrases by which the Apostle designates him, or the definite notices made of what he did, he stands out manifestly as one who, receiving not the grace of God in vain, could becomingly exhort others to follow the Lord because he himself was walking in His steps.

His deportment as before God unquestionably gave character to what he was to the Apostle and to what he did towards the saints.

Let us briefly consider the testimony of the Word on these three points in the order stated, in the prayerful hope that God may graciously own our so doing unto the arousing in us of aspirations, real and fervent, after such lives that it may indeed be ours to merit kindred commendation.

Colossians 4. 12, 13 beautifully tells out what he was in the presence of God. Note the expressions, "always striving" and "much labour." Surely, too, devotedness to God is involved in the designation, "Bond-servant of Christ Jesus."

What he was to the Apostle may be gathered from the words, "Our beloved fellow-servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf," Colossians 1. 7, and "My fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus," Philemon 23; whilst as to manifestations towards others, how excellent the spirit, how becoming the behaviour, seen in the unwearied supplication to God, the repeated remembrance in salutation, and the diligent service in sowing the good seed of the Word of God, withal himself being not a forgetful hearer, but one

who remembered God's commandments to do them. See the occasion of the Apostle's thanksgiving—Colossians 1.—assuredly the fruit of the ministry and example of Epaphras, noting the words, “Even as ye learned of Epaphras.”

“On our behalf” suggests that Epaphras was such an one as those to whom Paul exhorts Timothy to commit the things that he himself had learned, even

“FAITHFUL MEN, COMPETENT TO TEACH OTHERS.”

On the other hand, Epaphras had a good report to carry to the Apostle of those to whom he ministered. Would God there were more like him in this respect! Would God that of more assemblies such witness could be borne! “Amen,” sayest thou? Let us then, beloved, see to it that we ourselves are assiduously seeking to let

CHRIST BE MAGNIFIED IN OUR BODIES,

and also that we are giving due heed to the claims of the Lord upon us in regard to fellow-saints and in regard to the world.

Pitiable, indeed, is our condition if experimentally we know nothing beyond that which even sinners in their sins can know and show. See Luke 6. 27–38.

We fear that too often the well-known phrase,

“OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND,”

correctly describes the relation of fellow-saints to us, and of us to them. Much to be regretted as this is, more deeply is it to be lamented when it may be applied to the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet alas, alas, how very often indeed could it have been said of God's people of this day that, like those of olden time,

“THEY FORGAT GOD THEIR SAVIOUR.”

The exhortation to “Remember Jesus Christ” was never

more needed than in these latter days, when the darkness is deepening all around, and difficulties abound on every hand. Pray note the setting of those words in 2 Timothy 2.

Of Epaphras it could be said that he remembered Him, and, remembering Him, did not forget those that were His.

That he bare testimony in the Gospel Colossians 1. establishes, but that he was not of those who make the salvation of the unsaved their SOLE aim in the service of God, Colossians 4. makes equally clear.

Evidently he cherished the spirit of the Apostle John as expressed in the words—

“Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth,”

and therefore he prayed and ministered as he did.

Consider the character and scope of his prayers. How comprehensive in aim. How widespread in embrace. Colossians 4. 12, 13.

Not the least important statement in connexion with Epaphras is that found in verse 12, which associates him with the saints in Colosse. He was not only born again, but baptized and separated, and was altogether one whose example is worthy of imitation by Christians of these days who desire to live not unto themselves, but unto Him Who, for their sakes, died and rose again. Yea, who is there that may not learn something from this faithful, suffering, serving, praying one? As we think of him may our spirits indeed be raised to lay hold on the grace at our disposal, so that we may be enabled, out of love to Him Whose we are, and Whom we should serve, to hear and heed His words once used concerning another, “Go and do thou likewise.” Epaphras, though dead, yet speaketh.

FRIENDSHIP.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY ROBERT SMART.

THE word commonly translated "Friend" in the Old and New Testament means "Lover." It has to do with the affections, and speaks of a heart-to-heart relationship. The Lord Jesus in Gethsemane, when Judas came and kissed Him, answered by saying, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Matt. 26. 50 (A. V.); but this word "Friend" should be translated, "Comrade" or "Companion." (See Young's translation and Newberry's margin respectively.)

The Lord Jesus, who was ever careful of His words, did not say Friend to Judas, but Companion; for He knew there was no love in Judas' heart to Him.

There was a companionship between them because of Judas being one of the twelve disciples, who had followed Him during His public ministry, but Friend was not applicable to Judas because Friendship demands Love.

Prov. 19. 4-6. "Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts." This is so well known by every-day experience that we need not comment on it. We would only say, there are many to-day who have received and are receiving gifts from God who turn out not to be His friends.

Prov. 18. 24. This verse is also well known and often quoted in connexion with the Lord Jesus. Much is said and sung of His friendship to us, but how many are touched thereby and turned thereby to show their friendship to Him? When the Lord Jesus after His resurrection met His disciples on Galilee's shore He asked Peter, "Lovest thou Me more than these?" (John 21. 15); the word He uses here denotes Love in the sense we have in John 3. 16; but Peter had learned a lesson he would never forget, and would not use such a word, but answers, "Thou knowest that I am fond of Thee." (See Rotherham's translation.)

A word that denotes friendly attachment. The second time the Lord asks him "Lovest thou Me?" leaving out the words "more than these." Peter again answers with the same word. The third time the Lord uses Peter's own word, "Art thou fond of Me?" and at this Peter was grieved. The more we learn of our own hearts it will make us slow to speak of our friendship to the Lord Jesus.

Prov. 17. 17. "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Here we have the test of all friendship, "Loveth at all times." No matter what the circumstances are. This is the position of the Lord Jesus towards us. We change, He changes not.

Turn now, please, to John 15. 9-15. The Lord here takes them into His confidence, He makes them His friends. He says, "Ye are My friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." What did He command them to do? This is often taken to embrace all His will for His people down here, but we rather think it applies to the definite command to love one another. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." To die is sometimes easier than to live, laying down one's soul for one's friend.

"Whoever undertakes a friend's great part,
Should be renewed in nature, pure in heart,
Prepared for martyrdom, and strong to prove,
A thousand ways, the force of genuine love.
He may be called to give up health and gain,
To change content for trouble, ease for pain,
To echo sigh for sigh and groan for groan,
To wet his cheeks with sorrows not his own."

No one ever saw Love, we only know it by its manifestations (1 John 3. 16). The highest point that love reaches is that we lay down our souls for one another.

James 2. 18 to 24. We see from this scripture that Abraham was justified by works, while Romans 4. as definitely says he was justified by faith apart from works. The fact of

the matter is, he was twice justified. When God spoke to him at first he heard and believed God, and he was justified by faith; this was years before Isaac was born. After this God spake again to Abraham, and he heard the second time and obeyed in offering up Isaac his son. Thus he was justified by works according to James 2. 21. There are many believers to-day who are not and never will be justified according to James 2., for it is absolutely necessary for us in this our day to hear God speak a second time and believe and do, in order that we also may be justified by works; and as it was after Abraham had offered up Isaac that he was called the Friend of God, so it may be ours to be called the Friends of the Lord Jesus Christ in that day when our works will be made manifest. It is worthy of notice that it is not until the prophecy of Isaiah that God speaks of Abraham as "My Friend." (See Isa. 41. 8, compared with Jas. 2. 23.)

Turn now, please, to 1 Chron. 27. 32 to 34. Note specially ver. 33. "Ahithophel was the king's counsellor and Hushai the Archite was the king's companion." David is not now the shepherd lad but he is the king, and there are those under him who hold responsible positions. Because he is king he has few friends, for it is unbecoming the dignity of a king to take all and sundry into his confidence. So it becomes us who are God's own to uphold the dignity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Samuel 15. 31. "One told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." Here circumstances are changed and no one is sure who is with David and who is against him, so when David hears of Ahithophel, the man whose counsel had proved itself worthy in difficult times in days gone by, he is made to fear, and prays to God to turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. From chap. 17. we see how wonderfully that prayer was answered, for we doubt not, speaking after the manner of

men, that had Absalom followed Ahithophel's counsel David's case would have been hopeless.

But while altered circumstances reveal enemies we least expect, they also give an opportunity to show true friendship. Hushai is still David's friend. See verses 32 to 37 of chapter 15.

Notice what a task is given him to do. If he would be David's friend indeed, he is to go back to the city, and although not *with* David to be *for* him in the enemy's camp. David had proved him as his friend in days gone by, and no other could he depend on in such a position. So Hushai, faithful to his friend, takes his life in his hand and goes back, and is taunted for his seeming unfaithfulness to his friend. (See chap. 16. ver. 17.) Do we not often find ourselves to-day in circumstances similar to these? when we would rather be with the Lord than where He would have us to be in this scene of rebellion; and although we may have to suffer the taunts even of our brethren now, the time is coming when the Lord will make manifest that we have been His friends indeed.

UNMOVED.

“BUT none of these things move me.” Thus spake Paul as he cast his mind backward at the much he had passed through; at the constant suffering he had known, beginning by his being let down over the city walls in a basket. He had been misunderstood and maligned; stoned and drawn outside Lystra as dead at one time (Acts 14. 19). At another he had been imprisoned in a Roman dungeon after having been cruelly beaten (Acts 16. 23).

When the more he had loved, the less he had been loved; yea by some he was counted their enemy because he had

told them the truth. He had experienced the fickleness of John Mark (Acts 15. 37); and the inconstancy of Peter (Gal. 2. 11, 12). Thus as the Lord's dauntless hero glances backward he might well have reasoned: "Surely it is enough." He might well have wavered and hesitated. But did he? Nay, verily.

He said, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I might finish my course with joy." The Holy Spirit had drawn aside the veil, and revealed somewhat of the future to him, viz., that bonds and imprisonment awaited him in every city, embracing, it may be, the labours abundant; the stripes above measure; the prisons more frequent; deaths oft; beating with rods; shipwrecks; the night and day in the deep; journeyings often; in perils of robbers, from his own countrymen, from the Gentiles, in the city, in the wilderness, in the sea, among false brethren; weariness, painfulness and watchings often; hunger, thirst, cold and nakedness. Beside those things that were without, there was that which came upon him daily, the care of the churches; yet he adds, "who is weak and I am not weak?"

See 2 Cor. 11. 23-29, which perhaps wearies some of us to read, not to speak of enduring a tithe of it. All of this he had known or had yet to know when he gave utterance to those noble words—

"But none of these things move me."

What a striking contrast does he thus present to the many to-day! How very little it takes to move some, and that notwithstanding the all-sufficient provision God has made that it might be otherwise!

May it be ours, fellow-saints, to know ourselves preserved in the unction of the Holy Spirit! See Ps. 16. 8, Ps. 62. 2-6. Also note Col. 1. 23, which was needful unto the fulfilment of verse 22, and forget not Heb. 12. 3:—

“Consider Him that hath endured such gain-saying of sinners against themselves, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.”

Thus shall we be enabled to heed the exhortation found in 1 Cor. 15. 58, “Be ye stedfast, UNMOVEABLE, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord,” and be constrained more frequently to think if not to sing of Him who trod this scene—

Unmoved by Satan's subtle wiles,
By suffering, shame and loss,
Whose path, uncheered by earthly smiles,
Led only to the Cross.

WM. ROBERTSON.

HYMN.

Tune—“Lead, Kindly Light.”

LIGHT of the world, whose kind and gentle care
Is joy and rest;
Whose counsels and commands so gracious are,
Wisest and best.
Shine on my path, O Lord; and guard the way,
Lest my poor heart, forgetting, go astray.

Lord of my life, my soul's most pure desire,
Its hope and peace,
Let not the faith Thy loving words inspire
Falter or cease;
But be to me, True Friend, my chief delight,
And safely guide, that every step be right.

My blessed Lord, what bliss to feel Thee near,
Faithful and true!
To trust in Thee, without one doubt or fear,
Thy will to do!
And all the while to know, that Thou, my Friend,
Art blessing me, and wilt bless to the end.

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.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XL. JULY 5.

MATTHEW 19. 1-12; MARK 10. 1-12; LUKE 17. 11-19.

THE LAST JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM.

OUR consideration of John 11. has necessarily led us to look, somewhat prematurely perhaps, at John 12. and the parallel scriptures, and thus to anticipate the natural course of the narrative. Returning now to the other three Gospels we have to observe the manner in which Matthew and Mark introduce the final journey. To and fro between Judæa and Galilee He has travelled again and again in these days of His ministry, as in earlier days He had gone backwards and forwards between the carpenter's shop and the synagogue, where the roll of the law was to be read. Neither then nor now had He wearied of His work; too true, too steadfast, too faithful a servant of His God was He for that. But as the time had come when the work of the carpenter's shop was at an end, and He left it for the last time, so now on His last journey He departed from Galilee. It is true that as the One raised from among the dead He went again to Galilee, but only to be seen by a few. So too as the glorified One He again revisits the workshop wherever a carpenter can be found (or other workman) who earnestly desires His presence in the daily round of common duties.

Matthew 19. 1 connects the departure from Galilee with the fact that the teaching of Matthew 18. had been finished. Compare here Ecclesiastes 3. 1-8.

Both Matthew and Mark dismiss the journey as far as the border of Judæa in a sentence. But Luke describes an

important incident that occurred as they were entering a certain village in Galilee or Samaria (as only one of the lepers was a Samaritan, and he is called a stranger, it was probably a Galilean village). There is, I think, great significance in the fact that whilst all ten lepers got what they asked for, even mercy, he who returned and gave thanks was more exceedingly blessed in grace. All were cleansed, but he was not only cleansed, he received from the Lord's own lips the assurance of salvation, that is, of healing in a fuller and wider sense. We are apt sometimes to lightly speak or ask as to a person being saved, when what is meant comes far short of what is meant in the word of God by salvation.

Reverting to Matthew and Mark we are brought to the borders of Judæa, where multitudes followed Him, and came together unto Him. He healed them, and He taught them. Note the difference in wording between Matthew and Mark; the meaning of some differences is very clear, that of others is less so.

Pharisees came to Him and asked, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" The Lord's reply is fraught with most important instruction. He answers them by reference to that which was written. "Have ye not read?" was His inquiry. He magnified the Law and made it honourable, for He based what He said on what was to be found in the book of the Law, namely, to be particular, in what we call Genesis, chapter 1., verse 27, and chapter 2., verse 24. Therein firstly is recorded in 1. 27, that Elohim created man in His own image, and created him male and female; secondly, the manner in which the woman was made from the man's rib is described in 2. 21-23. So that the first man and woman were made out of one flesh, and because of this it becomes a man who takes a wife to himself, to cleave unto her, leaving for her both his father and his mother, that he and

she may not be any longer two but may become one flesh. God having joined them thus together by His word, man may not put them asunder.

The scriptures before us in Matthew 19. 3-12, and Mark 10. 2-12, are of great importance in their bearing on the relationship that exists between the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and that of the earliest of the sacred writings.

However great and good the Lord Jesus Christ was, however kind to man and devoted to God, if, as some falsely teach, He were but a man of human origin, whose beginnings date from Mary's womb, His reference to these scriptures as authoritative in their teaching, and as truthfully recording that which took place at the beginning, would have had little or no more value than that of any other teacher of men. But if, as the Gospels most clearly teach, He was the Eternal Word, the One without Whom no thing was made; if His life on earth was that of One Who could truthfully say, "Before Abraham was I am," then His use of the Old Testament Scriptures is of necessity of deepest significance as to their character.

For the issue is plain, the parting of the ways is here: Was the Lord Jesus Christ (the Man of Sorrows of twenty centuries ago), was He the Eternal One or no? Had He or had He not means to know the truth as to what was written in Genesis 1. or 2.? If any doubt this, alas for him!

Doubts and difficulties over doctrines, albeit they are doctrines of the Holy Scripture, are one thing, but alas for him who hath not faith in Christ! Woe, woe is to the man who believeth not in Him as the great I AM, for so dying a man, howsoever good he be, dies in his sin, and in his sins (see John 8. 21, 24, R. V., note margin).

We speak to those who believe in Him, and we ask what value is this faith if it allow us to think He could err?

Could He err by ignorance? Could He mislead by design? Could He? Perish the thought!

We further look at this passage to note the positive and unmistakable way in which the Lord proclaims the sanctity and permanence of the marital tie. The provision that Moses had been bidden to make was a provision for hard hearts. Else nothing could break the bond save only fornication. That is to say, if the obligations of faithfulness which marriage imposes equally on both are disregarded by one, this and this alone will serve as a ground for the dissolution of the bond, and act as death acts in breaking the legal tie and liberating from its obligations.

Need we say that neither death nor fornication necessarily destroy that higher and holier, that deeper and more lasting reality of which marriage is or should be but the expression and the embodiment. We refer of course to that true love which can only exist in its highest form between those who knowing God and His Son and being taught by His Spirit have been mutually attracted by and to each other, he to cherish her, she to reverence him, and both giving God His first place in all things and most of all in this, to be first in heart, then in flesh one, as Christ and the Church are. Such love even death cannot destroy. Happy, thrice happy, they who know it, be their trials and troubles what they may!

XLI. JULY 19.

MATTHEW 19. 13-20. 16; MARK 10. 13-31;

LUKE 17. 20-18. 30.

Whilst the disciples were trying to accept the difficult teaching of the Lord as to marriage, some mothers came along with their little children. How significant to notice that though the disciples could not readily come down to

such small things, the Lord could! Here and now comes the teaching not inferior in its importance to that of the preceding passage—"Suffer the little children to come unto Me; forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God," as Mark records. To know the rule of God in the heart there is nothing more important than to become like a little child.

The same is true of the Kingdom of the Heavens. In this realm, the Kingdom of the Heavens, where the Heavens do rule, there are many who are in no sense children. But the children are the King's especial care; and whilst the mighty men of this world war and contend, they who are as little children may take things easy and have no care; for He that is higher than the highest careth for them. It seems to us that these two scriptures, recording what the Lord said in two different forms, are the complements of each other. Mark refers to that which is within: God ruling in the heart. The rule of God may be, and is, especially effectual in the hearts of little children of all ages, see Psalm 131. Matthew refers to what is without: where the heavens rule, all things are overruled for the good of little children.

Then as He was going on His way comes the ruler who wished to inherit eternal life. Compare the three accounts. How careful he had been as to what he did not do. Note that the Lord in answer to his "Which?" recounted the commandments manward and their summary, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." These and this he had, so he said, observed from his youth up. Perhaps so, but if he had loved his neighbour as well as himself he had loved him no better. It needs love from God, that goes back to God, to make a man do this. And when love to God was tested by the command to sell all and follow the One who for our sakes had become poor, it was too much for him. What is the connexion between this and "Suffer little

children" ? Of such is the Kingdom, but it is hard for a rich man to enter into it.

Peter was glad evidently that he had not been too rich. He had given up boats and nets and the like, and what should he benefit? Peter on a later day would not have asked this kind of question; for he learnt later about an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, that he would scarcely have thought only a reward for giving up an old wooden boat and some tackle! On the contrary, the exceeding great promises demanded that with all diligence in faith virtue should be added, and something else therein, until at last love being added one would cease to be blind and would learn to look a little further than to the forsaken nets on the Sea of Galilee (see 1 Peter 1. 3-12, and 2 Peter 1. 1-11).

Well, now again, about these wages. Is it wise always to be a good hand at a bargain? Likely enough eightpence halfpenny was worth having for a day's work; I am sure it was fair. But I wonder how much the third hour and sixth hour and ninth hour men got? The one hour workers got their denarius apiece without a bargain, and it may be as well for us to trust the Lord about all these crowns and things that are coming when the day of reward arrives.

The passage Luke 17. verses 20-21 deserves particular notice. When these words were spoken we are not told. The following verses record what Matthew tells of in chapter 24. The parable of the unjust judge is peculiar to Luke, so is that of the Pharisee and the publican; the former prayed with himself, the latter looked for propitiation and obtained more; for he was justified. And it is the goodness of God in reaching to publicans which Luke sets forth as extended to babes. For all these incidents in this Gospel precede the bringing of the babes and the coming of the Ruler.

XLII. AUGUST 2.

MATTHEW 20. 17-34; MARK 10. 32-52; LUKE 18. 31-
19. 35.

THE Lord now starts for Jerusalem, and the twelve follows Him, amazed and afraid. He calls them to Him and tells them plainly what was about to befall Him. But they understood not. Here, in particular, a comparison of the three Gospels is most helpful. Matthew shows that others followed Him beside the twelve, for He took them apart. Mark tells of their fear and amazement before He spoke. Luke tells of their lack of perception. Luke thus helps us to understand Matthew and Mark without being unduly severe on Zebedee's wife and sons; though their want of sympathy was very sad, there was not that heartlessness that might at first appear. It is fair, too, to remember that John who wished to be on the left hand in the Kingdom lay in His bosom whilst on earth. James had the honour of being the first apostle to follow the Lord out of this world, and perhaps lonely John of the Patmos isle revelation was the last. Anyhow, when He saw the Lord in His glory he fell at His feet, which was far better than to sit on His left hand.

Then the ten come into view with their indignation. What a silly lot of men these apostles were, we might say, if we were not so much like them. But even in present days it is not altogether unknown, even in the Community of which Christ is Lord, that rulers should seek to lord it over their fellows. We have not yet quite perfectly learned the way to become great. For it is no bad ambition to wish to be great. No, indeed! for the Lord tells us how—He tempts us to that true greatness in which He was and is so great an adept. He came not to be served but to serve,

and to give His life a ransom for many. And how great is He? Ah, how great indeed! God hath highly exalted Him. So then if we would be great be it ours to serve, and this in both senses. "Let him be your minister, that is, your ministering servant, your deacon . . . shall be your servant, your bondservant, your slave." See the Revised Version with its margin.

So then they get to Jericho, and deeply significant is the history of Jericho in this connexion. He gave His life a ransom for many, and they came to Jericho, the place of sin, builded in disobedience and revolt against God. He came there, and they with Him.

Compare the Gospels; note the seeming contradictions of "as they went out" and "as He drew nigh." First thank God for them, and then ponder them and praise God again. It is comely; praise is comely.

"As he drew nigh," says Luke, "a certain blind man heard and made inquiries." "As He went forth," says Matthew (whether finally on the Jerusalem journey, or just for a walk, as we should say, is not clear) there are two blind men sitting waiting, and they cry to Him who never refused the needy in their need.

Mark tells us explicitly that they first came to Jericho, and as He went out this Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, sat there and cried. Only one man is told of here, and he is mentioned by name. The Perfect Servant knows the names of every one for whom He came. This name was written in heaven. Then note the persistence, the determination, spite of the bullying crowds who would have closed his mouth. But he receives his sight, and is saved. "Go thy way," says the Lord. He went his way, but that was the Lord's way, for he followed Him. So did they both.

Then Jericho has another tribute, for as they pass through, little Zacchaeus up in a tree hears the welcome word "Come down," and down he comes quicker than he went

up, and has the honour of entertaining the Lord as another publican had done before. But he was lost till he was found, and thus his being lost is the Lord's justification for saving him. Are any wise? If so let this word suffice.

Then Luke makes plain that whilst the twelve had not understood the Lord's word as to His passion, they had become reconciled to the Jerusalem journey, supposing that there would be an immediate manifestation of His power.

