

NEEDED TRUTH

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

VOLUME XVIII.

1906.

ISSUED BY

NEEDED TRUTH PUBLISHING OFFICE.

“ I COME AGAIN.”

“ I COME again,” oh, precious thought !
That He Who our salvation wrought
 Will soon for us appear.
Our pilgrim days will then be o’er,
We’ll dwell with Him for evermore ;
 Let this our spirits cheer.

No more His loving heart we’ll grieve
For Christ will then His own receive.
 And we, from sin set free,
For ever gone our every care,
His perfect likeness then shall share,
 And with our Saviour be.

To live for Christ our aim should be
That unsaved ones indeed may see
 That Christ in us doth live.
God’s grace and truth we’d spread abroad
That sinners may return to God
 And saints obedience give.

“ I come again,” the day is near
When Christ will for His saints appear
 And with Him, His reward.
“ I quickly come,” ’twill not be long,
And then we’ll sing the eternal song,
 “ For ever with the Lord.”

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NEEDED TRUTH.

VOL. XVIII. JANUARY, 1906.

THE YEAR THAT'S PAST.

ANOTHER year has passed away,
And we, with joyful hearts, can say
We're nearer now than ere before
The cloudlèss bliss, the golden shore.

What peace and joy in Him we've found,
Who has the year with goodness crowned!
Oh! rich the blessings He has shed
Upon us in the year that's fled.

Though shadows o'er our path did fall
He led us safely through them all,
Still onward, to the perfect day,
His hand has guided all the way.

Then let our hearts with praise o'erflow
For grace abounding here below.
Adoring thanks to Him shall rise
Whose glory fills the boundless skies.

Oh! love untold and love unknown,
And matchless marvellous grace; we own
Abundantly He doth bestow;
Unnumbered blessings from Him flow.

Then sing with joy, and gladness sing,
All praise and adoration bring
To Him for all that He has done,
God's precious, spotless, peerless Son.

West Benhar.

R. SMART.

DIVISION.

THE close of Solomon's reign saw Israel exalted to the highest dignity to which it had ever attained.

The provision which had been made through David and Solomon had furnished the people with a system of public worship and instruction that had hitherto never been theirs. In regard to the progress of Divine revelation for the worship of Jehóvah and the instruction of His people therein, the Books of Psalms and Proverbs, together with the records of God's dealings with Israel in their history from Joshua to the end of 2 Samuel, furnished them with instructions so complete that, had they been heeded, they were calculated to make Israel the centre of light and blessing to all the earth. Solomon himself contributed but little to this, his Book, of Proverbs and Song being of value more for private life than public exercise.

The idolatry and misrule of Solomon had, however, prepared the way to defeat the very purpose for which Jehovah had made Israel the Nation; although it would seem that for the most part his idolatry was of a personal character. We do not read that it had spread much amongst the people.

No sooner, however, is Solomon dead, than we see a sad picture of human failure. As soon as the young King Rehoboam is placed on the throne, Jeroboam, who had already shown indication of self-will and disobedience in the court of Solomon, is recalled from Egypt to voice the grievance of the people. They demand something to be done to ease them of the burden of taxation laid upon them by Solomon. To this request Rehoboam in the pride of his power answered them roughly, which at once roused the old hostility which had happily ended when, with one mind and one heart, all Israel and Judah exalted David to be king.

The outcome of this was the separation of the ten tribes from the house of David: a breach which has never been

healed to this day, nor will be till He come Who will again unite Judah and Israel in one, the greater than Solomon, He Who is meek and lowly in heart, great David's greater Son.

After this unhappy meeting between Rehoboam and the people, Rehoboam and his followers return to Jerusalem, and there prepared to make war against Israel, with the object of bringing them into subjection to the rule of Rehoboam, from which they are prevented by the interference of Jehovah. Jehovah Himself forbids the war, because He Himself had permitted the separation because they had set Him aside.

On the other hand Jeroboam is made king over Israel, and at once takes steps to maintain, at any cost, the separation. The people must not return to Judah on any account. But there is one great obstacle standing in the way of the maintenance of this division. Jerusalem was the place where Jehovah had placed His Name. The Ark of the covenant is there, with its mercy seat, as the meeting place between Himself and the people.

There also was the Holy Priesthood, and the Levitical service; there legally appointed priests offered the sacrifices and expounded the Law of Jehovah.

Jeroboam shrewdly calculated that if the people belonging to the ten tribes were allowed to go up to Jerusalem to the worship of Jehovah, they would return again to the house of David. So he instituted an order of worship entirely at war with that established by the Word of Jehovah. Thus Bethel had been a sacred spot from the days of Abraham, and Dan is conveniently situated for the northern tribes. In those places he set up golden calves for the people to worship. And for this new thing he must have a priesthood; but the tribe of Levi would have nothing to do with it, knowing it to be wrong, because against the Word of Jehovah. They knew that Jerusalem was the place where men ought to worship, and although their cities and possessions were scattered throughout the whole kingdom, they left them

in a body because they valued the Word of Jehovah more than their possessions. Not to be thwarted, however, in his purpose, he employs the lowest of the people as priests for his calves.

Now, Jehovah seeing this, sent a man of God from Judah, to denounce Jeroboam and to cry against the altar which he had raised up at Bethel, at the very time Jeroboam is present sacrificing to his idol. As a sign of coming judgment, the altar is rent and the ashes upon it poured out, which when Jeroboam saw he stretched out his hand towards the man of God and commanded him to be seized, whereupon his hand was withered up so that he could not draw it back ; which, however, as an act of Sovereign grace, was restored in answer to the prayer of the man of God.

Passing on now to the next generation, Abijam succeeds Rehoboam on the throne of Judah, and he continued in the sins of Rehoboam his father in adding idolatry to the worship of Jehovah. This Abijam is called Abijah in the Chronicles. And against Abijah Jeroboam makes war, and a great battle is fought between Judah and Israel, the greatest battle that had ever been fought in the land. Two mighty hosts contend together ; in all twelve hundred thousand strive together for the mastery. It was a great struggle, and although Abijah's host was out-numbered by four hundred thousand men, victory was with him, and he was able to penetrate into the enemy's country as far as mount Zemaraim, where he made a stand and addressed the host of Israel.

Read his wonderful words as they are recorded (2 Chron. 13. 4-12). In this he charges the Israelites with rebellion against the anointed house of David, and with having cast off the worship of Jehovah. He claims Jehovah as their God, for they had not forsaken Him. His Priests and Levites were with them, keeping the charge and attending upon the worship and service of Jehovah. Then he tells the Israelites that they had forsaken Jehovah and therefore He could not be with them. Their chance of success was gone, for they

of Judah had Jehovah as their Captain and His Priests with them to sound the alarm against them. For Israel to fight against Judah was to fight against Jehovah the God of their Fathers; they could not prosper. But all this was lost upon Israel; they heeded not the wholesome words that fell upon their ears. And we read the result, "God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah; . . . so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men." This great defeat of Jeroboam so prostrated his strength that he made no further attempt against Judah. But Abijah, believing the separation to be final, made no further effort to recover the kingdom.

Now in all this there is surely a lesson for us in these last and difficult days. Surely God has caused a separation from those who have set up a confederacy of their own, in which almost every man does that which is right in his own eyes. And by doing so has caused many who were determined not to be in and of this to separate and seek with His help to go on with that which owns the Fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, where there is godly rule, and where assemblies are linked together to the praise of His great Name. This separation, beloved, I believe to be a final one, from that with which we were identified.

Also we may be fewer in number, yet we can say like the king, we have God on our side and we shall surely prosper (2 Cor. 9. 10; Phil. 1. 9-10).

THOMAS CATLOW.

WHOSE HOUSE ARE WE.—Heb. 3. 6.

INQUIRY concerning the House of God is unmistakably apparent among many of those who are the children of God through faith in Christ in the present day. This desire to know practically what is the meaning thereof is a sign of a revival which is of God; and most assuredly those who are spiritually exercised concerning the great and blessed privilege to be of and in that House which the Living God

is pleased to own and to indwell will be satisfied with nothing short of all that which He hath by His grace made it possible to be.

Vague, indefinite, and misleading is much of the teaching of Christendom on this subject, for an effort is made to apply the truth of the House of God to every one born of God, irrespective of the association in which they are found. But in so doing they are faced with a difficulty in explaining the conditional character thereof (Heb. 3. 6.) "If so be ye continue," and in explaining this, the blessed truth of the eternal security of the believer is let go.

On the other hand some dear children of God, beholding the spiritual ruin which self-will hath wrought, say there is no House of God on earth to-day, and speak in a way as if such were impossible in the presence of the spiritual ruin around. Concerning the former, it may be only necessary to point out that the writer to Hebrews presents the difference between Moses and Christ in the exceeding greatness of the One as compared with the other, yet the faithful testimony to God the Father on earth being the object of the Epistle throughout, but in association with the Son in place of Moses.

Concerning this we would refer to the book of Ezra where we read of the House of God being rebuilt, notwithstanding the ruins, though indeed many, very many, remained in Babylon and only a portion of Judah were found together in the place where Jehovah had chosen to put His Name. Yet it was the House of God then as truly as in the days of Solomon, and was owned of God as such. Upon what ground is the claim made of being House of God by the writer of the Epistle? This is important; for if to-day, though centuries have intervened, believers in Christ are found in association by reason of having been brought together by the same power and for the same purpose as they to whom the Word first came, such may claim upon the same authority to be what they were. It is written (John 1. 11), "He

came unto His own (things, Revised Version, margin), and they that were His own received Him not." This historical comment upon the coming of the Son, and His rejection as such, reminds us of the parable recorded in the Gospel by Mark 12. 1-12.

In consequence of their rejection of the Son, God the Father no longer would acknowledge the people with whom He had so long been identified, and we understand from the words of the Lord Jesus (Matt. 23. 38), "Your house is left unto you desolate," that He withdrew and disowned the House which they had built for Him. Among them the Son may have found a place, but the only place which He must have or none is that of Lord in the midst claiming, nay, demanding, subjection unto Himself as the greater than Moses. This they apprehended; this they refused, sealing their refusal by His death upon the Cross.

In the preaching of the Apostles is declared the blessed truth of His resurrection by the power of God, and the place of authority as Lord and Christ which they denied Him, but which He holds by Divine appointment.

Comparatively it was only a few who realized their true position before God as guilty, and heard with joy the Word of forgiveness from the risen One at God's right hand, and with childlike faith and love desired to hear the will of God concerning them, obeying readily the first injunction thereof, being baptized into the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, thus confessing to all their identification with the rejected Christ.

Trained up from childhood to revere the Divinely set appointments of the Mosaic dispensation, it would not be easy to turn therefrom, but in their confession they find themselves alienated from friends and things dear, enduring sorrow, shame, and suffering, yet count it a joy to be with Him. It is still God's desire to dwell among men, and we find a significant word in Acts 4. 11: "The Stone which was set at nought . . . was made the Head of the

corner." This undoubtedly implies that in the purpose of God a building for some object was designed, and that His beloved Son was the main and leading part thereof.

This is confirmed in 1. Peter 2. 1-10, where together with Him the Chief Corner, Elect, Precious Stone others (*v.* 5) are seen, built a Spiritual House. We have asked the question: What is the ground upon which a claim is made of being the dwelling-place of God? An answer thereto seems clear from Heb. 13. 13, "Let us therefore go unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach." Two things may be pointed out here, namely separation from the religious place, outside of which He is, which He never gathered, and of which He is not the centre; to this Christendom in her man-made sects and systems answers. In part and whole these sects are the outcome of self-will, neither are they maintained by Divine principles. Frequently they descend to worldly methods and means to carry on their work, they enter the political arena to obtain their aims, and the elevation of man is in many cases their social ideal.

Yet to be simply separated from this and nothing more comes short of God's will; for the bidding is, "Go unto Him," and associated with Him outside the camp is that Divinely brought together people on earth amongst whom He is pleased to dwell.

Is there a people thus found to-day entirely and practically disowning all that which is not of God, touching not the unclean thing, gathered unto the Lord Jesus, owning Him as Lord in the midst, His Word having pre-eminence therein? We believe there is such who, upon the authority of God's Word, without fleshy pride or boast, but with deep thankfulness for the grace given, may be known as the House of God in which every truth God hath been pleased to reveal may be firmly maintained, desiring only that the excellencies of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light may be shown forth.

We might say in closing, fearing some might misunderstand

our meaning, this does not affect the truth of the Church of Matt. 16., in and of which every believer in Christ is, nor of the Bride mentioned in Eph. 4: this is for the Eternal future where the perfectness and beauty of such will be revealed, whilst that of which we have been speaking is the testimony of God on earth, which may indeed be only two or three (Matt. 18. 20), or may swell into thousands and tens of thousands, and again diminish to the two or three.

W. H. BURDEKIN.

DIVINE PRINCIPLES OF MINISTRY.

THE fact that God has a House, even in these remnant days, in which He can dwell, although but of remnant proportion, and standing in similar relation to the House of God in Apostolic times as the temple of Zerubbabel to that of Solomon, should be a source of deep satisfaction to all who have at heart the glory of God and the honour of Christ.

This House is composed of churches of God, fitly framed together according to the pattern left on record in the Holy Scriptures, and of saints, many of whom have never had the pleasure of seeing each other, and who perhaps never may have this pleasure till they meet before the throne above, but still, "though sundered far," are perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

For the extension, edification and general wellbeing of this House, God has been pleased, in His wisdom and forethought, to ordain the ministry of the Word therein; and in connexion with ministry He has revealed certain Divine principles for teaching and guidance as to the manner in which it should be carried out.

The first thing to remember about this ministry is that it is from God. He is its source. As every perfect boon, it cometh down from the Father of Lights. It reaches the sphere of its operation through the Son, and the Holy Spirit is its sustaining power. In this manner each of the persons

of the Godhead is concerned in it. The One Lord, the One Spirit, and the One God and Father being severally concerned and interested in its exercise, as follows : the Lord controlling, the Holy Spirit empowering and the Father disposing according to the good pleasure of His will. In accordance with this, the Father sent the Son into the world. This requires no proof, it is so well known, yet, it will not be wasted space to cite the following from the Gospel according to John : “ Say ye of Him Whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God ” (John 10. 36). “ My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me ” (John 7. 16). “ He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God ; for He giveth not the Spirit by measure ” (John 3. 34).

The Son received His ministry from the Father, His commission from the Supreme Court of the Universe, and His Authority on all matters from His Sovereign Lord. He came from the Father to declare the will of God to man ; He therefore required unreserved submission from the hearts and wills of men to His commands. This ministry comprehended in its far-reaching design the fulfilment of all that had already been foretold, and that has since been revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

Among those of the first importance may be counted the following :—The salvation of fallen men ; the building of the Body of the Christ ; the construction of a Spiritual House of God in place of the material one at Jerusalem ; the establishment and the extension of the Rule of God in its various aspects and spheres ; and finally the institution of the Ministry of the Word by those whom He by His grace had saved and gifted for this purpose, by means of which these things might be accomplished.

It will be time well spent to consider for a moment or two, before passing on, the moral glory that shone around His holy footsteps as He trod the path appointed for Him by the Father in the fulfilment of the ministry entrusted

to Him. How suggestive of this grace and glory are the words, "Lo I am come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10. 7)! "I am come down from Heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6. 38). And again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4. 34). These, with many other similar expressions, breathe out the manner of His spirit. What food for meditation and matter for imitation do they provide for every child of the Heavenly Father, but especially for all who serve the Lord in the ministry of the Word!

How unlike what usually obtains among men was this ministry of the Son and Sent-One of God! He was not school-taught like the Scribes; nor like those who run before they are sent. He was no disciple of men and slave of traditions, on the one hand, nor upstart pretender, the dupe of his own self-will, on the other. He differed even from those who had been taught of God, as were the Holy Prophets.

"Order is Heaven's first law." This is not Scripture, but it is true nevertheless. And there is order in connexion with ministry as in everything else that is of Divine origin. Order is of God. Chaos, disintegration and disorder are of the Devil. All confusion, physical, moral and spiritual, is the work of this Disintegrator.

Now as the promised Seed and Son, the Sent-One of God stood variously related to all the sons of Adam. Out of these relationships arose various responsibilities to be discharged. And with regard to each of these the Lord in His ministry observed certain rules, or modes of procedure. One of these rules of God is, whenever God is going to make any great change among men, He begins with those nearest to Him. To this rule there are but few exceptions. Thus it was that when He began His dealings in grace with a lost world He began with the Jews, who were positionally nearer to Him than the Gentiles. Conditionally they could not be

worse than they were. For the same reason, when God begins His strange work of Judgment, we read, "Judgment must begin at the House of God, and if it begin with us, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

In accordance with this rule, God's Sent-One began with the Jews. In this light must be understood the Lord's attitude towards the woman of Canaan who sought His help for her daughter, when He said, "I am not sent, but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." An attempt must first be made to gather Israel unto Jehovah, before Christ could be given a light unto the Gentiles, and be the Lord's Salvation unto the ends of the earth (Isa. 49. 6).

Now in so far as Israel as a whole was concerned, the Lord spent His strength for nought. They were neither converted nor restored to the Lord. Upon them the prophecy of Isaiah 6. was fully accomplished. Though this great Apostle was wiser than Solomon, they came not to hear His wisdom. Though greater than the temple, they saw not in Him the only acceptable way of approach to God for salvation and worship. Though greater than Jonah, yet they repented not at His preaching. Though a greater light than John the Baptist, they would not walk in His light. Though He spoke unto them as a true prophet and minister of the Word, with the words of Jehovah, and a'l the words of Jehovah, yet all the day long He stretched out His hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people. And though He had the words of Eternal Life, and spoke them with such power and grace that astonished, convinced, silenced, confounded and angered those who were of a contrary part, still they neither received His testimony nor forbore to go on in their self-will.

Yet it must not be supposed that God's purposes concerning His earthly people were frustrated. This is not so. In consequence of their rejection of their Messiah they have only been deferred till a later day. "For the gifts and callings of God are without change of mind." Israel will yet

be gathered and God glorified in them, both for His own and for their fathers' sake (Isa. 49. 9-11 ; Rom. 11. 28).

Besides, it should be remembered that the Lord's ministry had both a present and an abiding result. Notwithstanding that it was a savour of death unto death to the bulk of them, nevertheless, by it God was cleared from the charge of injustice in the eyes of the whole world when He poured out His judgment upon them. Thereby His justice was manifest to all. And further, men of successive generation have heard and seen and feared and turned to the Lord, and thereby God has been glorified. From which, ministering ones may learn lessons of encouragement for those times when they see little or no fruit from their labours. It says, in the language of the Apostle, "Wherefore be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Again, this persistent rejection of the Lord was not by all. From among the nation there was a small remnant that received Him gladly. They acknowledged Him as the Lord's Anointed, and received Him as their Saviour. For this it is that the Lord gives thanks to His Father in Matt. 11. 25, 26, in words pregnant with important teaching regarding the absolute authority of God the Father as the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and regarding the wisdom and justice of His administration among the sons of men. Likewise with regard to the perfect submission of the Son, as the One Who had taken upon Him the form of a servant, to the will and pleasure of the Father, though they contain not so much as a hint that the Son is in any way inferior to the Father. These words command attention. Let each one who is engaged in the beautiful work of the ministry of the Word wait here to learn the lesson and catch the spirit, that he may imitate the manner of God's Servant in Whom He is well pleased. W SAVIGAR.

(To be continued.)

HIS EXCELLENCIES.

OUR function as the "Royal Priesthood" is to "show forth the excellencies of Him Who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2. 9). To show them forth by actions and words, for of our Great Example it is witnessed, "All that Jesus began both to do and to teach" (Acts 1. 1). To DO first, to TEACH next; indeed there are even prior conditions, as He Himself said, "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it" (Luke 11. 28). HEAR first, KEEP next, so that the moral order is "hear," "keep," "do," "teach"; and this applies with special force to the present subject.

We must learn of Christ, treasure Him in our hearts, do after His example, before we are proper persons to declare by word of mouth the excellencies of that surpassingly Excellent One. Let us endeavour to have what is called "the fitness of things," for there is nothing so unfitting, so incongruous, as a person attempting to speak forth the excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ who is not himself in some little measure excellent; in some faint degree in harmony, both inwardly and outwardly, with the One he seeks to hold forth. "A parable in the mouth of fools" is a small discord compared with this.

How imperative then for each one who would aspire to that holy service—for the Royal Priesthood is also a "Holy Nation"—to be in harmony with it.

One has somewhere said, "What we say is something, what we do is more, but what we are is most." This is the essence of truth, therefore let us see to what we are, and are in our inmost beings, and let that be the foundation of all that we do and say. Let our showing forth of His excellencies arise from a heart appreciative of those excellencies, as they are revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and then, and then

only, may we hope to show forth those excellencies in anything like a worthy manner, worthy of Him Who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light, out of dense spiritual darkness—in which many of the most religious, cultured, and enlightened are to-day—into His marvellous light, by which we can see things clearly and plainly that can never be seen by those who are not in that light.

To worthily show forth the excellencies of such a One should be our highest ambition.

The Song of Songs (ch. 4. 9–16) might help us. Verse 9 tells us of a question by the daughter of Jerusalem put to one whom even they admit to be the fairest among women, therefore a fit one to speak of beauty. “What is thy beloved more than another beloved?” they ask. We also have our beloved ones, ten thousand of them, and worthy they are of our love; what then is thine more than ours? This fair one seizes the opportunity of setting out in order the beauties of her beloved; such an array of justly beloved ones does not deter her. She is delighted with such a background, for she well knows that hers will stand out; she is delighted with such a host, for she knows that hers will be seen and marked off from them all. The better they look the more glory will be heaped on him who will with ease be the chief. She began by giving a more general description of him, and then she went on to particulars, and gave them so accurately, and with such relish, that all must have been convinced of the truth of her opening assertion that he was the “chiefest among ten thousand.” The way she handled these particulars and set out his graceful parts and proportions, proved that she had carefully considered him. As she once again called up his beauties before her mind and heart, and proclaimed them to others, she exclaims, “Yea, he is altogether lovely.” Lovely in each perfect part, lovely as a perfect whole, altogether lovely. And with lawful pride she wound up by declaring, “This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.” The next verse proves that

her testimony had its effect, for they desire to "seek him with her."

This may suggest to us the way that we may rise to the fulfilling of our Royal Priesthood service. We must study the excellencies of Christ before we can hope to show them forth. We must diligently seek to get closer to Him in order to a nearer view. "His head," "His eyes," "His lips," "His hands," "His mouth," all must be carefully observed. He must become more and more precious to us if we are to better show His excellencies forth, not as an undefined Christ, but the Christ of the Scriptures, the Christ of God, He Who was manifest in flesh.

As He becomes more undefined, more lost to view through being mixed up with the ten thousand good and lovable men, may we be found giving forth a clearer and more defined testimony concerning those excellencies all His own, those features which put Him at once beyond comparison, indeed which make comparison a high crime, high treason.

To us let there be but one God the Father FROM Whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ BY Whom are all things; and while abhorring idolatry which would rob us of that ONE God, may we also abhor unenlightened comparisons, which would likewise rob us of that ONE Lord Jesus Christ.

There have been men both great and good, but enlightened comparison of these with Him will but take us far in the direction of contrast, and only serve to mark in a yet stronger way the supreme excellencies of Him Who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light.

W. J. LENNOX.

A HYMN.

O, BLESSED God, the Father
 Of Jesus Christ our Lord,
 With joy we come together
 To do, with one accord,

That which His lips commanded,
 That which His hands have done,
 By which we are reminded
 Of Him, the Coming One.

'Twas He Who sought Thy glory,
 And did Thy law fulfil ;
 'Twas He Who brought us to Thee,
 According to Thy will.

He'll set us in Thy presence
 With most exceeding joy—
 This, His looked for recompense,
 For which He stooped to die.

We'll then fall down before Thee,
 And joyfully proclaim—
 Blessing, honour and glory,
 Through Him, unto Thy Name.

 SERVICE AND ITS REWARD.

“If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will the Father honour.”

John 12. 26.

Young Men's Corner.

WE desire at the commencement of a new volume to offer our thanks to the many friends who have kindly contributed to this Corner of NEEDED TRUTH. We only fear that the necessity at times of cutting down the notes sent because of limitations of space has, in some cases, tended to discourage contributors. In response to our appeal on this head last spring (vol. xvii., number 166, page 120) an esteemed correspondent wrote:—

“As one who wrote pretty freely at first, but who later felt a restraining influence, I was glad of the notice in May NEEDED TRUTH. I am not sure that I can make any suggestion of the kind desired, but thought perhaps my case would be that of others, and therefore of no harm if made known. Often when looking through and studying the portion in company with others, certain thoughts have come before the mind, and all that could be desired has seemed to be at hand ready for sending up. But when attempting to put down in writing what had filled the mind, how difficult it has seemed, how disconnected the thoughts and sentences! And when printed and read afterwards more than once has it seemed to miss the mark. Then again what a difficulty to set things down in a concise, condensed manner. When written one has scarcely ventured to hope that such a long winded article could have space found for it. Even this time it is as long as ever.

“There is one more thought which has been before my mind of late, but not really bearing upon the point raised in the notice in May NEEDED TRUTH. That is, that it may be a means of drawing the Corner Young Men closer together if they knew one another and who the correspondents are for the various companies. Maybe there are points raised in one another's contributions which others would like to know more about. Of course, to a certain extent this can be done by means of the monthly contributions, and

again, unless pursued in a godly spirit would be otherwise than profitable. However, I thought I would mention it and trust the Editors of NEEDED TRUTH will not be discouraged if we are rather backward in our contributions, and perhaps sooner or later we may have help upon the matter."

We are very thankful for this letter, and publish it to provoke comment from others on the matters referred to. We wish, however, to point out that while we much value many contributions that have been received for their intrinsic merit, we also set great store on the evidence that others offer of earnest and thoughtful study, and we are fully persuaded that it is good exercise for us all with godly restraint to submit for the consideration and criticism of others what we may think we see in the Holy Scriptures, even where we cannot express it with all that conciseness and definition that we might wish.

Another correspondent writes :—

"May I humbly offer a suggestion for NEEDED TRUTH? It would seem from what is sometimes said among saints, that NEEDED TRUTH appeals more to young men than to little children (1 John 2. 13). Might I suggest that it would be appreciated if a page or two pages in NEEDED TRUTH were set apart for short striking thoughts suited to young ones. Say four or five such short thoughts to a page. I merely suggest this for your consideration."

This suggestion shall certainly have earnest consideration.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 16. (Acts 11. 19-30.)

(Continued from page 272, Volume XVII.)

FROM BRADFORD. *Re* the questions raised in November issue. We suggest as follows :—

First, as to the possibility of the men of Acts 11. 19, having been at Cæsarea about the time of Peter's preaching there,

we think this hardly probable. We note that those men seem to have been preaching as they journeyed northwards, and again that Peter's work at Cæsarea was some three or four years (possibly more) after Stephen's death. If we say the men of Acts 11. 19 had not gone beyond the regions of Judea and Samaria all those three years we are compelled to leave a great gap between Acts 10. and fore part of the eleventh chapter and Acts 11. 19, whereas the latter seems to be concurrent with the former. Antioch is some 250 miles from Cæsarea, and to journey that distance preaching by the way would take some time. Peter and John, soon after Stephen's death, had spent some time in Samaria, and the villages between that city and Jerusalem (Acts 8. 25). Saul had made his journey to Damascus, then to Arabia (Gal. 1.), then to Jerusalem, and finally to Cilicia (Acts 9. and Gal. 1.). Peter had passed throughout all the assembly in Judea, Galilee and Samaria, and then to Cæsarea, and again to Jerusalem. All of which we think was taking place as others of the scattered ones were journeying towards Antioch. As to the names of these men, are we justified in turning to Acts 13. 1 for some of them ?

Then as to the planting of an assembly at Antioch. We suggest this was done through Barnabas and Saul. We think there is something in the thought that the Apostles either did not feel capable of, or were not clear that the time had come for extending the work to Gentile lands. We do not at all think they were negligent in this. Is it not a matter worthy of the closest attention, that when the word is first spoken in Gentile lands, it is not by the Apostles, but men whose names are not definitely mentioned ? a new centre, with new preachers and the starting place for a work among Gentiles by an Apostle who was as one born out of due time. Not until Barnabas and Saul are seen together do we find any mention of a church at Antioch. Is there not much to be learnt from the fact that the dis-

iples were called "Christians" *first at Antioch*? Such a name for the disciples would seem to us to be altogether out of place so long as the work and the assembly were limited to Judea, Galilee and Samaria. Neither does it seem to be in keeping with word spoken to Jews. We never find the disciples in Judea called by that name among their own countrymen. Many years after, in Acts, it is still "the sect of the Nazarenes."

From CARDIFF. In reconsidering this chapter we have found fresh light, as to why we said in October issue of NEEDED TRUTH, that the Apostles were not directly responsible for the founding of the Churches, and the activity in this chapter is explained thus. Barnabas was a great worker in this scene; he was not of the twelve and he has to go to Tarsus to seek Saul. Peter is not seen or heard from the 19th verse, so we suggest, and leave it for consideration, that the action of these men seems independent of Peter [or, rather, done in ignorance of the Cornelius incident] or else they must have waited till Peter's action at Cæsarea reached them. Does the mission of Barnabas to Antioch show that he went on his own motion? The preaching of the Gospel to Jews was not a new thing, it had already taken place at Pentecost; that the Apostles retained overseership is apparent from Acts 15. 2. This spread of the Gospel expanded beyond the bounds of Judæa. God is now opening a new thing which had been hid in ages past and chooses fresh instruments to accomplish the same.

A GOOD SUGGESTION.

From BRADFORD. Would it be advisable, before we leave the work among the Jews, to pause a little and gather together the various points brought forward and things learnt, as a sort of Summary, so that we may see what has been done, in a comprehensive article? Perhaps some of the better fitted among us can take up the thought and send a contribution.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

*Psalm 15.**(Continued from page 275, Volume XVII.)*

From DERBY. This Psalm seems to set forth the moral conditions of those whose privilege it was to dwell in God's Holy Hill and sojourn in His Tent.

In verse 2 we have three W's. Compare Eph. 5. 9.

His Walk. Walketh up- The fruit of the light is in
- rightly. all Righteousness,

His Work. Worketh Right- Goodness,
eousness. and

His Word. Speaketh truth Truth.
in his heart.

While in verse 2 we have In verse 3 we have three
three positives— negatives—

What he does :—

What he does not :—

Walketh Uprightly ;

Taketh not up a reproach
against his neighbour ;

Worketh Righteousness ;

Doeth not evil to his friend ;

Speaketh truth in his heart.

Slandereth not.

Verse 4. He does not honour those whom he should despise, neither does he despise those whom he should honour. But he despises the reprobate, and honours them that fear the Lord.

He that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not. We have not the oath in this dispensation (see Matt. 5. 33-37), we have the Word of God and God expects us to keep to our promise as they kept to their oath.

Verse 5. He that putteth not out his money to usury. This is money paid for the use of money. They were not to take advantage of their poorer brethren by making gain of them.

He that doeth these things shall never be moved. Thus he becomes the rock man on the rock. He becomes like the Holy Hill in which he dwells.

SOMETHING TO LOOK FOR.

On page 256 of last Volume Acts 10. 20 is a mistake for Acts 11. 20 as I.P. has kindly pointed out. We await the result therefore of search for names of any of the preachers of Acts 11. 20.

PRAYER.

“ *Ye people pour out your hearts before Him* ” (Psalm 62. 8).

From S.S. *Ataka*. Of all the exercises in which the children of God can possibly engage, there is none more refreshing, and perhaps none more solemn than prayer. Our need of prayer is as frequent as the moments of the day. The little while of His absence is the opportunity for prayer; for neglect of prayer is a sure loss of joy. In all our prayers let us remember that God hears us, and He delights to give us the things we need, though often not the things we want. In the Scriptures we find that those who were men of God were men of prayer, and also the Perfect Servant continually withdrew Himself from the multitude to pray to His Father. As each one of us grows in spirituality of mind, the continual sense of our need will be felt by us. If we neglect morning meditation on the Word, and prayer, nothing goes well the whole day. This has been the writer's experience, with many others. The exhortation to each of us is still the same, “ Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need ” (Heb. 4. 16).

“ Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air.”

CORRESPONDENCE.

REPLYING to question, page 232, Volume XVII, there seems to me to be only one definite scripture bearing on the point, and that is 1 Cor. 7. 39, especially latter part of verse (only in

the Lord). If the wife who has lost her husband who was in the Fellowship of God's Son wishes to marry again, it can only be in the Lord; hence to have God's approval of courtship, as one in the Fellowship and carried out in fellowship with Him, could only be by both being in the Fellowship of God's Son.

God has made no provision (as far as I understand the Scripture) at all for sects, though many of God's dear children are found in these; but He has made every provision for those inside the Fellowship of His Son. See Romans 7. 28; 2 Cor. 6. 14-18, and many other scriptures. And our correspondents can rely on having God's approval and fellowship, if they court one another as being in that which God can own, and where He condescends to dwell.

QUESTIONS.

Is it according to the mind of God that His Saints become members of Societies or have their children enrolled therein? Is it honouring to God for them to become say, Rechabites, or Good Templars, or join any Co-operative or Friendly Society which is not compulsory?

What difference is there, if any, between the foundation spoken of in 1 Cor. 3. 10 and that of verses 11 and 12 of the same chapter?

NOTICES.

We solicit contributions on the following:—

Summary of Acts 1. to 11. as suggested on page 21.

Herod's attempt to serve his master and the issue (Acts 12. 1 to 23).

Psalm 16. Michtam of David.

Psalm 119. Statutes and Judgments.

Answers to Questions.

Any other matters of interest.

DIVINE PRINCIPLES OF MINISTRY.

(Continued from page 13.)

OUR present intention is to supplement our former remarks on this subject with some observations on the opening chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel.

In the first verse the prophet tells us that he had seen "Visions of God," which, as the description of them shows, had as their object—God, His purposes, His glory and His government. He does not, however, base his claim to be heard on these, important as they in his case were, as marking him out as a prophet. He had stronger credentials. Jehovah had entrusted him with a knowledge of His will and ways for the people of the captivity for their instruction and encouragement. Thus verse 3: "The word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi." This was his title to be heard.

Now observe that here is a man with the credentials of a prophet of God; he had received visions and revelation from the court of heaven, much that, humanly speaking, might have inclined him to an unprofitable exaltation of self had he been so disposed, yet he keeps himself in the background and seeks no honour for himself. He saw nothing in this to cause him to boast. He speaks of himself in the third person, which shows how far self had retired from view, and makes manifest, quite unconsciously, the humility of his mind. This humility becomes more evident as we understand the teaching in the words he utters. They strike a sweeter note of lowly-mindedness even than the manner in which they are spoken. "Ezekiel, the priest, the son of Buzi." Buzi, the despised or contemptible one. What humility! Manifestly his greatest boast is to indicate his own humble origin, and his highest place lying low at his Master's feet, and his most profitable exercise remembering that whatever good or gift he pos-

sessed was entirely of God's mercy, and that grace alone had made him to differ from his fellows.

Whereby we are taught, at the beginning of this great prophet's career, that one of the very first essentials of acceptable ministry of the Word, on the part of those who are entrusted with any special gift or mission for God, is humility. This grace is the direct outcome of close communion with God. Pride and self-sufficiency, sorry weeds of a corrupt human nature, wither, like aquatic plants under the scorching sun of the desert, when brought into the sunlight of God's holy presence. A due sense of God's majesty and of human frailty never fails to produce this desirable quality which is becoming in all, but most of all in those who are called upon to minister God's word.

It was this grace that transformed "the son of Buzi" into "Ezekiel," the one whom God strengthens. "Ezekiel" is one of those names which breathe the faith and piety of God's ancient people, which were frequently found among them. It is borrowed from the invincible might of Elohim. Whether assumed by the prophet for his work's sake, or bestowed upon him by his parents, it is full of meaning. In the former case it denotes that the prophet had learned his own insufficiency for the work God had entrusted him with, in the other the faith of his parents finds expression. But in either case Ezekiel could comfort and fortify himself in all his trials and hardships by the remembrance of his name and its meaning. It would continually remind him that God imparts power to him who is without might. And it would teach him that he only, whom God strengthens, can endure the labour and trials involved in the arduous work of ministry. Mere human strength is too weak. Divine sufficiency is required, is what we thus learn.

Passing over the vision we find the prophet at the end of the chapter on his face before the Lord. This is a necessary preparation for special ministry. But he is no use to God while he lies there. He must stand on his feet

and hear the words of the Lord, and receive His spirit, before he can go forth to his work (Ezek. 2. 1). He must hear from God before he can speak for God.

Note the words with which the Lord addresses him. "Son of man." This title belongs in its highest sense to the Lord Jesus Christ. He often used it during the time of His ministry on earth, as though ever reminding Himself and His hearers that He had come into touch with all that belonged to the sons of men, sin excepted. It is a remarkable fact that this title, son of man, is addressed to Ezekiel about the same number of times as the Lord uses it of Himself in the gospels. It suggests one of those Divine verbal linkings together which we meet with at times in the Scriptures of Truth. However, we may be sure that it served the purpose of reminding the prophet that he also was only a man, although exalted to the dignity of a serving one of Jehovah. He must not be exalted above his brethren, for he had nothing more than they that he had not received from God. He was but a man, with a man's failures, weakness, needs and besetments. He must speak as a man to men, as a sinner to sinners. Here is wholesome instruction for all.

We have now arrived at a perfect treasure-house of instruction on this subject of ministry, the briefest possible notes of which would fill many pages, wherefore we can only give a few words here and there as we pass along. But let the reader study the whole three chapters for himself.

"Stand upon thy feet"—the attitude of attention and preparedness for action—"and I will speak unto thee." To be able to speak so as to support and instruct others with words from God, there must first be the awakened ear, the learner's heart, and the serving one's will. (Isa. 50. 4, 6). Regarding the hearing from God, there are no visions or new revelations in these days, because we have every scripture inspired of God, to furnish unto every good work (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17). Herein the ministering one should give

diligence to present himself approved unto God, a workman not to be ashamed, handling aright the Word of truth (2 Tim. 2. 15). Here he must hear God speaking, and he himself must speak according thereto, and if he speak not according to this Word, surely the morning light of Divine instruction is not with him (Isa. 8. 20). "Thus saith the Lord," must be his watchword and his war-cry.

"The Spirit entered into me when He spake unto me, and set me on my feet." This is of importance. The minister of the Word must not set himself up or force his own notions and ideas on the people of God. If the Spirit of God does not set him up and uphold him he is nothing. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Zech. 4. 6). The need of counting on God for the help of the Holy Spirit cannot be overstated. But let it not be supposed that he who is thus sent and upheld by God will of necessity have large gatherings of people to listen to his ministry. Read Ezek. 2. 3, 4. It is sad to have to say it, but God's people in these days of a spiritual captivity in a spiritual Babylon, are, for the most part, like those of the temporal captivity to whom Ezekiel had to speak, a stiff-necked and rebellious people. He who comes reproving, rebuking and exhorting with the words of the Lord will never be popular among the masses of Christendom. For the days have come, of which Paul spake in 2 Timothy 4. 3, when they will not endure sound doctrine, but heap to themselves teachers, after their own lusts, having turned their ears from the Truth; and turned aside unto fables. Hence it cannot be expected that he who comes with the unadulterated word of the Lord will ever be popular. On the contrary, popularity, in these days, is much more likely to be a testimony against him than in his favour.

He may not have large gatherings, but he has something more valuable: he has the Lord's command and the Lord's approval, and the Lord's seal upon his ministry.

He may even find that the Lord has made his path very thorny, and his dwelling among scorpions, in a waste howling wilderness, while the teachers of fables and of the traditions of men have their path strewed with flowers, and dwell in palaces and manses. But he must not be afraid, nor be a time-server, nor place-seeker, but speak faithfully the word of the Lord, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear (Ezek. 2. 6, 7). He will find much to grieve him. He may grieve as he sees how little effect the word of the Lord has, but let him beware of anger. Yet he may not be all tears like Jeremiah. He may and ought to be wroth, on account of sin that dishonours and defies his Lord, but always sorry for the sinner, considering himself lest he also be tempted. He must not be rebellious, whatever others may be.

“Open thy mouth and eat that I give thee.” “Eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel” (Ezek. 2. 9, 10; 3. 3). Note the contents of the roll, “and there were written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe.” Of course these do not compose the whole of what the minister of the Word has to feed on. There are many exceeding sweet and precious things to be found in the Word of God. But sometimes there are lamentations, mournings and woe to be faced; and, when occasion requires, these must form part of his ministry. He must feed upon the Word and eat what he finds, not what he likes. There is nothing of more importance to him than a full and general knowledge of the Word. He has sometimes to speak upon special subjects, but he must not confine himself to favourite subjects. In order to teach and preach the Word he must not skim over the surface, but seek to understand the deep things of God. In this he must bear in mind that the natural man understandeth not the things of God, not even the natural man in the believer. He needs the aid of the Divine Author. It is for him to consider carefully what is said, and seek that the Lord may give him under-

standing, that the Father of glory may grant him a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Thus by feeding on this wonderful food he is instructed, strengthened and fitted for the work with which he has been entrusted, he must go forth and speak. Without such feeding speaking is only the talk of the lips, which tendeth only to penury.

“Son of man, go, get thee to the house of Israel, and speak with My words unto them” (Ezek. 3. 4). “To the house of Israel.” It is sometimes harder to speak to saints than to those who are still unsaved. It is often a pleasant work to carry the gospel message to the lost; but speaking to believers is often a solemn and painful business. “Speak with My words.” Not thine, not some one else’s (Jer. 23. 30).

Verses 8 and 9 of chapter 3. show the lion-like character required of the ministering one. He must be bold, fearless and faithful. A brave face but a loving heart.

Above, we had “speak with My words,” verse 10, it is “all My words.” He must not shun to declare unto them the whole counsel of God.

We will conclude by a word on Ezek. 3. 13. “The noise of the wings of the living creatures as they touched (literally kissed) one another,” and so on. We suggest that we have here the character of ministry represented by the living creatures (see chap. 1. 10). The face of a man, intelligence and love; the face of a lion, courage and faithfulness; the face of an ox, patience and perseverance; the face of an eagle, keen sightedness and lofty flight; and all these kissing, that is harmonizing with each other, and sustained by the Holy Spirit in agreement with the counsel of God.

WILLIAM SAVIGAR.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

To CHEER us on in the pathway of obedience God has given us many exceeding great and precious promises. He has also spoken sober words of warning lest we become heedless of our ways. But the hope of award and the fear of suffering loss are not to be compared with the power of the love of Christ. This is what God would have us know as the great constraining, controlling power of our lives. See 2 Corinthians 5. 14.

In Ephesians 3. 19 the love of Christ is spoken of as surpassing knowledge. To explain the idea in the word "surpass" let us suppose we stand at the foot of a high hill. We ascend, and now when we gain the summit, we find that there are heights, hitherto unseen, towering above us, and we feel that if we could but scale these it would be to find that there were yet higher mountains beyond. So it is with the love of Christ. Or to change the figure, we have here that which we may liken to the waters of Ezekiel 47., waters to the ankles, v. 3, waters to the knees, v. 4, waters to the loins, v. 4, yea, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through, v. 5.

" 'Tis a deep that knows no sounding
Who its breadth or length can tell ? "

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?

THEN AND NOW.

THE two words *Then* and *Now* briefly describe the three pictures on "Grace and Truth Sheet Almanac" for this year, compiled by our beloved brother and fellow-worker unto the Kingdom of God—A.F.

The facts portrayed are such as need to be remembered by us, and this being the case, a short reference to them may prove helpful, and thus come under the heading of NEEDED TRUTH. The children of God need to be reminded of those bygone days of many tribulations, in

order to appreciate more fully the peacefulness of the days in which we now live.

Those were indeed dark days as pictured by "The Forbidden Reading." God's Word was precious, and His children could only gather food for their souls by stealth, so awful was the bann placed upon any found possessing a copy of the Scriptures, the which, if possessed, must be kept out of sight, and its contents read secretly.

And who were the persecutors? None other than the religious leaders of that day. History bristles with records of those who faced death rather than give up the Sacred Writings.

We often feel saddened to think that the present generation appears almost to have forgotten the past, and hence do not realize the cause for thankfulness that we have peace in our days; none daring to make us afraid; at any rate, in those countries where the Romish Church has not unlimited power.

"*Semper Eadem*" is its motto, and the same atrocities would take place even in so-called Christian England if it were not for the powers that be and other deterring influences, which prevent the showing out of the undeniable fact that she is "always the same."

The warning is needed, because the users of this motto are viewed too favourably by many who have forgotten the records of early Christians, such as the Huguenots, Vaudois, Scottish Covenanters, Lollards, and others.

A reference to such would enhance the value of these days when the old man can sit in his cottage and call a grandchild to his side to tell out the many Divine stories from the Book he has loved so long; also the peacefulness with which the old lady can rest out of doors upon the garden-seat and meditate upon the words she has just been reading.

Lack of space upon the Almanac forbade the full details, but the reader may now see the pictures in a clearer light by these few remarks.

At times when saints are together—Lordly days or holidays especially—such thoughts as these come to mind and lead to thankfulness that we are not living in like troublous times.

Were this remembered, the injunction of Paul in 1 Timothy 2. 1, 2 would oftener be given effect to in the prayers of the saints.

Our earnest desire also is that fellow-saints may be reminded of their privileges, unto a better use of them both as regards the assembling of ourselves together, and in ministry worldward—holding forth the Word of Life to others—thereby giving cause for glorying, in the day of Christ, that the labour expended upon us has not been in vain, according to Philippians 2. 16.

Thus the same words will have place with us, but in reversed order :—

Now and Then.

W. H. B. FULLARD.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

A Fragment.

ASK the Jew on what scripture he grounds his belief in the Resurrection—(the belief of all the orthodox of the nation in our Lord's time, as St. Paul is witness)—and he refers to Exodus, chapter 6. verses 2-4, where the Lord, speaking to Moses long after the death of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, renews His promise to them individually of the land of their pilgrimage: "And God spake unto Moses and said unto him, I am the Lord. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by My name Jehovah was I not known to them. And I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers." The same argument, it will be remembered, by which our Lord confuted the Sadducees, who received the Pentateuch, but rejected the

rest of the Scriptures, saying (as recorded by St. Matthew 22. 32) : "As touching the dead that they rise, have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God (referring to the occasion of His appearing to Moses in the bush), saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." An argument in which our annotators generally see only a proof (to quote the words of one of them) that "these patriarchs must have been existing in some sense when this declaration was made, for it implies a relationship between God and them which could not be if they were not existing" ; and thus a proof indeed of "a future state" ; but none, except by implication, of the resurrection of the body. Whereas, if the promise to them be understood literally, which God here renews and confirms, it is a direct proof of this latter truth, inasmuch as so only could it be fulfilled to them ; and thus the resurrection of the dead is an integral part—and more, the very basis—of the Abrahamic Covenant.

FROM AN OLD AUTHOR.

INTO THE LAND.

HAVING been brought into the land given to us by Jehovah, into the unsearchable riches of the Word and truth of God, it is our duty to hear what He has to say to us therein.

In the anticipation of this by God's people in the past, it is written in Deuteronomy 7, "When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hast cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites and the Girgashites, and the Amorites and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou . . . thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them" (verse 2). Please notice verse 7 : "The Lord did not set His love upon you nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people ; for ye are the fewest of all people." But few as

they were it was far from God's intention that they should be disheartened in their littleness; nor on account of this did God minimise the great work that lay to their hand to accomplish. Very definitely He desired them to be acquainted with the truth of verse 17.

We should cease to compare or contrast if in so doing we are caused to faint in our heart. Comparisons and contrasts given by God are intended to make Himself better understood by His people. Who can understand God? and who would be afraid (as is forbidden in verse 18), in the remembrance of the exercise of His great power, in delivering us from sin's doom and from chains much stronger than those that bound the demoniac of Mark 5?

Theirs was a wilderness experience indeed when this interesting instruction was given them concerning the land. Much of the loving-kindness of Jehovah had been extended from that memorable night in Egypt till now, although their appreciation of it at no time rose very high. But great as was God's kindness to them, greater lay in store. He only wanted opportunity to make Himself known. How slow they were to give Him this.

How he sought to establish His real place among them. How often their dull apprehension—their little or no knowledge—regarding this is manifest in their revolting more and more! Still He continued to bear with them as a people and to instruct them, notwithstanding the varied judgments that fell, cutting off companies and individuals. Thus in their going into the land weighty instruction is given them.

The presence and power of such a people God intended to be felt and known in a very definite way, as they kept and did those things which Jehovah commanded to be kept and done. In so doing lay their wisdom and understanding, which, when heard of by the nations, would bring forth from them the good testimony of Deuteronomy 4. 6, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

But we must come to the book of Joshua to get a proper view of this people in the land. The desert journey is over, and Moses their noble leader has been taken up to Mount Nebo by God and there given a view of the land concerning which he had heard so much, and towards which with lack of neither zeal nor ardour he had made such notable progress. There lay the land sure enough, a goodly land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And there with eye undimmed by the age of years, and natural force unabated, he took his first and last long look across its broad pastures. But such an experience at this point, in the light of the Divine record thereof, may be better imagined than described.

Into the hands of Joshua, however, the leadership of this great company has been put. And the Jordan must be crossed, and the toil and task of the land begun. It may have seemed well to Moses from the heights of Mount Nebo, but many a brier and thorn had to be uprooted in the march of this advancing host.

First then in their way lay a walled city ; its name not indicating any rich vineyard—Jericho. And if ever the words of Deuteronomy 4. 6 and following verses required to be remembered by them it was now. This city, King and all, must be taken, and preparations for so doing are early made. Joshua, the able general, is in the understanding of the times and of the work which must needs soon be accomplished. But what is the use of going forth to battle without courage ? “ Be strong therefore and of good courage ! ” For though the words are but the words of Rahab, and therefore in danger of being lightly esteemed, yet they are also the words of God. “ Your terror is fallen upon us, and all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.”

Then sounded the seven trumpets of the seven Priests before the Ark of God, as they compassed the City the seventh time on that memorable seventh day. See what the Spirit of God says regarding the fall of those walls in Hebrews 11. 30. This was but the beginning of a wonderful work that

might take volumes to adequately describe in the subsequent history of this people.

Without fail indeed, with the Living God in their midst, a desirable work is begun,—the driving out of those who should be out and the establishing in of those who should be in. Canaanites, Hittites and all the other nations must be driven out, although God is careful not to give too much to do at once, but little by little.

Then there must be no sparing of those altars of Deuteronomy 7, nor of the altars of a later day, remembering at the same time the natural tendency to do so, and that it will cost something to spare them not.

Scripture goes to show, no doubt, that at various times and in various places those altars were assailed. See how the axe is laid at the root, it may be, of the attention and diligence of years—as seen in those groves, those pleasant places—as the crackling and smoke of those images that are burned with fire are carried away by the wind.

In this little what a vast amount may be gleaned and laid to the hands of the people of God to-day to be done. This work in the land may be but little apprehended, and when done may not always have the approval of the many, being so contrary to the work of anything that is fleshly.

As the greatness of such work presses itself upon us, and the intense need of the same in this goodly land, so rich and plentiful, into which by the grace of God we have been brought, and which by this same grace we hope still further to explore in all the best of our strength and vigour, we ask in the language of another, “Who is sufficient for these things?” And taking courage, may all who essay to so work and labour do so in the understanding that “Our sufficiency is of God.”

D. REID.

GOD'S NOTS.

FRET NOT.

IN Psalm 37. (a psalm of David) we have the threefold exhortation: "Fret not thyself," which is re-echoed by his son Solomon in Proverbs 24. 19: "Fret not thyself because of evildoers": "Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in the way": "Fret not thyself, it tendeth only to evil doing." In 1 Samuel 1. we have a striking illustration of this in the two women—Peninnah and Hannah—the one provoking the other so sorely as to cause her to fret. Hannah, having come to the temple of the Lord, she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord and wept sore; then she is misjudged by the priest, Eli, and her sorrowful spirit and quivering lip are taken for drunkenness, but she could speak of having poured out her soul before the Lord out of the abundance of her complaint and provocation. Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace; and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of Him." . . . And the Lord remembered her.

In chapter 2. her fretful, sorrowful spirit is turned to praise and thanksgiving. Now, let both writer and readers take warning from this God-breathed narrative that they provoke not others to fretfulness; but rather let us provoke ourselves unto love and good works (Heb. 10. 24).

To any who may have been provoked and made fretful, we would say, "Fret not," but, like Hannah, pour out your complaints before the Lord; never mind even if others misjudge you, God shall give you an answer of peace.

To the bereaved and sorrowful would we utter the word "Fret not," for fretfulness leads to faintness, the appetite goes, the spiritual and physical strength will go too.

FAINT NOT.

The Lord Himself has given the word, when here as the

Man of sorrows amongst sorrowing ones, that "Men ought always to pray and not to faint." Both fretfulness and faintness are remedied by prayer and waiting upon God (see Psa. 37. 5, 7; Isa. 40. 31): "They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint." Again, Galatians 6. 9, 10: "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, especially towards them that are of the household of the faith." Hebrews 12. 3: "Consider Him . . . that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls." The Apostle Paul prays for the Ephesian saints, that they faint not at his tribulations for them (Eph. 3. 13). In Revelation 2. it is written concerning them, "Thou hast patience, and didst bear for My Name's sake, and hast not grown weary."

FORGET NOT

comes to us as it did to Israel of old (see Deut. 8. 11): "Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God in not keeping His commandments." Chapter 9. 7: "Remember, forget thou not; how thou provokedst the Lord thy God in the wilderness."

Psalm 103. 2: "Forget not all His benefits."

Proverbs 3. 1: "My son, forget not my teaching."

Proverbs 4. 2, 5: "My sons, forsake ye not my law; get wisdom, get understanding; forget it not."

Isaiah 49. 15: Jehovah says of women: "They may forget, yet will not I forget thee."

In Hebrews 13. we have the exhortation: "Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares"; and in verse 16: "To do good and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Chapter 6. 9: "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and the love which ye shewed toward His Name, in that ye ministered unto the saints, and still do minister."

“NOTS” IN THE PROVERBS.

In the Book of Proverbs we have words of exhortation containing God's “Nots,” to which we would particularly draw the attention of young believers, with the hope that it may be the means of preserving them from wrong paths and leading them into “every good path.”

Proverbs 1. 8 : “My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.”

Chapter 23. 22 : “Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old” ; those mothers of whom it can be said, “she openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.”

One has said : “For myself and for the work that I have been permitted to do for God, I owe an unspeakable debt of gratitude to my parents.”

And how many more of God's honoured servants can bear the same testimony ?

Proverbs 1. 10 : “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”

Proverbs 4. 14 : “Enter not into the path of the wicked, and walk not in the way of evil men ; avoid it, pass not by it ; turn from it, and pass on.”

Proverbs 3. 5 : “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not upon thine own understanding.”

Verse 11 : “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord ; neither be weary of His reproof.”

Proverbs 3. 21 : “My son, let not them depart from thine eyes ; keep sound wisdom and discretion . . . then shalt thou walk in thy way securely, and thy foot shall not stumble. When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid. . . . Be not afraid of sudden fear . . . for the Lord shall be thy confidence and shall keep thy foot from being taken. Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not

unto thy neighbour, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give ; when thou hast it by thee."

Proverbs 27. 1 : " Boast not thyself of to-morrow : for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

Proverbs 24. 28 : " Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause ; and deceive not with thy lips. Say not, I will do so to him as he has done to me."

Proverbs 25. 8 : " Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof. Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself, and disclose not the secret of another. Lest he that heareth it revile thee, and thine infamy turn not away."

Proverbs 4. 26 : " Make level the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left."

Proverbs 7. 1-26 : " My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee. . . . Say unto wisdom, thou art my sister, and call understanding thy kinswoman, that they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger that flattereth with her words. For at the window of my house I looked through my lattice and I beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, and he went the way to her house. . . . She is clamorous and wilful ; her feet abide not in her house. . . . Now, therefore, my sons, hearken unto me, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways. Go not astray in her paths, for she hath cast down many wounded."

Proverbs 22. 22 : " Rob not the poor."

Proverbs 19. 17 : " He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and his good deed will He pay him again."

Proverbs 23. 4 : " Weary not thyself to be rich . . . for riches certainly make themselves wings, like an eagle, that flieth toward heaven."

Proverbs 28. 20 : " A faithful man shall abound with

blessings, but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be unpunished.”

Proverbs 13. 7 : “ There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing. There is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great wealth.”

Proverbs 10. 22 : “ The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich.”

How this leads our thoughts to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, though rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich (2 Cor. 8. 9).

Proverbs 24. 11, 12 : “ Deliver them that are carried away unto death, and those that are ready to be slain, see that thou hold back. If thou sayest, Behold, we knew not this ; doth not He that weigheth the hearts consider it ? And He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it ? And shall not He render to every man according to his work ? ”

“ Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
 Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.”

Proverbs 23. 23 : “ Buy the truth, and sell it not ; yea wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.” “ Sell it not.” What needed truth for these last days, when on every hand we see those who once bought the truth (at great sacrifice some) selling it for a mere trifle, and at eternal loss to themselves ! Brother, sister, “ Sell it not ! ” We will pass on to the words of the preacher, and listen yet again to words of exhortation containing “ God’s Nots.”

Ecclesiastes 5. 2 : “ 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.”

Verse 6 : “ Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin . . . but fear thou God.”

Chapter 6. 9 : “ Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry ” (margin, vexed).

Verse 10 : “ Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these ? ”

Chapter 9. 8 : " Let thy garments be always white : and let not thy head lack ointment."

Chapter 11. : " Cast thy bread upon the waters . . . for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon earth . . . in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand ; for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

Psalm 41. 1 : " Blessed is he that considereth the poor."

Then passing on to Galatians 2. 9, 10, we read that how even Paul and Barnabas were exhorted by James, Cephas and John to remember the poor. Is not such an exhortation needed in these days, when men have become " lovers of self " ? How many can reply in the words of the Apostle Paul : " Which very thing I was also zealous to do " ? Lend your money unto the Lord, and your good deed will He pay back with good interest. " For great will be your reward in heaven." Read James 2. 15 ; 1 John 3. 17, 18.