Hence the parable of the ten pounds, which must not be confounded with the parable of the ten talents. In this present parable ten servants get a pound apiece. Every one has the same to start with, as each of us have one life, or as each has one heart, or as each has one spirit. But, to return, one gets by trading ten pounds and another five pounds, and these get ten cities and five cities respectively. But now comes one who has done nothing. He has wrapped up the pound and taken oh! such care of it—and care of himself, too, for he has done no work. He is reproached as a wicked servant; he returned the lord his pound, but what about the labour that was due from him? The pound therefore itself he may not have, but it is given to one who had better known its value and its use. What care some people take to make no mistakes! hence they do nothing, which is itself a great mistake. These, too, be it noted, are to be carefully distinguished from the enemies.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

OUR TRUE STANDARD OF CONDUCT.

CONDUCT depends chiefly on principle. What manner of persons ought we to be? Titus 2. 11, 12, 13: "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that, having denied ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. . . ." The "ungodliness" that is mentioned in this Scripture may refer to the current and manifest practice of godlessness that ungodly men love; although it is quite true that both ungodliness and worldly lusts are attributes of man's very nature, however refined and gracious man's nature may sometimes seem. At all events, this nature is hostile to the Divine nature; and the believer who is eager to have and retain a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man may well keep the precious commandment and promise: "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5. 16).

The shedding of the life-blood of the eternal One, Who counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, revealed God's grace, throwing open to the ungodly, among whom we were, a door of escape from the impending Divine wrath; and now this same grace has made known to us the standard of conduct that God counts worthy of such a redemption. (See 1 Peter 1. 18, 19.)

The book of Ecclesiastes, written by King Solomon, shows that all the pleasures of sin have a boundary in the grave: the redemption of the believer, however, is eternal. Grace is thus like a heavenly instructor. Also, Divine grace seems inseparable from Divine power. What believer, for instance, will look for a manifestation of God's power on his behalf if he does not first confess need

of His grace? "Our infirmities" are not unknown to ourselves. See Hebrews 4. 15, 16: "Let us therefore draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need." God's commandments are not grievous (1 John 5. 3); but even good manners get corrupted by bad company, and we can only expect to be able to avoid this corrupting influence if, in consciousness of our own weakness, we seek to know the power of Christ resting upon us. (2 Cor. 12. 9, 10.)

Let us remember that when we think ourselves strongest that may, indeed, be our time of greatest weakness; for we may try to meet temptation in our own strength without having dealings with God in regard to it, and we may thus fall an easy victim to Satan's power, and come far short of the Divine standard of conduct set for us.

In conclusion, may it be ours more and more to consider the Lord Jesus Christ, in Whose life we see God's standard perfectly attained; and let us see to it that, as constrained by His knowledge-surpassing love, we are endeavouring, though it may be falteringly, to follow His steps. Thus shall we the more nearly answer to God's standard, and not only be a joy to His own heart, but doubtless be used by Him as a channel of blessing to others.

SO RUN.

Let us

lay aside

every weight.

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

“Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—2 *Tim.* 3. 13-17.

XIII.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THE Kingdom of God is an expression which opens up a very large and important subject of scriptural teaching. It may be viewed in regard to the past, to the present, and to the future, but we only propose now to deal briefly with a few points in regard chiefly to its present aspect.

The Kingdom of God has to do with heart submission to God and His will. This is illustrated by the teaching of the Lord with the babes in Luke 18. 15-17: “Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you: Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child he *shall* in no wise enter therein.”

Unlike translation into the Kingdom of the Son of His love (Col. 1. 13) entrance into the Kingdom of God is not an experience completed and finished at the commencement of the Christian life. This is made perfectly clear by such scriptures as Acts 14. 22, where disciples are exhorted that through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God.

It seems clear from these and kindred scriptures that entrance into the Kingdom of God, that is to say, experimental enjoyment of its possibilities, is to a certain extent conditional.

This is still more marked in that which is spoken of in

Scripture as the inheriting of the Kingdom of God. The idea of inheritance seems to convey that of some likeness between the inheritor and the one from whom the inheritance comes. Therefore in addressing the saints in Corinth, amongst whom a sad laxity of conduct was becoming developed, the apostle in his exhortation to righteousness asks, "For know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators nor idolaters . . . shall inherit the Kingdom of God, and such were some of you; but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." Let it be well noted that in the immediately preceding chapter they had been commanded to put one out for no other reason than that he was one of these. Compare 1 Corinthians 5. 9-11 with 6. 9-10. This wicked person was a child of God, a member of the Body of Christ, but a wicked person having at this time no inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God, as also Ephesians 5. 5 testifies.

The Kingdom of God, the rule which is of God, can have no place in the heart of an unregenerate man. The submission to the Lord Jesus Christ at the moment of the new birth is as the dawn of a new day illuminated by the Sun of righteousness, but alas! it is not a day without clouds. The learning of the will of God, and the practice of obedience are slow at the best, and often they cease altogether.

They who preach the Word in fellowship with Him from Whom it comes will not be content to tell their hearers of the blessings that sinners may receive as the result of simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Like Paul and his fellow-workers, the Kingdom of God will be the subject of their preaching (Acts 28. 31, Col. 4. 10-11). They will urge upon their hearers the claims of Him

Whom God has made Lord and Christ, and teach the disciples they make to know and practise in every relationship of life that which is pleasing to God and to the One whom He delights to honour.

The result of preaching the Kingdom of God in the power of the Holy Spirit will be that the disciples made are gathered together with their hearts set on carrying out the will of God. The rule of God in the hearts of His gathered people finds expression in their corporate testimony to Him as His House, the place for the soles of His feet. In the House of God it is possible for God's will to be carried out as it cannot be in any of the sects of Christendom. The rule of these is diverse from one another in many cases, and is opposed to the rule of God in all; so that those whose spirits are stirred up, to know and do the will of God need to maintain separation from them each and all. For much as we love and esteem many Christians in the sects whose personal lives are frequently very excellent, yet in connexion with those sects the will of God for His people collectively cannot be done, and we must therefore avoid all unequal yokes that would hinder our obedience to God's will. The will of the Lord must be absolute. Every thought must be subjected to Him. Every relationship must be formed and maintained, as subject to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY.

Tune—"PATIENCE."

Come, quickly come!
 Thou Bright and Morning Star;
 Already now Thy silvery light
 Illumes the dark, dark hours of night:
 Come, quickly come!

Come, quickly come!
 Lord Jesus Saviour Thou!
 Thy glad returning from on high
 In radiant glory draweth nigh:
 Come, quickly come!

Come, quickly come!
 For Thee alone we wait;
 This hope of hopes our thoughts employ,
 And speaks 'mid sorrow only joy;
 Come, quickly come!

Come, quickly come;
 The night is further spent;
 We long salvation full to know
 From all unrighteousness below:
 Come, quickly come!

Come, quickly come!
 Thou wilt not tarry, Lord;
 'Tis Thine own word, "I come again";
 And we responding cry "Amen":
 Come, quickly come!

THE CHRISTIAN.

THE subject we propose to consider is that of "the Christian," and his place and business in various connexions. The subject is one of manifest practical importance, seeing that the obligation is laid upon the disciple to prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Our guide in such an inquiry must be the Holy Scriptures, and especially the New Testament writings.

Our first business will be to learn what a Christian is and how one becomes such. Then we may proceed to the subject of—

1st. His connexion with an assembly of God.

2nd. His position and duties in various earthly relationships.

3rd. His attitude towards earthly government and "all men."

I. WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN ?

What then is a Christian, and how does one become such? We turn to Acts 11. 26, and there find that "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch"; then to 1 Peter 4. 16, "If any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name; and further to James 2. 7, "The worthy Name which was called upon you."

From these scriptures it is evident that the title by which the disciples were known in early days is one which bears very distinct marks of Divine approval. Indeed it is manifest that it is a most fitting name for those who are the followers of Christ. Not the reproachful name of "Nazarene," but one which sets forth the exaltation and authority of the anointed One.

Let us see how this name fittingly described those to whom it was applied.

The Gospel of God reached men in their sin and rebellion and presented Jesus in His double character of Saviour and Lord. As Saviour He redeemed, and as Lord He claimed the redeemed one for Himself. Preaching which stops short of such a presentation of Christ must fail of the purpose of God.

If Luke **24**. speaks of repentance and remission of sins to be preached in His name, Matthew **28**. shows the obligation resting upon the Lord's servants to make disciples. This was evidently always before the mind of His servants in their work as recorded in Acts. The invariable rule was so to preach as to bring men under the authority of Jesus Christ as Lord, and when this was effected those so discipled were baptized in accordance with His commands.

This is referred to in Galatians **3**. **27** in the following significant way, "As many of you as have been baptized unto Christ did put on Christ." The allusion is evidently to the time when the discipled one was baptized on the authority of His name and henceforth bore the name of Christ, becoming a Christian. A careful perusal of the scriptures relating to baptism will leave a very distinct impression on the mind, that, in the early days to which Acts refers, only those who distinctly took sides with the Lord and were baptized at His command were known amongst men as His; and that the name of Christian was not and could not be applied to any unless they had evidenced their attachment to the Lord in this way. It must be noted from the scripture in Galatians quoted above that the putting on of Christ refers not to the inward working of the Spirit of God, but to that which was the outward sign entered into by the willing disciple, Christ put on, as a recruit in the King's Army, after enlisting, puts on the uniform.

II. THE CHRISTIAN'S CONNEXION WITH AN ASSEMBLY OF GOD.

It is desirable at the commencement of such an inquiry to get clear ideas as to the purpose of God for His people, and assistance in this connexion may be readily gathered from the typical teaching in Exodus.

Briefly, God expressed His desire to dwell in the midst of His people, to which end a suitable dwelling-place was to be erected. His words concerning it were, "Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell in the midst of them," and then followed directions as to two all-important matters; first, the sort of materials required, and second, the manner in which those materials were to be put together. These two things called forth two sorts of people—first, willing-hearted ones, and second, wise-hearted ones; and it was by means of the gifts of the willing and by the skill and labour of the wise that eventually a dwelling-place was made which God gladly acknowledged.

These particulars are not mere matters of ancient history, but have a very important bearing on the will of God in this present dispensation, for the New Testament equally with the Old speaks of "House of God," and describes it as being the Church of living God, in connexion with which a right manner of behaviour is to be observed. Then who can read 1 Corinthians 3. without seeing the allusion to the type of which we have been speaking? The apostle definitely speaks of the Corinthian assembly as being God's building and God's temple; he goes on to speak of the sort of materials of which it should be composed, and he lays responsibility on the wise-hearted as to how they builded. His reference to himself and Apollos forcibly reminds us of Bezaleel and Aholiab as being the principal workers in the Old Testament building. Seeing then that in New Testament times the purpose of God is that His people should be together as His house, His temple, we may

gather helpful illustration from the shadows of the Old Testament.

We gather then that the material of which God's house is to be composed is that furnished by willing-hearted ones—in one word, disciples. As of old the gold and silver were laid down as a willing offering, so now there is "giving of themselves to the Lord and unto us (the wise-hearted) by the will of God." But materials are not a building, and something more is necessary than willingness to effect the purpose of God. Understanding, skill, and experience are necessary, and the responsibility of bringing into the House of God is most evidently laid upon leading men—those to whom the apostle refers as builders in 1 Corinthians 3.: "Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." Therefore viewing an assembly of God as a building, we see that the responsibility rests upon certain builders as to bringing persons into it. These are referred to elsewhere and in other connexions as overseers.

Not only is an assembly viewed as a building, but also as a company of people having responsibility as to what obtains in their midst, and such truth finds illustration in the camp of Israel in the midst of which Jehovah walked. Then there were a within and a without, and the people had an obligation to put away certain from amongst them, such as lepers or defiled, and under certain circumstances they received them back again (Num. 12. 15). In these matters their rulers led the way, but the action was also that of the assembly. The truth of 1 Corinthians 5. very closely corresponds with this, where the responsibility is laid on the assembly to put away from amongst them, and we find that the opposite course is enjoined upon them subsequently in the second letter. All this shows that the assembly has a responsibility as to receiving and putting away, and we conclude that it is in harmony with this that one who commends himself to leading men as eligible

should be proposed to the assembly and after opportunity given for satisfaction to be assured should then be received.

The same truth is implied in the giving and receiving of letters of commendation. No one can join himself, but must bear evidence of genuineness which will commend him to those with whom he desires to be, and then he is accepted and received.

In the light of the above we see the Christian whose course we are considering taken in hand by responsible men, and on their recommendation received by the assembly, thus becoming part thereof.

Now we have to consider what such a position means to him; what are his privileges and his responsibilities in the assembly. We can hardly choose for our guidance a more suitable and concise portion than the word in Acts 2. 42, where is presented what actually was the occupation of those who had first received the word, then had been baptized and added together. Four things are particularly mentioned concerning them in their together character.

They continued steadfastly in—

1st. The Apostles' teaching.

2nd. The Fellowship.

3rd. The Breaking of the Bread.

4th. The Prayers.

Each of these may legitimately be expanded so as to embrace the whole will of God for His people. Thus the first would take in the obligation to heed the whole word of God; the second to put into practice in fellowship with others what has been learnt previously; the third would include the subject of worship, and views saints as a holy priesthood; the fourth would view the people of God as engaged in His work and so cast upon Him in prayer.

Let us now look at the individual Christian whose case we are considering. On being added he is found in the position of a subject and willing one, but as yet quite

ignorant of the will of God as to his new surroundings. He is not called upon to do anything firstly, but is required to present an open ear to the instruction given. It is ever God's way with His people—the ear is the first thing He requires, and if the ear is given the hands and feet will not be withheld. And this is so very important when we consider the sphere into which the Christian is brought—the sphere of God's government—His dwelling-place. It is all-important that men should know how to behave in the House of God.

We should think it very strange for any one to engage a servant—taking her from the most disorderly surroundings and bringing her into a house which it was desired should be a model of order—without instructing her fully in her new duties and seeing that those instructions were comprehended and appreciated by her, before allowing her to put her hands to the performance of the work. In such a case her open ear allied to a willing mind would be very essential, and if these were wanting we should not confidently look for good service to be rendered.

And are we to suppose that willingness alone is sufficient? Far from it. There must be a steadfast continuance in the teaching, and, as we learn, a carrying out of the will of God.

Let it not be supposed that because this is viewed as a preliminary condition it can at any time be dispensed with as being left behind. So long as we know not anything as we ought to know we shall do well to emulate those noble men who received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

How often failure in the work of God can be traced to failure in the initial stage, even the hearing and taking heed to His instructions! What a solemn and striking example of this is furnished by the history of Saul, the son of

Kish, in 1 Samuel 15. ! Note the address of Samuel. "The Lord sent me to anoint thee King over His people, over Israel. Now, therefore, hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord." Should not the sad and solemn story which this chapter tells cause all to stand in fear of failing to continue in His teaching, and particularly should it not speak loudly to leaders amongst God's people? And what an evidence of a disciple spirit is this continuance in the teaching! Could anything prove the genuineness of the work of God on the day of Pentecost more than the sight of those three thousand who a little before had been bigoted, intolerant Jews, but who were now like little children at school, taking in with meekness the new teaching concerning the Lord Jesus and His will for them? It affords reason for grave doubt as to the genuineness of the work of discipleship if there be the absence of a ready mind in connexion with the Word of God.

We have dwelt upon this first point at some length because of its immense importance. If the open ear and the ready mind are wanting, then, whatever else there may be, no progress can be made in the will of God unto His pleasing.

We now come to the second matter, "They continued steadfastly in the Fellowship," that is in active participation in those things which they had in common as added together ones. They had been brought into a partnership, and this involved privileges and responsibilities. No longer were they independent units, but were mutually responsible one to another under the Lord's controlling hand. To use a common illustration, we may compare them to a piece of mechanism, say a watch, only that in this case there were more than three thousand different parts. The effect produced by the teaching of the apostles we may liken unto the skilful placing of the various parts in their proper positions relatively to one another. Then the whole is set

going, each one moving in his appointed sphere and doing his appointed work, each contributing to the efficiency of the whole, but with no confusion, no interference, no jarring. A little later on (in Acts 6.) we hear a little jarring—things were not working smoothly; but again the apostles are on the scene, and as their directions are followed, harmony and peace are restored.

Thus this word views the company not merely as rightly placed and ordered but as workers in fellowship. Note that an assembly is viewed as a company of workers as well as a company of worshippers, and it becomes all in an assembly to be exercised firstly to know what to do and then to do it with their might in fellowship with others.

S. J. HILL.

(To be continued.)

NATURAL DESIRES.

“And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove!
Then would I fly away, and be at rest.
Lo, then would I wander far off,
I would lodge in the wilderness. Selah.”—Ps. 55. 6.

SUCH was the desire of the Psalmist, and we doubt not has been, yea, and still is, the desire of many others. For what is more natural, when trouble besets our pathway, than that we should desire to speedily place distance between that trouble and ourselves?

We are persuaded that in the main they who are spiritually exercised are those most likely to have such desires. Others, like the raven that Noah sent forth out of the ark, may find much that is congenial to their taste, amid a scene of desolation and judgment. Their nature may be so appealed to that their desire is to remain where they are, whereas the Psalmist and many others since who, whilst not having wings like a dove, have nevertheless somewhat of the dove-like nature and desire to exchange

the present for more congenial surroundings. Like Noah's dove they cannot find a resting-place here on earth. But, beloved fellow-saints, as the Psalmist learnt, surely so might we learn that it was not, and is not, God's mind that we should fly from our troubles, but rather that in contending for His will, even if we have done all—a most unlikely thing—we are still commanded to stand (Eph. 6. 13, 14).

Would each one please read this 55th Psalm in its entirety? Doubtless it speaks of David the king when the son of his bosom had sought to dethrone him; when his counsellor Ahithophel had turned traitor, and when homeless and throneless he fled like a fugitive for his life. These were troubles, beloved, compared with which ours are surely insignificant. Yet may we like him get beyond the troubles to God Himself as in verse 16,

“As for me, I will call upon God:
And Jehovah shall save me.
Evening, and morning, and at noonday, will I complain and
moan
And He shall hear my voice.”

Then doubtless we shall know in experience, verse 18,

“He hath redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that
was against me.”

It was no doubt at this time that he was able to say as in Psalm 3. 5,

“I laid me down and slept;
I awaked; for the Lord sustaineth me.”

As he thus exulted in the God of his salvation, finding in Him that rest he vainly thought he would find by flying away from his troubles, he was able fittingly to exhort others in the language of verse 22,

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee.”

May we covet a like experience.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

2 CORINTHIANS 5. 18, 19.

How impressively these two verses portray that Divine attribute of God's character which another apostle—John—designates when he declares "God is love" (1 John 4. 8); not "God loves," but that He is love.

The Psalmist may well say, as he does four times in Psalm 107., "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!"

How blessed to know that God is love! This dispels hard thoughts, mistrustful views of His mind towards us. As Peter again puts it, "The Lord is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3. 9).

True indeed are the words, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55. 9). "Canst thou by searching find out God?" inquires Zophar the Naamathite; and the wisest of men says, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few" (Job 11. 7; Eccles. 5. 2). A few words spoken direct from the heart are far more pleasing to God and salutary to oneself than many uttered only by the lips.

"My son, give Me thine heart," is the language of God to us, and where the heart is the affections will be.

What love the gift of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, bespeaks to us! fathomless as the sea—He in whom His soul delighted given over unto death, yea, the death of the cross.

Let us not dishonour the death of our Lord by esti-

mating it as if it were the death of a mere man; but rather seek in fellowship with God to apprehend its significance, in that He was the uncreated, eternal One, God's Son, sent forth in the likeness of sinful flesh, His body being expressly prepared for Him by God (John 1. 1, Rom. 8. 3, Heb. 10. 5). Let us adoringly, reverently acknowledge His death as a perfect body offered in sacrifice. John 10. 18 declares, "I lay it (My life) down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again," and in viewing God's gift to us of His Son thus, our grasp of the sufferings He endured for us will be helped.

Can we compare the Lord's pangs with our own? Oh, reflect upon the absolute sinlessness of the Sufferer; His infinite hatred of sin, for which He was passing through it all; His ever poignant aspirations towards God and anticipations of the concealment of His face from Him! and think you that the sting of death was no more to Him than mere human feeling?

May our knowledge of the Divine, Incarnate Son of God give us truer and deeper conceptions of Himself. "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2. 9), therefore every attribute of God as God, and towards man as Man has been manifested in Him, and nature might well be clothed with darkness whilst its Author hung accursed on Calvary's tree.

Let our aim be to dwell in love, that we may dwell in God, and He in us. Let God's love be perfected in us by our love one for another, in lesser degree thus manifesting the Lord's love to us (1 John 4. 12).

E. J. OWLES.

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.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XLIII. AUGUST 16.

MATTHEW 21. 1-22; MARK 11. 1-25.

LUKE 19. 29-48; JOHN 12. 1-50.

THE KING COMETH.

THE parallelism of the four Gospels becomes more marked as we approach the end. All describe the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. John tells us that it was immediately preceding this that the memorable supper was served to Him in the house of Simon the leper by Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

The *δειπνον* (*dēipnōn*, *supper*, see Bible Reading XXXIII., this volume, page 86) was an evening meal, but there would probably have been plenty of time afterwards for the coming of the Jews, who came not for His sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom He had raised from the dead.

The chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death. Note the word “also.” They had, we thus see, made up their minds to the greater crime.

On the morrow then the Lord makes His triumphal entry. By careful comparison of the Gospels with a map before one (No. 9 *environs* at end of Oxford Revised Bible) it seems clear that the Lord spent the night at Bethany, that in the morning He started west, and when He reached Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, He sent into the village (Bethphage?) for the she-ass and her foal, and as He rode into Jerusalem He was met by the multitudes crying “Hosanna.” Hosanna means “Save us,” and little could they know at what cost ere the week was over He would accomplish His Great Salvation.

But here the meekness of the King is the subject, and Matthew, Mark, Luke, who say nothing here of the tarrying at Bethany, all tell us how He sent for the ass (blessed amongst beasts!) who was to bear the Divine and Royal Burden into the city. The minor differences of the four accounts deserve attention:—

Mark and Luke speak of a young colt on which no one had yet sat, who was to be brought. This colt was a male, the masculine article and pronoun being used in Mark and Luke frequently. Thus in Mark: “. . . a colt tied, on whom (ἐφ’ ὄν, eph hon, masculine) . . . loose him (αὐτόν, autōn, masculine) . . . he will send him (αὐτόν) . . . they loose him (αὐτόν) . . . loosing the colt (τὸν πῶλον, tōn pōlon, ton is masculine) . . . bring the colt (τὸν) . . . He sat upon him” (αὐτόν). Luke is similar.

But Matthew, recording the King’s birth, tells of His mother; so Matthew tells of the ass who was the mother of the colt. The Lord sent for the ass and for her colt; “a colt with her” (μετ’ αὐτῆς, mēt’ autēs, feminine).

Moreover the Lord had need of the mother ass as well as of the colt (see verse 3). And many a mother who is bringing up a troublesome lad may be helped by remembering that though, as Zophar said,

“Man is born as a wild ass’s colt,”

“THE LORD HATH NEED OF HIM” (Mark and Luke); and He the King born of a woman never forgets the mothers of His servants, for “THE LORD HATH NEED OF THEM”—that is, mother and son both (Matthew). He did not apparently ride on the mother ass, though the disciples spread their garments over her as well as over the colt. For whilst the ass of Matthew 21. 2 is feminine that of verse 5 line 3,

“Meek and riding upon an ass,”

has no mark of gender. Line 4 reads,

“And upon a colt the son of a beast of burden.”

This word *beast of burden* is another word for *ass*, used also in 2 Peter 2. 16.

The lines 3, 4 of verse 5 have that parallelism that characterizes Hebrew poetry. They do not give two statements but one statement in a two-fold form.

Hence we conclude that the actual service was done by the foal, the son, but in doing this service he was not separated from his mother, either in fact or in the Lord's thoughts.

Thus Jesus Christ the Lord of Glory, the King of Israel, entered into Jerusalem in glory and meekness. The joy and pleasure of the disciples ascended acceptable to God in heaven, though it vexed the Pharisees sadly.

Then as He drew still nearer to the city He wept—it is Luke that tells us this. Richly did the city deserve the worst that was to befall it, but the Son of Man wept over its coming woe.

THE LAST WEEK.

We may at this stage seek what light is to be obtained as to the order of that which took place during the week that preceded the sacrifice of our Passover.

We shall for definiteness suppose, without at this point giving reasons or stating it dogmatically, that the crucifixion took place on the day of the week that we call Thursday.

We gather then from Matthew 26. 1, 2 (and following verses), that it was on the day now called Tuesday that the Lord spake to His disciples the words recorded in Matthew 24. and 25. (also in Mark 13. and Luke 21. 5-36).

The discourse (for it is manifestly one discourse) commenced with a response to a question that was asked by the disciples (Matthew 24. 3; Mark 13. 3; Luke 21. 7), as He sat on the Mount of Olives, evidently in the evening of the day, and this question arose out of the conversation briefly

recorded in Matthew **24.** 1, 2; Mark **13.** 1, 2; Luke **21.** 5, 6, which took place as He left the temple.

In the temple, as we suppose that same day, He had first encountered the opposition of the chief priests and elders and put them to silence (Matthew **21.** 23-22. 46; Mark **11.** 27-12. 37; Luke **20.** 1-44).

Then He had spoken plainly to the multitudes as to these scribes and Pharisees (Matthew **23.** 1-39; Mark **12.** 38-40; Luke **20.** 45-47). His observation of the treasury followed and then He went out.

Again, it was on this day that the chief priests and Pharisees had sought to lay hold on Him but feared to do so (Matthew **21.** 45, 46; Mark **12.** 12; Luke **20.** 19). They had sought in vain to catch Him in talk, and they were baffled.

On this day (which we reckon to be Tuesday) the chief priests and elders were gathered and took counsel as to taking the Lord by subtilty, and to them comes poor Judas, who had taken offence a few days back at the Bethany supper (Matthew **26.** 1-5, 14-16; Mark **14.** 1, 2, 10, 11; Luke **22.** 1-6).

We go back again to the beginning of this fateful Tuesday and the days immediately precedent. If we err not, the supper at Bethany being six days before the Pass-over (whilst what we call Tuesday was two days before it) must have been on the Sabbath day, and the entry into Jerusalem would have been on the first day of the week.

We are now in a position to consider and compare Matthew **21.** 12-22 with Mark **11.** 11-25, two passages which appear on careful reading to offer some difficulty as to the order of events. To overcome this difficulty it is wise to separately consider the two questions. Did the purification of the temple take place on the day of the triumphal entry? On what day was the fig tree cursed?

Supposing then the triumphal entry to have been on

the first day, and the third day to be that to which Matthew 21. 23, Mark 11. 27, Luke 20. 1 refer, we incline to believe that the purification of the temple took place on the intervening day. This appears to be plainly stated by Mark, and though verse 12 of Matthew 21. follows verse 11 closely, this in no way shows that no day intervened. Again it seems more probable that the demand for the Lord's authority by the chief priests and elders should follow the next day after the purification than that a day should intervene.

The fig tree being cursed immediately withered, so Matthew says distinctly, but the disciples did not notice it till the next morning, so Mark plainly asserts. This involves no contradiction at all.

It seems plain that the Lord's words as to believing prayer were on what we are calling the Tuesday morning, whilst the actual cursing and withering of the tree were on the day previous.

THE NARRATIVE IN JOHN.

It is interesting to compare or rather contrast John 12. 20-50, with the scriptures just mentioned. Perhaps these words belong to a very early period in the week, such as the first or second day. But at any rate they are marked by a great difference in character from the utterances recorded by the other evangelists.

The parable of the grain of wheat, the words as to saving or losing the life and much else are deeply significant and characteristic. Here too the Lord is seen to depart from unbelieving ones, as we do not see in Matthew, Mark, Luke.

Note also the reminiscence of the John 1. story, where Andrew and John are called and then fetch their brothers, and Philip calls Nathanael. For here Philip and Andrew too are named as bringing others to the Lord.

XLIV. AUGUST 30.

MATTHEW 21. 23-22. 46; MARK 11. 27-12. 37;

LUKE 20. 1-44.

IN THE TEMPLE.

We now reach what we suggest is the account of the Tuesday (as we should call it) immediately preceding the Crucifixion. It closes with the words, "After two days the passover cometh." It divides itself into three parts:—

The controversy with the chief priests and others in the temple.

The words spoken afterwards to the multitude, also in the temple.

The Lord's words to His disciples after He went out.

We at present confine ourselves to the first.

The chief priests now demand His authority for what He did (the purification of the temple being very likely the main ground of attack).

He replies by a question as to John, which goes to the root of matters, and proves their utter insincerity—they were weighed in the balances and found wanting.

Then comes the parable of the two sons, given only by Matthew, and then the parable of the vineyard, given by the three gospels.

They would then have taken Him, but feared to do so. He then gives the parable of the king's feast (Matthew only). Then back come Pharisees and Herodians to catch Him in His talk. They fail, and the Sadducees come, who also have their trap, which is likewise in vain.

The sidelights from these incidents are invaluable. Note for example that the sceptics of those days quoted from Deuteronomy as a record of what Moses said. Of course their testimony would not of itself be adequate proof that Moses wrote Deuteronomy. But it is instructive, if we would not be ignorant of Satan's devices, to observe how

much further he has got the higher critics, as they are called, of the present day in his great lesson,

HATH GOD SAID ?

For probably the majority of the parsons of professing Christendom would be insulted at the idea that they accepted Moses as the writer of Deuteronomy (see 2 John 9).

Then come the Pharisees with their questions—but note that amongst them is a young man whom they made their spokesman perhaps, but who was not altogether corrupt.

Then all were silenced, and especially when He asked the further question, “David calleth Him Lord, how is He his Son ?”

How, indeed ? we may well ask—

“But the high mysteries of His Name
An angel's grasp transcend,
The Father only—glorious claim—
The Son can comprehend.”

C. M. LUXMOORE.

Correspondence.

BIBLE READING XXXIII.

LUKE 11. 41, R.V.: “Howbeit give FOR alms those things which are within; and behold, all things are clean unto you.” The word “FOR” seems to me to have decided weight.

As regards the expression “those things which are within,” may it not refer to the preceding expression, “but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness” —seeing that, if their inward part, *extortion and wickedness*, were given up as an alms-deed, all things would indeed be “clean” ?

The word “behold” in verse 41 would thus seem to throw open a door from darkness into light.

May I say that for absolute faithfulness the Revised Version increasingly appears (to me at least) far superior to all others. I say so out of gratitude. R. G. D.

HYMN.

Tune—"Communion."

O blessed God, our voice we raise
 To speak Thy worth and sing Thy praise,
 For love that made Thee give Thy Son
 For sinners ruined and undone.

On Him by Thee our sins were laid,
 When He for sin atonement made;
 Our every sin was known to Thee,
 He bore them that we might be free.

Such love we cannot comprehend;
 Why Thou for us Thy Son couldst send,
 To bear such heavy load of woe,
 To pay the debt that we did owe.

But this we know, that Thou didst give
 Thy Son to die, that we might live.
 Now all the work is fully done,
 We stand accepted in Thy Son.

And now we wait the happy day,
 When He will take His own away
 Far from this scene of care and strife,
 To dwell with Him in endless life.

Till then, O God, be this our aim,
 To spread abroad His wondrous fame;
 To tell the love that made Thee give
 Thy Son to die that we might live.

BIBLE QUEENS.

QUEEN ESTHER, THE OBEDIENT ONE.

As we pass on to the 2nd chapter of the Book of Esther we learn that, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus was pacified, he remembered Vashti and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. Then it was suggested by his servants that fair young virgins should be sought for in all the provinces of his kingdom, and brought to Shushan, the palace, that the maiden which pleased the king might be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king and he did so. The maidens were sought, and among those brought into the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women, was a maiden fair and beautiful. Her name was Esther. She came from the far-off land of Judah, a stranger in a strange land, father and mother both dead. Her cousin Mordecai, who was of the tribe of Benjamin and had been carried away captive from Jerusalem with Jeconiah, king of Judah, by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, took her for his own daughter, and under his care the fair young maiden is trained and taught the all-important lesson of obedience which so characterized her after-life of usefulness, and made her more beautiful and enabled her to become the saviour of her people, as we shall see. Oh! what a needed lesson is this in these last days wherein disobedience to parents is so prevalent, as foretold in 2 Timothy 3, 2. How many a fair young maiden is being spoilt in these days through failing to become obedient to parents, seeking to do her own will, and thus the after-life of usefulness is spoilt! May the God-inspired story of the young captive maiden speak to each heart and have practical results in the life of the young believer, which is being lived either to self or to God. Which?

Hegai, the keeper of the women, is pleased with Esther, and she obtains kindness of him, and all the necessary things and the best place (preparatory to her going into the presence of the king) are given to her. We find her still acting in obedience to her cousin. Esther had not showed her people nor her kindred, for Mordecai had charged her that she should not show it. As Solomon in his wisdom had said, "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing" (Proverbs 25.).

Will our readers now turn to another scripture, Revelation 19. 7, 8, where we read of the Bride, the Lamb's wife. Let us consider the words, "His wife hath made herself ready, and it was given to her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints." Blessed, glorious privilege, set apart for the Lamb of God, to become His wife, sharer with Him of His kingdom and His throne! "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (read Rev. 3. 14-22 and 4.). The days of preparation will soon be ended, and there will be heard "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Hallelu-Jah: for the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigneth. Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19. 6, 7).

The time drew near for Esther to be brought into the presence of the king. She required nothing but what Hegai, the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. Herein is another proof of her will being subject to the one set over her. "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit to them" (Heb. 13. 17).

Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. Even so in the nearing future will the Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, be looked upon with

favour. The appointed time has come, and Esther is taken in unto King Ahasuerus into his house royal.

AND THE KING LOVED ESTHER

above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.

CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH

and gave Himself up for her . . . that He might present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church. . . . (Eph. 5. 25-27).

(To be continued.)

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

“Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—2 *Tim.* 3. 13-17.

XIV.

ELDERS AND OVERSEERS.

In the very beginning of the history of the Fellowship, after the Lord's ascension, the responsibility for rule and ministry manifestly centred in the apostles. Even before the first scattering they associated others to some extent with themselves as to service (see Acts 6. 1-6). But especially afterwards we find others acting with them, as witnessed for instance by the contribution for saints in Judæa being sent to the elders (Acts 11. 30). Compare too in this connexion Acts 15. and note verses 2, 4, 6, 22, 23, also Acts 16. 1-5. Evidently the elders were being educated to act together, as would be necessary for them when the apostles were no longer with them (see Acts 21. 19).

In connexion with the planting of assemblies of Gentile believers we find Paul and Barnabas pointing out certain of the leading men among those who had been made disciples to be elders of the church (see Acts 14. 23). The word translated "ordained" in the Authorized Version means literally "to stretch out the hands," and is correctly rendered "appointed" in the Revised Version. Note that here it is the Apostles Paul and Barnabas who appoint; not the churches, as in 2 Corinthians 8. 19, where the same word is used, but where those appointed were simply stewards of a temporal gift. These men of Acts 14. were not made elders (that is older men and leaders) by the apostles, but being already such, and being approved, they were appointed to be elders of the church in the given town.

Everywhere in apostolic times we find a group of men responsible for the rule and guidance of the flock. These are often called overseers (bishops), in reference to their duty or business of caring for and overseeing the churches of God. See in passing, Acts 20. 17-35, Thessalonians 5. 12, 13; Philippians 1. 1; 1 Timothy 3. 1-7, 5. 17; Titus 1. 5-9; Hebrews 13. 7; 1 Peter 5. 1-5; Revelation 1. 20.

From first to last of New Testament Scripture we find the elders or overseers acting together during the apostolic period. In the admonition of Paul to the elders at Ephesus (Acts 20. 17-35), and often in other scriptures just quoted, it is to be noted that the overseers are addressed together, which suggests joint responsibility. And much that is said necessarily involves their joint action, as for example in 1 Thessalonians 5. 15, where they have to prevent any in the assembly from rendering evil for evil and themselves to follow good one toward another as well as toward all. Again in the same scripture it is together that they are exhorted to prove all things.

In Acts 16. 2 we read that the brethren had together

recommended Timothy to Paul as a fit coadjutor, whilst 1 Timothy 4. 14 mentions that the presbytery (that is elderhood) had put their hands on him in fellowship with Paul, when Paul had imparted to him the gift to which he refers in 2 Timothy 1. 6. This use of a word in the singular for the elders (presbyters) acting together clearly marks their corporate action. And it is to be noted that these brethren were from more than one assembly of God (see Acts 16. 2). For even if it be claimed that "brethren" of Acts 16. includes a larger circle than "presbytery" of 1 Timothy 4., still the very use of the word "presbytery" is itself proof positive that elders acted together as a corporate whole.

So also 2 Corinthians 8. 9 and Romans 15. 26 show us the churches acting unitedly by their elders in Achaia and Macedonia, for as the brother who was to accompany Paul with the gift was appointed by the churches it is clear that those who had the care of the churches must have acted together in connexion with his appointment. The very word used for appointed, which means to appoint by show of hands, indicates that the overseers by whom the assemblies acted were together for the purpose of appointing; and afterwards they approved him by their letters (compare 1 Cor. 16. 3).

Then Peter in his first letter exhorting elders in the assemblies throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia to care for the Flock speaks of them as being among the Flock, and then as having the Flock among them—language clearly indicating the necessity of unitedness on their part.

Finally, in the very latest time of Scripture we find the angels of the churches in that sad time of declension are seven stars in and upon the hand of One like unto a Son of man. This clearly shows His will that His serving ones should be united (Rev. 1. 16, 20, and 2. 1).

THE CHRISTIAN.

(Continued from page 176.)

UNQUESTIONABLY there are great dangers of disagreement and trouble amongst a company of workers, and especially in a day such as the present, when after grave departure from the truth, there is an anxiety in many to be conformed to the will of God as to methods of service. At such a time and in such a connexion the epistle to the Philippians appeals to us with peculiar appropriateness and force, for its subject is that of fellowship in service. Its address is suggestive. Paul and Timothy as servants send the letter. Here we have an example of true yokefellows in the service of the Lord. They address their letter to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the overseers and ministers." Thus the saints are viewed as united with their leaders in the service of the Lord also.

The apostle's prayer in verse 9 of chapter 1. puts together two things which are often sadly kept apart, *love* and *discernment*. They were to keep their eyes open in the service of God, to discern things that were more excellent.

Then he goes on to warn them against party spirit by alluding to certain in Rome who were preaching Christ even of envy and strife. We may judge that the danger to the Philippians was very real for the apostle to adopt so extreme a course as to hold up as a beacon that which was happening in another assembly.

In furtherance of this purpose the second chapter presents for the emulation of the saints four most blessed examples of self-denying, lowly service. Need the examples be enumerated?

- 1st. Christ Jesus—Equal with God,
Emptied Himself,
Took the form of a servant,
Found in the likeness of men,

And being found in fashion as a man—

He humbled Himself,
Became obedient unto death,
Even the death of the cross.

2nd. The Apostle Paul: "Yea, and if I be poured out upon the sacrifice and service of your faith I joy and rejoice with you all." How like his Lord! But the apostle's humble way of putting it may lead us, if unwatchful, to overlook the reference.

3rd. Timothy—A man likeminded with Paul,
Naturally caring for the state of the
saints,
One who served humbly "as a son with
a father."

4th. Epaphroditus.—A brother,
Companion in labour,
Fellow-soldier,
A messenger for the saints,
One who for the work of Christ was
nigh unto death, not regarding
his life.

One can only in a very cursory manner refer to this beautiful chapter, and it is hoped that it may be read again and again at length.

The examples of lowly service are presented to counteract the natural tendencies in the saints to do service in a wrong spirit. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory." "Look not every man upon his own things, but every man *also* upon the things of others." These exhortations are given and are then strengthened by the blessed examples to which we have alluded.

Chapter 3. discriminates very plainly between evil workers who are to be shunned and workers who may yet be but feeble in their understanding of the will of God. And then golden advice is given by which the conduct of

saints toward one another should be regulated, to the end that fellowship may be maintained.

The apostle in verse 14 sets before himself a very high standard, to the attainment of which his greatest efforts were to be given, and looking round upon others, he invites them also to join him. "Let us therefore," he says, "as many as are perfect [full grown] be thus minded." He refers to a limited number and exhorts them to press forward in the things of God with the greatest possible ardour. Then realizing that in so doing many will be left behind, he adds, "Nevertheless, whereunto we have already attained let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing."

Thus we gather that nothing should be permitted to hinder or interfere with individual attainment; no mistaken regard for others should lead any to pause in the onward race. Each for himself must be the rule here, knowing full well that most help can be given to others by those who are farthest on the way.

This necessarily means that there will be the utmost diversity amongst saints as to individual attainment. But then comes in the other word relating to united keeping of rank, and so says the apostle, notwithstanding what I have said as to individual advancement, whereunto we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Thus in the mind of chapter 2., with consideration for one another, we should be able to find common ground whereon to serve in happy fellowship.

Chapter 4. follows with helpful words, laying it upon the saints to keep their eyes open for and their minds engaged with "whatsoever things are true, venerable, just, pure, lovely, of good report; if there be any virtue, any praise, think on these things." It may also be pointed out, as strengthening the thought of the need to maintain fellowship in service, that in verse 2 of this last chapter two women labourers

are mentioned by name, and besought to be of the same mind in the Lord, and a true yokefellow is entreated to help them to this end.

It may appear that these remarks on the Philippians are a digression from the subject of "continuing in the Fellowship," but it is only as the grace and truth presented in this epistle are appreciated and manifested by saints that they can so continue. If the mind which was in Christ *Jesus and in His faithful servants is not in us, no amount of external order, however excellent and desirable it may be, will keep us acting together with harmony in the things of God.*

Thirdly, "they continued steadfastly in the breaking of the bread." The Christian on being added to an assembly of God will find that the breaking of the bread occupies a very prominent position amongst them. If he should inquire why this is so and what is the origin of the observance, he will be informed that the Lord Jesus—the One whom they acknowledge as Lord—did on the night of His betrayal and in full view of His sufferings, establish this breaking of the bread, enjoining that it should be observed after He had left them unto a remembrance of Himself. As his gaze is directed to the three thousand odd whose observance is recorded in Acts 2., he will appreciate the thought that as the Jews were under obligation to observe the Passover as that which referred to the very basis of their existence as the people of God, so the people of God now are under obligation to loyally observe the commands of the Lord Jesus in this particular matter, in which are brought into prominence those things relating to the person and work of Christ which lie at the foundation of their existence. Thus the simple record that they continued steadfastly in the breaking of the bread indicated the loyal and affectionate regard they had to the desires of the Lord Jesus; they did it simply because He enjoined it—

that was enough for them. This is the first thing which needs to be pressed on the people of God—not to do this or anything else because of the precious truth which is suggested in it, or because of the blessing resulting from it, but simply as an act of loving obedience and loyalty to Him. And surely if we consider the circumstances of the time when He instituted it, how that it was with the cross and the sufferings looming before Him, that then He had thought for the loved ones He was leaving and left what may be looked upon as His last request, our hearts will be very hard if we can treat His wishes with want of respect.

For a Christian to abstain from fulfilling those wishes betokens either sad ignorance of the Lord's will or sadder indifference thereto. The breaking of the bread is the one particular observance left for the assembly of God; it sets forth in a most graphic and appealing manner all the great truths relating to the person and work of Christ, and therefore must occupy a unique position in the regard of gathered saints.

One scripture, in Acts 2., brings the fact of the breaking of the bread before us, but with no particulars as to the time, manner, or purpose of observance. For all these and other particulars we have to go further, to the Acts and Epistles. Referring to the time, the scripture in Acts 20. appears to be specially given to guide us. It records the being together to break bread on the first day of the week as the normal and customary thing. The language is very suggestive—"on the first of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread." It was no exceptional thing so to do, but was their custom, and the apostle took advantage thereof to speak to them.

The breaking of bread is not an individual act, but collective, and should embrace all the saints in any given assembly; therefore it is of the first importance that there

should be a common understanding as to when it should be done, and that the time should be fixed by an authority which would command the subjection of all, so that no one could with reason claim the right to have the breaking of the bread at another time more convenient to himself. Let us imagine that no day had been marked out especially in the New Testament, but that it was left for us to decide upon which day we should be together for the purpose. Instead of one day, we should have seven presenting equally good claims, and the result would be that through conflicting interests it would soon be found impracticable to be together at all, and not only would the breaking of the bread fall into abeyance, but even the assembling of the saints would cease to be.

We cannot be too thankful that this question is removed beyond the region of debate and man's choice, and that a day is fixed having paramount claims upon our affectionate regard. It is obligatory and not a matter of choice to be gathered together on the first of the week to break bread.

Then as to the manner. 1 Cor. 11. unquestionably is designed to guide us in this as well as in other particulars. It is evident that some manner of behaviour must necessarily be observed in connexion with the eating and drinking—it being impossible to limit our action to that which the disciples did when the Lord was with them, for then they only ate bread broken for them and drank the cup poured out for them. We cannot limit our action to this.

Without limiting ourselves to 1 Cor. 11. we are presented with the fact that each and all of the accounts of the supper set forth an order followed by the Lord Jesus, namely, that He took bread, gave thanks, broke it; and a like manner was observed with the cup. In the light of the fact that certain preliminaries must be observed before eating and drinking, can anything better be suggested than

that followed by the Lord Himself? But it will be felt that such a way of putting the matter is hardly satisfactory. We should expect some definite instruction for our own guidance, and not have to infer merely from the conduct of the Lord. Such definite instruction, it is suggested, is given in 1 Cor. 11.; for there, in order to put right that which was wrong in connexion with this matter, the apostle declares (that which also he had previously made known to them by word of mouth) how the Lord acted in the way above indicated, and that His action was followed by the words "This do for a remembrance of Me." If this is not given for our guidance, then what guidance for our conduct do the Scriptures afford, and what is our warrant for acting as we do? And if this be for guidance, if what the Lord did as recorded here is by way of example, then let us see to it that we accept the account as given without addition or subtraction.

It is not suggested that in these brief remarks anything more than a reference to the subject is given. Much more might be said, but so much is said to show that the manner of conduct to be observed in the breaking of the bread is a subject upon which guidance may be sought and found in the Scriptures.

S. J. HILL.

(To be continued.)

EPAPHRODITUS.

At different times the writer has been impressed with the thought that in reading the records of godly lives furnished in the Scriptures we are prone to forget that they of whom such praiseworthy accounts are given were persons of like passions with ourselves. They owed not their greatness to any inherent superiority nor yet to any advantage of surrounding, but rather to the practical recognition of these

facts, coupled with steadfast faith in God and grateful desire to glorify Him.

Otherwise expressed, it might be said that they were great because they were good, and the records preserved of their lives are surely intended and calculated to stir us up to a sense both of our privileges and our responsibilities, so that a deeper concern may be manifested by us to avail ourselves of the God-provided means at our disposal for the reproduction not only of the lives of such ancient worthies, but also of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself our perfect Exemplar.

Amongst celebrities of New Testament times an honourable place indeed was occupied by Epaphroditus, and we consider no apology necessary for encroaching on NEEDED TRUTH space in order to present in large letters the testimony borne to his worth and work by the Apostle Paul, in Phil. 2. 25, even—

“MY BROTHER AND FELLOW-WORKER AND FELLOW-SOLDIER,
AND YOUR MESSENGER AND MINISTER TO MY NEED.”