Young Men's Corner.

IN consequence, we suppose, of the unavoidably late issue of the January number very few contributions to this Corner have yet arrived. If we wait for them we shall only make February late also. We therefore look forward to inserting fuller notes in March and following months. To prevent future delays as far as possible we append list of subjects for future months, which we shall adhere to as far, and only as far, as seems to fit in with our correspondents' convenience.

March : The History of the Fellowship, Section 17, Acts 12. 1-23—Herod's attempt to serve his master and the issue.

May and July : Section 18, Acts 12. 24—the work of Barnabas and Saul as sent from Antioch, and reaching to Pisidia and Lycaonia.

April : Psalm 16.—Michtam of David.

June : Psalm 17.—a Prayer of David.

August : Psalm 18.

Monthly : Questions, Answers to Questions, Correspondence on various subjects ; Notes on Psalm 119. and on other scriptures, as occasion arises and opportunity offers.

We desire to urge renewed activity on the part of all our friends.

QUESTIONS.

What is it which is referred to in 1 Corinthians 13. 10 as that which is perfect ? Is it come or is it yet future ?

Is it in accordance with the teaching of Scripture to use warm water in baptizing a believer into the Name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit ?

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 16 (Acts 11. 19-30).

(Continued from page 21.)

From BRIGHTON. In January issue (page 20) it is stated that Peter's work at Cæsarea was some three or four years after Stephen's death. How is this to be arrived at ?

Section 17 (Acts 12. 1-23).

Herod's Attempt to Serve His Master and the Issue.

From LONDON, S.W. From the context it would appear that this was a period of the rapid progress and development of God's work on earth. The saints of the circumcision have passed through the refining fire of the persecution of chapter 8, and now, with those Gentiles who have heard and received the Word of Life, they are found together carrying out God's will with renewed energy and zeal. His work in their hands is being richly blessed. Alas ! however, rebellious as ever, Satan—the arch enemy of God—views with evil interest this prosperity in the Divine work and therefore, with all the enmity and hate with which his heart is filled, he sets to work to thwart it, by endeavouring to remove two of the strongest pillars of the Church. God

however, by the miraculous deliverance of Peter, averts the disaster which the success of this plan would involve. This manifestation of God's power on behalf of His saints gives them Divine encouragement and assurance ; while, at the same time, it administers a severe repulse to Satan, and considerably weakens, for the moment, all active opposition. The result of this we see in the 24th verse : "The Word of God grew and multiplied."

The inestimable value of earnest collective prayer is shown forth in this chapter. In James 5. 16-18 we see the value of individual prayer, and if a single man's supplication can bring such blessing from God, how much more should be accomplished by the united prayer of His saints ? It would be well for us to take to heart the lesson taught in this 12th of Acts, and to be found resorting collectively, oftener and with deeper earnestness, to this wondrous source of blessing and power.

It is suggested that the sleep of Peter (v. 6) on the eve of such a terrible trial beautifully illustrates the attitude of one who places absolute reliance on God ; of one who, however great may be the trials of the pathway, trusts implicitly in the guidance of God's hand, assured that "All things work together for good to them that love God."

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Psalm 119.

JEHOVAH'S PRECEPTS.

The Law of Jehovah is like a map ; it gives a full representation of the land in which we travel, showing us where the places are that we seek and how to reach them ; pointing out also that which we need to avoid, and thus guiding us in the way we should go. If we take verse 1 as a key to the whole Psalm we see that the Law is that which reveals the Way.

Suppose now that it is the time of darkness, the tempta-

tion is to think that there is no guidance for us now. Hence the significance of the line—

“ I have remembered Thy Name, O Jehovah, in the night.”

For the name Jehovah speaks of the unchangeable Eternal One (Malachi 3. 6). But see what is conjoined therewith—

“ I have remembered Thy Name, O Eternal, in the night,
And have observed Thy Law.”

What? observed it in the night? Surely the night is the time for sleep, not for attention to the Law? Even supposing one wishes to do so, how could one succeed? How is the road to be found and its dangers avoided in the dark of the night? The reply is that, firstly, this can only be as the Name of the Eternal is remembered.

But granting this, what else? The Psalmist explains how it came about that he could observe the Law in the night, so as to walk, perfect in the Way even in the dark night—

“ This I have had
Because I kept Thy Precepts.”

This seems to give a clue to what the precepts are: the keeping of the precepts made possible the observing of the Law. In other words, the precepts are a means unto an end. They are, of course, part of the Law in its widest sense; but they specially concern the saint as to himself. It is by keeping the precepts that he is enabled to live a life glorifying to God.

We heard them recently compared, very aptly, as we think, to the instructions of a foreman to the workmen under his supervision. They are, of course, commands (see verse 4) that need diligent observance; but this, in order to bring about a further result, an ulterior aim, namely, in this case, to secure that the workman turns out his work according to the pattern desired and up to the standard required. Again, we may compare the precepts to the directions a physician gives to his patient,

that his health and strength being improved, he may be able to fulfil his vocation in life, whatever it may be. Thus, by attention to proper food, exercise and sanitation, an erstwhile invalid may live a long life and become a useful member of society.

Precepts abound in the Book of Proverbs, as witness, for example, some of the following :—

Go to the ant, thou sluggard.
 Be not wise in thine own eyes.
 Enter not into the path of the wicked.
 Walk with wise men and thou shalt be wise.
 Commit thy works unto Jehovah.
 Weary not thyself to be rich.
 Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks.
 Honour Jehovah with thy substance.

It is through the precepts of Jehovah that we get understanding, and it is thus, and by esteeming all the precepts concerning all things to be right that we may learn to hate every false path (verses 104 and 128).

Again, it is by the precepts we are quickened, as see verses 40 and 93. And it is well to note that only as redeemed from man's oppression is it possible to observe these precepts (verse 134).

These brief notes may serve to direct attention to the peculiar value of the precepts of Jehovah, and as the word so translated **פִּקּוּדִים**—*piqqūdim*—only occurs thrice outside the 119th Psalm, we will subjoin the three other passages that contain it for the light they can throw on the significance of the expression :—

“ The Precepts of Jehovah are right :
 rejoicing the heart ” (PSALM 19. 8.)

“ But the mercy of Jehovah is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him ;
 And His righteousness unto children's children,
 To such as keep His covenant,
 And to those who remember His precepts to do them.”
 (PSALM 103. 17, 18).

“ All His Precepts are sure ” (PSALM 111. 7).

For Youngest Believers.

“Thy word have I laid up in mine heart.”

WHATEVER else a child of God may do or not do, he should take care to lay up in his heart each word that he gets from his God. We may not know what it all means ; we may be in doubt as to the truth of what some one says that this verse means, or how it can be made to fit in with something else. But look ! here is a verse in the book, and the book is God’s book, and this verse I have read ; it is mine, it comes to me—it comes to me from God, for my very own, a rich prize from God for me ; let me take care of it, let me hide it, let me hide it safe in my own heart. It is all for me ; God speaks it to me ; and it is for me to prize it as His gift.

I shall want another to-morrow, but here is one to-day—it may have come to me anyhow or perhaps it came in my daily reading, or in recollection of what I had heard or read or learnt long ago—I may know what it means better another day for I do not know fully to-day, but it is mine, my very own from God ; so I prize it and hoard it in my heart.

Of course if we value aright the book which God has given we shall try and learn a lot of it ; we shall try and read as much as we can, and we shall often be just doing what we can to know it more and more, and to know better and better what it means. Thus we may get to know a great deal in our heads, that is well worth taking a lot of trouble to know. But if we want to be wise and please God we must be sure and get, at least once a day, a word for ourselves ; that is the word that we hide in our heart that we may not sin against God. So we learn from Psalm 119 verse 11 :—

“Thy word have I laid up in mine heart,
That I might not sin against Thee.”

The Woman in Her Sphere.

THE ALPHABET.

GOD has given in Proverbs 31. 10-31 an alphabetical account of an excellent woman; and daughters in Israel who do virtuously naturally turn hereunto that they may better themselves.

Æ Aleph.

The first letter Aleph in Hebrew, answering to the English A, commences the first stanza :—

“ A woman virtuous who can find,
For her price is far above rubies.”

The virtuous woman is a woman who has force of character—she is not one readily turned aside by flattery or by other artifices. She is a woman with a purpose. Strong in mind and perhaps (in the original meaning) in body also; no doll nor puppet is she. Yet she is a woman. It is the word “ woman ” which in the Hebrew opens the verse and carries us back to Genesis 2. 18-25. Here the woman is seen to be taken from man and given to man. All of which is illumined by 1 Corinthians 11. 8, 9, and this in full light of verses 11, 12.

But how few virtuous women there are to be found, and how precious are they when they are found. Rubies are perhaps the most precious stones of which we read in Scripture, and beautiful objects they are, and costly too. But a woman of virtue, a woman who can worthily fill the woman's place, how rare is she, how valuable, how priceless.

If such is her worth in her own sphere, when she bravely tackles her own work with all it involves, what a loss is sustained when a woman of parts steps out of her place and, whatever else she may be doing, leaves unfulfilled that for which God has given her being.

How great her value in her own sphere, how inestimable her worth for doing her own work; so great the loss when she becomes otherwise occupied, so dire the calamity when she deserts her post!

“SHEW FORTH THE EXCELLENCIES.”

A BELOVED co-worker has directed attention to this subject, surely a fascinating one to the child of God,—the excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See NEEDED TRUTH, January, page 14.) It has been noted that the showing forth of these excellencies is the function of the Royal Priesthood (1 Pet. 2. 9). Somewhat of the significance of Scriptural words may be gathered by reference to the various passages in the Word of God where the same word occurs, but as the Greek word which is translated by the phrase—show forth—in 1 Peter 2. 9 is unique, occurring only in this place, we are unable to get help in that way as to its meaning. From its derivation, however, it would appear to have in it the thought of one receiving a message and delivering it; of one hearing tidings and publishing them.

Perhaps we might cite the testimony bearing of John the Baptist to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ as a Scriptural example of “showing forth.” In Matthew 11. 10 he is called by God, “My messenger,” and in John 1. 7 we read that he “came for witness, that he might bear witness of the Light, that all might believe through him.” The object and fulfilment of his mission are well illustrated in verses 35–37 of John 1. Here we see John standing with two of his own disciples. John looks upon Jesus as He walks, and thus occupied, he exclaims: “Behold the Lamb of God.” The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.”¹ May we not learn from this that we may rightly look for subjection to the claims of the Lord on the part of disciples where ministry obtains that is the spontaneous expressing of considering Him?

Let it be carefully noted that whilst the example thus given is that of an individual, yet that individual was in the way of God—a man sent from God. Testimony in these days to the excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ is to

¹ Contrast with this Acts 20. 30.

be a corporate thing, and they who would participate in the privilege must not only personally possess some of the characteristics of the Lord Jesus Christ, but must also be found in “the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth” (1 Tim. 3. 15).

Gratitude is doubtless expected to be a considerable influence in inducing this service. Hence we are reminded of the darkness in which we were ; of the marvellous light in which we now are, and the One Whose excellencies we, as a Royal Priesthood, are to show forth is brought before us as the One by Whom this wondrous change has been effected. How fitting are the words in the lips of those thus blessed by Him :—

Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love, and power
That mortals ever knew,
That angels ever bore ;
All are too mean to speak His worth,
Too mean to set our Saviour forth !

And what a high honour has been conferred upon those who in time past were no people but who now are the people of God ! Truly, where sin abounded, grace has abounded more exceedingly. This grace has not been received in vain, and now, they of whom

LO-AMMI

was spoken by God rejoice that He is not ashamed to acknowledge them as

AMMI.

The word translated “Excellencies” in 1 Peter 2. 9 is the same as that translated “Virtue” in 2 Peter 1. 5, where it is associated with the people of God, and this not as in the case of the Lord Jesus Christ as an inherent quality or characteristic, but as a matter of acquisition or attainment. “Adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue.”

This word also occurs in 2 Peter 1. 3, where it is surely enhanced to us as we learn that we have been called “by

His own glory and virtue." Its only other occurrence is in Philippians 4, where it is put as a test of those things of which the saints are finally exhorted to take account. See verse 8.

As English meanings of the word we give the following from S. G. Green's vocabulary: Virtue, Divine efficiency, Excellency, Perfection, Courage, Manliness.

The root from which the word is derived suggests the last mentioned as the nearest approach to a literal translation, so we quote the weighty words of another:—

I dare do all that may become a man,
Who dares do more is none.

By the grace of God may it be true of us, one and all, who are of the Royal Priesthood, that we dare do that, and that alone, which becometh

MEN OF GOD.

Thus indeed shall we "show forth the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvellous light," even His, of Whom we may well sing:—

True Image of the Infinite,
Whose essence is concealed,
Brightness of uncreated light,
The heart of God revealed.

Throughout the universe of bliss
The Centre Thou, and Sun,
The eternal theme of praise is this,
To heaven's beloved One.

J. P. A. TAYLOR.

For Youngest Believers.

The Word of God. A Comparison.

PAST.—There seems to be a striking comparison between the Word became flesh and the written word; both express the mind of God, hence called "the Word," as a person's mind is only known as it is expressed. He was the Eternal One, when the fulness of time came He was born of a woman, born under the law (Gal. 4. 4). "Foreknown indeed

before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times " (1 Pet. 1. 20).

In regard to the written word, it was indeed foreknown likewise before the foundation of the world by Him who knows the end from the beginning. His word is perfect, and that which He doeth He doeth it for ever.

For ever, O Jehovah,
Thy word is settled in heaven (Ps. 119. 89).

When the time came, God caused it to be written through human agency. The original Scriptures are without blemish, as the Son of God Himself is, the one is perfect as the other is.

PRESENT.—He who became flesh was rejected because of His being so human. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? and are not His sisters here with us? And they were offended in Him" (Mark 6. 3).

Likewise men to-day reject the written word, alleging that the human element is too apparent for the Scriptures to be God-breathed: so blind is the natural man to the works and ways of God.

FUTURE.—We need to quote a few scriptures out of many to show the eternity of the Son of God in respect to the future:—

Of the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;
Thou continuest;
Thou art the same (Heb. 1).

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day, yea and for ever" (Heb. 13. 8).

Of the written word we read:—

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. 40. 8); see also 1 Pet. 1. 25. That which is so sublime and perfect cannot pass away; in whatever form it may be, one thing seems certain that in heaven we shall still possess the written word.

KINDNESS TO THE DEAD.

THOUGHTS SUGGESTED AT A BIBLE READING.

A MIGHTY leader of Israel had fallen in battle. One whom God had anointed and through whom He had wrought deliverance in days gone by had passed away. Saul was dead. Whatever had been his faults—and they were neither few nor trifling—he had been Jehovah's anointed one, and notwithstanding his failures—

“To err is human”—

he had been mighty as a warrior, who had slain his thousands and had clothed the daughters of Israel in scarlet delicately and put ornaments of gold upon their apparel. Therefore his successor, whom he had deeply wronged, and whom he had more than once sought to destroy, sang his praises and lamented him without stint.¹

He was dead. Whatever his past had been, his leadership was at an end. As one who made history, his life was well worth consideration; but it was over; he would lead no longer; the spirit had returned to God who gave it, and his soul was with Samuel in Sheol.² On earth there only remained the corruptible body, with the self-inflicted sword-wound that had let out his life,³ and paltry worms could feast upon those limbs which had once caused such devastation in the ranks of the mighty.⁴ He was dead.

What kindness then was there that could be done to such an one? What indeed but what the men of Jabesh-gilead showed? They first and longest of all knew what gratitude to Saul meant. It was they whom he had delivered when first he manifested his kingly power, and this they never forgot.⁵ Whilst he lived they had hope in him and in further deliverances that he would effect.

Samuel indeed had long before been blamed for mourning for Saul. A man of his understanding was expected to

¹ 2 Samuel 1. 17, 27.

² 1 Samuel 28. 16–19.

³ 1 Samuel 31. 4.

⁴ Job 24. 20.

⁵ 1 Samuel 11.

know how hopeless Saul had become, a man rejected by God because of the matter of Agag ;¹ but for the people generally Saul remained the king, the one in a position of authority in which God had originally placed him. But even for them the day came when they were to learn that God was no longer with him, for Jehovah delivered the host of Israel into the hands of the Philistines, and Saul died and his three sons and his armour-bearers and all his men that same day together.²

What, we ask, then remained ? It were well to remember Saul for good ; to give him as far as man might his meed of praise. But he could be no longer followed. He lived to lead the people of Israel no more. He was dead. Kindness to him was to bury him out of sight.³

* * * * *

God has given to His people in later times many a leader of undoubted power, men of varied gifts that He has bestowed, and He has used these men for the deliverance of His people. They have been enabled to effect results that have not only been for the benefit of the people of God in their own day, but have been of value for generations unborn. For such men we should have veneration ; we should not stint the praise they merit, but thank God for them. In their own day the men of whom we speak were God-given leaders, and therefore it was then right to follow them. We do not say to follow them everywhere or always. We neither stop to distinguish between these and those, nor do we deal with the question of how long they continued to be in a place of God-given authority. But it was only while they lived that they could possibly be leaders—leaders who would indeed lead for God they only were so long as they were in fellowship with Him, the ever-living God. But whatever they might be in life, when their life was ended, then, at any rate, their leadership ceased. Their history remains, with all its lessons ; their victories are the

¹ 1 Samuel 15. 35, 16. 1. ² 1 Samuel 31. 6. ³ 2 Samuel 2. 4-6.

heritage of those that follow them. But for themselves fit burial alone is meet.

* * * * *

We carry the parallel a step further. Luther, Wesley, Lincoln, who are now with the Lord, seem to us to be not the only leaders who have ceased to live. Do we not know of men still in mortal body who a few years ago were valiant champions of the truth, through whom indeed God wrought deliverance not to be forgotten, who now have turned out of the way? Have they not ceased altogether to help the little flock in the ways which are in Christ? We do not think they should be forgotten. Certainly we should have no unkind or harsh thoughts about them. But if they have left the paths of Life and are wandering amongst the Shades, what can we in all kindness do for them? Some, in goodness of motive, no doubt, will keep up their acquaintance and cultivate their friendship, will see as much of them as possible, and perhaps think that by the interchange of social courtesies, visiting and receiving visits, they may win them back. But this is all very much mistaken.

Whilst there is any apparent doubt as to the position of unstable ones, we may marvel at the way some spend their time in mourning for those whom God has rejected. The time however comes when all doubt is at end. They cut themselves off from the Fellowship, they depart from the good way; then surely they are dead to us, and to bury them is the kindest thing we can do. Not as the poet says—

“The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones.”

The very opposite should be our endeavour, as of David with Saul. We should remember all we can that will enhance our love and esteem for the departed ones. It is well for us to feel the aching void—

“. . . the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.”

It will humble us to think of the mutability of all that

is human, and make us prize more our knowledge of Him who is

“The same yesterday and to-day and for ever.”

But in the matter of life, the life to be lived in the day that now is, it is as another poet says—

“Let the dead past bury its dead,
Act in the living present.”

For this we need to know the living God, that we be not hampered and trammelled by the withering curse of the dead hand. Jehovah will show kindness and truth to those who show this kindness to their dead lord and bury him.

WAYFARER.

THE SALVATION OF CHILDREN.

“I will save thy children.”—*Isa. 49. 25.*

At the present moment, when the religious world is busy contending about the religious education of the young, to see what God thinks about them may be opportune.

This subject naturally divides itself under two heads thus : (a) The attitude of God towards those who have not passed the boundary line of accountability (*Deut. 1. 39 ; Isa. 7. 16*) ; and (b) His attitude towards boys and girls during the twilight of awakening consciousness (*Deut. 6. 6, 7 ; Luke 1. 80 ; 2. 40*).

It would be difficult to decide which of these is the more interesting. Both are intensely so. Parents whose children have died in infancy will give first place to the former, but those who have them “like olive plants round about the table” will decide in favour of the latter. So will all those interested in the work of the Lord among the young, because it seems the more practical. It is truly the more important. We have, however, to follow some sort of order in

dealing with a subject of this kind. We intend, therefore, in the present article to offer some remarks on the Word of God regarding unconscious infants, reserving what we may have to say on the latter part of the subject for another time, if the Lord will.

To begin then, when David wrote the 51st Psalm he had committed some terrible sins, for which he, however, had bitterly repented. These sins he traces, in verse five, to the corrupt root of inborn sinfulness, which with its guilt and ruin had been transmitted to him by means of natural descent from the common stock of the human race. This infected him with sin from his birth, and from his youth up. He charges his entire nature with corruption. He notices not only the fruit, but goes deeper and points out the ungodly nature that produced it. He realized that he had been born guilty and depraved.

Now what David said of himself is true of every child coming into the world, he is born in sin, and the seeds of sin dwell in him.

Please read Romans 5. 12. In these words the depravity in the human family, which in David's case bore such bitter fruit, is traced to its root. In this passage Adam is viewed as the seedling from which mankind as a tree has developed. The injury he suffered by the fall damaged all who have sprung from him to the smallest shoot of the utmost branch. The Apostle's argument is that the universality of death proves the universality of sin. It may be put thus : Death among men is not something that has come in by accident during the course of development, nor is it a natural event destitute of moral significance or unconnected with sin. On the contrary, it is a consequence of the fall, and is the fruit of sin, a punishment for transgression. As, for instance, "The wages of sin is death," or again, "Sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death." From which it appears that had Adam remained innocent, he had not died. But sinning by disobedience to the Sovereign Will, he became

liable to death ; and being the head of the race, death, as the punishment of sin, passed upon all, for all sinned in him.

Now a babe cannot be personally blameworthy, because he cannot become a transgressor. Yet infants die, and by dying suffer the consequence of sin. Why do these infants die who are personally incapable of sinning ? The fact that they die shows that in some way they have participated in the guilt of sin ; for the Righteous Judge of men would not inflict death except because of sin. As we have seen, death is the punishment of sin. When, then, did they come under the penalty of sin ? The Scriptures answer, " All sinned in Adam, therefore in Adam all die."

Look again at that babe in the cradle. What better picture of purity and innocence could possibly be found ? The sight brings the much-loved words of the Saviour to our mind, " Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of God." But we must not deceive ourselves into thinking that the Lord intends us to understand by these words that little ones are free from the taint of sin. That is not intended. But the trust and humility of the little ones are what He makes prominent, without which none can partake of the blessings He had come to procure for lost men. The loveliest infant is a natural branch of a tree which by nature is corrupt, containing in seed all the evil qualities of the tree that bore him. And, as soon as his will becomes operative, he makes evident the inborn corruption of his nature by bearing fruit after his own kind.

This corruption is not accidental. It comes in by the fall and is transmitted by way of natural generation to all in this manner. Adam was betrayed into sin against the God of Light by the Prince of Darkness, and in this way let loose, in so far as mankind is concerned, the stream of corruption, and it has flowed on and down ever since, throughout all his descendants.

Now there have not been wanting men, both ancient and modern, who have taught that a child enters into this life

burdened with the accumulated depravity of the race since Adam.

We do not intend to deny that mankind is worse to-day than directly after the fall. But to suppose that a child inherits the accumulated depravity of humanity is going beyond the teaching of the Scriptures. The child born to-day is no more depraved than Cain and Abel who were born just after the fall.

This corruption of human nature is, however, sufficiently great in itself to be beyond the power of self-purification. Though he has not, nor could have sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, the contagion has affected every part of his nature and tainted every faculty the child possesses.

All this is sad, and it is with pleasure we now turn from the sad effects of the fall upon the unconscious little one, to dwell briefly on the happy results of the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

Just as guilt and depravity came by Adam, life and righteousness come by Christ (Rom. 5. 17-18). Adam let in the stream of corruption and death which polluted all. Christ has brought in the healing stream of life for all. It was thus. In His human nature the Lord Jesus Christ represented the race, and the benefits resulting from His obedience unto death are co-extensive with the injury resulting from the disobedience of Adam. The first Adam brought sin and death to all; the last Adam brought righteousness and life for all. From which it follows that none are condemned because of transmitted sin. The redemption wrought by the Great Redeemer is adequate for every infant born into the world. And this saving power acts of itself by the Divine will in respect to those who die before they are able to discern between good and evil. Thus, infants become partakers of Adam's sin without personal fault, and they become partakers of salvation because of Christ's work without personal faith.

The manner in which this power operates in babes, and what actually takes place concerning them, must remain among the mysteries of God. But without being wise above that which is written, we can safely say that it is by the work of the Kinsman Redeemer that the prey of the terrible shall be delivered. "Once in the end of the world He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," and this reaches back in its delivering power to the fall and forward to the end, and God's purposes shall be complete. And from all this we conclude that the Divine attitude towards the infant is an attitude of infinite mercy. Where sin abounded grace has much more abounded. All children without exception who die in infancy are saved, without human agency. It is not intended to say anything in this article on the question as to what place the infant dead will have in the future economy of God. Sufficient for the present to know that they will be saved.

How comforting it is for Christian parents who have had to part with their children in infancy to know that they have not perished, will not perish, but have part with themselves in the saving work of the Redeemer. They have already entered the good land, and are safe in the arms of the Great Shepherd. And, like David, each parent can say, "He shall not return unto me, but I shall go to him."

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!" Amen and Amen.

WILLIAM SAVIGAR.

Fragment.

WE'LL list for Thy shout, blessed Master,
Though loud be the din here below ;
Our heart—it is now beating faster—
Thy Presence is nearing, we know.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Summary. Acts 1. to 11.

From G.H.W. As we review the very early days of the Fellowship, one or two scriptures stand prominently out, showing us the character and purpose of those times. The first of these is found in the disciple's question, "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Nor are we right in supposing that this simply betrays their ignorance of the purpose of God. The Old Testament prophecies speak of the sufferings of the Christ and the glories that should follow without any reference to a time between, and this was evidently in the mind of the disciples. In Amos 9. we read of God's verdict upon the sinful kingdom. He will destroy it from the face of the earth, yet not a complete destruction. They shall be sifted as wheat, yet shall not one grain fall upon the earth. But with this prophecy of judgment we are told He will raise again the tabernacle of David, and bring again the captivity of His people Israel. They shall be one kingdom, no longer divided, but restored to their former greatness. This, we know, will be in the "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord"; the great season of joy and rest on earth which it was understood the coming of Messiah in His glory was to bring with it.

The prophecy of Joel, moreover, has most decided reference to the last days (Acts 2. 17), after that Jehovah had gathered Judah and Jerusalem—days associated with the "times of refreshing" of Acts 3. 19, pointing unmistakably to the fact that God was dealing with His people in view of a possible restoration in the near future. God was opening out the possibility of the prophecy of Joel being soon fulfilled, if only they would turn again and receive the Christ before appointed for them. His Spirit

shall be poured out upon all flesh in the days of Israel's restoration and blessing.

Yet again the times of restitution of all things take us back to Malachi 4. and Matthew 17. 10, of which times all the prophets from Samuel onward have spoken, and which God made known by the mouth of all His prophets which have been since the world began. This is indeed, the hope of Israel as a nation, linked with the blessing of all nations in the seed of Abraham. But the prophets before never spoke of the coming of the Lord to the air, as we get in the Pauline epistles; nor of this present dispensation wherein Jew and Gentile are fellow-members of the Body. Yet they had spoken of the days in which they then were (Acts 3. 24), days in which God had sent His servant to them to turn them away from their iniquities.

In the light of these things, therefore, we see a great difference between the disciples of those days and these. Their hopes and desires, their testimony to the people and their relationship to them; their very name, were all different from ours in a greater or less degree. Their desire was the blessing of the nation; they were hoping for the return of the Christ appointed for them, in like manner as He had been seen going into heaven (Acts 1. 11); their testimony was that the heavens had received Him, and must, until the times of restitution, which times were even then drawing nigh, if so be they would turn again and receive the Christ appointed, even Jesus; for in none other is there salvation. But the people clung passionately to the mere types and shadows of the law, which, though appointed by God, were now become obsolete. Yet let us bear in mind, not until God had cast off the nation are we justified in expecting that every jot and tittle of a former Divine arrangement would be removed and replaced. Never do we read of their being called "Christians" while the testimony was confined to Judæa and Galilee and Samaria. They were intensely and altogether Jewish, Jews according to the Divine

meaning of the word, in heart, and not in word and form alone (Rom 2. 28-29).

Such, then, were these early disciples, and such their hopes and testimony. We have seen them baptized unto remission of sins, and given the Holy Spirit of promise. Further, they are gathered in one Fellowship, continuing in the Apostles' teaching, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. While the assembly is confined to Jerusalem we see need arising and a provision for the same in the appointing of deacons to minister to the necessities of the saints. We also see the shepherd care of the Apostles, more clearly defined after they are scattered, but there from the very first. All this speaks of a rule of God among them; such a people as God had long desired. But the nation has refused the opportunity of repentance. They have killed the witness of the risen Lord and spurned the Holy Spirit. One has already been chosen to carry the Gospel of God's Grace to the nations, and we close with an assembly planted in a Gentile land, the starting-place for the Apostle of the Gentiles in his work and testimony among the Gentiles.