It is somewhat difficult for us with our modern means of express conveyance to fairly appreciate the service which Epaphroditus undertook, but that it was an undertaking attended with the greatest possible danger to him is made clear beyond all dispute by the Apostle's testimony (Phil. 2. 30). Does not this scripture also give us some enlightenment as to the motive power at work that actuated the service?

“For the work of Christ he came nigh unto death.”
What a reflection this, beloved, upon the spirit of the age!

Upon every believer is the solemn obligation laid to love the brethren even unto the laying down of life for them, but how very few know anything of this as a matter of actual experience. May it be ours more and more to con-

sider God's love in the light of 1 John 4. 9-11 and the example of the Lord Jesus Christ in the light of 1 John 3. 16, so that we may be preserved from becoming like those who go down to the pit, and that we may not frustrate the desire of the Lord Jesus Christ that "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13. 35).

Even in the days of Epaphroditus a spirit of worldliness and self-seeking was prevalent amongst saints, and we can the better appreciate the joy of the Apostle when we consider the condition of matters referred to in Philippians 2. 21 with other attendant circumstances. Little wonder then that he enjoined the saints in Philippi to receive Epaphroditus with joy and to hold such in honour. Truly the purpose for which Epaphroditus had been apprehended by Christ Jesus was being apprehended and diligently pursued by him.

What fervent love he bore towards those whom he had left behind! Consider the longing after them and the sore trouble mentioned in verse 26, and may our desire and prayer be that more of this spirit, even the spirit of the Master Himself, may be seen in us.

As we meditate upon the simplicity of the service, the sickness nigh unto death, the feelings cherished towards the work of Christ and all else that might be involved for Epaphroditus in hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in their service toward Paul (verse 30), we are reminded of the words of the poet Longfellow:—

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time—

"Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's troubled main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing shall take heart again."

And may it indeed be ours to know somewhat of a spirit responsive to the following:—

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

Yet let us see to it, fellow-saints, that we become not like those of whom the Apostle testifies in Romans 10. 2 as having “a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.”

J. P. A. TAYLOR.

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

“Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—2 *Tim.* 3. 13-17.

XV.

REPENTANCE AND SEPARATION.

WE now proceed to give reasons for believing that all that we have been saying as to apostolic times is deeply important to-day for those who seek to please God.

When God's ancient people Israel had been for years captives in Babylon, God raised up a king who issued a decree giving permission to return to Jerusalem. Those whose spirits God had stirred then rose up and returned, and later on a company under Ezra, and later still Nehemiah, followed them. What was then done pleasing to God was a return to His revealed will as contained in the law of Moses.

Thus we read: “They stood up Jeshua the son of Joza-

dak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God . . . And they set the priests in their divisions, and the Levites in their courses for the service of God, which is at Jerusalem; as it is written in the book of Moses . . . Ezra went up from Babylon; and he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses which Jehovah the God of Israel had given" (Ezra 3. 2, 6. 18, 7. 6; see also Neh. 1. 6-11, 8. 1-8, 14-18, 9. 3, where the same prominence is given to a return to the law of Moses).

The Divine principle of returning to God's Word that has been neglected is further enforced in the final paragraph which closes the writings of the Old Testament. "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and judgments" (Mal. 4. 4).

If any doubt the bearing of these facts on our circumstances, we are content to quote, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Rom. 15. 4), and "Now these things happened unto them by way of figure, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. 10. 11), ere we turn to the teaching of New Testament Scriptures.

Many readers of the New Testament Scriptures are prone to miss a certain very important provision for days of widespread apostasy which is contained in the later scriptures to which we are about to refer. We therefore urge the words of the Lord, "Take heed what ye hear," and "Whoso readeth, let him understand."

At the first all that believed were together. The earliest

gaps in the numbers of the gathered disciples were due to death. Then later on we have such a case as the wicked man of 1 Corinthians 5. put outside the Community. This of itself, though a small point, is instructive, because when he was outside the company in Corinth it is still called the church of God in that place, though there was one believer not within it. See 2 Cor. 1. 1 ; 2. 5-8.

Later on the Apostle Paul warned the elders at Ephesus that grievous wolves would enter in after his departure and that men would arise even from among themselves who would speak perverse things to draw away the disciples after them, not merely "disciples" (as given in the A.V.), but "the disciples."

In Paul's first letter to Timothy at Ephesus he speaks in warning words of two of these perverse teachers, Hymenæus and Alexander, who had made shipwreck of the Faith. When he wrote his second letter the influence of the evil teaching had become more manifest, for he says, "Their word will eat (or spread) as doth a gangrene, of whom is Hymenæus and Philetus. . . ."

What word is now spoken for faithful ones who find themselves where teachers of false doctrine are pre-eminent and the mischief they are doing cannot be stopped, so that they overthrow the faith of some? "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness. . . . If a man therefore purge himself out from these [so the Greek] . . . follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." That is, separation from every association where the will of the Lord Christ is not paramount, and fellowship with all who are like-minded in seeking after Him and His will in a dark day.

Later on they who in response to the word of the Lord in 2 Timothy 2. came out and were found together are Divinely addressed, as we read in the Book of Revelation,

as the church in Ephesus, joined with six other churches in Asia, partakers with the Apostle John in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus.

Coupled then with the teaching by analogy of such scriptures as Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi we have here in later New Testament Scripture evidence that the existence of an assembly in no wise depends on its containing all the Christians living in the given place. An assembly of God is such not because it is "a congregation of faithful men," but because they who constitute it are together at the call of God to contend earnestly for the Faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. We therefore are no more reluctant to use the expression "church (or assembly) of God" for fallible and failing companies than to call fallible and failing persons saints and Christians. The names are of God, and the sole question is, To whom does He give them? The same principle applies to the use of the terms "the House of God," "the Fellowship," and so forth.

Having been brought out by God from the sects of Christendom, seeking from Him repentance and forgiveness for all share we have had in its works of human religion, we are now gathered into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we can welcome all children of God who, turning their backs on Christendom in all its forms, come forth to the Name and Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. In such we expect to find heart repentance for their association with the sects. Then, if and when they as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ have been baptized into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, they are gladly received into the assemblies of God, in which, by the grace of God, we find ourselves, and well may we render unto Him the grateful homage of our hearts for this manifestation of His unmerited favour.

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.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XLV. SEPTEMBER 13.

MATTHEW 23., 24., 25.; MARK 12. 38-13. 37; LUKE
20. 45-21. 38.

PERHAPS the scribes and Pharisees, or many of them, had now gone out. At any rate they were silenced, and the Lord turns to the multitudes and to His disciples with the deeply important words with which Matthew 23. commences. Whilst these men continued to sit on Moses' seat their reading and exposition of the law demanded attention. But the One, who had ever given them their due place, now with all the more effect tears aside the veil of their hypocrisy and exposes them in all their naked deformity. Seven woes are then pronounced upon these wicked men. These deserve the most solemn attention of all who seek to teach or lead others. For terrible as is the list of their misdeeds—

1. They were like the dog in the manger of the homely fable ;
2. Zealously they sought to make others worse than themselves ;
3. They were thrice blind ;
4. Their chief care was for things of least importance ;
5. They acquired by extortion what they consumed in excess ;
6. Hypocrisy and iniquity filled them ;
7. Murder was their hereditary occupation—

each count of the terrible indictment but marks the goal to which the great Adversary is seeking to lead all those who are not found in the first three verses of the first Psalm.

Upon such a generation, then, the justice which characterizes the kingdom of the heavens would assuredly bring down dire judgments.

None the less the cup of fury that Jerusalem was about to drink gave deepest sorrow to her Lord and King.

The thirty-nine verses of Matthew 23. are represented by only three in Mark and in Luke. But in both of these the condemnation of those who made great professions is deepened by the contrast with the poor widow who cast in all that she had.

“Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would His favour secure ;
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.”

The prophecy of Haggai had been fulfilled ; the Lord Himself, great David's greater Son, had come to the House of God and conferred on it in its latter days a glory that the days of Solomon never knew (Haggai 2. 9, R.V.). But He was rejected ; the rulers whom He had silenced hated Him and plotted His death. Therefore destruction must needs befall that temple and city ; and when His disciples enthusiastically claimed His admiration for such manner of stones and such manner of buildings He turned to foretell its utter downfall.

Then as on each of these evenings He turns His steps away from the city (Mark 11. 19, Luke 21. 37) ; and as He reaches the Mount of Olives He sits Him down there and looks towards the doomed temple, and while He looks there come Peter and James and John and Andrew and seek privately to hear more of the dread story of coming woe.

Into the details of these passages we shall not now enter. But we point out how full the account is in Matthew compared with that in Mark and Luke, for it is in Matthew that the thread of Divine dealings with Israel is continued most markedly.

But note that both Matthew and Mark witness that the Lord names Daniel the prophet as the one who had long ago predicted that the abomination of desolation should stand where it ought not.

And here the times foretold by Daniel the prophet are taken account of. The tribulation is mentioned and the shortening of the days for the sake of the elect remnant.

Again it is as the Son of Man (in the third person) that the Lord speaks of His coming again to this earth with signs and wonders accompanying His advent.

All of this is in the sharpest contrast to the intensely personal character of the Lord's words on the following evening as recorded in John 14.

When the signs and wonders of Matthew 24. and Mark 13. and Luke 21. have reached their climax, the Son of Man shall be seen to come on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven, yea, from one end of heaven to the other, shall His elect be gathered by angels, with a great sound of a trumpet.

In contrast to this, when God shall bring with Jesus those that have been put to sleep through Him, the Lord shall descend Himself with a shout, with archangel voice, with the Trump of God.

This shout of the Son of God with His archangel voice, with the Trump of God, will be heard by the dead in Christ and the living in Christ. After this no more will any die in Christ (though many will die in the Lord). For it is the special prerogative of the Son of God to gather unto Himself in the air by means of His own shout with His own archangel voice those who constitute the Church whom He will present to Himself in glory.

[Some further notes on the important difference between the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the air for His Church and His coming to the earth as Son of Man with

angels will be found in the commencement of volume 2 of **NEEDED TRUTH**. Reference may also be made to the booklet on "The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus Christ," by Mr. John Brown and "The Lord's Second Coming, in two Aspects," by the late Mrs. F. A. Banks (*Spiritual Growth*, pages 76-85).]

Matthew's account of this Mount of Olives discourse is notable for—

1. The fig tree parable (given also by Mark and Luke).
2. The likeness to the days of Noah.
3. The parable of the ten virgins.
4. The parable of the talents.
5. The judgment of the living nations, likened to sheep and goats.

All these are in their primary application definite in their reference to the coming to the earth of the Son of Man. But they teem with moral teaching of uttermost importance, from which all at all times may learn who will. We may note that though only the first of these parables is given by Mark and by Luke, they add thereto words connected with the other similitudes.

In Mark **13.**, for instance, compare verse 34 with Matthew **25.** verse 14, though verses 35-37 seem rather parallel to Matthew **24.** 43, 44.

The comparison of these passages would be very interesting, but time and space and something else fail.

XLVI. SEPTEMBER 27.

MATTHEW 26. 1-30; **MARK 14.** 1-26; **LUKE 22.** 1-24.

THAT we are now quite close to the Great Sacrifice is clearly stated in the opening words of Matthew **26.** and Mark **14.** and Luke **22.** And these make clear that at the time the Lord was speaking to His disciples in the words we have been just considering the chief priests and scribes were conspiring how to put Him to death without causing

an uproar. Then the account of the treachery of Judas Iscariot is in Matthew and Mark preceded by a brief mention of the Bethany supper, evidently introduced to explain the immediate occasion of his dastardly act.

We pass on to the passover supper kept by the Lord. The accounts of this in the four gospels have many points of difference deserving earnest consideration, and to some of these we will direct attention.

When evening came, as Matthew and Mark tell us, He came and was sitting with the twelve. But Luke says that when the hour was come He sat down. The interest of these expressions is enhanced by the fact that John 18. 28 makes plain that the punctilious chief priests and elders and Pharisees had not eaten the passover the following morning.

In spite of certain difficulties involved in the interpretation the present writer understands the commandment of the Lord, therefore, in Exodus 12. 6 to be, as the margin gives it, between the two evenings—that is, between two sunsets.

The Lord Himself and the twelve with Him killed and ate the passover, we understand, immediately after sunset on what we should call Wednesday, whilst the rulers of Israel left it till close on the following sunset.

Then it was still between the evenings—that is, before the sunset of Thursday—that Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. For it was between noon and about 3 o'clock that darkness overshadowed the whole land (or the whole earth), and at the ninth hour that He uttered the cry—

“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”

“My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?”

To return to the evening in the upper room, we understand “when the hour was come” to indicate the fulfilment of the words—

“I made haste, and delayed not,
To observe Thy commandments.”

This we suggest is the clue to the interpretation likewise of the words, “Upon the first day of the week” in Acts 20. It might also be useful as a hint to folks living say five minutes from a meeting-place who never start more than five minutes before the hour of meeting.

As to the order of what took place in the upper room, we think that the dipping of the sop marks a notable point, and that Luke does not observe the order of events.

If this be so, after the supper had commenced the first recorded incident is the feet washing of John 13. 1-20.

Then follow the troubling of His spirit foretold in Psalm 55—

“My heart is sore pained within Me.

* * *

But it was thou, a man Mine equal,

My companion and My familiar friend;”

* * *

after which He gave the sign that He knew the heart of that wretched man, who was hasting to his doom, his hands red with innocent blood.

Perhaps immediately after follows that of which we read in Matthew 26. 26-29 and Mark 14. 22-25. We will refer to the account in Luke later. The accounts in Matthew and in Mark seem to us to be distinctly historical in character. Matthew, let us say, records what took place as it then presented itself and was meant to present itself to him. Calvary, however little they entered into it, was their horizon. If He were to die, they could think of nothing beyond that.

Confining ourselves then to the accounts given through Matthew and Mark, we read that He took a loaf and blessed and brake it and gave to them. So far we have that which was characteristic of Him, that which He had often done. But this loaf was not like other loaves: it was a symbol,

for as He gave to them He said, "Take, eat, this is My body." He as He spoke was yet in the body. The symbol pointed on to the morrow, when He was to die, when the body which God had prepared for Him was to be nailed to the cross—when He was to give His flesh for the life of the world. And now in symbol it behoved these representative men to take from His outstretched hand that which represented His body to be given up, life for life, ere the sun again set.

Peter was there, type of earnest and often misguided men who take the sword to serve the Lord when He calls for service of a far different character; type too of those who, being restored after a fall from self-confidence, are all the better able to strengthen their brethren. James too was there, type of the noble army of martyrs, slain with the sword; John in like manner, the one who knew the Lord's love; Andrew the representative of brother-bringers; Nathaniel the guileless one, and Philip who called him. There too was Thomas, who was naturally of a sceptical disposition, but learnt to believe anything possible; and besides these were those whose names were written indeed, but of whom we know little beyond the name.

But Judas Iscariot, the empty professor, was not there, for the eleven men to whom the Lord said, "Take, eat, this is My body," did so as representative of all in every day and every clime who receive life from God because of the manifold and infinitely precious worth of the Great Atoning Sacrifice.

This taking and eating by these eleven men, then, stands unique, in its far-reaching significance telling of life received from the One who died.

He took a cup also and gave thanks and gave to them. Not the first time He poured out wine indeed, but this cup spoke of the blood He was about to shed—blood of the new covenant, shed not for them only, but for many. For

many, but for how many? Ah! who can tell? The Great White Throne alone will reveal the countless myriads who, in addition to the Old Testament worthies, to the Church of this time, to those who die in the Lord hereafter, shall with the myriads of infant dead all cry "Worthy, worthy, worthy!" And then will it be true—

"Around the throne of God in Heaven
Myriads of myriads stand,
Myriads whose sins are all forgiven,
A holy happy band,
Singing Glory, Glory, Glory."

It is not, let us in particular point out, any ceremony of human device or human corruption—like, for example, the superstition of infant sprinkling (misnamed christening)—that does an infant any good. The welfare of the infant dead lies in this: that the Lord Jesus Christ shed His blood for the remission of sins.

But of this cup He drank not Himself. In connexion with the passover very probably He had drunk—but for Him there waited a cup of bitter woe, and for the fruit of the vine He waits till He shall drink it new in His Father's kingdom.

Luke gives an account very different in many details from that of Matthew and Mark. The first point we shall note is the place of verses 17, 18. The latter words, "I will not drink . . . kingdom of God shall come," we understand to be what Matthew and Mark place at the very end (Matthew 26. 29, Mark 14. 25), and we suppose therefore that Luke, for a reason which we cannot surmise, is referring in verse 17 to the cup again mentioned in verse 20; but we are not certain.

Then in verse 19, "This do in remembrance of Me," are words spoken by the Lord that Matthew and Mark do not give, and this, as we believe, for the simple reason that that which belonged to our wilderness journey beyond the cross

was no part of the picture that it lay with them to present.

But Luke, writing for Gentile believers perhaps especially, gives the Lord's words providing for a lasting memorial of Himself, in that His disciples after His departure were to do collectively as He had done Himself, and doing this to bring Him to remembrance, namely by taking a loaf, giving thanks for the same, and breaking it before eating.

But of this and its exact relationship to 1 Cor. 11. this is not the time or place to speak particularly.

Then we learn from verse 20 that as the bread was broken so the cup was poured out. This is plain from the words—

τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον
 tō hupēr humōn ekkhunōmēnōn
 the for you poured out,

where the article and participle agree with

Τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον
 tōutō tō potērion
 this the cup,

and not with

τῷ αἵματί μου
 tō haimati mou
 the blood of Me.

That is, whilst Matthew and Mark speak of the blood being poured out (or shed) for many—that is, the real thing, the effectual outpouring of the blood for remission—Luke speaks of the symbol—that is, of the cup (meaning, of course, the wine), which cup was poured out from one vessel into another.

Luke, moreover, for a moral reason gives after the bread and cup that which referred to the traitor—evidently, I think, because all the eleven were by nature even as Judas, and this is hinted by the “also” which introduces verse 24. Even poor wretched Judas shows what is possible to the human heart—what is possible to such as me and you.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

BIBLE QUEENS.

QUEEN ESTHER.

(Continued from page 190.)

"AFTER these things" brings us to another stage in Esther's history. We have seen the fair young captive maiden crowned and united to the great King Ahasuerus. In that exalted position her subject spirit is still to be tested in continuing to do the will of Jehovah her God, through the teaching of Mordecai. After Esther's exaltation we read of another whom the king is pleased to promote, one Haman the Agagite (signifying that he was of Amalekitish descent), who was set above all the princes that were with him, and concerning whom the king gave commandment that all should bow down and do him reverence.

But there is one who refuses, even Mordecai the Jew, and Jehovah's faithful witness has to suffer nigh unto death, and, moreover, his brethren also. How many have been brought into a like position in the history of the saints, who would not bow and do reverence to the Pope and his followers! Israel had been taught to bow down and worship the Lord their God alone (Ex. 20. 5).

Amalek was to be blotted out of remembrance from under heaven. Read Deut. 25. 17-19. How much bowing to the World, the Flesh and the Devil has there been from the time when men exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator down to this present age! Even angels are not to be worshipped, as the apostle John was told when he fell down to worship before the feet of the angel: "See thou do it not . . . worship God" (Rev. 22. 8, 9). Take heed, young believer, that you bow not or do reverence to the world, or the flesh, to devil or angel. Be thou faithful to thy Lord, seek to serve Him with reverence and godly fear day by

day ; it will cost thee something, but thou shalt in no wise lose thy reward ; thy God shall be glorified, and in a coming day thy brethren shall share thy joy.

If Mordecai will not bow and do him reverence, then Haman will away with him. But he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone : for they had showed him the people of Mordecai, wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

For twelve months, day by day, the lot is cast before Haman, until finally he brings the matter to the king concerning this people that were dispersed among all the peoples in all the provinces of his kingdom, that their laws were diverse from those of every people, "neither keep they the king's laws ; therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king let it be written that they be destroyed." To this the king agreed. "And the king took his ring from his hand and gave it to Haman the Agagite, the Jews' enemy." Letters were written, sealed with the king's ring and "sent by posts into all the king's provinces to destroy, to slay and to cause to perish all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month . . . the posts went forth in haste by the king's commandment . . . and the king and Haman sat down to drink ; but the city of Shushan was perplexed."

Now when Mordecai knew all that was done, he rent his clothes and put on sackcloth with ashes and went out into the midst of the city and cried with a loud and bitter cry ; and he came even before the king's gate where none might enter, clothed in sackcloth. "And in every province whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews and fasting and weeping and wailing, and many lay in sackcloth and ashes."

(To be continued.)

HOLINESS IN THE HOUSE.

IN a previous article we sought to bring before fellow-saints some of those things which concern our individual life and walk. We sought to show that while the Divine standard is perfection, and nothing less, even being perfect as our Father in Heaven is perfect (Matt. 5. 48.), this is quite unattainable by any effort of our own, but is ever to be aimed at in the power and fellowship of the Spirit dwelling in us, Who desires to possess us wholly for God (James 4. 5, R.V.) We endeavoured also to show that there is such a thing as falling from grace, not in the fullest sense of the word, but in measure, that is falling from a walk in the Spirit, to a walk more or less in the flesh, in which condition the manifestations of the child of God resemble in many ways those of the one who without Divine life seeks to live the life of a Christian. Such an one may outwardly resemble a Christian, and a Christian may resemble one of the world by being conformed to the world, instead of being transformed according to the will of God. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12. 2).

In our present article we desire to show that as with an individual so with an assembly there is no lower standard than perfection for us to aim at. God's principles for us collectively are as perfect and holy as are His principles for us individually, and just as unattainable in the power of our own will and flesh. To illustrate what we mean more fully: Most of us learn as we grow out of childhood to hide in great measure our real feelings, in fact were we to say that a great effort of human nature is to wear a mask, we believe we should not be very far from the truth. We naturally desire to appear to others what we are conscious in ourselves that we are not, and in this we may and do succeed to a very great extent, so that the saying is—We

must live with a person to know him—and with some this takes a lifetime, and even then we shall not know one another as we know ourselves, for what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man that is in him? (1 Cor. 2. 11). Still less shall we know one another as God knows us, for God knoweth our hearts. But what we here speak of is something very far indeed from the Divine pattern.

It is no easy thing to esteem others better than ourselves; it is no easy thing to love those who wrong us, to be tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us (Eph. 4. 32). It can only be done as we walk in the Spirit. We repeat we may have learned to be good hypocrites and deceive others, and even ourselves, but this is another thing from being sanctified wholly—spirit, and soul, and body. That is a work of God commencing from within and then showing in our outward life and behaviour (1 Thess. 5. 23).

So in an assembly the letter of the word may be carried out and we may find that the letter killeth—that is, that spiritual death instead of blessing may result from what appears to be a right action according to the letter of the word of God. Alas! how often we see this result; how little of blessing do we see from that which is called carrying out of the will of God, and which may be in great measure in accordance with the letter of the word.

It would be well for us to look closely and prayerfully into this matter. "Is there not a cause?" We do not think we shall have long to look to find it. God has not given us principles by which to walk apart from Himself, but on the contrary, both individually and collectively, we can only do the will of God in His way as we walk in fellowship with Himself.

Galatians 5. 16 comes in here to us as individuals, and 1 Cor. 13. comes to us as assemblies. How sadly little this

latter chapter seems to be spoken on, and less, we fear, acted out in our lives, and yet there it stands as a danger signal to warn men, in the midst of the very epistle that so fully reveals the will of God for us collectively and regulates our assembly life.