And when the Church is taken up, God will again resume His dealings with the Jews, and will there not be a period between the rapture of the Church and the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy, just as there was a period between the Cross and the Apostle Paul's ministry? Since then such a people were found in these early days, in which days God was dealing with the Jews, and, later, days of transition, does it not speak to us that God will have a testimony on earth then, and may they not be seen in assembly capacity in some manner such as these were?

From BELFAST. Having reached the beginning of that stage mentioned in the last clause of Acts 1. 8, a survey of the course traversed in our subject should help to familiarize us with the more prominent occurrences.

Before the Lord Jesus was received up into heaven He

gave commandment unto the apostles whom He had chosen, and—because of the new order of things which was being brought about—for forty days remained with them speaking things concerning the Kingdom of God.

Evidently they did not all fully realize at that time what Acts 1. 6 teaches ; and Acts 11. 1-2 leads us to think that for long after they but dimly apprehended the truths connected with the Dispensation of the Grace of God. The raising up of Paul for a work of ministry in the light of these facts is, to say the least, very striking.

When the Holy Spirit descended on Pentecost day there were found together about 120 obedient disciples, and they, forming the nucleus of the assembly in Jerusalem, received power.

They at once became active in holding forth the Word of light. The result of their first day's testimony was the addition of 3,000 souls who continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching, in the Fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in the prayers ; others who were being saved were added daily, till we find that in ch. 4. the men alone numbered about 5,000.

Many of those added were evidently in need of sustenance, but those who were not had grace given to them to rise to the occasion, and manifest by their manner of meeting that need that they understood what being in a Fellowship meant. The extreme method adopted was necessary, because no other church of God existed at that time.

Lest any should imagine that communism was either taught or practised by the apostles the words of Peter to Ananias should be heard, "Whiles it remained, did it not remain thine own ? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power ?

We may safely assume that at this time the responsibility of overseership and deacon-work of this first assembly devolved upon the twelve men who were also apostles (see Acts 1. 20). For when a trouble arose through certain

widows being neglected in the daily ministration, they are the ones directly concerned. To put things on a workable basis they appoint and identify themselves with seven special men who were chosen to take up this work of the daily ministration, that the apostles might not be hindered in their ministry of the word. This is an example of apostles shepherding as overseers, to the end that they might also continue to serve as deacons of the word.

In this way the first assembly, in a crude state, without a single line of the New Testament, learned to progress in organization and order. Notwithstanding the fact that they had apostles and prophets orally, are we not more highly privileged than they, seeing we have the complete Scriptures and the same Holy Spirit? For even apostles and prophets might not go contrary to what is written, but only speak and teach things which were in accordance with the word of God as it was being recorded (1 Cor 4. 6.)

The death of Stephen was the most important among many depressing events which were besetting the assembly about this time. Stephen, who appears to have been a very energetic and aspiring worker, was cut down in the morning of a day full of promise. A life short, but who knows what it effected. A ministry brief, but bringing glory to God. His death was brought about by men who were not able to withstand the wisdom or the Spirit by which he spoke. Yet in the light of what followed that word is fulfilled, which says, "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

On the day that Stephen fell asleep there arose a great persecution against the assembly in Jerusalem, reducing it until only the twelve remained in Jerusalem, the others being scattered abroad over the districts of Judea and Samaria. By this scattering the enemy defeated his own ends, for his efforts to obliterate the work of God resulted in the spreading of the truth by those thousands of persons who had witnessed the gathering together of the first assembly of God.

Special mention is made of Philip going down to the

capital of Samaria and preaching ; men and women believe and are baptized. When the report of this work reached Jerusalem, the apostles, in carrying out the responsibility which was upon them as shepherds of the scattered flock, at once delegate Peter and John to go down and visit Samaria. The abnormal position in which the apostles were placed of being alone in Jerusalem with the flock outside, instead of decreasing their responsibility only increased it greatly.

The Divine arrangement of God is seen in the way Samaria is reached and linked on with the Fellowship, although the persecution was severe, yet a unit was left in Jerusalem capable of carrying out administrative functions, and it is with Jerusalem that Samaria is linked.

It is evident that the action of the apostles was according to God, because although Philip was able to do signs and work miracles in the same manner as the apostles, and although the people had believed and were baptized, yet they did not receive the Holy Spirit until Peter and John had come down and laid hands on them. It is the same John who wrote later on, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God."

Peter and John return to Jerusalem again, but Philip is directed by an angel of the Lord to go towards the south of Judea, in order that a man of Ethiopia might be reached and saved.

After the eunuch was baptized, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and he was found in Azotus. From there he passed through Judea back into Samaria, and disappears from our notice at Cæsarea.

While God was thus working in various places, the persecution against the disciples of the Lord was still being continued. A young man called Saul, who had been very active in laying waste the assembly in Jerusalem, now procured letters unto the synagogues in Damascus. But while he was journeying to that place he was converted.

Upon his return to Jerusalem again the Grecian Jews

sought to kill him ; but when the brethren knew it they took him to Cæsarea, and from there sent him to Tarsus, a city of Cilicia.

Now the persecution abated, and we read that the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace, being edified ; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied.

Peter leaves Jerusalem now and passes throughout all parts. In Lydda he heals a palsied man, and in Joppa he raises a dead woman. The working of those miracles causes many to turn to the Lord.

While in Joppa Peter received a message to go to Cæsarea, and see a centurion called Cornelius, who had been told by an angel that from Peter he would hear words whereby he would be saved, he and his house. Peter goes to Cæsarea, and while speaking to the household of Cornelius the Holy Spirit came upon all who heard the word, and they spake with tongues and did magnify God. Then Peter commanded them to be baptized.

It is significant that the Jews did not receive the Holy Spirit until coming up out of the water of baptism ; the Samaritans not until the hands of the apostles were laid on, although baptized ; but the Gentiles received the Holy Spirit without either being baptized or having hands laid on.

This seems to be a record of the first Gentiles to believe the word of God in the Dispensation of Grace. The incident caused some contention among the apostles and brethren that were in Judea. When Peter was come up to Jerusalem again, they of the circumcision raised the question about the going unto the Gentiles. But Peter gave a full explanation in order, and when he had finished, they held their peace and glorified God, recognizing that to the Gentiles also God had granted repentance unto life.

After this we read of some preachers going as far north as Antioch, a city in Syria, north of Phenicia, and preaching not only to Jews, but to Greeks also. The hand of the Lord

was with them, and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord.

The assembly in Jerusalem sends Barnabas to Antioch. He arrives and after exhorting and encouraging the disciples goes off to Tarsus to seek for Saul. He meets with Saul and brings him to Antioch. Then it came to pass that even for a whole year they were gathered with the Church and taught much people.

Antioch became a centre of some importance, but, like Jerusalem, it was not long in existence before it received a trial. Certain prophets came down to Antioch and spoke of a famine which came to pass in the days of Claudius. Upon hearing of this the disciples at once prepared to send relief to the brethren that dwelt in Judea, and this they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

In the ministration of this service two things are evident. The obedience of the confession of the disciples in Antioch unto the Gospel of Christ, and the singleness (oneness) of the Fellowship.

It is evident also that the apostles had now linked other men—who were not apostles—with themselves in oversight work, for the gift was sent to the elders for the brethren in Judea.

Section 17. (Acts 12. 1-23.)

(Continued from page 45.)

From BRIGHTON. God is unchanging in His purposes of love and grace. Satan also is unchanging in his purposes of hatred and enmity against all that is of God. This is manifest by his continual attempts to oppose and harass those who are engaged in doing God's will and work. In Herod, Satan finds one ready to do his will—one who puffed up with pride, as a result of his prosperity, the favours he received from Caligula [?], evidently reckoned without God, for though he is permitted to kill James with the sword, God

steps in and delivers Peter who had been cast in prison, in spite of the guard of sixteen soldiers. The church is seen raising her weapon against which Satan is powerless. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty before God." Peter is delivered against the expectation of the people and apparently against the expectation of the church too, for the one who answers the door to Peter and conveys the news to those who were gathered together and were praying, is told she is mad.

There is something beautiful in the sleep of Peter in that prison, in his calmness under the trying ordeal, for humanly speaking there was only certain death awaiting him on the following day. Fear not them which can kill the body. Satan's design is frustrated for the time being, and he whom he had used to do his will is unconsciously hurried on to doom. He that exalteth himself shall be abased.

FROM DERBY. In chapter 11. they experience a time of blessing. Now in chapter 12. they pass through a time of trial. Herod puts forth his hands to afflict certain of the church, which we understand to be the church in Jerusalem (see chapter 11. verses 29,30 and chapter 12. 12, 25). Herod's purpose is accomplished in some measure, killing James the brother of John with the sword, this also being a part fulfilment of Matthew 20. 20-23. This murder of James pleases the Jews, thus showing their bitter enmity against God and His people and reminding us of the words of the Lord Jesus to His own in John 15. 11-21. Herod proceeds to seize Peter also, he is put in prison and bound, and while waiting Herod's time, when he should be brought forth, the church are making earnest prayer unto God for him. Time goes on; on the morrow Peter is to be brought forth; confiding himself in God's hands, he is seen sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains. But an Angel of the Lord stood by him, and verse 7 tells how the Lord delivered him. Then we have Peter's obedience in verses 8 and 9.

All are rendered powerless while God is at work. In verse 9, Peter thought he saw a vision, but in verse 11, he says, now I know of a truth that the Lord hath delivered me. Peter considered, and then came to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, where it appears there was a midnight prayer meeting. How amazed they all were when Peter recalled them. Is this not strange after their continued prayers unto God on Peter's behalf? But are we not guilty of this same thing to-day? How fitting are the words of the Lord Jesus to us in this day as well as to His own of a past day, "O, thou of little faith" (Matthew 14. 31). From verse 19 it appears that the guards were going to be put to death, and thus Satan would lose sixteen of his own men when he thought of putting one of the Lord's to death. In the beginning of this chapter, we have Herod smiting, but in verse 23, an Angel of the Lord smote Herod because he gave not God the glory. Yet through it all the Word of God grew and multiplied.

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

From JARVIS BROOK. In contrast to the lengthy account of the slaying of Stephen (which preceded a great persecution against the church), the outstanding fact of the brief record of the slaying of James the brother of John is, that it was the act of Herod the King.

Whether done or not through the influence of those that had aforetime persecuted the apostles and those with them, the words are significant, "when he saw that it pleased the Jews he proceeded to seize Peter also." Having secured Peter, he purposed making a display of him to the people, and perhaps to gain applause from them by affording the spectacle of a torturous death of the apostle. Herod however reckoned without God, for when he was about to bring him forth, an Angel of the Lord delivered him from prison, and Peter was restored to those by whom prayer had been made unto God on his behalf.

When subsequently Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon, and (through the medium of a mediator) this was appeased, he made an oration unto them, and accepting their acclamation of his deity, Heaven's displeasure was incurred, and Herod is immediately smitten, "because he gave not God the glory," and as a mortal, died a most loathsome death.

FROM MARKET HARBOROUGH. The persecution which ceased after the conversion of Saul (the great persecutor) (see Acts 9. 31), again breaks out. Herod undoubtedly wished to become popular with the Jews at Jerusalem, and how could he better succeed than by persecuting the hated sect of the Nazarenes. The martyrdom of James, the brother of John, causes great delight, but far greater pleasure would have been theirs, if Peter suffered the same fate. What greater prize than the chief of the apostles, the one who had introduced the blessed Gospel of the Grace of God both to Jew and Gentile, the one who had so fearlessly witnessed for his Lord and Master, and brought home so forcibly to them the terrible sin of the murder of God's Son?

Here was their opportunity to get rid of him, as they had done Peter's Lord before. Herod knowing their desires, lays his plans, and imprisons him, guarding him strongly outside and in. Surely there is no fear of escape under such precautions, but God overrules all things. It is not His will that His servant shall yet put off his "earthly house." While Peter sleeps in his prison, an unceasing prayer goes up to God from the church for his safety and deliverance, not an individual prayer, but a united earnest supplication, which continued on through the night, and which received such an answer that they were all more than astonished when Peter presented himself before them, explaining his miraculous escape.

The Woman in Her Sphere.

ב BETH.

THE second stanza of Proverbs 31. 10-31 is named Beth after the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. For the word translated "trusteth," with which it commences, begins with this letter.

Trusteth in her the heart of her husband,
And of gain he shall have no lack.

This tells of the confidence of her lord in the virtuous woman who is his. In the picture before us he is probably a man of some property, and of this she is not wasteful. Whatever falls to her lot to care for, she can be trusted to do her best, and that best is good. Consequently nothing is lacking in the house where she rules. Were she wasteful or extravagant the means would be depleted, and the husband in thinking of ways of replenishing it might be tempted to such as would not be altogether good. But her care is such that of this there is no need. . . .

A Christian artisan in a certain town is earning very moderate wages, which it rests with his wife to spend. She has children as well as her husband and herself to provide for, but she exercises herself as a child of God, and as a disciple of the One Who for our sakes became a poor man, to use the little that comes to her to the best advantage. She has no cause for regret that her children and herself are not dressed above their station, for with God's help they all get nourishing food and warm clothes; and though the responsibility of giving is not neglected, there is still something being put away. In the same town, there is another earning better wages with a wife who is a wellmeaning Christian woman, but so far are they from finding contentment with that which they possess, that he is sorely tempted for the sake of a few shillings more a week to move to another town where there is no assembly. Beloved Christian wife, can your husband trust in you that he may not need gain at such a cost?

THE KING THEY ASKED FOR.

“I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah.”—1 *Sam.* 15. 20.

THESE are the words of Saul, the son of Kish, who is brought before us in 1 Samuel 9. 2 as “a choice young man, and a goodly, and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he :” of whom the Lord said, “This same shall reign over My people” (ver. 17), and “the people shouted and said, God save the King” (10. 24).

The time and circumstances attendant to the utterance of these words are recorded in 1 Samuel 15., and, being written for our learning (Rom. 15. 4), may we therein seek to receive instruction (see Prov. 24. 32). A solemn charge is given (vers. 1-3), carrying with it the possibility on the one hand of faithful and acceptable service (and retrieving in measure the disobedience and heeding the warning of an earlier day, 1 Sam. 13. 13), as also on the other hand the possibility of continued disobedience and partial or complete disregard for the words of the Lord. In verse 9 a distinction is made where the Lord made none, “but Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep . . . and all that was good . . . but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.”

Does not this read a solemn warning to those who dare to say concerning the charge, “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matt. 28. 20), that this or that is essential or non-essential?

In the face of definite instructions, God ignores the partial obedience, and the wilful disobedience is summed up in the words, “He is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments” (ver. 11). “It grieved Samuel; and he *cried* unto Jehovah *all night*.” Contrast Hebrews 13. 17 and 2 John 4. The reading of verse 13 should cause us to reflect. Samuel (with whom is the secret of the Lord) *silent*, “and Samuel came to Saul”: and Saul (who had turned back and was self-confident as equally self-deceived), *said* unto him, “Blessed

be thou of Jehovah : I have performed the commandment of Jehovah." High words indeed, but not too high *if true* (see John 3. 21 and 2 Tim. 4. 7), but, alas ! for the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen that witnessed against him. The mention finds Saul ready and willing to justify and excuse himself, "They have brought them . . . for the people spared the best . . . to sacrifice unto Jehovah thy God" : (herein he essays to excuse the people) "and the rest we have utterly destroyed" (ver. 15). Did he think he had to do with Samuel alone ? If so, he might have hoped to have been exonerated, by pleading what might appear to man to be an evidence of delight in "sacrificing the best" unto Jehovah. But the end does not justify the means.

"Then Samuel said unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what Jehovah hath said to me this night ! . . . When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and Jehovah anointed thee King over Israel ? and Jehovah sent thee . . . wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of Jehovah, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of Jehovah ?" How forcibly the heart and conscience are reached, and that with words from the mouth of Jehovah, "when thou wast little," a past condition no longer existing for the position and work wherein it was so essential. How like the exposure of the church in Ephesus, "Thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works" (Rev. 2. 4, 5).

The answer of Saul in verse 20, "Yea, I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah, and have gone the way which Jehovah sent me, . . ." shows him still willing to justify himself and blame the people whose King he was, yet withal what an acknowledgment is made and what responsibility is laid upon the people in verse 21, "The people took of the spoil, . . . which should have been utterly destroyed."

"And Samuel said, Hath Jehovah as great delight in burnt

offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou has rejected the word of Jehovah He hath also rejected thee from being king" (vers. 22, 23).

Read also Deuteronomy 17. 18-20, "To the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel." What blessed possibilities! How abused! The foolishness of 1 Samuel 13. 13 is followed by rebellion and stubbornness (instead of repentance unto righteousness), and as the result he is rejected from being king. "And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned; for I have transgressed the commandment of Jehovah and thy words" (see ver. 1): "because I feared the people and obeyed their voice." What a confession! He feared the people rather than Jehovah. How true the words of Proverbs 29. 25, "the fear of man bringeth a snare," in contrast to Proverb 14. 27, "The fear of Jehovah is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death"! Hence the importance and necessity of the words, "The God of Israel said, he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Sam. 23. 3), otherwise in fearing and pleasing the people, what dangers, what snares! (See also 2 Timothy 3. 1-8, 4. 3, 4.)

The request made of Samuel for pardon and fellowship (ver. 25) and subsequent developments (vers. 26-29) are significant, but in verse 30 the people's man betrays himself: "Yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people" (contrast, "Thy people," 1 Kings 3. 8), "and before Israel." How different to seeking "the honour that cometh from God only" (John 5. 44)! For the negative and positive ways to attain this, see Galatians 1. 10: "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" and John 12. 26: "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."

Ought not the judgment of Eli's house and the words of Jehovah in 1 Samuel 2. 30 : "Them that honour Me, I will honour ; and they that despise Me, shall be lightly esteemed," to have been a warning and an incentive to obey the Lord at all costs ? " So Samuel turned again after Saul ; and Saul worshipped Jehovah " (ver. 31). An acknowledgment of Jehovah in worship is good, but to be acceptable there must be in it that reality of heart that will show in walk and service.

Then said Samuel, " Bring ye hither to me Agag the King of the Amalekites." And Agag came unto him delicately, and Agag said, " Surely the bitterness of death is past ? " Whether a like attitude and pleading had been heeded by Saul or not, it finds Samuel ready to vindicate the honour and execute the requirements of Jehovah, and thus he " hewed Agag in pieces before Jehovah in Gilgal."

The parting and separation of those that had occupied high position in Israel are not mentioned apart from the words : " Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul : and Jehovah repented that He had made Saul King over Israel " (vers. 34, 35). These are words of importance to those that have to do with the administration of such discipline and watch its effect. Godly discipline generally has restoration in view, as see Galatians 6. 1 ; 2 Timothy 2. 24-26 ; Hebrews 12. 4-13 ; as also Luke 22. 31, 32.

What was the purpose or extent of Samuel's mourning for Saul ? Was it restoration ? The period of silence and mourning may suggest an answer, for after an interval of about sixteen years, " Jehovah said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him " (1 Sam. 16. 1) ? But while Samuel mourned, and nothing is recorded of Saul during this lengthy period, Jehovah sought him a man after His own heart (1 Sam. 13. 14) ; and now such an one is to be anointed King over Israel ; thus Samuel is sent to Jesse the Bethlehemite : " For I have provided Me a King among his sons," and when he

is discovered and anointed in the midst of his brethren, the Spirit of Jehovah came upon David from that day forward. . . . “ But the Spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him ” (1 Sam. 16. 13, 14). Herein is seen the judgment of God : “ He putteth down one, and setteth up another ” (Ps. 75. 7)—that which was doubtless remembered by David (Ps. 51. 11).

Yet withal, Saul still occupied the position ; David acknowledges him as his master, Jehovah’s anointed (1 Sam. 24. 6) ; and spares the life of him that sought to slay him (ver. 28) ; and when at last Saul dies by his own hand (1 Sam. 31. 4), “ David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son ” (see 2 Sam. 1. 17–27).

Wherefore “ take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the Living God. But *exhort* one another daily, while it is called ‘ to-day,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin ” (Heb. 3. 12, 13) ; and “ He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord ” (1 Cor. 1. 31)—as also see Jeremiah 9. 23, 24—“ for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”

J. T. BRIDGER.

For Youngest Believers.

RECRUITS WANTED !

PAUL the aged, towards the end of his course, addresses his true and beloved child in faith as a

MAN OF GOD.

See 1 Timothy 6. 11. Like many others, Timothy had been brought early in life to know the Saviour, and, buying up his opportunities, he sought to become thoroughly furnished for every good work by the Word of God (2 Tim. 3. 16, 17). Thus, when Paul’s time of departure was drawing nigh, and his course was almost run, having himself fought the good fight, he could write to Timothy and exhort him also to

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF THE FAITH.

This reminds us of a past day when God spake to Joshua and said : “ Moses, My servant is dead ;

NOW THEREFORE ARISE.”

See Joshua 1. 2. The time had now come for God to use him in a manner and measure not possible before.

Moses passed off the scene, and God took up Joshua. Paul’s time of departure is at hand, and God has Timothy ready to carry on the warfare, and he in turn is exhorted to commit what he has learned to

COMPETENT MEN, ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS.

Oh ! may we aim at being like Joshua and Timothy, learning from God while young in years ; as new-born babes longing for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that we may grow thereby. Thus feeding upon the precious Word of God, in due course becoming able for solid food, Timothy-like, we shall be completely furnished thereby, and

BEING NOT HEARERS THAT FORGET, BUT DOERS THAT WORK,

like him we too may be well-reported by the brethren (Acts 16. 2), and continuing to seek not our own but the things of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2. 19–22), we shall become

MEN OF GOD

whom He can take up in His own good time, that as present servants finish their course there may be those like Timothy or Joshua to whom He will be able to say—

NOW THEREFORE ARISE.

Let us sit before Him, as learners now ; that at His bidding we may be ready to arise.

CONSIDER.

THE Greek word which is most frequently translated "Consider" occurs fourteen times in the New Testament. According to Dr. Strong, it is made up of two words, one of which means "down," and the other "to exercise the mind," and so he gives the meaning of the complete word as "observe fully" (*κατανοέω*, *katanoeō*, from *κατά*, *kata*, and *νοέω*, *noeō*). It implies not only exercise but exertion, and indicates a close, careful scrutiny as contradistinguished from a passing glance or superficial survey.

Not only do objects which are easily seen reveal themselves to the considering eye as possessing beauties which are quite undreamt of by the mere casual observer, but objects which are themselves unseen by him stand out luminously clear to the one who considers.

Out of the fourteen occurrences mentioned, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself uses it four times, and it is evident from His use thereof that if we would be happy and contented amidst all the vicissitudes of life, then we must be a "considering" people. Herein lies salvation from over-anxiety, from fretfulness, from faint-heartedness, and from misdirected energy.

CONSIDER THE RAVENS.¹

They sow not ; they reap not ; they possess not store-chamber nor barn ; and yet,

THEY DIE NOT THROUGH HUNGER !

Why is this ?

GOD FEEDETH THEM.

And how much more value are ye than the birds ?

CONSIDER THE LILIES, HOW THEY GROW.

They toil not ; they spin not ; and yet

EVEN SOLOMON, IN ALL HIS GLORY, WAS NOT ARRAYED
LIKE ONE OF THESE.

If God doth so clothe the grass . . . how much more you ?

¹ See Luke 12. 24, 27 ; Matt. 6. 26, 28.

O YE OF LITTLE FAITH !

Fitting rebuke this, of our failure to trust in Him, whether it be, as here, for the things needful for this life, or in times when "troubles like sea billows roll." How can I outlive this trial? Is it possible for the assembly testimony to outlast these difficulties? Can it be that the Fellowship shall not be swamped? Ah! the child, the assembly and the Fellowship are dear to His heart; He has purposes to fulfil through them upon the earth, and so, although He finds it necessary to rebuke us, as a true Friend, and say

"O YE OF LITTLE FAITH!"

yet in the compassion of His loving heart and the majesty of His Almighty power, He also says

"PEACE, BE STILL!"

and there is a great calm.¹

The other day I read of the captain of a vessel which was wrecked. His confidence in God, his coolness in the hour of danger when face to face with death, were not lost upon the crew, as one of the survivors afterwards testified, for that day he became convinced that there was a reality in Christianity after all, with the result that he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his own personal Saviour, and so entered into the possession of eternal life. He told how the captain stuck to the wheel though wave after wave dashed against him, and with almost inevitable destruction before him, so far as appearances went, he boldly sang:—

"Begone, unbelief! my Saviour is near,
And for my relief will surely appear.
By faith I confide in His power to perform,
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm."

Beloved, may we be not faithless, but believing!

But, again, the Lord Jesus Christ not only points out the ravens and the lilies as displaying the goodness and power of God, and so forming fit subjects for consideration

¹ See Matt. 8. 23-27; Mark 4. 35-41.

unto our own comfort and encouragement ; He also by words of reproof seeks to save us from an unmerciful condemnation of others, in a hypocritical spirit, and the word "Consider" is used in the admonition in a most instructive way.

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye ?" ¹

Alas ! that those who are wont to sing

"A debtor to mercy alone"

should so allow the Adversary to prevail that they are found forgetful of that mercy, and, instead of manifesting to others somewhat of the kindness they themselves have known at the hand of God, they are unmerciful, if not over-exacting. Yet the Lord Jesus has said : "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," ² and "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful." ³ From the admonition, however, let us learn that the natural tendency is to be otherwise than merciful, and in our forewarning may we know grace also to make us forearmed. How small a mote is when contrasted with a beam ! Yet it is the mote that we readily "behold." We don't need to consider in order to find it out. Oh, no ! we see it at a glance. Why is this ? The reason is that it is in my brother's eye. Had it been in mine own it would never have given me a thought. Why, I can bear a beam in mine and yet not be caused to consider it.

Do not let us try to pass such teaching on to others ; it is truly needful for the disciples. Oh ! how Satan would seek to rob God of His joy in us as a people for His own possession, who are not satisfied with being simply in a Divine position but are seeking earnestly to become more Christ-like in word and way and walk. His perfect teaching should conduce to this desirable end.

¹ Matt. 7. 3 ; Luke 6. 41 (Revised Version).

² Matt. 5. 7.

³ Luke 6. 36.

Do not let us say with Hazael : " Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing ? " Where others have fallen we too may come down. We are on dangerous ground when we begin to think that we are strong. The Apostle said : " When I am weak, I am strong." May we seek to enter more fully into his experience. As for Hazael, despite his seeming abhorrence of the suggested cruelty and tyranny, he went home and soon proved himself a liar and a murderer, and repeatedly we read of him as an oppressor.

But an example that comes nearer home is that of the man after God's own heart. Did not he, so to speak, behold the mote in his brother's eye when he saw the rich man sparing to take of his own flock to dress for the way-faring man, and taking instead the poor man's only lamb ? How David's anger was kindled against him ! Such despicable behaviour demanded nothing short of death. But, surely, surely, this rich man's meanness was as nothing compared with David's. What is a lamb to a wife ? Then think not only of his adultery, but of his wicked scheming and murder, in vain attempts to hide his sin. A beam, and that of no ordinary size, was in his own eye, although he seemed unconcerned about it, until the searching words of the prophet :

" THOU ART THE MAN "

brought home to him a sense of his great fall.¹

Beloved, may we be not high-minded, but fear !

The next occurrence of this interesting word is in Luke 20. 23, from which we, who would seek to walk in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ, may learn a wholesome lesson. Who teacheth like Him ? What feeble imitators we are ? As hypocrisy may find place even with us, then how much more so with the world ! Do not let us shut our eyes to it. The Lord Jesus knew the craftiness of His interrogators. He did more, He regarded it carefully, and

¹ 2 Sam. 12.

in the light of such regard He framed His answer. Well may we sing and pray :—

“ Oh ! .teach us more of Thy blest ways.”

May our speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that we may know how we ought to answer each one !

The Greek word which we are tracing is translated, in this passage, by the English word “ Perceived.” It is similarly rendered in Acts 27. 39 (Revised Version), where the context shows that the perception did not result from a hurried, cursory look, but rather from eager, earnest consideration. That the idea in this word is something more than simply seeing is proved beyond dispute by its use in Acts 7. 31, 32. Here it is twice translated by the word “ behold.”

“ MOSES SAW IT.”

“ HE DREW NEAR TO BEHOLD.”

“ HE DURST NOT BEHOLD.”

Turning to Exodus 3. for the account of this wonderfully interesting event in the history of Moses, we find that “ the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush : and he looked, and behold, the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside now and see the great sight, why the bush is not burnt,” from which we learn of the exercise of his mind upon the thing that he saw, with desire and intention to understand.

Equally conclusive is its occurrence in Acts 11. 5-6, where we read that Peter saw a vision, a certain vessel descending, upon the which he fastened his eyes, and considered and saw. He saw, he fastened his eyes, he considered, and in this consideration he had further revelation. Attaching this significance, then, to the word, how it enhances the steadfastness of the faith of Abraham, of whom we read in Romans 4. 19 that “ without being weakened in faith he considered his own body,” and so forth.

The occurrence of this word in James 1. 23, 24, where it is translated "beholdeth," does not militate against the opinion that it is only used where something beyond what we call "at first sight" is intended to be expressed.