To illustrate more fully what we desire to bring before fellow saints: supposing one put out of an assembly for the same or a similar cause as the man in 1 Cor. 5., put out according to the Word, we may say scripturally; for the place of such an one is outside the assembly and the Fellowship. But let us look more closely at this. "Israel hath sinned," we are told in Joshua 7. 11, not only Achan. So the church in Corinth needed to be humbled, but where was the humbling? How often those least fitted for the work try and act for God! But one may reply: Are not we bound to carry out the letter of the word? We reply, Yes, God's word must certainly be carried out. But while God distinctly demands that sin should be put away from the assembly, He as distinctly points out who those are that are specially responsible to act for Him in an assembly of God.

There are two passages we would at this point press on the careful consideration of the reader. "Is there not a man amongst you?" asks the Apostle (1 Cor. 6. 5) "who is able to judge between his brethren?" Now this does not mean a man who is clever in human knowledge, in other words, a business man. We do not for a moment deny that such a man may be and often is a wise man according to Scripture. It does not mean a clever man who may himself have fallen from grace and one who is able to meet his brethren with their own fleshly weapons, and the power of his own mind, but it means one whose wisdom answers to that spoken of in James 3. 17. The wisdom of the world, with its results, is depicted in the previous verses (verses 14, 15, 16), but the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then

peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. What a description this of the man whom God chooses to act for Him amongst his brethren! What utter disaster and ruin must be the result if this is neglected! The spirit of the day is amongst the saints and many will reject the thought that it is only such men who are called on to act for God in this manner.

Moreover we shall find that yet a further provision is made for the carrying out of the will of God in His assembly, not only according to the letter but according to the spirit. "Ye that are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted" (Gal. 6. 1). Now here are two guiding scriptures, if it is to be the rule of God in His own House, not for those who in the pride and carnality of their hearts would hasten to act for Him in the power of their own wills, but those who, walking in the Spirit themselves, can act acceptably to God, and this is God's provision for the carrying out of His will. If we look carefully into this subject we shall find God has most fully guarded the honour of His House in this matter; for first, in 1 Tim. 3., He points out what is to be the character of the men who rule for Him, but such men even may fail and be unfitted to act aright for God till they themselves are restored in heart to fellowship with Himself. Thus those who are spiritual are pointed out as those who alone are fitted to carry out the rule of the House, the place where God Himself dwells.

How solemn, beloved reader, are these matters if they are rightly considered. We fear they have not had sufficient consideration. When men appoint themselves to a work to which God has not called them, men like themselves may help to maintain them in their false position, and help them to carry out that which after all is but a counterfeit of the Divine thing; and thus the work of God languishes,

those who are desiring to walk in the truth are discouraged and hindered, and often driven from the truth by that which they see done in the name of God. As we have said, how much of evil results from what appears to be the carrying out of the letter of the word without power from on high.

We wish here to note that the church in Corinth had failed to put away sin. We believe the expression "Have not rather mourned that such a one should be taken away" (1 Cor. 5. 2) is a most important one. We do not believe that chap. 5. does away with the need of humbling on the part of all when such sin is manifested in an assembly, but rather that the discipline in chap. 5. and the mode of action there depicted is supplementary to what precedes it; the mourning and humbling before God would have brought Him in living power into their midst as the God of judgment, and had there been this condition there might possibly have been no necessity for the action of the assembly—God Himself acting on their behalf. Looking at things thus, how solemn the responsibility of acting for God in His House!

It will be seen by what we have written that an assembly can be outwardly correct as to the letter, yet the power and blessing of God absent because what is done in His name is done in the power of man's will and not in the power of the Holy Spirit. Such an assembly will correspond to the individual before described—one seeking to live the life of a saint by the power of his own will, such an one's experience being, "Oh, wretched man that I am!" and in this case it will be, "Oh, wretched assembly that we are!" because the will of God is being professedly carried out by those in whom His will is not being done. The Divine order is, first His will done in us as it is in Heaven, then His will done through us in His House as it is in Heaven.

Yet another point before we close. Not one of us knows the law of Great Britain, not even the judge upon the bench claims to have attained fully to such knowledge, and yet few of those who read this article have ever been convicted by the law of Great Britain as transgressors. How is this? We are spoken of as a law-abiding people, the law is written in our hearts, it is not that we have fully studied the statute books of this realm. We shall find a parallel to this in the things of God—"Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." We shall not do the will of God by knowing all He has revealed in our heads, but by living in fellowship with Himself and having His law written in our hearts. Not that this will in the slightest excuse negligence in the learning of His will as revealed, for He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth; but "these things ought ye to have done and not to have left the others undone" applies here.

How solemn and humbling are these things, fellow saints! If realized and acted on what might not the results be? "Return unto Me and I will return unto you" is the word of Him who desires that we should walk in the light of His presence and find His strength perfected in our weakness. What is the language of our hearts in response? Is it that of backsliding Israel, "Wherein shall we return?" This people of Israel were gathered to the right place but they were in a bad condition of heart; they were the people who in the end became the betrayers and murderers of their own Messiah. If the answer of our hearts is like theirs, ours is a bad case indeed. We need to be humbled and to humble ourselves that we be not found with a name to live whilst dead; yes, dead and blind as to our own condition, without power to do the will of God; yet it may be with the boast upon our lips, "I am

rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing," whilst God's estimate is "Thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Rev. 3. 17). A backsliding child of God may outwardly conform to His will in measure, whilst the heart is going out to the world, so with an assembly there may be outward conformity to the written Word; there may even be uniformity of thought, yet all this may but hide departure from the living God, and fellowship with Himself and His presence in the midst as a realized and known power may be absent. The sum of what we have said is that God's principles for us as individuals are perfect and require of us that we should be perfect in our walk before Him, so also are His principles for His House and His assemblies, but in each case there must be Divine power to carry them out, remembering that uniformity is not unity, and zeal for God may not be according to knowledge.

It is not unanimity or majority which is to rule in the House of God, but a Divine unity; but this requires the presence of the living God in the midst. Any lower standard set up becomes but a human imitation of the Divine pattern; the attempt to carry out the letter of the Word without the presence and the power of God Himself may easily degenerate into a condition similar to that of Israel of old, who, while boasting in the letter of the law, yet became the betrayers and murderers of the Christ.

J. A. BOSWELL.

THE CHRISTIAN.

(Continued from page 199.)

THEN as to the purpose of the breaking of the bread. The Lord was about to leave His disciples, and during His absence He desired that they in a collective manner should have Him brought to their remembrance. Therefore did

He institute this thing, adding the words, "This do unto a remembrance of Me." There are several ways in which the Lord Jesus may be brought to the mind of His gathered saints. Thus by means of a psalm or hymn sung by all He may be presented in the words sung, and all hearts may be drawn to the one common Object. Or a brother may read scriptures in the hearing of all, bearing upon the person and work of the Lord, and every heart by the sympathetic hearing of the Word would again be drawn to one common Object—even the Lord Jesus Christ. But such means, while excellent in themselves, could only fulfil the required purpose in a very partial and fragmentary way, whereas in that which the Lord Jesus calls upon His disciples to do there is, if apprehended aright, a presentation of the Lord Jesus in a very unique way; both His person and His work are suggested to the mind in an intense and graphic manner.

It is a thing which is not merely internal, appealing to individual hearts, but the whole assembly is called to engage in the doing of that which will bring Him graphically before the minds of all. Thus the breaking of the bread is a means to an end—the end being to bring the Lord before His people; and in the remembrance of Him, with all the fulness of thought which this involves, there will result suitable responses in thanksgiving, praise and worship acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. And as each eats and drinks there will be in action, apart from any audible word, a proclamation of the Lord's death—each one by his or her act declaring his or her faith in His death.

Thus the Lord designs in this matter to furnish His people with a unique thing for their observance, in which every heart being directed to the Lord Jesus Christ as the one Object, will with perfect unity praise and worship God.

There is one matter of great importance which must not

be overlooked or put into the background, and that is the condition of those who participate in this great privilege. Heb. 10., after setting forth the blessed fact of access into the Holiest and witnessing to the eligibility of the worshipper, indicates two things as necessary in those who draw near—"a true heart" and "fulness of faith." Psalm 139. suggests the former, in him who could invite God's scrutiny in the prayer, "Search me, O God, and try my heart," etc. Such a condition, the enquiry of a good conscience, indicates the possession of that which Heb. 10. demands. As to the second requirement, it evidences not only a willingness to be subject to God's examination, but also a complete acceptance of what He has been pleased to reveal. It is the condition of one who has learnt of God, and who fully and absolutely receives what God says.

Practically the same condition is required according to 1 Cor. 11., where it is shown that because of want of discernment and self-examination there were an unworthy eating and drinking, eating and drinking in a profane way, not discerning the body, not appreciating the character and purpose of the feast. So serious was this that God Himself interposed with chastening, and the result is set forth: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Hence the exhortation: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup."

There is a further word of practical application in 1 Cor. 10. as applying to any other fellowship which a believer may have part in, and which would be inconsistent with the fellowship of the body and blood of the Lord. Thus the idea is, that should a believer eat of meat which has been sacrificed to idols, he in so doing becomes a partaker (or has fellowship) of the idols' altar; and the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to

God. Thus he becomes connected in the way of fellowship with that which is so opposed to God. . At the same time he is by means of the breaking of the bread a partaker of the Lord's table, for "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? Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. Ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" Of course it may be objected that there are no idol temples now, and such a thing could not happen. But will not the same truth apply? Are there not many evil associations around us, many of them of a religious nature, and dare we become a link of connexion between that which is of God and that which is opposed to Him? This matter of our associations is not less important than that of our own personal condition.

Before we leave the subject of the breaking of the bread we must gladly notice that it is the one thing in particular which connects the death of the Lord with His coming. "Ye do proclaim the Lord's death till He come." Thus the One who died for us is our portion to sustain us till we see His face, and in our eating and drinking we evidence not only our faith in His death, but in His promised return, and He Himself gave the feast as an additional earnest of His good intentions in this matter. What a unique position do we then occupy! How firm a foundation in His death, how glad a hope in His coming have we! May we never count it a common thing, as Esau who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright, and who is spoken of as a profane man. Let this blessed provision of His love occupy a foremost place in our assembly life, and let all earnest care be shown so that it fulfils toward God and toward ourselves that which the

Lord Jesus had in view when in the night in which He was betrayed He established the matter.

Fourthly, "they continued in the prayers." This short sentence brings these people into view as being in a position of dependence and responsibility, as being engaged in the business of God, and as seeking unto Him in connexion therewith. In worship there is a going in to give, in prayer to get, and that in connexion with the whole will of God concerning us.

The thought of the people of God being a praying people adds to the beauty and completeness of the picture. Was not this an important feature in the service of the Lord Jesus? particularly being marked in that Gospel (Luke) in which He is presented specially as a Man.

Prayer suggests our being needy, or helping others' needs, as burdened or bearing others' burdens, as being engaged in God's service, apart from whose help we cannot continue, as witnesses in a dark world needing oil for the light of testimony. Indeed prayer takes in the thought of work; if we pray we shall work, and if we work we must pray.

There is a definiteness about this word, "they continued in the prayers," as showing that it was no casual thing, or engaged in in a partial way, but the whole company being bound together in one service, were moved to unite in definite petitions. Of course it does not follow that for this all must be together in one place, as in the case of Peter's imprisonment prayer was made of the church, but as being part thereof many were found by Peter at a certain house gathered together praying.

"The prayers" here referred to are the prayers of the assembly, and helpful instruction in connexion therewith is given in 1 Tim. 2. In this scripture, behaviour is enjoined in connexion with the "House of God," and certain directions are given as to prayer. So in verse 8 we are told

both who are to pray and what reverent manner of behaviour they are to observe: "I will therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting." The women are referred to, and their behaviour in that same sphere is indicated, but it is the men who are to lead in prayer.

Then as to certain matters which it is befitting they should pray about, the opening of this same 1 Tim. 2. gives helpful exhortation. Verse 1: "I exhort therefore first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Let it be noted that in giving this exhortation the apostle is only enforcing his charge to Timothy of the previous chapter (verses 5 and 19): "The end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and faith unfeigned." It is in fulfilment of this that the behaviour set forth in the following chapters, including this concerning prayer, is enjoined. Note how the opening verse is made dependent on the earlier chapter: "I exhort THEREFORE." This brings before us a much needed and neglected duty. We are naturally so selfish; and certainly in connexion with our prayer meetings we often illustrate that word, "There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." We need our sympathies enlarged to learn what a very blessed position we may occupy toward all men in this sacred service.

S. J. HILL.

(To be continued.)

For Young Believers.

“As new-born babes, desire the milk of the Word, which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.”—1 Peter 2. 2.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XLVII. OCTOBER 11.

JOHN 13., 14., 15., 16., 17.

THESE five chapters give us the account that John was inspired to write of the Lord's words on the evening of the betrayal. For the present we wish to consider them as a complete and coherent whole and not in their relation to the accounts of the same evening given through Matthew, Mark, Luke.

The first thirty verses of chapter 13. refer to the earlier part of the evening while Judas Iscariot was present. Our attention is especially directed to him in connexion with the feet washing. Firstly in verses 2, 3, for note how closely the mention of the Devil's work in the heart of Judas is linked with the account of the Lord's acts; and especially further in verses 10, 11 the Lord's knowledge of what one may perhaps call in a certain sense the uselessness of the washing of the feet of Judas Iscariot is markedly emphasized.

The eleven then were bathed men. “ὁ λελουμένος,” hō lelōumēnōs, he that is bathed, literally the one having been bathed. The word has to do with an act which is thorough and complete and is quite different from the other word used in the same verse 10 and in verses 5, 6, 8 (twice), 12, 14 (twice) *νίπτειν*, niptein, to wash. A careful study of the passage makes the meaning clear to a great extent. Poor Judas had never been bathed. He had never received the word of the Lord into his heart, see 15. 3. He had no personal, no experimental knowledge of the laver of

regeneration (new birth, Titus 3. 5) and no wetting of his feet could make him clean.

Then the Lord distinctly shows that in the washing of their feet He was setting an example to be followed. This is what all may do in their measure and according to their opportunity. It will be observed that it is recommended as a service of humility.

Then come the verses (already briefly alluded to, this volume, pages 210-1) recording His prediction of the betrayal and His indication of the traitor; they seemed to have little appreciation, however, of the force of His words.

The departure of Judas the false friend was a relief to the Lord, to whom the pleasures of faithful friendship were ever dear; and He now commences to unburden Himself of those confidences which give to these chapters their extremely precious character. Perhaps it is Peter's interruption and the foretelling of his doleful fall that have led those to whom we owe the division into chapters to commence chapter 14. where they do. But there is nothing that is like a beginning in the words, "Let not your heart be troubled," and so forth. It naturally follows on, firstly after the bad news for them that He was going where they could not go, and secondly it connects with the sad words to Peter. Peter would learn how little he could trust to himself, but he was to maintain his faith in the God whom his eyes could not see (compare also Luke 22. 31, 32) and he was also to exercise faith in the One whom hitherto he had seen but who was about to go where He could not be seen. We have thus, as it were, paraphrased the Lord's words, but it is right to point out that the abstract noun "faith" has little place in the writings of John; it is the verb "believe" that generally, as here, is used by him.¹

¹ The only occurrences of the word *πίστις*, *pistis*, faith in John's writings are in 1 John 5. 4, and about four times in Revelation. The verb *πιστεύω*, *pisteuo*, to believe, occurs something like 100 times in the Gospel (but scarcely in Revelation at all).

Note the correct reading of 14. 14 and the explanation that follows. It is difficult indeed to understand any sense in which they could be said to know the place to which He was going; but they certainly knew Him and thus knew the Way thither, for He is the Way. But further, He is the Truth, for He is the revelation of the Father. "He that hath seen Me," saith He, "hath seen the Father." He, too, is the Life; as such they heard, they saw with their eyes, they beheld, their hands handled Him (1 John 1. 1). But now that He was about to go beyond the reach of the bodily senses, He promised to send the other Paraclete who is the Spirit of Truth and, as we elsewhere learn, the Giver of life.

Note please that this blessed Divine Being is first spoken of in an emphatically personal manner as another Comforter or Advocate, *παράκλητος*, Paraklētōs, that is another such as Himself. This proper name here applied to the Promised One is a word in the masculine gender with which agree:—*ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα*, *ēkeinōs humas didaxei panta*, He you shall teach all things (14. 26); *ὃν ἐγὼ πέμψω*, *hōn egō pēmpsō*, Whom I will send (15. 26); *ἐκεῖνος μαρτυρήσει*, *ēkeinōs marturēsei*, He shall testify (15. 26); *πέμψω αὐτὸν . . . ἐκεῖνος ἐλέγξει*, *pēmpsō autōn . . . ēkeinōs ēlēnxei*, I will send Him . . . He will convict (16. 7, 8); *ἐκεῖνος . . . ὀδηγήσει*, *ēkeinōs . . . hōdēgēsei*, He . . . shall guide (16. 13); *ἐκεῖνος ἐμὲ δοξάσει*, *ēkeinōs emē dōxasei*, He Me shall glorify.

He is also described as to His attributes as the Spirit of truth, and grammatically *πνεῦμα*, *pneuma*, spirit, is neuter gender and takes the article and adjective in neuter gender:—*τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον*, *tō pneuma tō hagion*, the Spirit, the holy (14. 26); *τὸ πνεῦμα*, *tō pneuma*, the Spirit (15. 26; 16. 13).

So ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν, ὅτι οὐ θεωρεῖ αὐτό, οὐδὲ γινώσκει αὐτό, ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε αὐτό, *hō hō kōsmōs ou dunatai*

labein, hōti ou theōrei autō, oudē ginōskei autō; hūmeis ginōskete autō; literally, Which the world cannot receive because it beholdeth It not, neither knoweth It; ye know It. ὁ πέμψει ὁ πατήρ, hō pēmpsei hō pater; literally, Which the Father will send (14. 26, the two words, ὁ hō, ὁ hō, are different). ὁ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, hō para tou patrōs ekpōreuētai; literally, Which from the Father proceedeth.

Note how the two usages are blended; observe the frequent use of ekeinos He (five times); see how it is used in 14. 26 after the parenthetical or at any rate descriptive clause:—the “Holy Spirit Which the Father will send in My name He shall teach.” So in 15. 26 observe:—“the Comforter Whom . . . the Spirit Which . . . He shall bear witness.”

Observe, too, how many of the actions attributed clearly mark Him as a Divine Person, whilst there is also that Infinite Pervasiveness ascribed to Him whereof the word Spirit fitly tells. Compare also John 4., “God is Spirit.”

Note the two promised comings of the Lord Jesus Christ:—The personal coming, the coming again of verse 3: “If I go and prepare a place for you I come again and will receive you unto Myself”; and the coming representatively by the Paraclete, “I will not leave you orphans; I come unto you.” This latter coming was fulfilled in some four and fifty days; to be particular, when the day of Pentecost was fully come. The personal coming, equally certain, is that for which we still wait.

Note in all that follows how fruitful the coming of the Paraclete was in its possibility. We say in its possibility, for there is much there that is promised conditionally. The personal coming of the Paraclete and His eternal abiding in us individually is unconditional. But He, the Spirit, may be quenched and resisted, hence the conditional character of the promises:—“I will love him

and will manifest Myself unto him" (verse 21); "My Father will love him and We (Father and Son) will come unto him and make Our abode with Him" (verse 23).

Why does verse 31 end as it does, Arise let us go hence? is a question we may well ask.

The parable of the vine is a further expansion of the truth as to conditional abiding already commenced. Note that the fruit here is fruit for the enjoyment of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is represented under the figure of the husbandman. The union, at the same time solemnly conditional and extremely intimate, of which this figure speaks, fitly brings in the thought of love. Love of the Father, love of the Son, love in the Holy Spirit.

Practical words of warning follow, and all that the Lord says to the eleven is guarded for us by the provision described in **14. 26.**

Well, these words reach an end and the Lord turns from His disciples to the Father and addresses Him in the memorable words of chapter **17.** We cannot now as we would linger over this unique revelation of the mutual intercourse of the ineffable Trinity, and we hesitate to comment on such a sublime theme in any casual way, but trust an opportunity may occur and grace be given for some feeble attempt at its exposition.

Immediately after, as we understand, the Lord crosses Kidron into the garden (Gethsemane) and John at once records the betrayal.

Matthew and Mark show that the Lord left the upper room after the hymn, which appears to have immediately followed the loaf and cup, and that it was after this that He foretold Peter's denial. It may be mere fancy, though we think not, but we are disposed to associate Peter's words, "Whither goest Thou?" (John **13. 36**), with the Lord's rising and leading them from the room as well as with His actual words as to His going. Then the contents of chapters

14., 15., 16., 17. of John take their place naturally between verses 35 and 36 of Matthew **26.**, between verses 31 and 32 of Mark **14.**, between verses 39 and 40 of Luke **22.**, that is this conversation was on the Mount of Olives before they reached Gethsemane.

XLVIII. OCTOBER 25.

MATTHEW **26.** 33-56 ; MARK **14.** 32-52 ; LUKE **22.** 40-53 ;

JOHN **18.** 1-11.

The shadow of the Cross now looms in its dread horror before the gaze of the Lord Jesus Christ. First He takes with Him Peter and James and John, as if perhaps He would have taken them yet further into His confidence as to that which was adding a deeper and a needless bitterness to His woe and sorrow. His soul, He said, was exceedingly sorrowful ; but all He asked them was to abide and watch while He went on a stone's throw to confer with the One who alone was equal to His confidence in that dark hour.

— We cannot believe that the Cup which He asked might if possible be removed from Him was the dread penalty of sin that was about to be exacted from Him. We remember that the shipmates of Jonah cast him into the sea with tears and regret when it was expedient that he should die that the whole crew perish not. Not so the people of Israel were about to conduct themselves on the morrow, not so the Pharisees who had already given the Traitor the thirty pieces of silver. So well had their master bound them to him in the toils of sin and hatred that with malicious eagerness they were about to hurry their Anointed King to a malefactor's doom, and couple His death as the atoning Victim with every ignominy and disgrace. It was this, as we believe, that led to His exceeding sorrow in Gethsemane, that found expression in that thrice repeated cry of anguish.

It is this, too, the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, which for ever bespeaks the condemnation of the world that knew Him not and knows Him not, that hated then and still hates.

“There lies beneath its shadow,
But on the farther side,
The darkness of an awful grave,¹
That gapes both deep and wide.
And there between us stands the Cross,
His arms outstretched to save,
Like a watchman set to guard the way,
From that religious grave.”

Then cometh Judas, and kisseth Him. So the cohort comes forward to take Him, and for a moment it seems as if His hour was not yet come, for at His words, “I am” they went backward and fell to the ground. Judas fell with the others I suppose, now first publicly exposed as the man who knew Him not, for certainly Peter and the rest fell not at that sound, which meant much to them.

How significant the zeal of Peter, though so useless; the cut-off ear, as Luke the beloved physician alone tells us, was restored.

Then they all forsook Him and fled. Some young man (I think we ought to be able to guess who he was) could only escape naked. If any dreads being made naked let him prefer being taken prisoner with Jesus to escaping. Peter followed afar off, and so did the other disciple known to the High Priest—evidently John.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

¹ That is Christendom. See Proverbs 9. 13-18.

“NOT MY WILL, BUT THINE.”

My will—

Once followed I its sinful inclination,
 Yet found the path it led me but vexation,
 Unrest and misery the consummation
 Of my poor will.

My will—

Along its crooked path my footsteps winded:
 Wretched and sinful, yet for all, highminded,
 I trod the way to Hell completely blinded
 By mine own will.

Thy will

Allowed me not to go my way and brave Thee;
 But Thou in love didst humble me to save me;
 Didst bring me low, then life eternal gave me.
 This was Thy will.

Thy will

Be done, O Lord, in me, and mine subjected:
 My words, my work, my walk by Thee directed,
 That in this once self-willed one be reflected
 Naught but Thy will.

C. B.

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

“Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—2 *Tim.* 3. 13-17.

XVI.

RULE AND DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE FELLOWSHIP.

GOD having in His grace brought us together at this present time with purpose of heart to do His will, and having separated us heart and soul from all the sects of Christendom, we understand it to be our duty and privilege to seek together to carry out fully and without reserve what Scripture teaches as God's will for us to-day. It is ours to imitate, as much as in us lies, the practices of early disciples as they are set forth for our example in the Scriptures of truth. What we have already learnt we seek to practise together. We are prepared, by God's help, to receive further teaching as He is pleased to give light; and we are ready to renounce or reject all that we believe to be contrary to His word and will.

As we have already cited scriptures showing that amongst the early disciples there were those whose business it was together to care for the flock, so we believe there are now. We turn in this connexion to Ephesians 4. 7-16. That apostles and prophets have passed away is clear from their being mentioned as “foundation” in Ephesians 2. 20. We have them in their writings. Yea, they live if we stand fast in the Lord. But evangelists, and pastors and teachers remain. Of the former, whose concern is largely with those that are without, we will speak later. The pastors and teachers are clearly those who tend and feed

the flock, and their perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering and unto the building up of the Body of Christ in love (see verse 16), is to be continued till we all attain unto the unity of the Faith, and is not therefore yet completed.

That those who are responsible to act together in their care for the flock may be rightly called elders as well as overseers, is doubted by some, but it seems clear that the elders of the churches and the overseers are the same persons. For example, the elders of the church in Ephesus were told that the Holy Spirit had made them overseers (Acts 20. 17, 28). Again, when Paul instructs Titus as to setting elders in every city in Crete, he describes the needful qualifications of elders by saying, "the overseer must be blameless as God's steward," and so forth.

More important than any question of name is the divinely given example in Holy Scripture showing these overseers acting together in their care for the flock.

Scripture gives us no example of one-man ministry or one-man rule in assemblies of God, except it be for reprobation, as in the case of Diotrefes, who was blamed not indeed for having, but for loving to have, the pre-eminence.

In the Epistle to Philippi we learn that there were in that assembly several overseers who, with the deacons in particular as well as the saints generally, are found together standing fast in one Spirit with one soul striving for the Faith of the Gospel (Phil. 1. 1, 27).

Again, overseers in one place are not to imprint on the local assembly the pattern of their own mind, but to act in lively fellowship with co-overseers, especially in neighbouring assemblies. Peter specially warns elders against lording it over the charges allotted to them (1 Peter 5. 3; the Greek word translated "charge" in the R.V. is in the plural).

On the contrary, they—the elders throughout the district concerned—were to be ensamples to or of the flock. One little flock, therefore one united group of elders (one elderhood or presbytery)—an example to the flock of what it should be, an example of the flock as it should be.

We note that when the church of God in Corinth was bidden to expel from their midst the wicked person, they were conjoined with all calling upon the Name everywhere; when exhorted to receive him back, the word is also sent to all the saints in all Achaia.

We observe that for purposes of administration assemblies are joined together which are in a province or a country; and it is clear that, in the case, for instance, when contributions were sent to Jerusalem from Macedonia and Achaia, the elders of the assemblies in those provinces acted together in the matter. We note, for instance, the appointment by the churches of one who was to accompany Paul with the bounty. (See 2 Cor. 8. especially verse 19, 9., and Rom. 15. 25–33.)

The united action of overseers is especially important in connexion with the recognition of those whom God calls to public ministry of His Word and of those in whom He puts a heart to care for the Flock. This is abundantly clear from the case of Timothy in Acts 16. already referred to. (See Chapter XIV., “Elders and Overseers,” paragraph 5, page 191.)

In matters of discipline it is clear that in many cases the overseers of the local assemblies of God can, with Divine help, direct the assembly to do what God directs in His word to be done, and this especially when the doctrine of the Lord in the given matter is agreed on amongst overseers generally. But where difficulties arise, either from insufficient knowledge of the Word of God or because the guiding principles are not generally understood, or the overseers are not of one mind, it is clearly incumbent on

them, recognizing that they are in a fellowship or partnership with co-workers in neighbouring towns, to seek counsel with their fellows. And the obligation rests on such overseers together in the district to be of one mind in the Lord in the given matter on hand: and on the local overseers to most carefully avoid the very appearance of independency.

In every case of difficulty such care and patience are called for, such mutual forbearance and mutual help, yea, and such diligence are required that the unity of the Spirit may be indeed kept in the bond of peace.

Let it be well noted that the warning against enmities, strifes, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, heresies as works of the flesh was addressed to those in the province of Galatia, wherein there were many assemblies of God. If it be said that this was to all saints, we reply, Yes, indeed, but how doubly important for leading men to observe this warning and to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance. What of these can there be when each local group of overseers is a law unto itself, or at least, as in the days of the Judges, they do what is right in their own eyes?

A happy illustration of fellowship is given in Acts 15., where Paul and Barnabas, knowing by revelation the mind of God beyond all possibility of doubt, yet gladly go up to Jerusalem, not to give place by subjection, but that the truth of God might be promulgated with all that additional weight of testimony which was given by the united judgment of those who were found together at Jerusalem.

PSALM 137.

The plaintive music of Psalm 137 touches a chord in each heart that knows the bliss of being brought to Christ, and knowing this, knows much more. As long as Faith looks upward and Hope looks onward, and the path of the child of God is rough and strewn with difficulties, and temptations to forsake God abound in every guise under which the master of wiles can clothe them, so long will the language of the people of God breathe the experience of this word for all time.

It takes but a short time at the most for us to learn how easy it is to get estranged from Him Who is our Sun and Centre. The road of departure from God has been trodden by the redeemed throughout all ages, and in all ages too have they proved that the way of transgressors is hard. How true of us all is it that we appreciate but feebly our greatest blessings until they are withdrawn from us. We learn by contrasts. Never did the prodigal value the plenty upon which he had so lightly turned his back, or the abundance of his father's home, until these remembrances were borne in upon him by the bitterness of the far country. If to disciples toiling upon a troubled sea the presence of the Master gave rest: if, in a home in Bethany where a brother had fallen asleep, that presence meant life: if to wearied fishermen labouring all night for nought, that presence signified abundance: or, if, to questioning, doubting disciples on Emmaus' road it stood for burning hearts and opened understandings, what, humanly speaking, must the departure of the Lord Jesus have been to those who had learned to know and to trust Him?

"By the rivers of Babylon
There we sat down, yea we wept."

No intelligent Christian will deny that the world has

its pleasures. Under him who controls it, it caters to all sorts and conditions of men, and professes to gratify the desires of the flesh and of the mind. But its intellectual or sensual streams are but poor substitutes for that presence in which is fulness of joy, even the presence of Him Who is the Fountain of Living Water. Well may the tears flow and the pent-up misery of the heart that is aware of its condition, find vent. Well may the harps be hanged upon the willows and the song be replaced by a groan, for the song and the music are incompatible with captivity. In the experience of the people of God they are ever associated with freedom, and there can be no freedom apart from obedience to the Will of God. It is written "I will walk at liberty for I have sought Thy precepts," and again it is written "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free."

"How shall we sing Jehovah's song
In a strange land?"

It cannot be done. Just as Israel's Song of Redemption would have been out of place in Egypt, so will this be also if the heart has wandered. The songs that breathe spiritual emancipation can only flourish in the hills and valleys of Emmanuel's land—

"If I forget thee . . . O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning;
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not,
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy."

How much is bound up in the remembrance of the Mount Zion which God loves! That hill-encircled city derived its value from the fact that God had chosen to place His Name there. As then, so now also, to the heart in touch with God unique value attaches to the testimony which the city expresses.

“The Lord is the Glory in the midst thereof.”

May He grant to us each that our life-work may be in connexion with the place of His Name, and that our labours may not be in the house of a stranger. Remembering that we differ from Israel of old in this respect, that, whereas their gatherings at the Divinely appointed seasons were to a place, our gathering is to a Person, how impressive to us each does the Psalmist's desire become. For do we not know by sad experience that ability to work well, expressed by the “cunning right hand,” and the power to speak as we ought of Christ to others depend upon our giving Him the chief place in our lives? Work and word, fruit and testimony are linked up with our remembering of Him. To forget and thus lose sight of our Lord means that Samson becomes weak as other men, that Peter denies and Thomas doubts Him. To forget Him means that we forget what manner of persons we ought to be, so that sons of God may be found devouring husks, occupied with forms, striving after earth's honours—and so be like those that go down to the pit. Blessed be God for that day soon to be ushered in by the Bright and Morning Star, when, for us, this scene of disorder and sin where He is rejected shall be ended. Our wanderings then shall cease and our backslidings be things of the past. Then, in His presence perfected and like Him, we shall with skill of right hand and tongue of more than angelic sweetness, praise Him as we ought.

J. M'LEOD.

THE CHRISTIAN.

(Continued from page 228.)

1. Supplications. We are so to enter into man's need as to take up his attitude of personal entreaty before God. He can make no demand on God, but is wholly dependent on His mercy. This the believer recognizes, and instead of man, and as occupying his place, he takes the place of a suppliant, casting himself on the mercy of God.

2. Prayers. This has reference not so much to the attitude as to the various subjects which appeal to the believer's mind as calling for constant mention before God, and it evidences an intelligent acquaintance with the leading features of man's life which will enable him to adequately pray concerning them.

3. Intercessions. Trouble, calamity, plague, war, etc., may fall upon the people, and such an one as an Abraham is needed to stand up and intercede, and how powerful such intercession can be we may learn from Genesis 18. Indeed the presence of the people of God in this world should be, and doubtless is, of incalculable advantage to men. God is not unmindful of their presence, and He bears long and much when perhaps otherwise judgment would be poured out.

4. Giving of thanks. If prayers in seeking God's blessing are desirable, then is it fitting to return thanks for blessing received, and for deliverances granted. Man is naturally forgetful of God's benefits, so ready to cry out in trouble, but so unready to return thanks, that the Psalmist makes his touching appeal: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men!" It is the believer's happy duty to recognize God's goodness, and to not only be thankful, but to give thanks.

There are of course many other matters concerning which the saints should pray—matters relating to the

things of God, and also to their own things as well as those concerning the world. Indeed the injunction is to be anxious in nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make known requests unto God.

We have now briefly viewed the position, with its privileges and responsibilities, of a Christian in connexion with the assembly of God, taking mainly for our text the comprehensive verse 42 of Acts 2., but not hesitating to go further afield to glean from other portions confirmation and illustration of the same. The subject is one of the very greatest importance as touching the will of God for His people; and if that which has been set forth commend itself as being the truth, then let us with devotion and earnest enthusiasm give ourselves to fuller manifestation of the same than has been the case in the past.

II.

We come now to the second part of our subject, namely, THE CHRISTIAN IN VARIOUS RELATIONSHIPS OF LIFE. This is very important, and has a distinct influence on one's service for God, therefore it is embraced within the legislation of God for His people. It is very noticeable that the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, which deals so largely with the important subject of the conduct of the assembly when in assembly, deals also with that of the people of God when not so gathered. To borrow an illustration from Israel's wilderness life, the legislation of God embraced the behaviour of His people in connexion with their tents as well as with His tent. His tent was the central thing, the point of gathering, but their tent life had an important bearing upon their service in connexion with His tent. The man of 1 Cor. 5. was not charged with sin or lawlessness in connexion with the assembly when in assembly, but with sin

in his private life, if we can use the expression, for in truth no life can be private in the sense of being lived entirely to oneself. Chapter 6. deals with the subject of practical righteousness between man and man, making special reference to men going to law with one another, and chapter 7. particularly illustrates what has been suggested as to God's legislation for the life of His people in their tents—their home life.

There are three kinds of double relationships which the New Testament Scriptures specially deal with, as being those in which the people of God may be in agreement with the will of God, and in connexion with which teaching and exhortation are given. These relationships are those of wives and husbands—children and parents—servants and masters. The first suggests the principle of partnership, with its mutual obligations. The second that of government, requiring also subjection. The third that of mutual dependence—covering the thought of trade and commerce.

HUSBANDS AND WIVES. When a man is unmarried he has only himself to consult and please, but if he take a wife he accepts the obligations of a partnership of a very high order—a partnership which makes claims upon those embraced within it affecting every part of their life. Neither the husband nor the wife can reserve anything, the one can draw upon the other without limit—the liability is unlimited. In a business partnership certain limitations may be laid down, beyond which neither partner can go, but not so in this partnership of God's own institution. And the obligation is mutual, though the duties of each to the other are different. This is very tersely put in 1 Cor. 7. 3. "Let the husband render unto the wife her due and likewise also the wife unto the husband." The one essential thing to grasp in connexion with this relationship is that privilege and responsibility must go together. It is because these two things are separated, and men desire the privilege

without accepting the responsibility, that so much unhappiness in the married state exists, and also why there is a traffic in this thing which is entirely opposed to the scriptural thought of marriage.

Christians who enter into this relationship should very seriously consider what is the wife's due, and also what is the husband's. Need it be said that a careful consideration of the scriptures in Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Peter 3., 1 Cor. 7. will give the necessary instruction?

This partnership does not mean that both partners are equal. The husband is, according to the united testimony of the Word, the paramount partner, the wife being the weaker vessel. This is no reason why the husband should be puffed up, but he should rather consider for what reason his strength is given, remembering that word "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak."

The husband's due or obligation to his wife is to love her. It is his business to protect, guide and cherish. She being the weaker should have great consideration shown to her. The husband should go in front and shield her, he should take the heavier portion of the burden and so relieve her. Indeed he cannot follow a better example than that set forth in Eph. 5. in reference to Christ's love to the Church, for which He gave Himself, and which He nourishes and cherishes.

The wife's part is to occupy a position of subordination. She should remember that the woman was made for the man, that she is his helpmeet and his complement. Her greatest pleasure and care should be to please him. Her manner will consequently be unobtrusive, the outcome of a meek and quiet spirit. Such a spirit is excellent in any, but peculiarly suits and adorns a woman, and in such a day as the present, when the cry of "woman's rights" is heard, and when many women are doing themselves and their husbands great wrong by their unseemly manner, it is im-

portant that the exhortation of 1 Peter 3. 1-6 be regarded. The woman's attire is also alluded to in this portion, and it is suggested that it should in its modest appearance be an index of the meek and quiet spirit within.

Both for husband and wife Eph. 5. furnishes a surpassingly excellent standard by which their conduct to one another should be regulated. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church," and "As the Church is subject to Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

PARENTS AND CHILDREN. If the relationship between a husband and wife is as it should be, then we may expect the result which is set forth in Malachi 2. 15, "a godly seed," but if there be estrangement and disunion between the parents it will be vain to expect this result. In the scriptures relating to this subject, the father is addressed as being the possessor of authority within the family circle, but the wife is one with him in the matter. The subject sets forth the principle of government on the one hand and subjection on the other. Indeed, in the family we have the principle of all government according to God in a miniature form, and that embracing nations and peoples should only be an expansion of the thing. That the thought of rule or government is prominent here, is plainly indicated in 1 Tim. 3. 5, "if a man know not how to rule his own house how shall he take care of a church of God?" We must guard against the tendency to restrict the meaning of the word "govern" or "rule." It by no means is confined to the thought of punishing evil, of using the rod, but covers the obligation to care for, to train, to encourage or discourage as the need may be of those embraced within the sphere of influence.

The father is to exercise firm and kind authority without being provocative, for provocative rule tends either to anger or discouragement, Eph. 6. 4, Col. 3. 21, whereas

training, which implies continuity of effort (free from the impulsiveness of rule that provokes) will be highly beneficial. It is easy to be lenient sometimes and severe sometimes, but such a course is ruinous to the children; but training is difficult, for it can only be carried on by one who is himself trained. It calls for love, patience, self-denial, wisdom and persistence, and perhaps it is because it is such a difficult thing and requires such a high degree of excellence in the one who "trains," that such sad failures are common in the households of Christians.

The sort of training is stated in Eph. 6. "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Their training is to be in the fear of the Lord; as Psalm 34. says, "Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord." The moral principles pleasing to God are to be pressed upon them, as Psalm 34. proceeds,

"What man is he that desireth life
And loveth many days that he may see good?
Keep thy tongue from evil
And thy lips from speaking guile.
Depart from evil and do good.
Seek peace and pursue it."

This by no means implies that they are to be made religious in the sense of making a speedy profession of being Christians. If God is pleased so to order it, this may rightly happen at an early age, but the care of the Christian parent is to see that the ways of his child are conformed to the will of God.

Then it is the further blessed privilege of the parent to instruct his children in the Word of God, and indeed this is implied in the foregoing. This obligation was laid upon the Israelites very emphatically, Deut. 6. 7, and receives confirmation for our own times in 2 Tim. 3. 14, 15, which scripture also furnishes us with an example of the excellent results flowing from it. We may gather that it is the

duty as well as the privilege of the Christian parent to seek to store the minds of his children with the Scriptures, looking to God that He will in His own time and way quicken the Word in their hearts, so that by faith in Christ Jesus they may be made wise unto salvation. Timothy is a delightful illustration of this; himself coming from a godly stock, he was instructed in the sacred writings from infancy, and while yet young, unfeigned faith was found in him. This is a most encouraging instance for Christian parents, and incidentally we may say for Sunday School teachers, who, moved with truly parental love, seek to do for neglected children of others what their own parents either cannot or do not do.

This training of the households of Christians has a very important bearing on the continuance of Christian testimony, for "instead of the fathers shall be the children," ought to be the rule, and indeed assemblies of God should be largely recruited from the families of those who have been and are in their midst.

We may add a few words on the obligations resting on Christian children. It is theirs to obey. The authority under which they are found is indeed of God, and resistance thereto is against Him. This fact needs to be appreciated far more than is generally the case. If it were better understood, the dignity of the parent's position would be greatly enhanced, and respect for Divinely-appointed government greatly strengthened. Then the exhortation proceeds "Honour thy father and mother." In how many ways may such an exhortation be interpreted? Not only in an outward show of respect, though this also has its place, but in the more substantial way of helping in times of need and in comforting and nourishing in old age. The behaviour of the Lord Jesus to His earthly parents is truly edifying in this respect. His subjection to His parents is particularly mentioned, and His firm check of His mother on

more than one occasion in no way militates against this fact, for it was only when His mother overstepped her proper duties and encroached on His subjection to His God that He checked her, and that this was appreciated by her is tolerably plain from her subsequent history.

Then what a remarkable instance of honouring His mother in caring for her is furnished by the scene at the Cross as recorded in John 19. 25-27! What a moment was that to make arrangements for her welfare after He had gone! Turning to her He said concerning John "Woman, behold thy son," and to John "behold thy mother," the result being that "from that hour that disciple took her to his own home."

MASTERS AND SERVANTS. We may conclude that this subject is one of great moment and especially that part of it which applies to servants, seeing that so many scriptures bear upon it (Eph. 6., Col. 3. and 4., 1 Tim. 6., Tit. 2. 9., 1 Pet. 2. 18.) The underlying thought in this relationship is that of mutual dependence, and it is the same principle which promotes trade and commerce. In the wisdom of God, no one is intended to be self-contained; each is viewed as belonging to a great scheme of co-operation where everybody should both give and receive, a sort of "Exchange" where value is given for value, whether it be in the form of physical or mental service, or in the form of food or any commodity of use to man. The great principle regulating such a commerce should be "righteousness." "That which is just and equal," Col. 4. 1, should be rendered by each to the other. This excludes the thought of overreaching, or of driving a hard bargain. The servant is viewed as being in possession of strength and skill which his master stands in need of. The master, on the other hand, has many things of value to the servant which he is willing to give in exchange for service rendered, the whole arrangement being governed by equity. But the Christian standpoint is somewhat

higher than bare right dealing, the servant is to render service with goodwill as to the Lord, acting as a servant of Christ. The master is to do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that his Master has His eyes upon him. Thus we get beyond the mere matter of barter, however rightly conducted, and the master is expected to show a benevolent feeling of interest in his servant, and the servant to look after his master's interests as though they were his own.

It need hardly be suggested that the state of feeling now so largely prevalent between masters and men, as seen in the formation of "Unions," and the industrial wars which are constantly being waged, are very much opposed to the harmonious co-operation which the Scriptures set forth. While indeed we do not expect men generally to take the New Testament teaching for their guide in this matter, yet it is urgently incumbent on Christian masters and men to behave to their servants and employers, whether they be Christians or not, agreeably to the good will of God.

We have thus very briefly glanced at the Christian in those positions in life in which he may be found according to the will of God. The subject is very, very important, and it may safely be said that he who conforms his ways in these things to the teaching given in the Word will be rendering a delightful service, an offering of a sweet smell, truly acceptable unto God.

S. J. HILL.

(To be continued.)

For Young Believers.

"As new-born babes, desire the milk of the Word, which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation."—1 Peter 2. 2.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

XLIX. NOVEMBER 8.

MATTHEW 26. 57-27. 26; MARK 14. 53-15. 15;

LUKE 22. 54-23. 25; JOHN 18. 12-19. 16.

WE learn from John that the Lord Jesus was at first brought before Annas and it might seem as if verses 19-24 of John 18. recorded what took place before Annas, previously to the Lord being sent before Caiaphas. But although verse 24 appears to convey this meaning, it can hardly be so, because verse 19 distinctly says that it was the high priest who examined the Holy Prisoner. The exact meaning of verse 24 with the word *οὖν*, *oun*, "therefore," in it we cannot understand. This should make us very careful to avoid the dangerous temptation to suppose the word of doubtful authority because this word is omitted in the Greek Testament of Stephanus, and in the English Authorized Version. Better and safer far to say that we do not understand.

From Matthew and Mark we learn of the vain efforts to convict the Lord on false testimony. But even when they got two to perjure themselves by a travesty of the Lord's word, they failed to agree in their false testimony (Mark). Through all this the Holy Prisoner is silent, in spite of the appeal that He should defend Himself. But there was no need of this; no one can or ought to be expected to defend himself against an indefinite charge, or one for which there is not definite and concordant evidence.

We now read of adjuration, a process strange to English ears. It consists in putting a person on oath perforce to speak as to a certain matter; compare, for example, Leviticus 5. 1, where it is counted sin to a man that having seen or

known a matter, he is adjured to bear witness and fails to do so. See also Proverbs **29. 24.**

It seems to us that it was a gross perversion of justice on the part of Caiaphas, though worthy of his selfish pseudo-patriotism. At any rate the very nature of the interrogatory showed its impropriety. For if he believed that the Lord Jesus was the Christ, it was the grossest blasphemy and profanity to allow Him to be brought before him. If on the other hand he did not believe, it is evident, as the event proved, that, like the *agent provocateur*, of continental governments, who entices poor victims into sin, he was tempting the Lord to say what he believed was blasphemy.

But this is no real cause for marvel; see Ecclesiastes **5. 8.** Besides Proverbs **27. 19** tells us that

“As in water face answereth to face
So the heart of man to man,”

and accordingly in the ruthless disregard of justice that Caiaphas showed we see as in a mirror what our own hearts are.

However the Lord accepts the challenge and bears the unequivocal testimony to His own person recorded in different forms in Matthew, Mark, Luke, but omitted in John.