Should objection be taken to saying that it is required of us that we regard its usage in this passage in the light of all the previous occurrences, and so view the "beholding" as more than a hurried glance, we would ask: Is it not apparent from the context here that the man who beholdeth his face in the mirror does not take merely a quick short look, but rather by means of a long, steady gaze becomes familiar with the delineation of his own features? Is it not thus he is used to portray the believer who hears the Word of God? The one hears God's word and thus knows God's will; the other gazes upon the reflection of his face and thus knows himself, but he goeth away and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. He had known this, else he could not be said to forget it. But he does forget it, and it should be noted that the "straightway" or "immediately" is connected with the forgetting and not with the acquiring of the knowledge. So is the man who knows God's will but does it not. It is not his knowledge that is called in question, nor his manner of obtaining this knowledge, but rather his failure to use it aright. God's desire and intention is that we look into the perfect Law, the Law of liberty, and continue, becoming thus in our continuing, not hearers that forget, but doers that work. We would also point out that in the Newberry Bible the marginal rendering for the "beholdeth" of the Authorized Version is given as "contemplateth."

All these remarks serve to lead up to that which should pre-eminently engage our attention—even the consideration of the Lord Jesus Christ, as we are exhorted in Hebrews 3. 1:—

“ CONSIDER THE APOSTLE AND HIGH PRIEST OF OUR CONFESSION . . . JESUS.”

Oh how readily should we respond from our hearts to such an invitation ! The great sight of the burning bush arrested the attention of Moses ; he drew near to consider, but the word of Jehovah forbade him. Here, however, we have something infinitely grander, and, far from consideration thereof being prohibited, we are invited to do this very thing.

“ Oh ! 'tis a wondrous sight,
All sights above.”

Thus we sing of His mighty cross work. No marvel that the prophets sought and searched diligently concerning, or that angels desire to look into the things pertaining to, our salvation, of which He Whom we are called upon to consider has become the Author ! The thing to marvel at is that those who are most immediately concerned, upon whom the grace of God has been so unstintedly lavished, should need any such invitation, or greater marvel still, should fail to respond thereto.

“ Salvation ! oh the joyful sound,
What pleasure to our ears,
A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears.
Salvation through God's blessed Son,
To Him the praise belongs.
Salvation shall inspire our hearts
And dwell upon our tongues.”

But it is not His cross work nor the salvation that comes to us thereby that we are here called upon to “ consider.” It is the Lord Himself, He of Whom it has been rightly said that—

“ The Father only, glorious claim,
The Son can comprehend.”

We were recently privileged to hear an address on Hebrews 3. 1, and Hebrews 10. 24, where this word “ consider ” again occurs. That address is a contributive cause to the

appearance of the present article, which we hope in turn may lead to the appearance of the address itself.

Be not unwise, but wise, buying up the opportunity

J. P. A. TAYLOR.

NOTE.—Even the simple Greek verb *νοέω* (*noeō*) means to revolve in the mind, consider, ponder. Liddell and Scott say, “Even Homer distinguishes simple seeing *ιδεῖν* (*idein*) from *νοεῖν* (*noein*), which implies perception by the mind as consequent upon sight. This may be seen by reference to its occurrences in the New Testament (Matt. 15. 17, 16. 9, 11, 24. 15; Mark 7. 18, 8. 17, 13. 14; John 12. 60; Rom. 1. 20; Eph. 3. 4, 20; 1 Tim. 1. 7; 2 Tim. 2. 7; Heb. 11, 3). It is variously translated to perceive and to understand, but most aptly to consider (note its use in 2 Tim. 2. 7). The prefix *κατὰ* (*kata*), literally down, has an intensive significance. Thus *νοέω* (*noeō*), I consider, *κατανοέω* (*katanoeō*), I consider earnestly.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 16. (*Acts 11. 19–30.*)

(Continued from pages 21 and 44.)

From BELFAST. In reply to question from Brighton the following circumstantial evidence is suggested, as showing the minimum time which had elapsed from Stephen's death till Peter's work in Caesarea.

Saul was present at Stephen's death, holding the clothes of the witnesses (*Acts 7. 5–8*).

Then Saul goes to Damascus (*Acts 9. 8*), and does not return to Jerusalem till three years have passed, during which time he visited Arabia (*Gal. 1. 17–18*). Now his visit to Jerusalem at the end of three years was to see Peter, and while on this visit he is sent to Tarsus, and then Peter passes throughout all parts and visited Lydda and Joppa before going to Caesarea. So that it is evident more than three years had elapsed.

From BRADFORD. In Galatians 1. we are told by the Apostle that when it was God's good pleasure to reveal His

Son in him, immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood . . . but went away into Arabia and returned again to Damascus. Then, after three years, he went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and then came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. In the Acts there would seem to be certain things that agree with this while others may not be so plain. Acts 9. 19 (the beginning of the paragraph) would seem to speak of his testimony after he returned from Arabia. Acts 9. 27 may not seem to agree with Galatians 1. 19, yet when he left Jerusalem because of the plots of the Jews he went to Tarsus, which agrees with Galatians 1. 21, Tarsus being a city of Cilicia (Acts 21. 39), where Barnabas finds him some time later; excepting the time when Barnabas and Saul both went up to Jerusalem from Antioch (Acts 11. 30), which would scarcely agree with Galatians 1. 19. Paul is no more at Jerusalem until Acts 15., answering perhaps to Galatians 2.

Since then Peter's work at Antioch follows his work at Lydda and Joppa, which also seem to follow Paul's departure from Jerusalem in Acts 9. 30, 31, we think we are right in saying this was some three or four years after Stephen's death.

Section 17. (Acts 12. 1-23.)

(Continued from page 72.)

From BELFAST. The arrival of Barnabas and Saul in Jerusalem with the gift from Antioch might help in some degree to cheer the hearts of those in that city who were cast down. Although no mention is made of what effect this grace had upon the brethren in Judea, yet the token of the love and care of their fellows in the north could not but beget corresponding feelings in them.

It seems probable that Barnabas and Saul were in Jerusalem when the events recorded in chapter 12. occurred. The action of Herod in killing James and imprisoning Peter must have caused Saul much sorrow, as he remembered that

not many years before he himself was found walking in the same steps as Herod; yet a joy would fill his soul as he realized that now he had obtained mercy.

Saul never forgot his early days, and it is this which gives emphasis to the words he addresses to the converted Gentiles in Ephesus, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh . . . are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

The cause of Herod's action seems to be more political than religious, nevertheless the hand of the adversary is plainly seen. . . .

To everything there is a season,
And a time to every purpose under the heaven.

The time for miracles is evidently not now, but now is the time for prayer. As we compare our time with that of the first Christians, we see cause to give thanks unto God for the liberties we enjoy and for the blessings received by the nation in which our lot is cast. Our prayers should continue that kings and all that are in eminent places fall not into the condemnation of Herod; that our liberties be not curtailed; and that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

The mention of the names of Claudius Caesar (in chapter 11. 28), and Herod (in chapter 12.) lends special interest to this very interesting portion of our subject. The names are also important, inasmuch as by these we are able to locate in some measure the place the events surrounding chapter 12: have in relation to the history of the world.

Claudius Caesar had been following up the work of conquering Britain—and unconsciously making a way for the Word of God—which was begun by Julius Caesar. From this he returned home in the year 44 A.D. In this year Herod, his subordinate, attended a festival in Caesarea, at which he was taken ill, and died a few days later from a grievous bodily disease.

Now, reckoning backwards to the time of Pentecost, which

occurred fifty days after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus in A.D. 33, we may safely conclude that at least eleven years had elapsed from that time till Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch from Jerusalem, after fulfilling their ministry there.

If this progress of time be taken into account in reading through the Acts, our reading will be the more edifying, and will give us increased pleasure. It will also save us from treating our subject as if it were a mythical tale, instead of a true account of actual occurrences, and facts recorded by the Holy Spirit through Luke for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages are come. [This is none the less true if our contributor is not perfectly correct in the calculation of the dates, which after all is a very difficult task. It is not certain in what year the Lord Jesus Christ died.]

From GLASGOW. This was a nephew of that Herod whose hands were imbued with the righteous blood of John the Baptist (see Matt. 14. 1-11), and who was a participator in the murder of the Son of God (Acts 4. 27).

Thus was he a fitting instrument in the hands of Satan to lay murderous hands upon the Apostles.

But what a miserable end! Truly it is, "Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him; the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Isa. 3. 11).

On the other hand, what joy and consolation to the Apostles with the assembly for that marvellous wondrous deliverance.

Truly God is stronger than His foes.

From BARROW-IN-FURNESS. . . .

The Lord executeth righteous acts and judgments for all that are oppressed (Ps. 103. 6).

And the day came when Herod, in the pride of his heart, sought to rob God of the glory due unto His holy name, even as his master and controller did aforetime, and will

yet do. But the angel of the Lord smote him because he gave not God the glory, and he died.

The Lord upholdeth the meek, but He bringeth the wicked to the ground (Ps. 147. 6).

I am the Lord ; that is My name ; and My glory will I not give to another. (Isa. 42. 8).

I will be glorified (Hag. 1. 8).

Thus the instances divinely recorded in this chapter (Acts 12.) shew the care of God for His saints, His gracious attention to their requests, and the surety of vengeance upon evil-doers.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Psalm 16. Michtam of David.

From LONDON, S.W. This "golden" psalm is replete with promises of blessing and joy to the one who makes Jehovah his portion, and whose eye is single towards Him. David could be described as "a man after God's own heart" because of the pleasure he gave to the heart of God by his obedience to God's will ; and it may similarly be our happy portion to minister to God's pleasure by giving heed to that which He, by His Spirit, reveals to us in His Word.

The psalmist seems to have had a very full apprehension of the character of God, gained in long and close walk in communion with Him. David knew God as the Mighty One, Who alone could succour in the hour of need. He knew Him as the Portion of his inheritance, the Source of all his blessings ; the appreciation of which led him to declare that his heritage in God was a goodly one, and that the lines were fallen unto him in pleasant places. Further, he knew Him as the Counsellor Whose wisdom was unfailing, and as the Object of his aims : the One Who alone was worthy to be kept continually before his mind. If this was David's experience, why should it not be ours ?

From verse 3 we learn that David's delight was in associating with God's people. Let us, who have been redeemed and separated unto God from the world, find our joys and

pleasure amongst God's children, and find our delights with those in whom God delights.

David knew what it was to wait upon Jehovah in the time of need and receive counsel from Him, and God's people should be thereby exhorted to resort oftener to the Throne of Grace, "and find grace (and obtain counsel) to help in time of need."

Verse 8. Like David, we have an object, even to do God's will; and if we are to reach our goal, we must keep God continually before our view. If we follow hard after God and desire to walk in ways well pleasing unto Him, He will, by His Spirit, make plain to us the path of life (ver. 11), which leads to Himself. It may be a rough and thorny pathway, but at its end in God's presence there is fulness of joy, and "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2. 9).

We suggest that "the lines" of verse 6 refer to the apportionment of inheritances in Israel, and David, speaking metaphorically, uses the words in describing the goodly heritage which had been measured out for him.

SOMETHING TO LOOK FOR.

From PICKERING. In reply to question of page 23 of January issue:—

Acts 11. 20 states, "There were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who when they were come to Antioch," . . . Acts 13: 1 shews the construction of the church of God at Antioch, founded in verse 26 of Acts 11. "Barnabas and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene." Now in Mark 15. 21 we read, "And they compelled one Simon of Cyrene." Is it not possible that Symeon of 13. 1 and Simon of Cyrene are the same person? If so, then Symeon of Acts 13. 1 is one of those of "Cyprus and Cyrene." Another of these men is Lucius of Cyrene, he still being in the church at Antioch.

Now notice Acts 21. 16, "And there went with us certain of the disciples from Caesarea, bringing with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple," who would possibly be one of the men in question, seeing he was an early disciple and a man of Cyprus.

Now turn to Acts 6. 5. Seven men are chosen to minister to the needs of the widows, among them is one "Nicolas of Antioch."

When the persecution arose about Stephen he would naturally flee to his own country, observing that all were scattered except the Apostles (Acts 8. 1).

Thus, drawing a summary, it appears from the facts named before that some of the men were:—

Symeon (meaning, a hearer or hearing) of Cyrene.

Lucius (light) of Cyrene.

Mnason (reminder) of Cyprus.

Nicolas (conquering the people) of Antioch.

These are probable men of Acts 11. 20.

[We print the above as the most complete reply we have received. It must be remembered that we are dealing with possibilities and probabilities rather than certainties.]

From BELFAST we have received some of the same thoughts and this note:—

Is it not remarkable that Barnabas was a man of Cyprus? I wonder how much this weighed with those who sent him to Antioch, where the men of Cyprus were preaching.

From MARKET HARBOROUGH we have received as follows:—

From Acts 13. 1, I think we may reasonably suppose that Lucius of Cyrene was one of the preachers of Acts 11. 20, but there does not appear to be sufficient ground for believing that others mentioned in this verse were of the number.

Barnabas was of the country of Cyprus (see Acts 4. 36), but it seems clear that he was ignorant of the work which had been going on at Antioch through the preachers of Acts 11. 20, until he was sent there by the Church at Jerusalem.

NOTE ON ACTS 1.-11.

From GLASGOW. We are perplexed on reading the Summary of the History of the Fellowship by your esteemed correspondent, G. H. W., in March NEEDED TRUTH.

We think he labours too much to shew the intensely Jewish character of these early days, and yet misses the mark as to when the cleavage of the dispensation took place, namely, the Cross, where the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile was broken down.

This must never be forgotten in all our study of these dispensational truths.

Again, your correspondent misses the mark in seeking to draw a distinction between the constitution of this early assembly and that of a later day, for from Pentecost onward it is one Fellowship—one united corporate living testimony for God upon the earth, though we grant its manifestation differs according to the relationship of the people addressed, whether Jews, Samaritans, or Gentiles.

Again, we do not deny that God was opening out the possibility of a return of the Christ had they been willing to receive Him; and yet, on the other hand, though the responsibility of rejection was theirs, God was overruling everything according to His own eternal counsels, therefore it is unwise to conjecture and suppose what would have taken place had Israel accepted their God-anointed King.

Again, we do not understand the suggestion that there will be at the close of this dispensation assemblies similar in constitution to this early Church of God in Jerusalem; therefore we crave more light on this matter.

[We look for G. H. W.'s reply to the above.]

THE WATER FOR BAPTISM.

In reply to the question as to whether it is in accordance with Scripture that warm water should be used for baptism a correspondent says, "It is not unlawful, and where it is

expedient who can forbid? Those who go down to the sea in ships tell us that in tropical parts expanses of water become perceptibly warm. Now the temperature of baptizing water—unlike drinking water, which is described once in the Old Testament and once in the New—is not specified. . . . For baptism is not a test of endurance, but a figure. . . . Breaking the ice in winter time to be baptized may indeed have a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and severity to the body, but is not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.”

QUESTIONS.

We have received replies to the question on page 24, January, as to co-operative societies and the like, and much in these replies is very sound and healthful indeed: but we delay to publish in the hope of getting some communication which will be more satisfactory in its discrimination between right and wrong. We are deeply impressed with the Lord's words in Matthew 23. 4, and dread lest in even righteous denunciation of unholy alliances we should seem to be binding heavy burdens and laying them on men's shoulders when we know nothing of their grievous weight, and moreover fail in so doing to rightly divide the word of truth. Compare for example, 1 Cor. 5. 10; 2 Cor. 6. 14; 7 1; James 4. 4; 1 Cor. 7. 31, 32.

NOTICES.

Our subjects for following months are, May and July, THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP, Section 18 (Acts 12. 24 to 14. 28). The work of Barnabas and Saul as sent from Antioch and reaching to Pisidia and Lycaonia. June, Psalms 16. and 17.; August, Psalm 18. Communications should reach the Editors in the first week of the previous month.

For Youngest Believers.

THE LAW OF JEHOVAH.

The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.—*Psa.* 119. 72.

THE word “Law” occurs twenty-five times in this remarkable psalm, which is rightly claiming a good deal of attention just now. The word appears to cover a great deal, it means “to point out.” “Thy mouth,” of course referring to the mouth of Jehovah, occurs in the psalm three times, and is worthy of notice.

The judgments of Thy mouth (*v.* 13).

The law of Thy mouth (*v.* 72).

The testimony of Thy mouth (*v.* 88).

How precious it is to be assured that God has spoken unto men. When the Lord Jesus was attacked by the great adversary (see *Matt.* 4.), He kept to the Scriptures alone in answering him, and His first answer reminds us of this verse: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

In connexion with the word “better” we are reminded of a beautiful group of verses in the book of Proverbs:—

Better is little with the fear of Jehovah
Than great treasures and trouble therewith.

Better is a little with righteousness
Than great revenues with injustice.

Better is a dry morsel and quietness
Than a house full of feasting and strife.

How often a path which to all appearances may be an easy and a money-making one has to be rejected because of the knowledge of that which is surpassingly more precious, “the law of His mouth” (see also *vers.* 14, 111, 162)!

“Therefore I love Thy commandments

Above gold; yea, above fine gold.

Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts in all things to be right,
And I hate every false way” (*vers.* 127, 128).

“ A DUAL CHURCH.”

SOME time ago a pamphlet with the above title was received through the post. We do not know who was the sender, and the pamphlet bears only initials, but from the name of the publisher we can judge as to the ecclesiastical position of the writer.

At the time of receiving this pamphlet we gave a casual glance over its pages, and thus saw some of its contents; but it was laid aside, and very probably might not have been looked at again had it not been that circumstances brought it afresh before us, and induced us to give it a more careful perusal.

In the first place, we are sorry to find that the writer attempts to attach a sectarian name to those Christians whom he might and should know would utterly disclaim any such designation. We should have thought that one himself professedly disclaiming sectarian distinctions would have been more careful how he bestowed them upon others; it looks too much like the old ministerial and sectarian mode of trying to cast contempt on those who differ from us, to be happy. Again, we find the writer of this pamphlet telling his readers how the so-called NEEDED TRUTH movement had its origin. If there are any who desire a more correct understanding of this matter, they will find it fully entered into in the pages of NEEDED TRUTH, Vol. XII., page 73. It will there be seen that long prior to the publishing of this periodical there were those who neither held nor taught the doctrines of so-called Open Brethren concerning church position and rule. These brethren also saw in early days that which some are now wakening up to see, namely, that they could neither consent to the defilement theory based on unscriptural teaching about leaven, nor to other doctrines of so-called Exclusive Brethren. And we must remember that the defilement theory was well nigh indispensable in making and maintaining the separation between

“Exclusive” and “Open Brethren.” This therefore shut the door to fellowship with those called Exclusives, whilst we found we could be in the Open association, and there hold and teach what we believed to be the truth in great measure. When, however, it came to the practice, and the carrying out of these truths was attempted, this was found to be impossible. For whether it be the ground of the one Body, the ground of life or the Father’s table, these doctrines lead to a line of action that prevents the carrying out of the rule of the House of God as taught in the Holy Scriptures.

But there is yet another reason why we are inclined to refer to this pamphlet. It is evident, from what the writer himself says in its pages, that some who have come across the teaching of NEEDED TRUTH, with whom he has been associated, are or have been more or less exercised as to the truth of what they have found in its pages. We could not help asking ourselves as we carefully read through “A Dual Church,” Is it possible that saints have had their minds set at rest, and their inquiry into truth in the pages of NEEDED TRUTH cut short by what the writer of “A Dual Church” calls “his impression” (page 3) ?

We do not wish to be unfair, still less to misrepresent others, but is it not rather a serious matter to base an argument on supposition ? And, after all, we can find little more in the pamphlet. It is inferred that because we do not mix up things that differ, that therefore we believe in a dual church ; it is inferred that because J. A. B. speaks of a church of God,¹ that therefore he believes in two churches of God in one city ! Surely it will be apparent to any candid reader that when we speak of a church of God we are not speaking of such in any particular locality. Were we to speak of scripturally gathered saints in any given place, we should at once use the definite article to distinguish such an assembly ; but we understand that the

¹ See *N. T.*, Vol. X., page 245.

writer of this pamphlet, in common with others, believes that all Christians in any given locality form part of the church of God. We would ask, If this be correct teaching, in what position were those whom Diotrefes cast out of the church? (not a church; see 3 John, ver. 10). Were they in the church or out of it? If still in the church of God when cast out of the church by Diotrefes, then surely we have a dual church taught by those who hold such a doctrine, for he was cast out of the church, and yet he was still in the church of God according to this teaching.

But may it not be that the writer of "A Dual Church" has read his own thoughts into the article to which he refers in NEEDED TRUTH? Is there not a strange confusion of thought among the brethren with whom we suppose him to be associated concerning this very subject of which he writes? We have before us a leaflet by the late J. N. D. entitled, "Baptism, an Act of Admission to Privilege, not an Act of Obedience." On the second page we find J. N. D. writing thus:—

It is a question of grace, and whether the infant is to be brought into the place where the Holy Ghost dwells, or left in the world where Satan governs.

What is the place where the Holy Spirit dwells? We perfectly understand that the Holy Spirit dwells in the individual believer (1 Cor. 6. 19), but we are told the church of God is in ruins. Does the Spirit of God dwell in a ruin? Into what is an infant brought by baptism, or is it brought into the House of 1 Timothy 3. 15? We understand that J. N. D.'s answer would be, No. To what, then, is the infant introduced? It is brought out of the sphere "where Satan governs" into the place "where the Holy Ghost dwells." What, again we ask, is this place? Surely not the church of God, which we are told is in ruins. Is it into the "Great House" of 2 Timothy 2., amongst the unclean vessels from which there is to be the purging out? Or is there some other assembly on the writer's

mind into which the infant is brought by baptism? And if so, is it a dual assembly? It appears rather like it.

Now, with regard to those cast out of the church by Diotrephes, this scripture presents no difficulty to our mind. They would be cast out of the church or assembly in that locality, and when thus cast out they would not be found in some other sort of assembly entitled church of God, but would be put wrongly by Diotrephes into the outside place where the man of 1 Corinthians 5. was rightly put. Yet these both would have remained in the Church which is the Body of Christ. It is not hard to twist the inspired Word of God. And this was early done, as the Apostle Peter tells us. How much more easy to misrepresent the teaching of men who are not inspired; and, alas! how often this is done by party leaders to keep up the divisions among the saints that men have made, thus hindering the manifestation of the unity of the Spirit.

Referring to Vol. X., page 245, of NEEDED TRUTH, it is not probable that many will be able to look up the article referred to by the writer of "A Dual Church." Were they able to do so, they would find it is an answer to a question, "What is the Scriptural Mode of Reception into an Assembly?" Not into any special assembly. Now, had we spoken of receiving into the church of God without specifying any locality, should we not have been leading our readers into the most serious error of thinking that the term church of God is a comprehensive one, and can be applied in a broad sense to all the Lord's people upon earth at any given time, whereas, when we examine Scripture on the subject, we find that without exception the term church of God is only used for a company of saints gathered in a town or locality such as Corinth. Though there might be many different places of meeting for the breaking of bread, yet all the gathered saints would make the church of God in that city. When we say without exception church of God is used for a local assembly, we do not

overlook Acts 20. 28 and 1 Cor. 10. 32. Nor do we understand these scriptures to be exceptions to the rule.

Before passing on, we would ask our readers to carefully notice the construction of 1 Corinthians 1. 2. Here the church of God is addressed with all the saints that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord; also in the second epistle (chap. 1. 1) the church of God is again addressed with all the saints which are in all Achaia. Again we ask, if church of God is used in the way some suppose, why does the Apostle thus head his epistle? Had he headed his epistle to the church of God in Corinth and all Achaia, then with more reason might it have been claimed that the term, the church of God, was a comprehensive one, embodying all Christians, and not one applying to local assemblies only.

If church of God is a term including all saints on earth, why do we get the plural used and churches spoken of? as in 1 Corinthians 11. 6, and 1 Thessalonians 2. 14. We are not simply arguing for a form of words, but for principles which will enable us to carry out the rule of God on earth to-day as in the days of the Apostles. Is there not ever an increasing need for Christians to awake to their surroundings, to lay aside their sectarian badges, and to seek afresh to unfurl the banner of the truth? In the precious teaching of the House of God we find much that some have, we believe, wrongly sought to teach from the truth of the one Body, for the Body is a truth, and a precious one, as presented to us in Scripture; but rule and discipline are not connected with the Body, but with the Church of living God (1 Tim. 3. 15). But then, we are told the house is in ruins, and, as one dear old exclusive brother used to say to the writer, "We are two or three of the rafters coming together."

We are quite aware of the teaching on 2 Timothy 2., but we do not admit its being Scriptural. We do not believe that, when failure entered the church of God in

Ephesus, the House of God ceased to exist, and that the great house took its place. We believe the House of God to be collective and the church of God to be local, and the sin of an assembly would no more bring the House of God to an end than the sin of an individual in the church of God in any given locality would un-church that assembly, unless in both cases there was failure in carrying out the judgment of God.

It may be said, "To what purpose is controversy?" It is not our desire to enter into controversy. Yet it is our desire to help fellow saints who may at the present time be awakening to the fact that the pathway they have so long trodden is one moulded by tradition rather than by the Word of God. The natural lethargy of the human mind in things spiritual too often leads men to the acceptance with little questioning of the views of others; for a ready-made theory that in measure at least suits our mode of thought, or even our natural inclinations, is far more easy to accept than it is to search the Scriptures to see if these things be so. Clerisy has very largely moulded the minds of men and women, and this clerical education goes on until the scholar is brought face to face with the absurdities of his or her belief or creed. Then a terrible conflict often takes place in the mind of such an individual. No middle pathway presents itself to the exercised mind between the implicit acceptance of all clerical dogmas and their utter rejection, and with their rejection too often the rejection of God's revelation to man in Christ. The mind, as we have said, has been educated to the acceptance of the dogmas of a creed; and has not been trained to form a judgment from personal understanding of the written Word, so in rejecting the doctrines of men the truths of God are rejected also, and the person on whom tradition has lost its hold has nothing to guide his steps, but wanders off into one of the many pathways of scepticism and doubt. And this may also be the pathway of a true child of God to

a certain extent; there may be the acceptance of traditional teaching without personal conviction of its truth from a careful comparison with the Word of God. There may be the holding the tradition of the elders, and thus making the Word of God of none effect.

The Lord Jesus as the sent One of the Father spake always those things which He received from the Father, so also the Apostle Paul gave forth the revelation that he had received from God (Gal. 1. 12). But the teacher to-day can only teach that which has been already revealed in the written Word, and this only as its truths are revealed to him by the Spirit. When the Lord Jesus was on earth He referred the people to their sacred writings, telling them to search the Scriptures which testified of Himself, but He also taught with authority that which He received from the Father (John 8. 40). The Apostle Paul made known the mystery, and through him were revealed the principles of the Kingdom of God. He taught not only from Old Testament Scriptures, but also by direct revelation. Not so the teacher of to-day. Such a one can only teach that which has been already revealed, but to do this with profit there must be the revealing to him of God's truth by the Spirit (Phil. 3. 15; 1 John 2. 27). If the Lord Jesus directed His hearers to search the Scriptures, and the Apostles also referred their hearers to the written Word, how great the need for saints to-day to take heed what they hear! Before concluding this paper, in which we have not attempted to enter in detail into all the arguments of the pamphlet before us, but only sought to hold out a helping hand to those seeking after the old paths and to understand the comings in and the goings out of the House, we would simply add that failure to grasp a fundamental doctrine of Holy Scripture and the consequent building up of a system based on an assumption is disastrous; it is like the diverging points on a line of rails—the trains may seem to run side by side, but in the end the

parting may be a complete one. Allow the thought of an infant being brought into some position, call it Church of Christ as taught in the Prayer Book of the Church of England, or the place where the Holy Spirit dwells, as taught by J. N. D., and this by an ordinance that man has the power to administer, and you will soon have not a Dual Church but an assembly of which man is the architect, and no matter how clever that man may be, the departure from the truth will become more and more apparent as time advances. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well" (Jer. 16. 17, and 8. 20).

J. A. BOSWELL.

THAT WE MAY KNOW HIM.

THERE is no knowledge more important than that which is spoken of by the inspired Apostle as "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"; after which he intensely longed, for which he counted all things but loss, and for which he had suffered, and was prepared yet to suffer loss. That such longing desire may be created and increased in one and all of us, is our wish and our prayer. To have tasted that the Lord is good but whets the appetite for a further and fuller experience of His goodness, and deepens in intensity the longing to know Him. He Who satisfieth the longing soul has not only given us a satisfying portion for our souls, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, but has also provided means unto our knowing Him. The varied unfoldings of His person, glories, excellencies and worth are calculated to ravish the soul and enrapture the heart, and cause us to exclaim with another inspired Apostle of old, "Unto HIM . . . be the glory, and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Unto knowing Him, then, it is necessary for us to embrace the means concerning which we here speak, and take due and full advantage of the same. These are of a threefold character, or in other words, disclose a threefold testimony to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning the

ministry of the blessed Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, Who indwells all who, having heard and believed the word of the truth of the gospel of their salvation, have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, it has been said, "But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me," and further, "He shall glorify Me; for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you." The importance of such ministry is seen in the light of what we read in 1 Cor. 2. 11, which shows that a spiritual and not an intellectual knowledge of Him is meant. This we need increasingly to learn and acknowledge; having our ears opened and anointed to hear what the Spirit saith in His testimony to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, thus we shall come to know Him.