During these hours of the night when the Master was thus being examined before the High Priest, the wheat was being sifted (Luke **22. 31, 32**), and poor Peter made a sorry exhibition of himself; again a mirror wherein we may see our own hearts. There is a little difficulty about the details of Peter's threefold denial as recorded in the Gospels. We proceed briefly to comment thereupon.

1. The first temptation was from a maid of the high priest (Matthew **26. 69, 70**, Mark **14. 66-68**, Luke **22. 56, 57**, John **18. 17, 18**).

2. From Mark **14. 69** (R.V.), we learn that this same maid after this said to those that stood by that he was one of

them, whilst from Matthew 26. 71 we learn that another maid did so. But Luke 22. 58, 59, shows that it was a man—*ἄνθρωπος*, *hētērōs*, a different one (masculine)—who spoke to Peter himself and to whom he replied, *ἄνθρωπε, οὐκ εἰμὶ*, *Anthrōpē ouk eimi*, Man, I am not. Evidently there was some little talk amongst those standing by; perhaps Peter kept quiet for a few minutes, till the direct charge of the man was too much for him.

3. They that stood by, and in particular a kinsman of Malchus, are mentioned in connexion with the third denial.

The cock crew—poor Peter—but the Lord turned and looked upon him. It is Luke who gives us this reason for Peter's remembrance of the Lord's words.

Compare Numbers 6. 25, for, of the triune blessing,

“Jehovah make His face to shine upon thee
And be gracious unto thee”

is the blessing of the Word, the Eternal Son of God, Who became flesh.

The morning being come of that dread eventful day the Lord is led away to Pilate and they accuse Him—not apparently at first for calling Himself the Son of God. In the first place, they seem to have depended on a vague charge that He was an evildoer, then more specifically that He called Himself King of the Jews, and hence was a rival to the Caesar.

Matthew gives us some account of Pilate's anxiety to release Him, especially after hearing his wife's dream. Mark is briefer. Luke alone records that Pilate sent Him to Herod as being a Galilean. John gives the most detailed account of the travesty of justice; showing, as do all four, that Pilate delivered the Lord to be crucified just because he was carried away by popular clamour, and had in him no manliness or courage to say “No” and stand to it. Over against this poor wretched weakling set the four Hebrew boys, Daniel and his companions, and let those who wish to

become Men of God, remember that such they cannot be unless as boys they learn with Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to say "No" when there is occasion, and there to stand. Poor Pilate, representative of the World's strong Empire! but his strength unhelped by God was as nought when the Devil brought his forces to bear.

So the murderer was released and the Righteous One was delivered to be crucified; not merely to be put to death, but to be slain with every circumstance of ignominy by which Satan could mark his hatred and that of his poor dupes; whilst at the same time God showed His wisdom and His power, interposing the Cross between His people and the religious world.

NOVEMBER 22.

MATTHEW 27. 27-66; MARK 15. 16-47; LUKE 23. 26-56;
JOHN 19. 17-42.

PERHAPS there is nothing in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded by the four Evangelists of which it is so easy to set the four accounts side by side and recognize their variety in unity, and especially their unity in variety as the narrative of the Crucifixion.

From Matthew and Mark we learn of the preliminary brutalities of the Roman soldiers, concerning which Luke and John are silent. From John alone we learn that at the first setting forth the Lord carried the cross for Himself, whilst we find from Matthew, Mark, Luke that it became necessary to impress Simon of Cyrene to bear His load. Only Luke tells of the Lord's words to the daughters of Jerusalem.

All four gospels record that He was crucified with two malefactors—robbers, the place being described thus:—

εἰς τόπον λεγόμενον Γολγοθά, ὅς ἐστι λεγόμενος Κρανίου τόπος.
eis tōpon lēgōmēnōn Gōlgōtha, hōs ēsti lēgōmēnōs Kranīou tōpōs.
into place called Golgotha, which is called of a skull place
(Matthew).

ἐπὶ Γολγοθᾶ τόπον, ὃ ἐστὶ μεθερμηνευόμενον Κρανίου τόπος.
 ἐπὶ Γολγοθᾶ τόπον, ἡ ὅ ἐστι μεθερμηνευόμενον Κρανίου τόπος.
 to of Golgotha place, which is being interpreted of a skull place
 (Mark).

ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Κράνιον.
 ἐπὶ τὸν τόπον τὸν καλούμενον Κράνιον.
 to the place the called skull (Luke).
 εἰς τὸν λεγόμενον Κρανίου τόπον, ὃ λέγεται Ἑβραϊστί Γολγοθᾶ.
 εἰς τὸν λεγόμενον Κρανίου τόπον, ἡ ὃ λέγεται Ἑβραϊστί Γολγοθᾶ.
 into the called of a skull place, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha.
 (John).

גִּלְגֹּתָא Γολγοθᾶ, Golgotha is Hebrew.

Κράνιος, is Greek (hence cranium, cranial).

Calvaria, Calvary is Latin.

Skull is English.

The occurrence of Calvary in the English Authorized Version is due to the fact that the Bible had been previously translated from the Latin Vulgate, and therefore Calvary was retained as a proper name.

Again, all the Gospels record that the soldiers parted His garments among them. But while Matthew, Mark, Luke all speak of their casting lots, only John explains the special reason for casting lots, namely, that the tunic was without seam, woven from the top throughout. Surely when we remember Hannah's care for Samuel, we may legitimately suppose that this garment was of Mary's weaving.

It is John, who records this, who alone records the Lord's words to Mary and to himself, which we count the second and third of His eight recorded utterances on the cross:—

2. "Woman, behold thy son."

3. "Behold thy mother."

For we judge that the words of Luke 23. 34 come first:—

1. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But whether right or wrong as to the order of these, there can, we think, be no doubt that these three were the first three.

The Lord being crucified at the third hour, we read not

only of mocking of chief priests and scribes and elders, and of soldiers, but also that the two robbers reproached Him (Matthew, Mark); but ere the sixth hour came—the one black noontide of creation's history—one of these malefactors had been moved by the marvellous meekness and kindness of the Suffering One; and when his fellow railed, "Art not Thou the Christ? Save Thyself and us," he turned and rebuked him, and though being ignorant of the Lord's dignity, he called Him with marked impropriety "Jesus," yet there was some little faith—shall we say as a "grain of mustard seed"?—that drew from the Lord the fourth word recorded only by Luke:—

4. "Amen, I say unto thee, 'To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.'"

Then was there a fulfilment of the word of Isaiah—

"When Thou shalt make His soul a guilt-offering.
He shall see a seed."

Then came darkness that covered the land (or the earth) from noontide to the ninth hour—that would be till some time before or after what we call three o'clock, according to the time of the year. This darkness is recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke. We look first at Matthew and Mark, who alone record the cry:—

5. "Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani"—that is, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?"—which we take to be fifth of the recorded utterances. We read from the Revised Version, margin, for the Greek verb is in the aorist tense. On referring to Psalm 22. we find the answer to this cry—

"Thou art holy."

It was because the Lord was the Sin-bearer that this terrible woe was His.

According to the Divine teaching in the Levitical law

we find four special types of the Lord's death, which we thus enumerate :

- I. The sin-offering.
- II. The guilt-offering, or trespass-offering.
- III. The burnt-offering, or ascending offering.
- IV. The sacrifice of peace-offerings.

And as we believe these are definitely to be connected with the four accounts of the Lord's work in the four Gospels, we will briefly indicate them, though we do not regard this as the place for detailed exposition of the manifold efficacy of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We note, then, that only Matthew and Mark record this particular utterance of the Lord, and hence conclude that the thought of suffering for sin is prominent here. To us it seems clear that the Divine punishment for sin is especially to be found in this forsaking by God, in this exclusion from His presence, which it appears that we are to connect specially with the dread darkness of these three awful hours.

“ Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When the Incarnate Maker died
For man His creature's sin.”

The difference between the sin-offering and the guilt-offering seems to be that the former contemplates the demands of Divine law, and the latter the requirements of the individual conscience.

Thus, for example, in Leviticus 4, 13-21 we read of a sin-offering for the whole people as well as for individuals in the same chapter. But in chapter 5, a man is contemplated who finds himself to be guilty, and he brings a guilt-offering; and yet the guilt-offering is not an altogether different thing, but is itself a kind of sin-offering, or shall we say the sin-offering in a particular aspect, so that Leviticus 5. 6 reads: “ He shall bring his guilt-offering . . .

a lamb or a goat for a sin-offering." Thus the two things are blended. Note the connexion of guilt-offering with forgiveness in Leviticus 5. 16. Compare, too, the law of the leper's cleansing in Leviticus 14. But note that in Leviticus 16. there is no guilt-offering. Forgiveness on the day of atonement is dealt with differently. We might perhaps say that to bring a guilt-offering suggests human responsibility—

"By faith I lay my hand
Upon that head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my crime"

whilst on the day of atonement we see Divine sovereignty in connexion with the scapegoat :

"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,
And I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

Then, as we have always found Mark to deal more personally and individually with sinners than Matthew, we associate the former with the guilt-offering, and the latter with the sin-offering.

Turning to Luke, we still read of those three hours of darkness which seem to shut man out altogether. Note, too, that here in both the first and last cry of the Lord we have an address, "Father." In this the Luke account stands alone. It appears to us that in Luke we have the Lord's atoning work as typified by the burnt or ascending offering, which was all for God. Christ through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. This is atonement for righteousness, not for sin. That is to say, it is the act of righteousness accomplished by Christ which is imputed to those who believe on Him :

"How perfect is the righteousness
In which unspotted beauteous dress
The saints have ever stood.

In John we read nothing of the darkness that shut man out, for here we have the sacrifice of peace-offerings, in which God, the Priest, and the worshipper all have a part. Here is food. This aspect of the death is spoken of under the title, the blood of the Son of Man; whilst the blood of Christ tells us of the burnt-offering; and the blood of the Lamb and the blood of Jesus the Son of God speak of the sin-offering and the guilt-offering, yet so as they are all linked together each to each and altogether. We say each to each, because, for example, in alike the sin-offering, the guilt-offering and the sacrifice of peace-offerings the fat was offered as burnt-offering; for example again, the sin and guilt-offering are closely linked; for yet another example, there was food for priests in the flesh of certain sin-offerings and guilt-offerings, for all which see Leviticus under those headings.

After the fifth cry we learn from Matthew and Mark that the Lord was given a sponge full of vinegar put upon a reed. From John we learn what the others do not mention that this followed His sixth utterance:—

6. "I thirst";

and that He then said:—

7. "It is finished,"

and bowed His head and gave up His spirit. One of these, probably the latter cry, is described by Matthew and Mark.

"Jesus cried again with a loud voice."

"Jesus uttered a loud voice."

This is supposing we take the reading of Luke 23. 46, as in the Revised Version text (and Authorized Version). Then He lastly said:

8. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. And having said this He gave up the ghost" (or expired).

(If we read as the Revised Version margin of Luke 23. 46 these last words were those which were uttered with a loud voice. This, however, seems unlikely.)

Care must be taken to distinguish between

(1) The wine mingled with myrrh and gall offered before the crucifixion.

(2) The vinegar offered during the first three hours by the mocking soldiers.

(3). The vinegar given and received after the ninth hour.

The actual death is described by the four Evangelists thus :—

ἀφῆκε τὸ πνεῦμα

aphēkē tō pneuma

yielded up or dismissed the spirit

ἐξέπνευσε(ν).

exēpneuse(n).

breathed out, expired.

παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα.

paredoke to pneuma

gave up or gave back or delivered up the spirit.

The loud voice immediately precedent showed the undiminished strength and vitality of the Sufferer.

It was a moment of triumph for Him, spite of the bitter and cruel anguish. He had offered Himself to God—His sacrifice was accepted as a perfect one, He was the Lamb that God had provided. He now lays down His life: He dies.

As to human responsibility and guilt, they took Him, and by wicked hands did crucify and slay. But none the less, it was true that they took not His life. He laid it down, having received authority so to do; and the spirit returned to God who gave it.

The soul of the blessed Lord went down into Sheol, and by the blood of the covenant He gave a blessed deliverance, and no doubt those of whom Matthew tells us that they re-entered their bodies after His resurrection and visited many, were just so many witnesses of the multitude of captives that He delivered.

As to the holy body of the Lord, it was laid in Joseph's tomb. But first, the absolute and unquestionable reality of the death must receive clear and unequivocal testimony from the enemies of the Lord.

First, then, ere the end of the day, ere sunset, the soldiers were bidden to put the poor sufferers out of their misery, and the two robbers were sent to Sheol (Hades, Hell) that same day, though they might have lingered on. But of these two, whilst one went to his own place, even to Sheol beneath, the other joined his Saviour in that upper Sheol, which the presence of the Redeemer converted into Paradise.

But when they (the Roman soldiers) came to Jesus, they saw that He was dead already—we are reading from John: we pass over the mention of the fulfilment of prophecy; we note that the soldier pierced His side, and there came forth blood and water. Let it be well noted that the value of this lay in the evidence it afforded. The blood speaks of the manifestation of death. Already the Lord was dead; already there was joy in the presence of God in heaven; and gladness amongst the patriarchs in Sheol; but what the soldier did was to show by that stream of blood and water that indeed the Lord had died.

Here, too, in John, we read of Joseph and Nicodemus burying the body; but it is clear from Mark that Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body before the soldiers had acted as described in John. This was in the wisdom of God, for now we get Pilate enquiring of the Centurion and receiving from him adequate legal proof of the death, to which the incidents recorded in John come to be added as additional evidence. But it goes further than this; for the chief priests and Pharisees, we learn from Matthew, were so satisfied as to the death, that they only wished the tomb guarded lest the body should be stolen.

We may just note that the late hour of the death and the much described as following it before the Sabbath leads us to agree with those who believe that the Crucifixion was on what we call Thursday.

“CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM,
FOR HE CARETH FOR YOU.”

WHATE’ER thy cares, O anxious one,
Cast all on Him.

Yea, ev’ry load, for there is none
Too much for Him.

Though many trials thee befall,
None is too great, nor yet too small,
But He will take and bear them all,
If rolled on Him.

If fierce temptations cross thy path,
Rely on Him.

He’ll succour thee, for power He hath:
Depend on Him.

Dost thou at times discouraged feel
When sinners heed not thine appeal,
And wasted seem thy words? Then kneel
And tell it Him.

Or doth the way seem hard and rough?
Then trust to Him.

To firmly tread, it is enough
To lean on Him.

If strange thy ways to some appear,
And thou dost feel their covert sneer
’Gainst One Whose will thou holdest dear,
Confide in Him.

When Satan’s wiles beset thee round,
Keep close to Him.

When snares on ev’ry hand abound,
Still cleave to Him.

Truth-haters may their malice show;
And earthly friendships cold may grow:
Calm, restful confidence thou’lt know
By trusting Him.

What canst Thou want, with such a Friend
 To care for thee?
Thou may'st on Him for all depend,
 Who loveth thee;
And not like some, whose love is shown
By empty, specious words alone;
But by His deeds He maketh known
 His love for thee.

When waters of affliction deep
 Seem swamping thee,
Remember He doth fondly keep
 His watch o'er thee.
To thy weak cry His ear He lends,
And to thy troubles He attends;
Himself the burden takes and sends
 Comfort to thee.

Whene'er uncertain doth appear
 The path to thee,
The road no longer seemeth clear
 At all to thee,
When difficulties loom ahead,
Clouds fraught with all that causeth dread,
Leave all to Him, Who surely said
 He leadeth thee.

Take courage, then, and forward go,
 The Lord's with thee,
Strength, rest, and comfort 'tis to know
 That He's for thee.
Smooth will appear the rugged road,
And light, what seemed a heavy load,
Until is reached the blest abode
 Prepared for thee.

There like Him, with Him, face to face
 The Lord thou'lt see.
 Contented in that glorious place
 With Him to be.
 No cloud can dim that endless joy:
 No sin, no sorrow e'er annoy;
 Nor aught that fellowship destroy
 'Twixt thee and Him.

C. B.

BIBLE QUEENS.

QUEEN ESTHER.

(Concluded from page 216.)

The tidings reach Esther, and the queen is exceedingly grieved and sends raiment to clothe Mordecai and to take his sackcloth from off him. "But he received it not." This leads Esther to make further inquiries; a messenger is sent to know what this was and why it was. Mordecai makes all known to the messenger and gives the charge to Esther that she should go in unto the king to make supplication unto him and to make request unto him for her people.

The test has now come for Esther in her exalted position; will she be obedient to Mordecai, as in days past? She pleads the law of the land which declared certain death to any who came unto the king into the inner court unbidden, except such to whom the king should hold out the golden sceptre that he may live. "But I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days."

What has Mordecai to say now? "Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's

house shall perish ; and who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this ?”

In her reply to Mordecai, Esther desires a fast to be kept by the Jews for her, three days and three nights ; she and her maidens would fast in like manner, and so would she “ go in unto the king, which is not according to the law, and if I perish, I perish.” Esther had yet to realize the fact that in becoming obedient, even though it might be unto death, she would be in the will of God, the saviour of her people, and that indeed for this purpose had she been raised to such a position.

“ So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.” Well might we pause and ask ourselves how much (or how little) have we waited upon God in prayer and fasting, individually or collectively, in times of difficulty and distress. The third day came ; “ Esther put on her royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king’s house, over against the king’s house ; and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house.”

Trembling, doubtless, would the fair young queen stand in the royal presence ; but “ she obtained favour in his sight, and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near and touched the top of the sceptre. Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, Queen Esther, and what is thy request ? It shall be given thee even to the half of the kingdom.” Esther desires the presence of the king and Haman at the banquet of wine she had prepared for them, to which the king and Haman hasten. There again the king asks Esther, “ What is thy petition . . . and what is thy request ?” Yet again she would have them come to another banquet, then on the morrow would she make known her request to the king.

Esther left room for God to work, so we read in chapter 6 : “ On that night could not the king sleep . . .” They who learn to wait on God, learn to wait God’s time, for the

accomplishing of His holy will in them and through them. Burdened as Esther's heart must have been, she could wait another day for making her request known to the king, and ere the king and Haman sit down a second time at the queen's banquet, in the purpose of God Mordecai has been exalted, and Haman has been humbled, and we find him, conscious of his downfall, hastening to the banquet with the king, where, for the third time, the king asks, "What is thy petition, Queen Esther . . . what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed." Read chapter 7. Esther now pleads for herself and her people that their lives might be spared.

The astonished king exclaims, "Who is he, and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so?" And Esther said, "An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman." So "the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine . . . So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified. . . . And Mordecai came before the king: for Esther had told what he was unto her. And the king took off his ring which he had taken from Haman and gave it unto Mordecai, and Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman."

Read chapter 8. "And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre." And it pleased the king that letters be written in the king's name and sealed with the king's ring, and the posts sent out on horseback riding on swift steeds, being hasted and pressed on by the king's commandment: and the decree was given out in Shushan the palace. (On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month were all the Jews to be ready to avenge themselves of their enemies.) Verses 15, 16, 17 tell us what a

time of joy and gladness the Jews had, and the day that had been appointed for their destruction was turned in the will of their God to be a feast and a good day. Chapter 9 tells of their triumph over their enemies, and of their yearly remembrance of their deliverance, how that their sorrow had been turned to gladness and their mourning into a good day.

We cannot fail to trace in this God-breathed story the shadow of Him Who was to come, and Who did come, in lowly form yet equal with God. He humbled Himself and became obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross, "that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

"Who ever liveth to make intercession for us."

"Who hath delivered us out of so great a death and will deliver: on Whom we have set our hope, that He will also still deliver us." 2 Cor. 1. 10. He hath appointed for us an eternal day of rest; truly a feast and a good day will that be when Rev. 21. 4 is fulfilled.

"COME, LORD JESUS."

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

"Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."—2 Tim. 3. 13-17.

XVII.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

It is recorded of the company of disciples mentioned in

Acts 2. that they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in the fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers. Later on, when Paul and his fellow-travellers found themselves for a week in Troas (where there evidently was an assembly), they were gathered together to break bread on the first day of the week (Acts 20. 6, 7, R.V.), and it seems clear that they met at the earliest hours which were possible to them. Accordingly taking this as example teaching, we understand that the right frequency is weekly, and the time the early part of the first day (compare Prov. 3. 9). We are confirmed in the latter point by the Lord's own act in keeping the last Passover. For whilst the letter of the law of Moses allowed considerable latitude (between the evenings), it is recorded of Him that when the hour was come He sat down, and the apostles with Him (Luke 22. 14, and compare John 18. 28).

An account of the Lord's breaking of the bread after the last Passover is contained in the Gospels according to Matthew and Mark, but certainly there are none of His words recorded there which speak explicitly of the future breaking of the bread by the disciples.

But in Paul's letter to the assembly of God in Corinth he speaks of what the Lord Himself had made known to him by revelation, which he had previously delivered to the assembly in Corinth, and undoubtedly to the other assemblies that he had planted, which were with the assembly in Corinth in the Fellowship of the Son (see 1 Cor. 1. 2, 9; 11. 23-25, and compare 4. 17).

It is clear, therefore, that we have here needful instructions as to the manner in which the Lord would have us carry out the ordinance. With it in general the account given in Luke agrees very closely. To it we shall not refer again, partly on this account and partly because we have no reason to believe that the church in Corinth had

either Luke or Matthew or Mark in their hands to direct them in the matter, but were guided by Paul's oral instruction.

Such a company as the assembly of God in Corinth gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (compare Matt. 18. 20 and 1 Cor. 5. 4), and forming a part of the Fellowship into which God calls His people, alone can keep the ordinance of breaking the bread in remembrance of the Lord of which this letter speaks (see also 1 Cor. 5. 8). This company, namely, a church of God, may meet in different places, each company meeting in one building, being called, as we have previously mentioned, a church of the saints or a church at a house. But apart from such companies we believe the ordinance cannot be kept according to the revealed will of God, since all the needful instructions for it are not found apart from this letter to an assembly of God; and the breaking of the bread is itself a corporate act that cannot be carried out by any individual or individuals, but only by a God-gathered company.

The passage in 1 Cor. 11. 23-25, records the Lord's special revelation to Paul as to what He in the night of His betrayal instituted in remembrance of Himself. That is to say, something ordained to be done to bring Himself to remembrance.

This account in 1 Cor. 11. 23-25 of what the Lord Himself did is given to us that when gathered together to break the bread we may do likewise, in remembrance of Himself. The bread was taken by the Lord into His hands, He then gave thanks, and having given thanks brake the loaf.

When we are in assembly, being gathered together for the breaking of the bread, the one who gives thanks does so beyond all controversy as the voice of the assembly. It is his to speak such words of thanksgiving that all

may from the heart say "Amen" (compare especially 1 Cor. 14. 16). His action is not to be regarded as in any way clerical or exalting him above his fellows, any more than any other act in which one in prayer, or in giving out a hymn for example, leads his fellows in prayer, thanksgiving, or praise.

Such it is in like manner with the taking of the loaf before the thanksgiving and the breaking thereof afterwards. All who are together do this by the hand of the one who becomes the servant of all for this purpose. What is done by one is done by him for all. The whole assembly of saints is acting together in the taking and the giving thanks and the breaking, though the literal acts are done by one. "This do ye"—are the Lord's words—"in remembrance of Me." In like manner with the cup, concerning which He also commanded, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink, in remembrance of Me."

We specially note these last-quoted words; because while many believe that the eating and the drinking themselves constitute what is to be done in remembrance, it is here clearly stated that there is something other than drinking to be done in remembrance of Himself when (or as oft as) we drink the cup.