But where and how does the Spirit speak? This brings us to another witness to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Ye search the Scriptures," He Himself said of old, adding, "these are they which bear witness of Me." How important to regard the Scriptures thus, whether Old or New Testament Scriptures! How common, how widespread is the error of failing to do so, and thus missing the Person, like those of old, concerning whom He had to add, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." How true the word of old, "Whoso findeth Me findeth life . . . but he that misseth Me, wrongeth his own soul!" How do we search the Scriptures, if we search them at all? Is it to know Him? The Scriptures are a means to an end, and that end is that we may know Him. Thus by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, ungrrieved and unquenched, we have in the God-breathed Scriptures the means which God has wisely designed and graciously provided for satisfying the longing desire, "that I may know Him."

But we spoke of a threefold testimony, and there is a third. The blessed Lord Jesus Christ on the morning of His resurrection from among the dead, presenting Himself as an unknown stranger to the two who walked from Jerusa-

lem to Emmaus, "expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself"; yet failing to reach the desired object He uses another means with the result that they rehearsed to the others, "He was known of them in the breaking of the bread." This third means we would desire to emphasize somewhat particularly; not because we think it of more importance than the others, but because we believe it has an importance and place, in the design of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in this association, that have not been recognized by many, who have thus lost much of the blessedness resulting therefrom. Few perhaps there are of His own in the assemblies of God but have apprehended that the purpose of their coming together, in church, on the first of the week is to do certain things with the bread and with the cup, in remembrance or unto the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ. The particular point we wish to emphasize is not so much what we are to do, as expressed in "This do," as wherefore we are so to do. That is the object of our so doing, which is unto a remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, as a memorial of Him. To think of Him, and remember Him, that is, have Him in our thoughts and memories, is possible at any and all times, anywhere, and under all circumstances, but what we do unto a remembrance of Him we cannot do at any time, anywhere, and under any circumstances.

As it was said in connexion with the Passover in the past, "And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast unto Jehovah throughout your generations: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever" (Exod. 12. 14). In an appointed season, at an appointed place, in an appointed manner, it was to be kept for a memorial. So now is it in connexion with the breaking of the bread. At an appointed season, in an appointed place, in an appointed manner, and for an appointed object is it to be done. On the first of the week (the appointed season), when ye (an assembly of God) come together in as-

sembly (corresponding to the appointed place), as delivered unto you (the appointed manner); and in remembrance or unto the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ (the appointed object). It is a memorial to His memory, and worth and honour, a collective and united expression of our appreciation of His person and work.

Then again, in the design of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, the breaking of the bread is a means to an end, that great and important end, of bringing to view vividly and preciously the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. How easy to miss Him: how possible even to go through the form of taking and breaking the bread, and yet fail to see or discern Him, of Whom these so truly and wondrously speak. How often, or how seldom, has it been ours to be able to say, "He was known of us in the breaking of the bread"? Further would we desire to ask in the language of the children's question of old, "What mean ye by this service?" (Exod. 12. 26). Why do we do what we do? Is there no meaning or significance in it all? Yea! verily there is! "He took bread—a loaf," He likewise said, "This do." What significance therein, if we discern Him. That One Who was with God, and Who was God, Who took a body; Who became flesh and dwelt among us: the great Mystery of godliness, "He Who was manifested in the flesh"; truly God and truly man; truly Divine and truly human; how important in these dark and darkening days is such a witness to the vital and fundamental truths of the Faith, as to the deity and humanity of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Thus we take the bread, for which we give thanks. Unto the accomplishment of the will of God and unto the suffering of death, He took that body. Faithful, devoted, obedient to the will of God the Father, pleasing Him, serving Him, and glorifying Him upon the earth; He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." To such appreciation of Him

and such honouring of Him we respond and answer, as we take the bread and give thanks for it. There is this significance to us in the taking of the bread.

Yet this is not all; having taken and given thanks, "He brake the bread," and of that broken bread He said, "This is My body which is given for you, this do." Why did He break the bread? Was there nothing of significance in His doing so? Was it only for convenience? Is there anything of significance in our doing so? "He was known of them in the breaking of the bread." As in the taking of the bread we are put in remembrance of the Incarnation of the blessed Son of God, so surely in the breaking of the bread we view His death, in all the sorrowful, yet hallowed associations thereof.

We can only now refer to some of these, which seem pre-eminently to be set forth in the breaking of the bread. In that whole veil, which stood in the temple, separating the holy from the most holy place, and which barred the way of approach to all, except the High Priest, once a year, on the great day of atonement, with the blood of the victim, we have brought to view "the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus," in the varied glories of His person, answering to the blue, the scarlet and purple, and fine twined linen, "the veil of His flesh." So, in the rending of the veil of the temple in twain from top to bottom, as the answer to the cry, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?" we view the way into the holiest, once closed and barred, so to speak, now made manifest. It is the new and living way, which He dedicated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, through which we have boldness to enter into the holy place. In the broken loaf, we view and express the significance of all this, and He thus becomes known of us, and His death is yet more vividly brought before us. In like manner with the cup which speaks of His blood, after which with subdued spirits and yet with glad and worshipful hearts, we can sing

"Through Thy precious body broken—
 Inside the veil.
 Oh, what words to sinners spoken—
 Inside the veil.
 Precious as the blood that bought us ;
 Perfect as the love that sought us ;
 Holy, as the Lamb that brought us—
 Inside the veil.
 Lamb of God, through Thee we enter—
 Inside the veil.
 Cleansed by Thee we boldly venture—
 Inside the veil."

As a holy priesthood we offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ, knowing that God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, seeketh such to worship Him, and that with such sacrifices He is well pleased. If one ask a reason of the hope that is in us, we would seek to reply with meekness and fear, as we should do, that this is why we do what we do, this is what we mean by this service, and unto the more worthy remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ we would yet desire and pray, that we may know Him.

DAVID SMITH.

COUNSEL AND PURPOSE.

THE days in which our lot is cast are dark and ever darkening days ; chiefly because of the vain reasoning of man being substituted for the revelation of God.

The young man Timothy was found in days of darkness likewise ; and while on every hand men were falling away from the Faith (2 Tim. 1. 15), he held fast the form of sound words which he had heard from Paul, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. "Thou didst follow my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, patience." (2 Tim. 3. 10).

Timothy therefore was a man of purpose, and this is what

is needed to-day—purpose in the right direction—in order to stand for God in days of departure from Him.

When Barnabas arrived at Antioch, and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord (Acts 11. 23).

Another very striking example is seen in Daniel. He was one of the many that were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and being of the seed royal he was chosen among others in order to be fitted for a place in the presence of the King, who appoints for them a daily portion of the King's meat, and of the wine which he drank, that at the end of three years they might stand before him. Notwithstanding the fact that it was the great King who swayed the sceptre of the mighty empire of Babylon who commanded this, Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the King's dainties, nor with the wine which he drank, therefore he requested. (Dan. 1. 8).

What a beautiful sight for God to behold, a youth with his heart fixed on his God ; on His Laws ; yea, on His statutes ; even as he could say :

“ Hot indignation hath taken hold upon me,
Because of the wicked that forsake Thy law.
Thy statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage ” (Ps. 119. 53-54).

But why was Daniel not afraid to purpose contrary to the desire of the great monarch ? Again we hear his voice :

“ Princes have persecuted me without a cause ;
But my heart standeth in awe of Thy words ” (Ps. 119. 161.)

From a babe Timothy had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation ; and I think Daniel and Timothy were very much alike in this. Taught the sacred writings from a babe ; Jehovah's words, His law, His testimonies, His precepts, His command-

ments, His statutes, and His judgments, and the godly fear which these engendered caused him to escape the fear of man which bringeth a snare.

Doubtless we make many purposes, but often our purposes are according to the flesh, and bring nothing to God.

What then is required to establish our purposes? Good counsel: for the wise hath said:

“Where there is no counsel purposes are disappointed:

But in the multitude of counsellors they are established.”

“Every purpose is established by counsel.

And by wise guidance make thou war” (Prov. 15. 22; 20. 18).

I think this principle is seen throughout the entire canon of Holy Scripture (see Isa. 40. 13, 14, Jer. 49. 20, 30). But seeing there are so many evil men and impostors, deceiving and being deceived, we must be on our guard, in order to obtain good counsel. Rehoboam was made king in Shechem, and Jeroboam and all Israel asked him to make their yoke lighter. So Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father, but he forsook their counsel, and took counsel with the young men that had grown up with him; to which he hearkened with the result that ten tribes revolted (read 1 Kings 12.). Compare the counsel of the old men, who had known the happiness of standing in the presence of Solomon and hearing his wisdom, with the self-satisfaction and pride of the young men, who had grown up with Rehoboam, remembering the proverb:

“By wise guidance make thou war.”

But, beloved, we need not be in despair, God has not left us to our own thoughts: neither alone to the thoughts of others, but He has given us His words, concerning which one could say:

“Thy testimonies also are my delight,
And my counsellors” (Ps. 119. 24).

“For unto us a Child is born,

Unto us a Son is given;

And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor” (Isa. 9. 6).

And He Himself says in Proverbs 8. 14, "Counsel is Mine." Well may we sing :

"Be Thou our Counsellor,
Our Pattern and our Guide ;
And through this wilderness
Still keep us near Thy side.
Oh ! let our feet ne'er run astray
Nor rove, nor seek the crooked way."

The place which Psalm 119. occupies in Scripture is indeed very remarkable ; the seventy years of captivity have come, and almost gone : and God is arousing some of His own toward His purpose. Let us turn back to the days of the Kings of Israel and Judah, when the House of God stood in its place, and ask : "Why has such havoc been wrought ?" The answer comes : "Jehovah was very angry with Israel and removed them out of His sight : there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also Judah kept not the commandments of Jehovah their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And Jehovah rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers until He had cast them out of His sight" (2 Kings 17. 18-20).

So we see Israel was cast out of God's sight because they forsook Jehovah and His word, and if they are to be restored again there must be a return unto God and to His word. This we most beautifully see in Psalm 119. :

"Before I was afflicted I went astray,
But now I observe Thy word" (ver. 67).
"It is good for me that I have been afflicted,
That I might learn Thy statutes" (ver. 71).

We say that the place which Psalm 119. occupies is very important, because it precedes the Songs of Ascents. In Psalm 120. 5, the writer says,

"Woe is me that I sojourn in Meshech,
That I dwell among the tents of Kedar."

Immediately on their return unto God's word they are

face to face with their dreadful sojournings, so far from the place of the Name. Psalm 122. begins :

“ I was glad when they said unto me :
Let us go unto the House of Jehovah.
Our feet are standing
Within Thy gates, O Jerusalem.”

His delightful testimonies have indeed become their counselors, with the result that a purpose has been conceived : and up they go from Babylonian pleasures to seek the good of the House of Jehovah their God.

Now, child of God, if not yet in the House of God, we entreat : Think on thy ways and turn thy feet unto His testimonies. He desires us to go up and build the House, and He has promised to take pleasure therein, and be glorified.

No doubt it will require energy for the ascent, but God will give us the strength of the young man, therefore let the expression of our hearts be : “ Most gladly will we spend and be spent in order to have a place for our God.”

Then shall we be able to say :

“ We will go into His Tabernacles ;
We will worship at His footstool.
Arise, O Jehovah, into Thy resting-place ;
Thou, and the ark of Thy strength” (Ps. 132. 7-8).’

G. PRASHER.

WHAT SHALL I CRY ?

ALL flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field : the grass withereth, the flower fadeth ; because the breath of Jehovah bloweth upon it : surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth : but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.—Isaiah 40. 6-8.

The Woman in Her Sphere.

GIMEL

Doeth him good and not evil
All the days of her life.

THE virtuous woman is a worker, not an idler. Moreover, it is for her man she works, because of her affection and loyalty to him. She does him good ; he is better off for being married. Again, it is only good she does him. She does him no evil. This is surely a word in season to many wives. And should not younger women not yet married consider whether they are likely to be workers of good only when the day comes ? For this is a matter of training. Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart.

The virtuous woman is not readily tired out ; weary she may become, but even so, as the years go round, all the days of her life it is only good she does her husband. Should she be the first to go out of this world, of course her work is at end. But if her husband die before her, she still continues to do him good ; every child that he has left is to her a precious memory of the departed, and in her care for them and for what else of her husband remains, she does her husband good all the days of her life.

WHAT SHALL I DO, LORD ?

WHAT shall I do, Lord ? should be the cry of every one who has known the Lord Jesus as his Saviour.

This question, it would seem, gives many of God's own children to-day little or no concern whatever ; and thus it is that God's purpose in saving them is frustrated, and instead of being a joy and delight, they are a grief and a heaviness to the One by Whose word they were begotten. We would seek to press it home upon the reader, and it cannot be too heavily pressed, that God has a purpose in salvation. Paul to Timothy says, " Who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal " (2 Tim. 1. 9). We see in this that Paul and Timothy were, according to God's eternal purpose given in Christ Jesus, saved and called. Though you may be neither a Paul nor a Timothy, yet there is that little portion of work which, if executed by you, will bring Him joy ; but if left undone, what disappointment ! But ere you can understand His purpose concerning you, you must be in that place where it can be known, and where God will manifest to you what His will is for you to do. Many have too hastily jumped to the conclusion that they have been called to a certain work, and the multitudes may confirm the mistake. Be not deceived, dear child of God, there is but one place where you can know God's will for you, and that is in the Fellowship of His Son, in that which God calls His House. His will to-day is not for His children to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, but to have them gathered into one. The thought is not that they should be gathered into one place and so make a little colony, as we see some misguided people doing to-day, but that His people might be one in their apprehension of Jesus as Lord and in the fulfilment of His word. One thing for and of God, together in all things, in principle, in everything ; but as to their place on the earth's surface, scattered.

In connexion with God's House, and there alone, you will find God's place for you ; out of it you will find your own place. In travelling on, in the pathway of obedience, a disciple first finds the waters of Baptism, and having submitted to this he becomes a fit and proper person for reception into the Fellowship. Now we seek to press home more impressively the fact of this, that those whom God in His kindness has called into the Fellowship of His Son are there because He has a purpose to be fulfilled, and that His purpose in saving will be seen and unfolded in their obedience to His calling. Furthermore we go on to affirm that there is not a saint in the Fellowship (that is, of course, of those who are rightly there as seen in churches of God in Christ Jesus) but has his or her own little bit of work to perform.

Some may say, " Well, I am not so gifted as so-and-so, and the little that I can do is so insignificant there's not much harm done if I leave it undone." Oh, how foolish, how very foolish indeed, it is for such to listen to the promptings of Satan, for it is nothing less. The Fellowship of the Son of God is like unto an army on service, all being required, down to the lowest in rank, to the common private. Thus it is that saints in the fellowship should wake up, knowing " that it is high time to awake out of sleep " (Rom. 13. 11), and to seek to apprehend that for which also they were apprehended of Christ Jesus (Phil. 3. 12). Alas ! that some whom we have looked upon as being in their right and proper setting, and whose gift and responsibility were great, have—either through moral or doctrinal delinquency—been cut short from finishing their course. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that those who in a measure (either small or great) seek to understand the will of God should not allow themselves to be tripped up by Satan, but to seek grace from God to enable them to stand to His glory, for to Him we either stand or fall.

If then in God's goodness we find ourselves in an assembly of God, God has laid upon us a responsibility.

Being one unit in an assembly of God we move in a certain sphere, and in that sphere our labours lie. God does not expect us to jump to great things all at once, nor does He wish us to sit down and mourn over our own littleness. His way has always been, "He that is faithful over few things is faithful also in much." In our own circle in which we move we come in contact with many kinds and classes of persons, and, according to the opportunities given by God, so bear testimony to His Son as the Saviour and to the word of God. If there is not the ability to speak publicly, this labour lieth to the hand of every saint; each being held responsible according to that circle in which he or she moves, to bear testimony, and "He that is wise winneth souls." This is service, the worth of which will only be seen when unveiled at the judgment seat of Christ. How we ought to covet it! We see then that each saint has this responsibility.

Now we go from saint to assembly, and that in turn has to bear testimony; it is a lampstand on which saints are set in order that light may be given to all around. The only company of saints whom God has brought together in that locality to bear testimony: what a responsible position! May the assemblies of God be up and doing in this matter. We go on from the saint in his circle, the assembly in its circle, to the Fellowship as a whole; this is God's testimony in the world to-day.

The strength and value of God's testimony—the Fellowship—in the world to-day is measured by the strength of the testimony of the assemblies in their given localities, and that in turn is measured by the value of individual testimony bearing, so that if we are weak and worthless in this, we measure by that the strength in testimony of the Fellowship.

For Youngest Believers.

THE Scriptures are called the testimonies of God when they are looked upon as His account of what has been done in days gone by. In other words, the testimonies of God are His history of the world. If we look at the Bible from a human standpoint we might expect to find mistakes, but whilst God used men to write the Scriptures, He taught them by His Spirit so as to prevent them from stating what was not true. God, of course, has only given in His history an account of such things as are important in connexion with His dealings with men. The mere acts of men to one another are not recorded, except they are important in their relation to God. But everything that is recorded in Scripture is true, because it does not depend on mere human testimony. It is all from God, Who knows everything, so that there needs no correction or alteration. What God has recorded will stand as truth for ever, though all mere human histories are constantly proved to be wrong in some point or another. This gives an immense value to God's testimonies. We may not fully understand them, but we know that they are true.

“Of old have I known from Thy testimonies
That thou hast founded them for ever.”

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 18. (Acts 12. 24 to 14. 28.)

From BRIGHTON. Barnabas and Saul are singled out by the Holy Spirit for a particular work. May we not take it that the Holy Spirit spake to them through their brethren? At any rate, they in their response to the Holy Spirit's call had the fullest fellowship of their fellows, as indicated in the fasting, praying, and laying on of their hands. How Satan always dogs the steps of those engaged in the work of God? How also he always seems to have

those ready to do his deadly work! What a contrast here between Saul and Elymas. One filled with the Holy Spirit, whilst, on the other hand, was one who could be described as being full of guile and villainy.

One wonders at a man like Sergius Paulus caring to be associated with such a character, seeing that he is described as a man of understanding. There seems to be no evidence of repentance on the part of Elymas, though the hand of the Lord was upon him in judgment. The proconsul, however, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

. . . Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch. Their visit to Jerusalem seems hardly to correspond with Paul's visit as recorded in the letter to the Galatians, chap. 1. 18. There, it seems, the express object of his visit was to see Peter, whereas in Acts 11. 30 Barnabas and Saul go up to Jerusalem to convey the bounty of Antioch for the relief of the poorer brethren of Judæa. Again the apostle very definitely states that other of the apostles he saw none save James, the Lord's brother, whilst this seems hardly to have been the case when he went to Jerusalem from Antioch. Further, this is not the first time he was at Jerusalem after his conversion, as it was from that place he fled to Tarsus because of the plots of the Jews; and from Tarsus he is brought by Barnabas to Antioch, and from Antioch he goes up to Jerusalem with Barnabas, whilst on his first visit it would appear that Barnabas was then resident at Jerusalem. Is not Antioch an error? (NEEDED TRUTH, p. 88 [Cæsarea].)

From JARVIS BROOK. "First, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers." Before the number of "the apostles" was reduced, did they not arrange for, as well as oversee, the necessary expansion from Jerusalem? Others had been associated with them, and (can it not be said?) instructed by them as to "the things concerning the Kingdom of God" and the testimony to be borne "unto the uttermost part of the earth." Barnabas had

been sent forth as far as Antioch. He seeks Saul at Tarsus (whither he had been sent from Jerusalem), and brought him to Antioch, then a church is found in existence there, not apart from Barnabas and Saul, or from those that had sent them forth.

There came down "prophets" from Jerusalem to Antioch, and from Antioch relief is sent to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. Thus they were again in Judæa, when it would be possible for them to confer with the apostles as to Antioch and developments therefrom. In returning, they take with them "John whose surname was Mark." With the future in view, this is significant.

Though without apostles, there were at Antioch, in the Church that was there, "prophets" and "teachers." Five names, including those of Barnabas and Saul, are given—"and as they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Had there been an exercise between them as to going forth or who should go forth, or a hesitancy to act on counsel from the apostles? In any case, the two that had been more or less with the apostles are called forth (see Acts 1. 21-27). It should be noticed, the Holy Spirit called on them to separate the two, not on the two to separate themselves. The former recognizes the Divine unity, the latter would spell independency and disintegration. "Then, when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Subsequently the two returned "from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled." The occasion and example are alike important unto those that are "fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God."

ERRATUM.

Page 94, line 8 from bottom, for at the close of this dispensation read when this dispensation has closed.

CHRISTIAN UNION

IN a bygone day, when Jehovah would turn the kingdom to David, among those who recognized His will and wrought in His work were certain of the sons of Issachar, "Men that had understanding of the times to know what Israël ought to do" (see 1 Chron. 10. 13 to 12. 40).

In full sympathy with Jehovah's purpose they were of one heart to make David king; but in this what especially characterized them was their understanding of the times, which enabled them to grasp the situation and take advantage of the day of opportunity to advance the cause of David.

Fain would we catch something of the same spirit in advancing the cause of Him whom God hath made both Lord and Christ, in relation to the New Testament revelation of the Kingdom of God.

With this object before us we beg to call attention to the movement now on foot for Christian union which finds expression in the noteworthy document appended:—

"We, who subscribe this letter, represent widely different Christian communities. We agree in deprecating at present any large schemes of corporate reunion, which seem to us premature, or any attempts to treat our existing religious divergences as unimportant; but we agree, also, in believing profoundly that our Lord Jesus Christ meant us to be one in visible fellowship; we feel profoundly the paralyzing effect upon the moral forces of Christianity which our divisions inevitably produce; and we recognize with the fullest conviction that it is the duty of all Christians, who desire in this respect the fulfilment of the Divine purpose, to give themselves to penitence and prayer—to penitence, because we have all, in various ways, as bodies and as individuals, contributed to produce and perpetuate differences; and to prayer because what we all alike need is that God should open our minds and hearts to receive without prejudice the gradual revelation of His will as to the ways by which we are to be drawn together.

"Being so far agreed, we are venturing, not we believe without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to approach, as far as we can, all the Christian ministers of religion in England to ask them to prepare their congregations for a united effort of prayer on Whit Sunday next, at the principal morning service, for the reunion of Christians—special care being taken that such prayer should be entirely uncontroversial and should involve no assump-

tions except those which all Christians can make their own, viz. : That our Lord meant us to be one in visible fellowship: That our existing divisions hinder or even paralyze His work: That we all deserve chastisement, and need penitence, for the various ways in which we have contributed to produce or promote division: That we all need open and candid minds to receive light and yet more light, so that, in ways we perhaps as yet can hardly imagine, we may be led back towards unity.

“ We believe that by these solemn exercises of penitential devotion, dispositions may be created and nourished which will do much to end the needless embitterment so frequently pervading our differences of judgment and creed; and that a freer way may be prepared for the divine purpose to realize itself.”

Signed by the so-called Archbishops of Canterbury and York and Bishop of Birmingham, the President of the United Methodist Free Churches, the Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, the President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, the Moderator Elect of the English Presbyterian Church, the President of the Baptist Union, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland, the President of the Methodist New Connexion Church, the Primus of the Scottish Church; whilst the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster has written to the Bishop of Birmingham:—“ MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,—Although I sympathize much with the object which you have in view, it would not be in accordance with our custom and tradition for me to sign a joint appeal for special prayers. For many years past we have had, all over the world, days of special supplication in preparation for Whit Sunday, mainly for the object which you have at heart. These prayers were ordered by Leo XIII. I feel that we can help most by working on the lines traditional among us, and I know that you will appreciate, even if you cannot fully share, my feeling. With every good wish for Easter,” . . .

All this is very striking, and some points are so suggestive as to warrant particular comment. We select one of these as being of especial importance, both from a Divine standpoint and from that of the promoters of the movement:—

We agree also in believing profoundly that our Lord Jesus Christ meant us to be one in visible fellowship.

Linked with which is the further statement:—

We recognize with the fullest conviction that it is the duty of all Christians who desire in this respect the fulfilment of the divine purpose to give themselves to penitence and prayer.

And this is carried to the length of confessing—

That we all deserve chastisement, and need penitence, for

the various ways in which we have contributed to produce or promote division.

Now this is very remarkable as constituting a complete change of front as compared with the attitude previously taken up by Ecclesiastical leaders in general in reference to unity and division.

Never before have we witnessed Anglicans and Non-conformists thus uniting in the unreserved confession of one visible Community, as being the will of the Lord for His people—and the consequent condemnation of divisions:

It is true that Rome has held this principle, though, alas ! utterly perverting it in its application, but Anglicans have held to a National Church, and Nonconformists have contended for “Christian Denominations” according to “Liberty of conscience,” and have compared the various Denominations to so many units of one army, all operating unto a common end.

This ground is now abandoned and the declaration made :—

That our Lord meant us to be one in visible fellowship : that our existing divisions hinder or even paralyze His work : that we all deserve chastisement and need penitence, for the various ways in which we have contributed to produce or promote division : that we all need open and candid minds to receive light and yet more light, so that, in ways we perhaps as yet can hardly imagine, we may be led back towards unity.

Hence the proposal for general penitential prayer for the reunion of Christians which has received the approval of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the heads of all the Free Churches, and elicited a sympathetic letter from the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster. We are disposed to view this as an epoch-making movement in the light of Prophetic Scripture (Rev. 17. and 18).

This, however, we leave at the moment as we first wish to point out that the conclusions relative to Unity and Division set forth in the letter under review—bearing such distinguished signatures—are practically an echo of what

others have set forth for years past. Indeed, we know of some who have regarded the testimony of these truths as largely constituting their life work in the will of God.

This being so, we necessarily regard the present occasion as affording a valuable opportunity for re-stating the things which are most surely believed among us, if peradventure God will bless the feeble effort to the furtherance of His will in some of His beloved children into whose hands this paper may come.

We begin with a short extract from a paper we penned a few years ago, entitled—

UNITY OR DIVISION, WHICH ?

Looking recently at Whitaker's Almanack for 1897, we observed on page 253 a list of Religious Denominations. Although the list only embraced a small part of Christendom, viz., England and Wales, the Denominations amounted to the surprising number of 293 ! If we omit such of these as are confessedly non-Christian, and allow for those that are mentioned more than once by different titles, we then have at least

200 DENOMINATIONS

of professing Christians ; What a spectacle of division ! Is this of God ? Let His own Word answer.

“ That they may all be one ” (John 17. 21). “ Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment ” (1 Cor. 1. 10). “ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned ; and turn away from them ” (Rom. 16. 17).

Further we beg to direct attention to 1 Cor. 1. 11-13, with 3. 1-4, where the principle of Denominationalism is completely condemned ; also to Gal. 5. 20-21, wherein “ Factions, Divisions, and Heresies,” i.e., Sects, are classed among the “ Works of the Flesh.” (The above word “ Heresies ” be it remarked, is not a translation at all ; yet the translators knew perfectly the meaning of the word, as proved by the fact that in certain places they translated it “ Sect.” Acts 5. 17 ; 15. 5 ; 24. 5 ; 26. 5 ; 28. 22 : this needs no comment.) In the light, therefore, of the foregoing—as indeed of all Scripture—it is perfectly clear that Sectarianism, both in principle and practice, is contrary to God's will, being condemned by God's Word.

At this point let us anticipate a question : “ Please define what is the essence or root principle of Sectarianism ? ” The answer is found in the meaning of the New Testament word previously alluded to, namely, Heresies (*αἵρεσις*, *hairesis*, a sect), which word literally signifies “ A choice,” and comes from *αἰρέω*, *haireo*, meaning, “ To take for oneself, to prefer, to choose.” This then is the essence of Sectarianism—a human choice or preference ; men choosing a way, instead of bowing to the revealed will of God.

How often has this been illustrated in modern times by the reply given to the query, “ What Church should I join ? ” The answer being, “ Join whichever you prefer.” No, no, we say, a thousand times No. We have no right to choose. Our responsibility is to humbly and gladly accept the revealed will of God and to walk in His way. Wherever this is ignored wholly or partially, whether through ignorance or otherwise and a system organized, there is a sect.

Quoting again from the paper “ Unity or Division ” :—

If space permitted, it would be easy to review the Denominations of Christendom one by one, and show the sectarian character of each and all ; Church of Rome, Church of England, Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, Wesleyan, Salvation Army, not one of these systems has or ever had a divine constitution (though of course, many pious, devoted, and gifted Christians have been in them, but that is quite another matter). The origin and history of the Sects are too well known to admit of any doubt as to their character ; their formative principles are unscriptural, and equally so, many of their practices. Moreover, in some, the most deadly doctrine flourishes, e.g. “ Priestly Absolution ” in Rome ; “ Baptismal Regeneration ” in the Establishment, and “ Down Grade ” views in the Dissenting bodies. Of the latter, Mr. C. H. Spurgeon said years ago, “ Dissent is eaten through and through with a covert Unitarianism worse than Unitarianism itself.” This witness is true.

Now let us raise the practical issue—

“ HOW OUGHT CHRISTIAN UNION TO BE EFFECTED ? ”

To this there can surely be but one right answer, namely :—

“BY RETURNING TO THE WILL OF GOD AND CONFORMING TO HIS WAY AS REVEALED IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.”