1 Cor. 11. 26 gives explanatory words of the Apostle Paul speaking by the command of God. They show clearly that the eating and drinking are a proclamation of the Lord's death.

It ought to be needless to say that there can be no separation of these distinct but conjoined things. The breaking and the eating go together as parts of the one command of the one Lord.

THE CHRISTIAN.

(Concluded from page 252.)

III.

WE NOW COME TO THE SUBJECT OF THE CHRISTIAN IN RELATION TO THE POWERS THAT BE AND TO ALL MEN.

First it will be desirable to examine into the nature of the Christian's calling. That it is heavenly and not of this world is plainly discovered on reading John 17., but it is also plain that he is not taken out of the world, though to be kept from the evil. Now the King is rejected, and His people are called to suffer and not to reign. Jerusalem is not God's centre for His people now, for the King is not there, but in Heaven; therefore the exhortation "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." That is our true centre. The Christian's relationship to the world is determined by the Lord's position. The time when Christ will sit upon David's throne in Zion is not yet. He is still rejected; the crowning day is coming by and by. Phil. 3. 20 views Christians as being strangers in the world, looking to Heaven as their native city and expecting the Deliverer speedily to take them there. "Our citizenship is in Heaven, from whence also we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Further, the nature of the present work of God is stated in Acts 15. 14 as being selective, God visiting the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name, not in saving nations, but in calling out a people from those nations. So the Christian is seen as apart from the rest, a stranger, and as going home, a pilgrim. And it is therefore not consistent with his calling to occupy a position of rule and government here and now in connexion with the kingdoms of this world.

But though this be the case, we desire to show that the

Christian has certain obligations to fulfil towards the world, in doing which he will not only discharge those duties, but will lay the world under a debt of obligation to himself.

The first and most important matter for him to observe is that of subjection, with all that it involves. The principle of government is recognized as being of Divine origin (Rom. 13.), "the powers that be are ordained of God," the ruler is the minister of God, and to resist him is to resist the ordinance of God. Incidentally it may be noticed that the ruler is seen as bearing the sword—not merely the rod—showing that punishment may extend even to taking the life of the offender.

The Christian should be the first amongst men to recognize such government and to be subject thereto. If it be righteous he is glad; if unrighteous he patiently submits.

Such recognition involves the payment of tribute, embracing any and every sort of impost which may be made. It is happily no part of his duty to judge of the justness or expediency of the tax, but only to pay—to render to all their dues. It is indeed a happy thing that the Christian is not called upon to judge as to the rightness of these taxes; if otherwise, his burdens and responsibilities would become very heavy.

Then he is to honour and fear those in authority, and this irrespective entirely of the personal character of the man. He is bound to respect the office he fills, even as the Lord Jesus recognized the authority of Pontius Pilate, albeit his action was most unrighteous.

We live in an easy-going day, and a democratic atmosphere is not a healthy one, nor one in which true reverence for authorities is likely to flourish and be strong. Therefore the more earnest heed should be shown to the directions of the Word on these matters. A proper appreciation of these things puts the Christian at ease, and delivers him from

the ungodly tactics of religious political agitators. Who are they, indeed, who bring government into contempt? Are they not religious people who talk arrogantly of rulers, who refuse to pay taxes, who stir up opposition? May we be delivered from all such ungodliness!

The second thing in which a Christian should do his part in the world is showing good works. Tit. 2. and 3. deal with this matter in a most forcible way, and show that such manner of behaviour is good and profitable unto men. It is something if a Christian becomes not a charge on the State by reason of wrong-doing; that not for Christians but for others is there need to maintain judges, police, prisons. Then the huge expenditure on Navy and Army, necessary, doubtless, from a national point of view, is not required by the teaching of Christianity. But while there is much matter for thought in connexion with this negative side of the Christian life, yet it by no means covers the duty of the follower of Christ. He is to live not only as denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, but soberly as to himself, righteously as to men, and godly as to God. He is to be zealous of good works, to be ready to every good work, to be careful to maintain good works, and the apostle concludes in Tit. 3. 14, "Let ours also learn to profess honest occupations for necessary uses." (R.V.) There are things in this world which rightly fall within the comprehensive words of Phil. 4. 8, "Things venerable, just, pure, lovely, of good report," and these things are ever to receive the approval and furtherance of the follower of Him Who went about doing good. Then as to honest trades, it is sad to consider that there are several occupations engaging the energies of men which are not merely foolish and wasteful, but actually vicious. In such a Christian should not be engaged, and it behoves all to be careful that what they are doing is good and profitable unto men.

A third thing which should engage the attention of the Christian is set out in 1 Tim. 2. "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all that are in authority." This views the Christian as occupying a very interesting position. He is in the midst of a scene of evil, from which his Lord has been rejected and which lieth under judgment. He is yet a man among men, knowing the sorrows and sins, the tribulation and distress which come to man, and out of the midst of such a scene, in which God can find no pleasure, he looks up to God, and on behalf of men who know not God nor Christ for themselves he, moved thereto by pitying sympathy, entreats, yea supplicates, God for mercy to be extended to men in their needs; he continues in prayers for their various and constant requirements; he intercedes for them when God's judgments are in the earth, and gives thanks for deliverances granted. Oh how greatly is the world under obligation to the people of God in this matter! in response to their prayers presented in the blessed Name God bears much and long. May we be more stirred up to this holy and blessed service for all men! It may be mentioned that fuller remarks bearing on this are given previously (pp. 227, 244), under the heading of "Continuing in the prayers."

The fourth way in which the Christian may do his part in the world is indicated in Rom. 1., namely, by making known the Gospel, which is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is a righteousness of God revealed from faith unto faith."

The Apostle spoke of getting to Rome, declaring his readiness to preach the gospel in Rome also, for he was not ashamed of it, seeing it was the power of God.

Rome in his day presented doubtless great moral and social problems which engaged the serious consideration of

statesmen and social reformers, even as the same problems face thinking men in these days, and nowhere more than in large towns and cities where people are gathered in great masses. Perchance even then, as now, crusades were organized against certain sorts of vice, pledges were taken to abstain from this thing or that thing, legislation was constantly being framed dealing with evils as they arose, and each and all of these efforts had some effect probably on the sum total of evil living. But at the best how inadequate was all this, how partial and fragmentary in its character, how largely based on mere prejudice, which would brand one vice with infamy and let other vices go free from censure! Such social reformers, however, posed as being better than most men, and duly received their portion of the esteem and honour of mankind.

The Apostle approaches, and he has a panacea—a cure not for one class of evil, but for all. He is not ashamed of it, because he knows it to be God's POWER, by which all who believe may be saved, and not saved from His judgment only, nor only from hell, but from the present dominion of sin. The Lord Jesus came to "destroy the works of the Devil." Behold Him in Mark 5, as the Power of God. A man, though in appearance more like a demon, approaches Him; he is possessed by a legion of demons. Repressive and reformative measures have been adopted, but in vain. Chains have been plucked asunder by him and fetters broken in pieces, and no one has been able to tame him. No more deplorable picture could possibly be given than this: a poor abandoned wretch beyond all human aid, but the Power of God is now present, the demons at His word depart, and the man is seen by the wondering eyes of the people sitting clothed and in his right mind, and he is then sent home to declare to his friends how great things the Lord had done for him.

The Lord has gone to Heaven, but in the Gospel

He is presented, that Gospel which can save and deliver the very vilest and the worst—"the Devil's cast-aways." How many evidences have been furnished of this great fact! Men and women of all kinds, guilty of all crimes, bond-servants of Satan, have been plucked from the burning through the power of the Gospel received in faith. This power will convert those who are held in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. This power is better, infinitely better, than reformation schemes, pledges, crusades, and the like, and it is this which the Christian has, and which he is responsible to make known. And in so making known the Gospel will he not be very greatly contributing to the well-being of men even here? How many men who were once evil living, or thieves or drunkards, or terrors to their fellows by their lawless ways, have been changed through the Gospel into righteous and orderly men to the great advantage of the community!

Much more could probably be written to show how the Christian who acts according to the Word in reference to the rulers and to all men is a great gain to any country or state, and that the country which embraces the most of such men will be the happiest and the best.

We now conclude these remarks, trusting that very careful consideration may be given to the exceedingly important subjects dealt with, and that with purpose of heart and much dependence on God further efforts may be made to give due expression to the same.

S. J. HILL.

Department of Review.

THE EXALTATION OF MAN.

REGRETFULLY true are the opening lines of the introductory section of this poem of our beloved co-worker unto the Kingdom of God, C. B., stating the general disrepute in which that person is held

“Who trusts implicitly, whate’er betide,
The Holy Scriptures as his God-breathed guide.”

Yet is the author not ashamed to be regarded as a “craze,” nor afraid of being accounted “behind the times” in seeking

“ . . . by the Book to scan
The Exaltation, false and true, of Man.”

Having thus declared his purpose he proceeds to recount the circumstances under which sin entered the world—the ear lent to Satan’s fair but deceptive promise, and refers to the state of ruin in which our first parents were thereafter found, which

“ . . . we, their progeny, in common share.”

Then we are informed of the author’s intention to glance at a few of the many ways by which fallen man seeks to exalt himself; all these efforts on the part of the many finding culmination in a supreme effort on the part of one who, in the language of Scripture, “exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, setting himself forth as God.”

“But this, by dire results we next shall see
A pseudo-exaltation proves to be.”

Following this, the author’s plan is to present the means that God sets forth whereby all may know true and certain exaltation no matter how lowly or despised

“ . . . their state or race,”

and to conclude by directing attention to

“ . . . God's exalted ONE,
The Christ. . . . ”

The poem thus naturally is divided into two parts, the first containing the false and the second the true exaltation of man, the former to be marked to be avoided, the latter to be marked to be pursued.

Specifically there is set forth in Part I. the career of the unregenerate, varied as it is in the forms that it takes, yet ever under the control of the Prince of the power of the air; ever at enmity with God, always in opposition to the rightful claims of the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore leading inevitably to a common woeful doom.

Beginning with Man in his natural estrangement from God, the pitiableness of his condition is further told out in that whilst manifestly under the power of Satan, yet nevertheless he thinks himself free and boasts of his liberty, presuming even to criticise the creation work of God, in Whose hands his breath is. What an incongruity this! The creature judging the Creator's work! But even here, as the poem declares, men understand neither what they say nor whereof they confidently affirm, for

“ In wilful ignorance of this they stand
That all was perfect as it left God's hand,
And that which has the harmony distraught,
The Devil has, by subtle scheming, wrought.”

But not only does Satan

“ . . . the great adept in craft and guile
Lead on his victims in the dark awhile,”

he even gets men to doubt God's very existence, and refusing to have Him in their knowledge the step is easy to reject His word. Revelation set aside, by what is it replaced?

“ Opinions changing often as the moon.
Wav'ring, unstable, e'en as shifting sand;
No solid ground on which the soul can stand.
But dreams of men. . . . ”

Apt reference follows to attempts that from of old have been made to destroy the Scriptures, which failing, the Adversary seeks to deprive them of their power by raising up

“ . . . a witty Voltaire and a Paine,
A Foote and Ingersoll, but still in vain ”

do these try

“ . . . hard to laugh and ridicule to death
The words of truth, inspired by Living Breath,”

and so recourse is had to

“ . . . men in graver tones of learned doubt
* * * * *
Who nature's universal laws make known,
But no Law-maker will their proud hearts own.”

It might reasonably have been thought that the artifices of Satan to get rid of the Word of God or to make it of none effect were thereby exhausted, and that he would not further maintain a contest in which he has ever known defeat, but alas ! no—for although

“ . . . neither ‘ modern thought ’ nor ancient flame
Can shake its truths—it still remains the same,
Firm as a rock, amid the seething waves,”
* * * * *

“ . . . sceptic pride has yet another phase,
A more deceitful artifice displays ;
* * * * *
A ‘ higher-criticism,’ German made—
Speaks of ‘ The Deity ’ in tones most awed,
Yet strives to show His written Word a fraud,”

and

“ By subtle sophistries they undermine
All credence in the Bible as Divine.”

But these

“ Professing to be wise, God says they're fools.
The ‘ higher critics ’ are but Satan's tools.”

We will not further anticipate our beloved fellow labourer, and so for what follows we must refer our readers

to the poem itself. Suffice it, in closing, to heartily commend this for general distribution as suitable not only for the unregenerate, but also for Christians, the references to the sufferings of Christ in particular being calculated to stir our hearts and to quicken our steps in the way of God's commandments.

J. P. A. T.

BIBLE READINGS ON THE GOSPELS.

LI. DECEMBER 6.

MATTHEW 28.; MARK 16.; LUKE 24.; JOHN 20., 21.;

ACTS 1. 1-11; 1 COR. 15. 1-8.

What remains for our consideration may be conveniently divided under four heads:—

1. The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and the visit of the women to the tomb.
2. The Infallible Proofs.
3. The teaching and commissioning during the forty days.
4. The Ascension.

Or again, we may say as to time that we have to take account of—

1. The Resurrection morning.
2. The remainder of the first Lordly Day.
3. The following Lordly day and subsequent occasions.
4. The fortieth day.

The distinctions just given may seem pedantic, but we think they will help to prevent needless confusion between the six accounts, and enable us to perceive the distinct narratives given in their mutual relation.

As to the actual resurrection itself, we are told but little. Matthew seems to give most particulars. There was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended (or

perhaps we should say "the Lord's angel," there seems a little doubt as to whether this might not be the Jehovah's angel of the Old Testament, whom there is some reason, perhaps, to believe is a unique personage) from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. The sight of this heavenly visitor frightens the watchers, and they see nothing else. Off they go, and the insane folly of verses 11 to 15 follows. How fond some religious men seem to grow of lies and lying!

This young man, Mark tells us—surely it is the same—is found by the women just inside, and to them he speaks in the words recorded in the three Gospels, Luke, however, mentioning another as being with him. In each please carefully note what is said. Observe that they are sent to the disciples, and especially to Peter, to whom they are to say that the Lord is to be seen by them in Galilee.

Let us now turn to John's account of these early hours. Here Mary Magdalene is mentioned alone, and the angels are quite left out. Clearly it is the intense personal and individual character of this Gospel that we see here. Such as it is, the difficulty lies in understanding how this account fits in with the others. We may just suggest a few possibilities to help, perhaps, in meeting the difficulties.

When Mary Magdalene rushed off rather hastily to Peter and John, as recorded in John, she probably had not seen the angel; the angels were not seen by Peter and John. Whether the meeting of the disciples with the angels miscarried, as the meeting of ordinary human beings may, or whether it was simply that it was not the Lord's will that the angels should be visible to the disciples we cannot say, probably the former. Then in John 20. 11 we read of Mary Magdalene that she stood without, weeping. Now there might possibly have preceded this that interview with the angels of which Matthew, Mark, Luke speak. We are not quite sure whether these three Gospels state that Mary

Magdalene was one of the women actually addressed by the angels.

We next observe the appearance of the Lord to Mary Magdalene; which is without exception the most pathetic incident in all the Scriptures. For mark that the Lord had not yet ascended to the Father. This ascent into Heaven spoken of in Psalm 24. verses 7, 8, as distinct from verses 9, 10, is that entrance when in His resurrection body He paid His first tribute of adoration to the Father and fulfilled, as we understand, what was typified by the first entrance of Aaron on the day of atonement, as see Leviticus 16. verses 11 to 14.

We are laying stress, it will be observed, on the words "Touch Me not" of verse 17, with the following explanation, as contrasted with verses 9 and 10 of Matthew 28. to show that between these two appearances of the Lord, that to Mary Magdalene and that to the women, there had been an ascent unto the Father and God. Hence the deep pathos, hence the infallible proof of the beating of a human heart in that resurrection body. For the tears of a woman stopped Him ere His triumphal entry as

". . . the King of Glory,
Jehovah strong and mighty,
Jehovah mighty in battle."

The earliness of this period is so emphasized that in spite of what we have said above we think it possible that it may be after this, namely, between verses 17 and 18 of John 20., that we should put the angelic message recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke. But we do not know, and perhaps are not meant to.

It may be convenient here to refer to Mark 16. 9-20 and to say that while the present writer makes not the smallest pretence to be an authority on textual criticism, he wishes to record his present judgment that though these verses are omitted in the very valuable MSS. \aleph and β they

yet form part of the inspired records. Here again we have the first appearance to Mary Magdalene mentioned. Note verse 11: they disbelieved—this may seem contradictory to John 20. 8, for instance. But there were probably great fluctuations in the state of their minds and hearts, till the other Advocate came.

Later in the day the Lord appears to others, and it is in His appearances to men that we must look for the infallible proofs of His resurrection; no women are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15. See thus how the Lord first appears to women for their own benefit only, afterwards to men whose testimony was of value. This shows the value the Lord sets on an individual.

First of all then amongst the men the Lord appeared to Peter, then to Cleopas and another (2). We cannot now tarry to comment on the Emmaus journey, but commend it for earnest study. Back without delay they come to find that the eleven were gathered, and that the Lord had appeared to Simon, and then the Lord took His place amongst them (3). Note that the apostles thus together are called in Mark 16. 14 and in Luke 24. 33 the eleven, though we learn from John 20. 24 that Thomas was missing. This is interesting and instructive. (But Paul speaks in 1 Cor. 15. of the twelve. Was Matthias with them on any occasion of this kind?)

Then from John 20. 26 we read of a manifestation on the following Lordly day, Thomas being present: this makes 4.

John 21. gives us an account so well known of another manifestation which we will count as 5.

Now returning to Matthew 28. see verse 16 and note the R.V. "But," not "Then" as A.V. incorrectly reads. Here then we have an interview which seems to us to be different to any recorded elsewhere: we may count it as 6 without suggesting exactly when it took place, but certainly it was not on the Resurrection day. This fitly closes

the Gospel of the Son of David, the Son of Abraham; the ascension not being mentioned here.

Mark gives us in verses 12, 13 a brief note of the Emmaus story, and in verse 14 we have a mention probably of what we have numbered above as 3.

But what of verse 15? Well, we are disposed to think that it is not closely linked to verse 14, but it records words spoken at an interview not elsewhere mentioned. There is, we suppose, an interval of time between verses 14 and 15, and between verses 18 and 19. We will call the manifestation of verses 15, 16, 17 number 7.

Luke's account of the third manifestation seems to continue to verse 43. The contents of verses 44-49 appear to have been spoken later: we number them as 8.

Here in verses 50, 51 of Luke **24.** as in Mark **16.** 19, 20, we get the inspired account of the Lord's ascension, also contained in Acts **1.** 9, 11 number 12.

The earlier verses of Acts **1.** scarcely allow of being portioned into definite interviews with the Lord, except that verses 4, 5 appear strictly parallel with Luke **24.** 48, 49.

In 1 Corinthians **15.** 1-7, Paul recounts certain definite witnesses to the Lord's resurrection which are

To Cephas, which we have taken to be first;

To the twelve, which may be one of those we have numbered third or fourth, or another manifestation altogether;

To five hundred brethren at once, not mentioned in the Gospels: we will call it 9;

To James, not elsewhere mentioned, say 10;

To all the apostles; this can hardly be identified with any in the Gospels: let us call it 11;

The manifestation to Paul after the ascension we will not here notice.

We have enumerated these, which, including that at the ascension, we count as being about 12 different manifesta-

tions, in order to present them in a tabular form to show what are given in each of the records respectively.

	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	ACTS	1 CORINTHIANS
1			24. 34			15. 5 (Cephas).
2		16. 12, 13	„ 13-35			
3		„ 14	„ 36-43	20. 19-23		
4				„ 26-29		
5				21.		
6	28. 16-20					
7		„ 15, 16, 17				
8			„ 44-49		1. 4, 5	
9						„ 6 (500)
10						„ 7 (James)
11						„ 7 (apostles)
12		„ 19, 20	„ 50-51		„ 9-11	

As to the order of the above, we only know that we have 1, 2, 3 in the right order, that 4 is a week later, and 5 follows 4. Whether 6, 7, 8 should be in the order above given, or any other, or whether they or either of them should precede 5, we do not know. Neither can we be quite sure that 3 and 7 refer to different times, or again 3 and 8 may be at the same time. Still the above scheme, however faulty, may at least serve a purpose as suggestive, and prevent any reader from thoughtlessly reading either of the chapters as the story of a day.

In the articles which we now bring to a conclusion, we are sensible of much shortcoming, but we have felt constrained to draw attention to various differences between the Gospels and even to emphasize certain apparent discrepancies fairly and boldly, that our readers may be led to approach the subject boldly and yet in fulness of faith, and however we have failed herein, we have ourselves had such fulfilment of the promise of watering to waterers (Prov. 11. 25) as leads us to anticipate Divine blessing on our feeble effort to encourage earnest study of the God-breathed narrative in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

Doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.

“Evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of what persons thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training which is in righteousness; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”—2 *Tim.* 3. 13-17.

XVIII.

TESTIMONY.

THE words of the risen Lord to the eleven apostles as recorded in Matt. 28. 16-20 give clear and definite expression to an aspect of the Gospel preaching sadly neglected. The Lord Jesus Christ must be the Subject of all ministry, whether to saints or to the unregenerate, if God is to be pleased. His atonement work is a perfect satisfaction of the claims of Divine justice, and therefore an adequate ground for the proclamation of mercy and forgiveness. It is also that which has given joy to the heart of God, and on account of it the Lord Jesus Christ has been exalted to the place far above all, which was also His by eternal right. His work and the place to which God has exalted Him were subjects of which His witnesses in early days were never tired of speaking, and the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, still abides with God's people to enable His servants to bear testimony to the person, the name and the place of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are diversities of gifts, and not to all is given to publicly herald the Word of God. Of those who are so gifted some in the goodness of God are wholly devoted to prayer and ministry of the Word, and for these it is the privilege of the saints to care, that they may have no lack in the things which are necessary for this present life, both for themselves and for their families.

By thus helping those who for the Name's sake go forth taking nothing from the Gentilish ones (so the Greek, as read by the Revisers) the gathered saints can manifest their interest and show fellowship in furtherance of the Gospel

(Phil. 1. 5 ; 4. 10-20). But besides all this it is the privilege and should be the joy of all to make known each in his or her sphere the goodness and grace of Him whom the Spirit has taught us to call Lord Jesus Christ.

For all servants of God, deacons of Christ Jesus, and more especially for those more prominent in the work, it is comely and obligatory that they should seek most fully to work in fellowship with one another and in godly subjection to one another, and especially in fellowship with the overseers of the assemblies in or near which they may be working.

XIX.

THE COMING AGAIN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. First He will come to the air in fulfilment of His promise to His loved and His own. Then the dead in Christ will be raised, living believers will all be changed and together, incorruptible and immortal, be gathered to Him in the air. John 14. 1-3 ; 1 Thess. 4. 13-18 ; 1 Cor. 15. 50-58.

Later the righteous dead, saints of other dispensations, will be raised ; those who have part in the first resurrection (Rev. 20.6). Afterwards the Lord Jesus Christ as Son of Man will come to earth to reign during the millennium of righteousness and peace, all authority and rule being put under Him (Zech. 14. 4 ; Ps. 72. ; Matt. 25. and elsewhere).

The coming of the Lord as Son of God for His saints is the great hope for believers in Him. For when He comes we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him. Every one having this hope on Him purifieth himself therefore (1 John 3. 1-4).

The hope too of His coming to the earth as Son of Man to rule the earth, as Son of David to sit upon His throne, raises the disciple above all paltry attempts at the reformation of the world by religious and political movements. It is ours, in fellowship with Him as the now rejected One, to live for Him in holiness and be loyal to His claims as our only Lord, knowing that He will shortly come and bring His reward with Him ; recompensing words from Himself and honour from His God and Father.