Union effected in any other way would be utterly valueless from the Divine standpoint, and in some respects worse even than a perpetuation of the existing Sects. For if unity is strength, then a colossal union upon a human basis (inevitably involving many merely nominal Christians) would mean strength in contravention of the will of God and this would gradually lead to intolerance and finally to persecution.

Sad as it makes us to think about it, we are obliged to say we anticipate that such a union will one day take place. Rome, it must be remembered, has always held the principle of a Catholic visible unity, and condemned divisions. Inflexibly has she maintained her claim to be the divine unity on earth. This claim, which has been largely and strenuously resisted, will we believe, one day be admitted, and the Protestant Sects which in their historical sequence, in a certain sense came out from Rome, will go back to “The Mother Church,” which in her future and final form is pictured in Revelation 17., “Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth.” That some of God’s people will be deceived and ensnared in this colossal counterfeit of Divine Unity, is evident from the divine call, “Come forth, My people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues ” (Rev. 18. 4).

We make no pretension to extraordinary foresight, but if we know and love the truth and have some understanding of the times, it is our bounden duty to sound an alarm. True, the day may yet be far distant when the Reunion of Christendom will be witnessed in the realization of the Apocalyptic Babylon. But we solemnly bear testimony of the Word of God, and the trend of events, and in view of their ultimate issue, point to the only divine resource, namely, God and the Word of His grace.

Christian Reader, we plead for a return to the Book wherein is revealed the way of Divine Unity—available for us in the twentieth century as much as for those of the first century. Briefly would we set forth in conclusion, the first principles of Divine Unity as found in the New Testament.

The initial principle is the ONENESS OF ALL BELIEVERS in Christ risen and exalted at the right hand of God. “Ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3. 28). “One Body in Christ” (Rom. 12. 5). This heavenly and eternal union is the base-principle for the outward visible union of Christians as forming one Divine Community on earth.

May we ask the reader to study as never before he has studied; first, the Book of the Acts, where the unity of God is viewed from a formative historical standpoint, and, second, the Epistles, where we have the doctrinal fulness and experimental setting.

The first actual expression of the Divine Unity is in Acts 2. where we have that deeply significant term “The Fellowship,” verse 42 (the article being present in the Greek), the divine Partnership of those together of God.

Note what precedes verse 42. Christ is preached (vers. 22–36), men are convicted and converted, then baptized and added (vers. 37–41), and these Divinely added ones continue steadfastly in the Apostles’ teaching and in the Fellowship, in the breaking of the bread and the prayers.

Now confessedly all this is very elementary. Yet it is certain that these elementary principles are never afterwards set aside, are never abrogated, but continue to be the fundamental principles of the Divine way of unity for the Lord’s people throughout the entire dispensation.

It is impossible in this short article to enlarge upon the subject by reference to the Epistles. We therefore simply repeat that Acts 2. exhibits the A.B.C. principles of Divine Unity as developed in the churches of God, embracing all that in every place call upon the Name of the Lord, the One

Divine Community, "The Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 1-9).

Finally, we urge once more that there can be no union of Christians, according to God, save by a practical acknowledgement of these principles. The sinking of Denominational divergencies and the amalgamation of Sects in one great ecclesiastical union, would be at best a human expedient, a huge confederacy paving the way for the realization of "Babylon the great" as predicted in the unerring Word of God.

HENRY ELSON.

THE REUNION OF CHRISTENDOM.

It should surprise no one that a desire has been widely expressed for closer union amongst the sects of Christendom. Surely nothing but vital truth warrants division amongst professing Christian communities; and nothing but vital truth can ever justify divisions amongst the true people of God. Where it is only men's opinions and man-made barriers that cause and maintain the divided state of professing and true Christians, it is surely a thing of shame. No wonder that on all hands a desire should be expressed to have the ugly blot removed.

He must be a strange Christian who does not mourn over the divided state of the people of God; he must be a strange Christian who would not rejoice if the breaches amongst them could be healed, and a united front presented to the enemies of God and His truth. But mourn as we may, and long for an ideal earthly testimony as we may, it becomes more and more apparent, as the days go by, that the realization of our longings will never be reached. It is only "in the Lord" that we are permitted to glory, and it is only in His coming and our gathering together unto Him that our hope can be set. We look not for Him to establish on earth a visible testimony which will include all His redeemed, but we wait for Him from Heaven to

receive all who are in Christ to be for ever with Himself ; and then only will that blessed oneness, which even now is seen by God and which Satan can never mar—the oneness of Christ the Head, and the members His Body—be seen in its perfection by our wondering eyes. Should not the divided state of His people on earth occupy our hearts all the more with that in which no division can ever exist ?

But union amongst the sects of Christendom is a totally different matter, and this is an ideal that will unquestionably be realized to a very large extent. The Word of God warrants us in expecting it, and, believing God, we are justified in asserting that it will come to pass sooner or later. The time may not be ripe for it, but in its day it will surely come. It will be brought about, however, not by the Spirit of God, but by Satanic agency, and Satan is already busy preparing the way.

It might be well to inquire as to the character of these sects that are crying out for "Christian Reunion." It will be unnecessary to deal with all, a few instances will suffice. And to be fair, we must frankly confess that all the sects are not alike, that some compare very favourably with others, that in them many excellent Christians are to be found who spend, and are spent, in beautiful works. We will content ourselves then by reference to three facts dealing with widely different subjects.

An Anglican Bishop, when preaching at a special service of the Actors' Church Union, at "St. Paul's Church," Knightsbridge, on February 11, chose for his text the beautiful words of Phil. 4. 8. He proceeded to laud the theatrical profession, and declared that the clergy and actors were the two brothers-in-arms who were working as they should be, standing shoulder to shoulder against a common foe. The actor, he said, was preaching to thousands of living souls who very likely would never go inside a church all their life. It was an opportunity of service which the Almighty had given them (the actors). The

motto for every one in the actor's profession should be "I play for Jesus Christ."

It is painful to have to remark on this fulsome flattery of the stage, and the attaching of the Name of the Almighty and the Lord Jesus Christ to this kind of "preaching" is irreverence of the grossest kind. Truly the preaching of the opera, notwithstanding its grave moral dangers, is not one whit worse than the preaching that issues from many of the pulpits of our land.

"Modern Theology and Foreign Missions" is the title of a paper in the *British Weekly* of September 29, 1904, from the pen of a popular Presbyterian minister and writer. He declares that the modern missionary no longer regards heathen religions as systems of darkness, but, on the contrary, as imperfect revelations of God. Buddha, Confucius and Mohammed he says were saints of God, forerunners and heralds of Christ; and the religious systems established by these men were a prophecy and an anticipation as well as a preparation for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Truly we need not go to heathen lands for "systems of darkness"; the darkness could scarcely be denser than that depicted by the above words, and we may well pray that God will deliver the heathen from the influences of the "Modern Missionary." Thank God we are independent of Modern Theology of this school—we have the Scriptures!

A professor of the United Free Church of Scotland published a few years ago certain lectures of the advanced "Higher Criticism" sort, which for a time caused a little trouble. At the next General Assembly it was moved "That it was not the duty of the Church to institute any process against the professor in connexion with his lectures recently published." This motion was carried by 534 to 263 votes, a majority of 271. The Higher Critic professor was the hero of the day, and when he rose to address the house he was accorded a great ovation. The *Scotsman* next day was justified in remarking:

“It is a new and strange position which the Church thus takes up. It declares its inability to tell the people what they should believe about the Bible, because the critics have not done discussing its difficult problems, and it is itself waiting to learn what it should believe and teach. In the meantime, it clothes itself in generalities, and invites its people to make themselves comfortable in the same loose raiment. It cherishes unabated reverence for the written word, though it no longer knows who wrote it, when it was written, how much of it is myth and how much Divine revelation, how much is true history and how much vague tradition or mere invention. The word thus dubiously compounded is still the “lively oracle” and the supreme rule of faith and life, but as to how it can be so regarded and used while it is as open to criticism as the plays of Shakespeare and to exactly the same critical methods, the Church unfortunately proffers no guidance.”

Let us review these utterances from acknowledged leaders of thought in the sectarian world:—

The theatre is as good as the church.

The clergy and the actors are brothers in service.

The actor preaches for Jesus Christ.

Buddha and Mohammed were saints of God.

Confucius was a herald of Christ.

The Scriptures are not inspired.

The critics some day may be able to tell us what is true and what is false, what to believe and what to reject.

These critics must be shielded from the consequences of their daring, and have perfect liberty to propagate their views.

These are the people and the sects who clamour for “Christian Reunion.” *Christian* reunion, forsooth! We may well inquire where the thought of “-Christian” comes in. Is there anything that savours of the Christian about it; is there a breath of the Spirit of God in all this? Reunion they may have, but it will not be Christian—it will be anti-Christian.

Then what of the alarming spread of Spiritism amongst the professing Churches? Whilst admitting that much that

passes under this name is pure fraud, yet genuine Spiritism is nothing else than intercourse with demons, forbidden by God, and branded by Him as the darkest form of iniquity. Yet thousands are enamoured of this detestable practice; and not only are its votaries found amongst mere professing Christians, but it is to be feared that many true children of God are to be found who tamper with this abomination, though they may not be aware how hateful to God it is, or how hurtful to their own moral and spiritual welfare. That spiritism will be the backbone of the world-system of religion established by Satan in the future admits of no doubt. There will be a great Reunion then, and woe be to all who will refuse to worship the Beast. Seducing spirits and doctrines of demons are even now abroad, and the hold that these are exercising on the minds and hearts of intelligent men and women declares how readily the world will be deceived by the signs and lying wonders of the man of sin.

Nay, let not the Lord's people be deceived. This desire for reunion is that which we may hail as a sign of the times, as a sign of the nearing approach of our Lord Jesus Christ, but otherwise it is not that in which we can rejoice nor is it that which we can touch or forward in any way. Our place is apart from it all, having gone forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Our gaze is turned from earth to Heaven, and as we discern the workings of Satan, the god of this age, in marshalling his forces for the last great struggle against Jehovah and His Anointed, we may well lift up our heads, for the Lord is nigh. He alone is our hope; our gathering together unto Him the goal before our hearts. Happy they who love His appearing.

L. W. G. ALEXANDER.

A DREAM OF UNITY.

I DREAMED that I was travelling alone through the arid desert. Behind me stretched that mysterious land which I had forsaken, while in front rose some towering granite peaks, showing volcanic origin, their red summits resting on black or green bases. As I came nearer I was struck with their wild and rugged grandeur, and ascended one (Jebel Katharin) which rose above the rest, and appeared to be one huge block of porphyry, and from its summit I gazed forth upon the mighty scene. As far as the eye could reach was a prospect of bare and desolate peaks, "a sea of rocky heights," or, as one traveller described it, "the Alps unclothed."

I came down awed and silent; but in order to get a different view I climbed yet another group, and from a deep cleft in a magnificent granite rock I looked northward into the immense valley beneath. And what a sight met my gaze! Thousands upon thousands of white tents dotted the vast plain, all arranged in perfect order around one central building, while a multitude of people of all ages were in and around them; and here and there grew green tamarisks and feathery palms. I marvelled how such a concourse of people could be fed in such a region.

But what claimed my attention most was the central edifice of the encampment, which was of oblong form and covered with a dark fabric. This was surrounded by a court of white curtains upheld by pillars sunk in the sand, whose chapters overlaid with silver, sparkled in the sun. The entrance was evidently towards the east, for the central curtains there were of bright colours, and within the court near the gate was a square, copper vessel, upon which an animal's body was burning. Between this altar and the building itself was another copper vessel in which I saw the gleam of water.

But the strangest sight of all, especially in an eastern land in summer, was a wonderful cloud, which hovered

directly over the sanctuary. This cloud had somewhat the appearance of a waterspout, yet it was stationary and neither grew blacker nor lighter. A power above nature's laws maintained it there.

I hastened down the mount to behold nearer what had aroused my wonder and awe when on the height ; and in my dream I drew near the camp, and lo ! a man leading a little lamb was making his way to the sanctuary, and with him was a bright, intelligent boy of some twelve years, whose sturdy limbs and well-knit frame gave promise of a future vigorous manhood. I followed them through long lines of tents until they reached the entrance where priests in white robes took the lamb. I regarded these strangers of the desert with increased interest, and questions rose in my mind which I longed to have answered.

At last a venerable man approached me, arrayed in glorious garments, wearing a breastplate upon which sparkled twelve priceless jewels. He told me that this nation was the sons of Israel, chosen and separated by Jehovah from all the nations to be His special people ; that every family in that vast company was in its Divinely appointed place. That every detail of the tabernacle and its furniture was made according to Jehovah's pattern, and that because of this the Mighty God in wondrous condescension designed to dwell among them. That the cloud above the tent of meeting was the outward sign of His presence, while the most holy place where the Shekinah glory shone was where He dwelt.

There upon those desert sands was the expression for that age of Divine Unity.

Only that of which God is the author can He recognize and own. Jehovah's character is still unchanged, His name is Jealous (Exod. 34. 14). Human confederacy—a union of the religious sects—cannot make a Divine Unity.

EDWIN MATTHEW.

THE UNITY OF BELIEVERS.

ALL true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ must lament the many barriers that separate them from one another and hinder their common enjoyment of their common heritage. There will be many different opinions as to the causes of these divisions, and as to the remedy for such an evil. But when children of God remember that the Lord Jesus Christ died in order to gather them together into one (as John 11. 52 tells us), how can they fail to bemoan it, if this His purpose is not accomplished? There can therefore be little doubt that the appeal for special prayer for the union of Christians, which has recently been issued by the leaders of certain large religious organizations in England and Scotland, will be read with interest by many sincere Christians. We may also readily suppose that when on so-called Whit-Sunday the prescribed prayers are read out, many a child of God will utter a hearty Amen, and perhaps look out with more or less faith for some relaxation of the existing separation as an answer thereto.

But in order that we may receive answers to our prayers, it is needful that they should be in conformity with the will of God, and it is therefore important to know something of His purpose in regard to the union of Christians. For the understanding of this, and that we may

“ have a right judgment of all things,”

He has sent, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Comforter the Holy Spirit,¹ and He has given the Holy Scriptures. It is the Scriptures which are inspired of God and are profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.²

It is the Comforter who teaches all things, it is He, the

¹ John 14. 26.

² 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

Spirit of Truth, Who guides into all the truth.¹ It was He Who taught the writers of the Scriptures what words they should use,² and it is He Who can make us understand that which is written.

If we can thus come to know what the Word of God teaches as to the Unity of Believers, we may be delivered from much vain and unprofitable labour.

We may first direct attention to the Unity of which we read so much in Paul's letter to the saints in Ephesus. In addressing this company of believers who aforetime were Gentiles in the flesh, he reminds them that they were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, and then speaks of the amazing power of the blood of Christ in which they who were far off had been made nigh. He tells, too, of Christ Jesus as "Our Peace," as the One who had made both Jew and Gentile one. He speaks of the new creation, the one new man created out of the two diverse and contrary elements. The One who died the shameful death of the Cross had slain the enmity thereby, and He came and preached peace to them that were far off and peace to them that were nigh.³ This is the Church which is His Body and of which He is the Head.⁴

It was of this that the Lord Jesus Christ spake to Peter as recorded in Matthew 16. 18, "Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." How different from such a church as that to which in a later day He said, "I will spew thee out of My mouth."⁵ For this Church of Matthew 16. 18 the Lord Himself builds, and of it, which is His Body, He is Himself the Saviour; it is He who preserves it inviolate against every attack of the Adversary.⁶ Man has not made and man cannot mar.

¹ John 14. 16, 17, 26; 15. 26; 16. 13-16.

² 1 Cor. 2. 13.

³ Eph. 2. 11-17.

⁴ Eph. 1. 22, 23; 3. 6; Col. 1. 18.

⁵ Rev. 3. 16.

⁶ Eph. 5. 23.

For the Unity of the Body we have no need to pray ; it is a cause for thanksgiving and for praise. Blessing and honour and glory be to Him Who loved the Church and gave Himself up for it, Who sanctifies it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word,¹ and Who will certainly present the Church to Himself in glory, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing.²

We learn from 1 Corinthians 12. 13 and John 1. 33 that members are brought into the Body by the Lord Jesus Christ by means of immersion in the Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit is then given to them according to the promise of John 13.-16. That this earnest of our inheritance is given to believers in the present dispensation, and to believers only, and that it depends in no wise upon anything in us but faith, is clear from Ephesians 1. 13, 14, and Galatians 3. 2.

Of the manifold responsibilities that result from membership of the Body time and space now forbid us to speak. Let it suffice to say that from the Head, even Christ, all the Body, fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.³

It is necessary to distinguish carefully from the Unity of which we have been speaking that Unity which is associated with human responsibility. In the operation of the Holy Spirit is exercised Divine power upon the spirits of the children of God which tends to bring them into conformity with the Divine will. When the Spirit of God came to the disciples on the Day of Pentecost in fulfilment of the promise of John 13.-16., the result of the ministry which He inspired was to unite together into one single-hearted company some three thousand persons.⁴

¹ Compare John 15. 3 to shew that the water here is typical and does not connote any ceremonial washing or water baptism.

² Eph. 5. 25-27.

³ Eph. 4. 15, 16.

⁴ Acts 2.

It is well to observe the character of the ministry that produced this result. Who can read the second chapter of the Acts without noticing the large place that is given therein to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ? The word spoken was of the One whom God had approved by powers and wonders and signs, but whom they had crucified and slain by the hands of the Gentile power. Him God had raised up and exalted, He it was. Who had received the Holy Spirit from the Father and had poured forth what they saw and heard. This Jesus whom they had crucified God had made both Lord and Christ. This was the teaching of the Apostles. In this the three thousand who received the word and were baptized and added, continued stedfastly. The oneness of the Spirit shewed itself in the oneness of those who thus corporately owned as Lord and Christ Him whom they had crucified but seven short weeks before. This was a Unity pleasing to God because it was honouring to His Son.

As time passed on others were added, firstly in Jerusalem, then, after the scattering which occurred in connexion with the martyrdom of Stephen, in Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria, and later in more distant places. The wider spreading of the Community into the Gentile world is, of course, specially associated with the work of the Apostle Paul, though it was the Apostle Peter who first spake the word of the Gospel to Gentiles.¹ But whether in earlier or later days of the New Testament times, whether when the area was comparatively narrow or when it extended throughout the then known world, we always find that the Unity of the Spirit shows itself in the place given to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The key of all may be found in the words that close the Gospel according to Matthew: "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into

¹ Acts 10.

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." Obedience to this charge in the power of the Holy Spirit goes to the fulfilment of the prophetic word, "that He might also gather together into One the children of God that are scattered abroad." ¹

To refer to another word of the Lord on the matter of unity, we turn to John 10. 14-16. The good Shepherd who knows His own sheep and lays down His life for them, is the One who leads them. Here He speaks of sheep, not of the Israel fold, whom also He must lead, and who should also hear His voice, and He says, "They shall become one flock, one Shepherd."

Let it be noted that the leading of the one Shepherd is the only effectual cause that can bring about the oneness of the flock. We read of the flock in a somewhat less general sense as the flock of God in 1 Peter 5., where under-shepherds are exhorted as to their oversight thereof, that they may remember that there is one chief Shepherd to Whom they must all give account, lest they behave as if they themselves were lords to carry out their own wills.

All these and many other scriptures may be quoted to show the supreme importance of giving to the Lord Jesus Christ His true and proper place. If this be so, He, by His Holy Spirit, teaches and instructs His people ; they are builded together as an habitation for God on earth.² He uses human agency, so far as it is subject to His authority, to instruct His people in His ways, and to fit them as a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Himself.³ Thus we find in the early days of New Testament History. Alas ! how soon a far different spirit comes in.

As the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, so the thoughts of the disciples were corrupted from the sim-

¹ John 11. 52.

² Eph. 2. 22.

³ 1 Pet. 2. 1-10.

plicity and the purity that is toward Christ.¹ Grievous wolves entered in, not sparing the flock. From among the bishops appointed by the Holy Spirit men arose speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them.² Even in Paul's own day he had to say, "All that are in Asia turned away from me."³ Men like Hymenæus and Philetus were saying that the resurrection was already past, and by their error overthrowing the faith of some.⁴ In Ephesus at the time Paul wrote to Timothy things had gone so far that a man who desired the honour of His Lord was called upon to purge himself out from the corrupt company which had been the church of God in Ephesus.⁵ The evil and bitter pathway of apostasy from God and His truth was manifesting itself when the closing books of the New Testament were written, and a mere remnant are there seen faithful to God and in obedience to the one only Lord and Master.⁶

In the company of those who set aside the claims of the Lord and who are rejected by Him as a corporate testimony to His Name there may be much appearance of unity and concord, or there may be manifest divisions into sects and parties. When the Gentiles raged and the peoples imagined vain things, the kings and the rulers were all gathered together; but it was against the Lord and against His Christ. Both Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were all united in one unanimous resolve to perpetuate the most stupendous crime that ever was enacted.⁷ From such a union what child of God would not cry,

" Good Lord, deliver us."

But the subtlety of the serpent is shown in the way in

¹ 1 Cor. 11. 3. ² Acts 20. 28-30. ³ 2 Tim. 1. 15.

⁴ 2 Tim. 2. 16-18. ⁵ 2 Tim. 2. 21.

⁶ See Rev. 1.-3. ⁷ Acts 4. 25-28.

which his like purposes are clothed in a very different manner to-day. The centuries that have passed since the Tragedy of Golgotha have had their lessons for Satan. Christianity—or, rather, an imitation bearing that name—has become a respectable thing, and all now pay outward reverence to the Name that was then so execrated. The methods of the Devil are suited to the altered circumstances. It is not his rôle at the present to openly oppose Christianity as once he did. For this work, as far as it may seem to him needful or advisable, he has myrmidons who are competent enough. He himself has a more crafty part to play.

For let any Christian man or woman who reads and loves his Bible, consider the way in which modern attacks on the veracity of the Scriptures are met by many who occupy high places in the sects of Christendom. Let him consider the methods of the so-called higher criticism which sits in judgment on the infallible Testimonies of God. Let him take note of the way in which the perfect wisdom and knowledge of the Incarnate Word of God are set aside by men who profess to be His followers and pastors of His people. Let him observe the attempts made to explain how the Lord Jesus Christ came to refer to Moses as the writer of Deuteronomy,¹ whilst they utterly disbelieve that Deuteronomy was written by Moses; for learned men in their folly believe Deuteronomy to have been written at a later date. So again with the Lord's references to the words of Daniel the prophet and to other Old Testament Scriptures. Let, we say, any loyal believer in the Lord Jesus Christ take account of these things and ask himself who is the author of such traitorous conduct on the part of men who profess to be followers of Christ; and we think there can be but one answer. Surely he who entered into Judas Iscariot and taught him to betray his Master with a kiss²

¹ Compare Deut. 24. 1 with Matthew 19. 7, 8.

² John 13. 27; Matt. 26. 48, 49.

is the one who alone could inspire conduct that so utterly undermines all real faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let no child of God think lightly of this. The blessed One who was on earth as the Man of Sorrows, who lived and loved and died and rose again is the Way, the Truth, the Life.¹

If He is not the Truth, how can He be the Way to God or the Life for those who are by nature dead? If we are to believe that He ever spake that which was not true, it matters little what reason may be given for the errors He is said to have made. If He could err in any wise, He was something less than the Perfect Man, the Incarnate God, and faith in Him becomes vain. What then is left? Nothing but darkness, no hope for time or eternity! But thanks be to God the One whom He sent is True² and spake true, and we gladly record our faith in Him, spite of all the learned folly of archbishops and bishops, of professors of theology, and of the so-called higher critics in general.

*But we go further than this: we warn children of God against any truce with men, however learned, however eminent, who impugn the veracity of the Scriptures or are confederate with those who do so.*³

Union may be called Christian Union, it may be spoken of in high-sounding language decked with the flowers of rhetoric and garnished with quotations from Holy Scripture. But unless it gives the pre-eminent place to the Lord Jesus Christ and His commandments,⁴ there is nothing in it to please God, nothing that can be profitable to His children.

The Unity of the Spirit shows itself in obedience to the Word of the Lord. Disciples are baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and gathered into His One Name. They continue steadfastly in the Teaching of the Apostles and in the Fellowship, in the Breaking of the Loaf, and in the Prayers.⁵

¹ John 14. 6.

² John 7. 18.

³ 2 John 9. 10, 11.

⁴ 1 John 5. 3.

⁵ Acts 2.

There is possible a Union very different to this. The history of the Roman Catholic Church is the history of a vast religious organization that can doubtless trace back its origin to the early apostate community of which the later books of the New Testament tell us. Through the intervening centuries it has manifested in no small measure what can be accomplished by the judicious blending of truth and error. Professedly the embodiment of the Scriptural idea of unity it has really been anything but that. The stern and cruel measures which have been taken to repress certain Divine truths, which Rome called heresies, have no doubt led many outside the system to an exaggerated idea of the uniformity of the Roman Catholic organization. As a matter of fact it is, we believe, a most heterogeneous thing, though with an outward semblance of unity. But what has done most to destroy its character as an inclusive and world-wide system of religion? Unquestionably the light that God sent forth in the days of men like Wycliffe and Luther.

As in Genesis 1. so in the days of the so-called Reformation God sent forth light, and separation was the result. In the proclamation of the light that God gave and in the separation that ensued we clearly see God working through these men His servants. The same may be seen in later days when the light and truth sent forth from God caused men to depart from evil associations at His command. And this we say notwithstanding much not of God which accompanied it.

But Satan has had his servants too, and they whom God has delivered from one snare have all too hastily been led into another; and thus have grown up the various sects of which Christendom consists. In these sects many, alas! how many, children of God are found and they grieve, as well they may, at the barriers that separate them. But let them beware! The great Adversary has his purposes to fulfil, and these require the reunion of Christendom.

Are we ignorant of his devices? Is there not a grave danger that God's beloved children will be found taking part in movements for the union of the various sects in which the Unity of the Spirit has no place? Is not the recent union of two presbyterian denominations in Scotland a case in point? Anything that is to be pleasing to God and profitable for eternity must be associated with greater reverence for the Scriptures, and must consist in a return to the footsteps of the flock.¹

Far different from this is the union of the religious world that will head up in the coming of the Man of Sin.² This will coincide with that day of a world-wide alliance of Great Powers yet to come, when all the armies and navies of the allied world will be gathered against Jerusalem to battle. When this great union of the civil and religious powers is consummated, and the Israel remnant are at their last gasp, there shall come the One who now sits waiting for that day. For they are His enemies about to be made a footstool for His feet. And in that day of battle great will be the victory of the Son of God and fearful the destruction of the workers of iniquity.³

If children of God are tempted to co-operate in movements for a union of Christians that fails to give the Lord Jesus Christ His place, they would do well to consider whether they may not be unconsciously lending their aid to Satan's preparation for the Coming Man of Sin. From all such dangers he will be delivered who knows what it is to give, first in his heart and then in every sphere of relationship, the right place to Christ Jesus as Lord.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

¹ Song of Songs, 1. 7, 8.

² 1 Thess. 2. 1-5; Rev. 13.

³ Zech. 14.

CONFEDERACY.

THE subject of Reunion has been brought very prominently before the public by the letter in the daily papers, which we reproduce on page 121 ; and in view of its great importance we desire to consider it in the light of the Word of God.

First, we would note that the prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ in John 17. is not for a reunion of the Churches. Moreover, such a prayer would, we believe, never have been uttered by the Lord ; for this reason—that as long as there were churches of God in the days of the Apostles, those churches would form a Divine Unity (mark *not* union only) ; and when those churches lapsed into apostasy, as did the Church of Rome, they ceased to be churches of God, and could not be reunited as such. There would have been needed a complete remodelling on Divine principles. “ Cease to do evil, learn to do well ” (Isa. 1. 16) would apply to such a condition, and the call of God to His people in 2 Cor. 6. 15, and 2 Tim. 2. 21 would be, we understand, God’s way of reunion ; not for the lapsed churches, but for His true children, who, as repentant ones, having heard the call of God and having experienced a Divine deliverance as those spoken of in 2 Tim. 2. 26, would be again united in the Fellowship of 1 Cor. 1. 9 as expressed in churches of God.

For such a reunion as this of the truly delivered and repentant children of God, we can pray in the spirit and with the understanding also ; and moreover, we rejoice when we hear of any desire among the saints of God, for such a Divinely wrought reunion.

But to look more closely into the subject. Who are those who are calling for a reunion of the Churches ? And what proof have we that they are men who have ever known the saving power of God in their own souls’ experience ? In other words, that they have ever been born from above ?

We do not doubt their earnestness, we would not wish to doubt their sincerity, nor do we for a moment doubt that they are men of great talent and ability. But 1 Cor. 3. 18, 19, 20 still holds good here, and the child of God must remember the words of 1 John 2. 27. That which is attractive to the natural senses has far too much hold on even the children of God in these days; and the solemn warning of 2 Cor. 11. 13, which tells us that Satan is transformed into an angel of light and his ministers transformed as ministers of righteousness is, we fear, little heeded; and men and women follow the teachers of their own choice, too often to their own destruction. Turning their ears away from the truth, they are turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4. 4). And the Word of God is made to them of none effect through the holding of the traditions of men (Matt. 15. 6).

The Lord Jesus Christ says, "I am the door; by Me if any man enter in" (John 10. 9). Mark, baptism is not the door, much less is that which is to-day practised as baptism, which is in reality but a heathen rite introduced among the early Christians from among the Greeks who practised the baptism, we are told, of their infants. In those early days departure from God had already borne its fruit, and the truth was being superseded by error. The early Christians were more or less affected by Greek culture, while the Greeks were in some measure affected by Christianity; thus a blending of Christianity and heathenism took place.

And who are to be united, we ask? Men and women of every creed and of no creeds. Those who hold that the teaching of Gautama (Buddha) is as good, if not better, than the teaching of God's Christ; in fact, that any and all religions are good enough if men and women are truly in earnest, whilst the Word of God says, "There is none other Name given under Heaven, whereby we may be saved," and this the Name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 4. 12).

Then again, what of Unitarians? Are they to be left

out in this reunion ? Why should they be ? Are not many men in the various Churches Unitarians at heart and, in great measure, so also in their teaching, although not honest enough to openly take their stand with the avowed Unitarian ? Where in the Scriptures can we find any thought of such a reunion as this ? “ Contend earnestly for the Faith, once for all delivered unto the saints ” (Jude 3.) is the word of God to His own people.

There is a union spoken of in Scripture that bears a very strong resemblance to the proposed reunion of the Churches. And this is where we find Herod and Pontius Pilate, being before *at enmity*, are made friends ; both men are willing to sacrifice the Son of God for their own ends, they themselves being tools in the hands of the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2. 2). Herod was an alien, and although one of his predecessors had in great measure rebuilt and beautified the Temple of God at Jerusalem, yet he was not born a Jew, and was not of the seed royal. He and the Roman Governor who represented the great world power could be united over the rejection of the Light of the world. And could the reunion of the Churches be accomplished as it is desired by some, it would be at the cost of what light and truth still remain amongst them. But we expect this movement to gain strength and spread ; for a union is before this guilty age, not of light and darkness, but of darkness and strong delusion (1 Thess. 2. 11). And it is to this that men and women are being steadily and irresistibly carried on. The coming religion is one suited to fallen humanity ; in it there will be no need of being born again (John 3.). The coming man who will come in his own name and will be received (John 5. 43) will form such a union as earth has not yet known. This union will not be optional ; it will be enforced (Rev. 13. 16).

In concluding these remarks on this most important subject, we rejoice to think that there are those who desire a Divine reunion, not of the various Churches of the deno-

minations, but of God's own redeemed ones, who may be found scattered throughout these denominations. If such a reunion were by the power of the Holy Spirit accomplished we should then have restored churches of God with their Divine organization. (And let it be remembered that in Scripture the term "church of God" does not necessarily embrace all Christians in any given place.) It would be then that the prayer given to the disciples (Matt. 6. 10) would see its fulfilment. There would be a manifested union upon earth of those called into the Fellowship of God's Son (1 Cor. 1. 9). And the prayer of the blessed Lord would have its fulfilment in the union before the world, but not with the world, of those who have been called of God out of darkness into light, and from under the authority of the god of this world to where the will of God can be carried out.

J. A. BOSWELL.

DIVINE DIVISION.

LET none think that Division is always the work of Satan. For, from the beginning, God Himself is seen as a Divider.

In Genesis 1. 7 God is revealed as dividing between the waters which were under the firmament and the waters which were above the firmament. In Genesis 1. 6 He is heard to say, "Let there be a firmament, and let it divide the waters from the waters." This division then originated with God. He designed it; He effected it, and He wrought that it might be maintained.

Again, from Genesis 1. 14-19 we learn that the purpose for which He made the two great luminaries and set them in the firmament was "to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness." Such division was good in His sight. This early dividing work by God is most significant when we remember that waters in the Scriptures speak of peoples (see Isa. 8. 7; Rev. 17. 15), and that those who have

become the subjects of the saving Grace of God are told in Ephesians 5., "Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord"; and in 1 Thessalonians 5., "Ye are all sons of light and sons of the day."

That God is unchangeable in His character as a God who divides is apparent from this presentation of Himself in Genesis 1. compared with what we find recorded in Revelation 22. There we read of some who are entitled to enter in by the gates into the city : there also we read that "WITHOUT are the dogs and the sorcerers and the fornicators and the murderers and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie." Between this beginning and this end the same truth may be proved at the mouth of many witnesses. Of these we can cite but one.

"What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? . . . Wherefore Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing. . . . Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Have these lines fallen into the hands of one who can truly take the language of the Psalmist into his lips —

"My heart and my flesh crieth out for the Living God" (Ps. 84.).

"My soul thirsteth for God,

For the Living God :

When shall I come and appear before God?" (Ps. 42.).

If so, then may his prayer indeed be—

"O, send out Thy light and Thy truth.

Let them lead me ;

Let them bring me unto Thy Holy Hill,

And to Thy dwelling places" (Ps. 43.).

Such petition will not pass unheeded, and in the energy of the Holy Spirit it will be his further to say—

"Then will I go unto the altar of God

Unto God—my exceeding joy" (Ps. 43.).

J. P. A. TAYLOR.

“THAT THEY MAY BE ONE.”

THE words which stand at the head of this article are found in the Lord's Prayer, which, like His costly Atoning Work, stands for all time. It is the priestly prayer of Him who has gone back into God's presence, our Divine and exalted Aaron, now to appear before the face of God for us. Such a prayer could be but offered once, hence its mighty theme should be wafted along every successive generation, and thrill and vibrate through the hearts of His own even to-day. Its language unutterably transcends that of any created being, and its substance remains unmodified by any subsequent revelation of His. Briefly He touches upon the eternal past, that into which no restless, peering eye of man shall or can ever gaze. “The glory, which I had with Thee before the world was,” is simply inscrutable. Towards the close, we find sublime utterances which upon other lips than His would be impious and blasphemous—words at which the child of God must bow in adoration: “Father, that which Thou hast given Me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with Me, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world”; words which speak of the eternal future, and will find the commencement of the fulfilment, for which they still wait, when the dead in Christ, and the living in Christ, shall be together caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be forever with the Lord. The major part, however, of this hallowed prayer is concerning His own, and that for the present, in view of His imminent departure. What must have been the effect of such outpourings to God upon the disciples, as under the silent, starry canopy of heaven the solemn stillness was broken by the words—

Holy Father, Keep them . . . that they may be one,
even as We.

I pray, . . . that they may all be one,

even as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee that they may be in Us.¹

Oh! that we could, as it were, be transported thither and find some little coign of vantage in which we could hide, and gaze upon that scene, and hear, fresh and clear upon the silent air, those words from His sacred lips: “Holy Father . . . keep them . . . that they may be one.”

Surely, few will deny that these words have a voice and present meaning to those who are born of God, who belong to the Lord Jesus.² It is plain that the Blessed Lord did not pray that such and such might become His by sovereign grace, but His prayer was that, having become His through faith in His Name, they might be one. Not merely one in being partakers of the Holy Spirit and of those spiritual blessings in Christ which are the common portion of those who believe in Him, but one also in definite fellowship and partnership, one in their loyal devotedness to Him, one in the open confession of His Name and subjection to His Will and Word; yea, the prayer was that they may be—

One, even as We,

One, even as Thou, Father, art in Me

and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us.

Which words indeed are exemplified and illustrated in the first verse of the first Pauline Letter “unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Here in Thessalonica, A.D. 52, a work of God had been wrought through the Apostle Paul, answering in character and result to that for which the Lord prayed. It is beautiful and refreshing to read the simple but real progress of the work of God *in* and then *through* these Thessalonians. The Apostle writes, “Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance” (1 Thess. 1. 4). What a contrast to present day work amongst professing Christians.

¹ John 17 11, 21.

² John 17 13.

The result of the ministry in those days was "much assurance"; in these it is "much doubt." Then the Word of the Lord was precious and powerful; now it is the tradition of the Church, or the latest scraps retailed from the tables of the Higher Critics, or some political problem. Then the word came in the Holy Spirit, but to-day, what with printed prayers and sermons, and the stereotyped public worship and Church creeds, His mighty and blessed ministry seems well-nigh dispensed with. To our shame be it said, to our loss be it experienced. The manner of the men who carried the gospel tidings impressed itself on the very heart of their listeners; no forced service, no hired service, but devotedness and loyalty to Christ were the mighty secrets of their activity. Well might the Apostle give thanks to God for those in Thessalonica, the seal and fruit of his apostleship, for they had turned to God, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven.

In the second chapter, however, of his letter, he gives an additional cause of thanksgiving, as he says, "For this cause *also* thank we God, without ceasing." Not enough to turn to God, serve Him, and wait for the Son from heaven; enough for many to-day—yes, indeed—but not so the Apostle; his added joy was found in the fact that "Ye received the word of the message, even the word of God; ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also worketh in you that believe," with this result, "For ye became imitators of the churches of God, which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus." Hence we note with glad and thankful heart, that the word of God had effectually worked in far-off Thessalonica, and produced results which were akin to those in favoured Judæa, where churches of God were formed by those who were in Christ before Paul. The Apostle, therefore, addresses those in Thessalonica in his letter, not as so many scattered, isolated units, but as a church, something called

out and called together, a together-folk, a Divine unit, itself in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, albeit each several unit of which it was composed being in Christ and members of that Body of which Christ is the Living Head and Saviour.

There are other portions of the Gospel of John which are in full harmony with the request in the Lord's Prayer, that those who had believed on Him should be one, namely, John 10. 16 (R.V.) and 11. 51, 52. Neither of these verses in our understanding refers to the mystery of the Body of Christ, which could not in any way be set forth under the term "flock," and it is equally clear that the Lord Jesus does not *gather* into the Body; neither portion therefore refers to that heavenly Unity, whose members hold their place, inviolably, eternally and unconditionally; but they are rather connected with the Kingdom of God, an aspect of present Testimony of which the Lord spoke to His disciples (Acts 1. 2), and the Apostle of the Gentiles urged upon his hearers (Acts 28. 31). It is interesting to note that the Lord applied the diminutive of the word "flock," as used in John 10. 16 (R.V.), to His disciples, when He addressed them in the comforting and assuring words, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom," and this word, "little flock," is used by Peter (1 Pet. 5. 2) to describe the company of believers, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, who, though found in many places, are regarded by the Holy Spirit as a united whole and bear one name, "Little Flock of God."

It may be objected by some that the Epistle of Peter is not for these days of Church dispensation. If this be so, it lies on those who so object, to shew that Peter and Paul were at the head of rival communities, that the churches of Galatia, addressed by Paul, were outside the churches included in Galatia, whom Peter addresses. Surely, however, the word "also" in 1 Pet. 2. 5 and "in Christ" in 1

Pet. 5. 12 make the matter clear; the former showing that into the Spiritual House of verse 5 the born-again of the sojourners of the Dispersion, aforetime sons of Israel according to the flesh, were being built, as living stones; the latter that those to whom Peter writes were joint-members of the Body, and joint-partakers of the promise in Christ through the Gospel, they having been baptized in one Spirit into one Body, and therefore are saluted as those "in Christ."

Summarizing what the Holy Spirit saith in Holy Scripture, we note that, as to

Those given to Him (His disciples). That they may be one.

Those who believe on Him through their word. That they may all be one.

The sheep "of this fold" and "not of this fold." These shall become one Flock and one Shepherd.

The children of God scattered abroad. He died that He might gather together into one.

These find illustration in the Acts and Epistles thus:—

Those together of God, <i>as one</i> , in Thessalonica, Jerusalem, Corinth, and elsewhere.	}	known as	{	The church of God in those cities (1 Thess. 1. 1; Acts 8. 1; 1 Cor. 1. 1).
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Those together of God, <i>as one</i> , in wider areas, embracing groups of churches, as in the five provinces,	}	known as	{	The Flock of God ex- pressed in many al- lotted portions.
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Those together of God, <i>as one</i> in widest known areas,	}	known as	{	The Fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
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The words "The Fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ Our

Lord,” are unique, and must not be read as though they meant “fellowship *with* His Son,” expressing an experience of which every one “in Christ” should know something; but read the words as they are written, “The Fellowship or Partnership *of* His Son.” It expresses saints in their collective capacity in the widest areas, as “the church of God” does in the local sense. The Partnership of the Son is that of which He is the centre and sum, that which is His property, that in which His authority as Lord is owned and His will done.

We noted that 1 Thess. 2. 14 mentions “churches of God in Judæa in Christ Jesus”; of these the first formed after Pentecost was that in Jerusalem. Luke gives us this account, with his usual regard for accuracy and order, as expressed in Luke 1. 3. In considering the Acts it is well to remember that Luke wrote after the first imprisonment of the Apostle and therefore after the Pauline Epistles of that period were written, namely Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians and Philipians, of which, we may well presume, Luke was well aware, as also of the epistles written prior to the first imprisonment at Rome, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians and Romans. Therefore in reading the Acts we must remember that the author had behind him the full Pauline language and doctrine, and we must interpret his words (Fellowship, Breaking of Bread, Church) in accordance with Pauline Epistles, rather than seek for their parallels in the Old Testament.

Peter’s address at Jerusalem reached its culminating point in the words, spoken with his characteristic zeal and vehemence, “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus, whom ye crucified.” Scarcely can one grasp the stinging acuteness of these words on the hearts of the men who had cried, “Crucify Him, crucify Him.” They are pierced to the heart. The conviction of sin was of the Holy Spirit: stubborn and lawless hearts were bowed, broken

and melted into submission, and found response in the words, "What shall we do?" The sequel may be read: the firstfruits of Pentecost were reaped, and in later chapters of the Acts Luke speaks of "the whole church" (Acts 5. 11) and "The church which was in Jerusalem" (8. 1); but he has left no doubt of its composition. It was composed of those who had known the conviction of sin, and the reception of the Word through Peter's lips; they were baptized and added together, a definite Unity. They continued steadfastly in—

The Apostles' Doctrine, The Fellowship, The Breaking of the Loaf and The Prayers. Hence was formed in Jerusalem, by the Spirit and Word of God, a Divine Unity.

Scanning the Request for Special Prayer by certain ministers, representing widely different Christian communities, our eyes fell on the words, "But we agree also in believing profoundly that our Lord Jesus Christ meant us to be one in visible fellowship." We may ask, Do the signatories of the document believe:

1. That the Lord Jesus in some of His utterances spoke of such communities, over which they have spiritual jurisdiction;

2. That He meant such communities to be one in visible fellowship?

If so it is a remarkable instance of how men can read into Scripture what they wish to find there. The Scriptures will be read in vain for any guidance or legislation for such communities. The churches in Jerusalem and Thessalonica give some idea as to the character and constitution of the churches which God can and will own, and amongst whom His presence, power and grace shall be known. There are without doubt many born of God amongst the members of the communities of modern Christendom, albeit the solemn and searching word of 1 Sam. 2. 30 is verily true.

JOSHUA HAWKINS.]

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT.

EVER since the children of men of old uttered the words, "Let us build us a city and a tower . . . and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth,"¹ there have been many and varied efforts toward union, both socially and religiously, on the part of men. At no time since has the realization of this been more truly and fully effected than when a partial fulfilment of Psalm 2. took place, as spoken of by the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ in Acts 4. 25-28, when the representatives of the earth, religious and otherwise, were associated in the rejection of God's chosen and anointed One, whom He had sent into the world. Thus again will it be in the future, when this scripture shall have its perfect fulfilment, when earth's representatives shall have one mind or purpose, "and agree to give their kingdom to the beast," or the antichrist, as foretold in Revelation 17. 17; that is, in the acceptance of him who cometh in his own name, whom they will receive and obey. The trend of things at present² is all in this direction, and very prevalent and manifest are the signs of the times in this as in other respects.

In the above instances of the attempts of the children of men for union, there are certain common characteristics which betray principles at work, that become more fully developed as the course of time goes on. "Nimrod began to be a mighty one on the earth," and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel. Thus in Nimrod's kingdom, in the land of Shinar, the authority and glory of the creature is everything, to the shutting out of God's will and robbing Him of the glory due to His name.

Such characteristics seen in Babel in germ form, have their full development and manifestation in Babylon as a system. They are found from the apostate Church of Rome, down to the Mission meeting controlled by the

¹ Gen. 11. 4.

² See 1 John 1. 18.

will of a gifted or moneyed man or woman. In Babylon, and of such elements and characteristics, there may be found union such as is provided by the associations which are miscalled undenominational and unsectarian, but there can never be the Unity of the Spirit, either as regards its elements, characteristics, or manifestations. What these are, we hope to show from the Scriptures of truth.

Of old, God gave instruction concerning the preparation of a compound of principal spices,¹ even a holy anointing oil, for the service of His sanctuary, of which it was said, "Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured: neither shall ye make any like it after the composition of it." This was accompanied with a solemn warning that whosoever compounded any like it, or whosoever put any of it upon a stranger, should even be cut off from his people.

In Psalm 133. we have this holy anointing oil referred to, and the significance of it made known, in these words:—

"Behold how good and how pleasant it is,
 For brethren to dwell together in unity.
 It is like the precious oil upon the head
 That ran down upon the beard,
 Even Aaron's beard,
 That came down upon the skirt (or openings) of his garments."

This Psalm in its divine setting is one of the Songs of Ascent or Goings-up, which found their fulfilment in the remnant of God's people of old who came up out of Babylon, and came to Jerusalem, the place God had chosen to put His name, and where was the place of His rest and delight, even His House, concerning which He spake, "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it."

In response to His call they came up, "all whose spirit God had raised," and of whom doubtless the language of Psalm 43. 3, 4 had its fulfilment, in their desires and prayer:—

"O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me.
 Let them bring me unto Thy holy hill:

¹ Exod. 30. 22-25.

And to Thy tabernacles.
Then will I go unto the altar of God ;
Unto God my exceeding joy."

In those who here and thus are found gathered together, dwelling together, worshipping and working together, in association with God's dwelling place, He finds the answer to the holy anointing oil, in its preciousness and pleasantness.

We yet pass on to the fuller expression of this as associated with purposes and ways that God has for His redeemed and His own in the present age. In the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, as raised from among the dead and exalted to God's right hand, we recognize God's chosen and anointed One, as we learn from Hebrews 1. 9, where God speaks concerning Him, saying, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity. Therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."

To Him hath been given all authority in heaven and on earth, and the Name which is above every name. Having given commandment through the Holy Spirit to Apostles whom He had chosen, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, "He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, ye have heard of Me." And when the day of Pentecost was now come, these all being with one accord in one place, the Holy Spirit came from heaven, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

To these were others on that same day added, and in such were characteristics, and of such were found elements that went to form the Unity of the Spirit. These persons answered to the Spirit's testimony to Him whom God had raised from the dead and exalted and made both Lord and Christ, by submission to God's Anointed, in that character and place, and thus became individually disciples of the Lord.

But in their individuality they could not manifest the

Unity of the Spirit, for as of old the holy anointing oil was a compound of ingredients, so is it with the Unity of the Spirit. This compounding finds its fitting answer and expression in what is set forth in the words "gathered together," "buildded together," and "fitly framed together"; the disciples of the Lord, gathered together into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, forming the church of God in the locality where found, and the churches of God, whether of Jews, Samaritans, or Gentiles, forming the one Community which is of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Again, the disciples are represented as "living stones," buildded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit; and such buildings, fitly framed together, in relation to the Lord as the chief corner stone (rejected of men, but chosen of God and precious), together form a Spiritual House, even the House of God, the present dwelling place of God in the Spirit, over which Christ is Son, and also Great Priest.

In the manner of such dwelling together of those who have thus been brought together in their common appreciation of God's Anointed, the Lord Jesus Christ; and in their submission to His authority, and aim to obey Him, can be found the Unity of the Spirit.

"All these worketh the one and same Spirit," however varied and diversified the gift, the ministrations, and operations; they are under the control and direction, and in the energy of the Holy Spirit of God; and in such manifestations of the Spirit will there be for the heart and eye of God, even the good and the pleasant thing that is like the precious ointment; and for needy saints and sinners, the blessing that is like the dew of Hermon.

"I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

DAVID SMITH.

A UNION NOT OF GOD.

THE Unity of the Spirit, that which God alone recognizes as according to His mind and will, seems to be much forgotten and neglected at the present time. There also appears to be generally speaking an utter forgetfulness of the evil principle at work, as expressed in Ephesians 2. 2, "The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." As to the former, the foundation fact is the new birth, which is denied by many, and spoken of in a light and jesting way by others of those who are the religious leaders of the day. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth" (1 Pet. 1. 23) are plain and unmistakable words as to this. Apart from this there never can be an entering into the thoughts of God revealed in the sacred Word. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto him : and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (1 Cor. 2. 14).

It is more, however, as to the evil principle at work that we now desire to write. Of those who are clamouring for Christian Union, some altogether deny the fact of a personal Devil ; indeed all the fundamental truths of the Scriptures seem to be more or less assailed or denied. For proof of this, we might refer to the correspondence carried on in more than one of the daily papers recently ; and let it be clearly understood that the writers not merely included insignificant men, of the rank and file, but leaders of the denominations : men of note and learning in their respective schools of opinion, who avowedly deny such truths as the Incarnation, the Personality of Satan, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, Eternal Punishment.

But lest we be misunderstood, we do not wish to assert that all those who are agreeing to an appeal for Christian Union are so deeply tainted with error, we trust that many are really children of God, and that the desire on their part

is sincere ; but we believe notwithstanding, that they are being deceived ; for before that can be brought about, which they desire, their must be a renunciation on their part of that which is not of God : there must be a coming out of that which is the Snare of the Devil.

Our prayer and hope is, that God will in His mercy bring good out of the present cry for “ Christian Union ” ; that many may see the way of God, unto the bringing about of that Oneness which is *of* and *for* Himself.

The destructive work of which we have spoken is negative, and we believe is preparing the way for that which is positive on the part of Satan. For he knows full well that first of all men’s minds must be shaken as to belief in the revelation of God given in the Scriptures.

Men will never be satisfied in that which is merely negative ; hence materialism, that which has entirely to do with things that are seen by all, may have had its day ; for it can never satisfy the craving of the human heart ; man being different to the beast that perisheth, for “ Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul ” (Gen. 2. 7 ; see also Acts 17. 24–28).

Recent correspondence in the daily papers more than proves how many are being ensnared in that which is the very opposite to materialism in character, and may be that by which man will be prepared for the great Satanic Union of a time that is yet to come—a power which may be that by which the awful time that is spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2. may be brought about, and the coming of the Lawless One, whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing.

Revelation 13. speaks of the same, which please read carefully, and note verse 8, “ All that dwell upon the earth shall worship him ; every one whose name hath not been written in the book of life ” ; see also verse 13, when

Satan will do, through human instrumentality, that which the prophets of Baal could not do : this is awfully positive.

We speak of that which is known as "Spiritualism." It is painfully evident that some of the prominent so-called Christian leaders not only wink at this awful delusion, but absolutely are connected therewith and patronize the same.

One writer recently expressed his alarm that Christian ministers do not warn their congregations ; but many of them know full well that if they did their popularity would come to an end ; this is precisely the state of things we are told will come to pass. "For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine ; but having itching ears will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables " (2 Tim. 4. 3).

Hear what a recent writer says, one who himself is opposed in the strongest manner to "Spiritism," with which he had personal connexion for years :—

"It is as a medium, or seer, or human being of exceptional power and degree of development, that they seek to exhibit Christ, and it is the subversion of faith in Him as a Divine person that the spirit messages ultimately aim at."

These words show the Satanic work that is going on : not only a destructive, but an awfully positive work.

First of all there must be a clearing of the ground, for Satan can never set up that which is positive and universal for himself, unless faith in the Christ of the Scriptures and the Scriptures of the Christ is shaken. If the minds of men are shaken on these truths, they leave themselves an easy prey to the great adversary.

In writing thus we do not positively assert that there is any supernatural power in what is known as "Spiritualism " to-day—this as it may be ; but acquaintance with a few scriptures will suffice to prove that as regards the past, what apparently had the same relation to that which is known as "Spiritualism " was a mighty power, which

—let none make a mistake—was denounced by God in the strongest possible terms, and ever, when it had ripened, brought down the wrath of God upon those who meddled with it.

Read 1 Samuel 28., also Isaiah 8. 19. These scriptures show that in that day there was precisely the same as there is to-day—a seeking to the dead; an assumption that Man can bring up the dead. Deuteronomy 18. 10, 12, is instructive here, for it not only shews that these things were forbidden and denounced by God, but that for these things God used His people as an instrument of punishment on the nations of the land. This may have been “the iniquity of the Amorite” (Gen. 15. 16). A Necromancer means one who consults the dead.

How significant that the Lawless One will be taken without hand, “whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of His mouth, and bring to nought by the manifestation of His coming”; as in the case of the Amorite; iniquity is full; the consummation of all that is opposed to God.

Unto the bringing about of his purpose Satan has deceived men as to his own person and character; and this is especially true of the children of God.

We might mention two ways. First, Satan is generally represented to men’s minds as a very hideous creature. Now the very reverse of this is true. Speaking of false apostles who fashioned themselves into Apostles of Christ, the Apostle Paul says, “And no marvel, for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11. 14; read also Ezek. 28. 11–19, and compare Gen. 3. 1 with the curse on the serpent form Gen. 3. 14).

Second, Satan can be most religious when it suits his purpose; he could quote the Scriptures with ease to the Lord Jesus (Matt. 4. 6). Again, a spirit under his control could speak words which were true, and yet Paul knowing that it was Satanic was sore troubled (Acts 16. 16, 18).

This side of Satan's character is too much lost sight of.

Even those who value the Scriptures, believing them to be absolutely Divine and the sole guide in all matters of faith and doctrine, are often forgetful: firstly, that the great object of Satan has ever been to overturn the work of God and hinder His will being done upon the earth; and secondly, that the Scriptures foretell a great Satanic delusion, when, instead of God, the Dragon himself will be worshipped; instead of the God-Man, Satan's Man will get the homage (Rev. 13. 4).

If these facts are clearly apprehended, it will not only deliver from a delusive error of the Devil—a united professing Christian world—but will open our eyes to see that a united professing Christian world is quite compatible with what must, according to the revelation of God, yet be brought about.

It is not for us to say that the present trend of things will lead directly to this; but this we do know, that "evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," that great imposition of Satan is yet to be manifested; we are left in no uncertainty as to this.

J. CROSTHWAITE RADCLIFFE.

THE SEVENFOLD UNITY.

REUNION being a right thing in itself, any attempt to discourage it must be made with becoming care and a full sense of responsibility. There can be no doubt that unity, as a principle, is of God, as many scriptures which could be quoted would show; and our Lord Jesus Christ in that wonderful prayer in John 17. earnestly prayed for it. We do well, however, to remember that the unity which is of God is subject to limitations and conditions. If these are ignored, a huge reunion will be brought about in the end with God and His ways outside. The present movement, it is true, imposes certain limitations, at least in name, "Christian Reunion" being the motto, but what the qualifying

word "Christian" means would be difficult to determine; it has almost as many meanings as there are persons using it, each having an idea of his own as to what a Christian is. In a popular general sense, however, it may be taken to mean a person who professes the Christian religion; in the Scriptural sense it means one born of God, a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is evident, then, that reunion on the popular basis would be a reunion of nominal and real Christians, with a further sinking of differences than is at present practised by the more enlightened in the various denominations.

It is noteworthy that while our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for unity He proclaimed Himself as the One who came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword, to set a man at variance against his father, and so forth,¹ and this in a community where the state of popular religion was in many respects better than in modern so-called Christian lands.

Every argument and consideration that could now be used and urged against those who stand aloof from the present popular reunion movement could then have been used and urged with even greater force against the attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ. For at that time the worship of God was supreme all over the land; and the then Bible, the Old Testament, was held to be the revelation from God, and every word of it guarded, by the leaders of the people, with extreme care and jealousy.

Those amongst whom the Lord Himself sent a sword, and whom He set at variance against one another, were not heathen, nor openly wicked and ungodly, but a people most particular about their religion, and exemplary in many respects. This leads us to conclude that if He were here in person to-day He would act similarly, and not join in this reunion movement.

He prayed for unity, but not for a union of real Christians

¹ Matt. 10. 34, 35.

and formal ones, bound together by a mixture of truth and error; nor even for a union of all real Christians simply as Christians, or as members of the one Body, but a Unity of all real Christians in the will and way of God.

That prayer contains several references to "the Word," "the Truth," as may be seen by reading down the chapter; and any unity that has not been brought about by heart submission to the Word of God cannot be the Unity for which the Lord prayed, and for which we should pray and labour.

We have this Unity further spoken of in Ephesians 4. by the Holy Spirit through Paul. It is called the "Unity of the Spirit," in verse 3, and includes one Body, one Spirit, one Hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all.

The first component part of that Unity is the one Body, referring to that one invisible Body which is composed of all true believers. Whoever, wherever, and whatever they may be—Jews, Greeks, or heathen; in homelands or foreign lands; called by whatever denominational name; if in Christ by living faith, then by Him in one Spirit have they been baptized into one Body. Without this before our minds and hearts, we must become contracted in our sympathies, and sectarian.

The next component part of that Unity is one Spirit Who indwells each and all; and, following that, one Hope of our calling, that one common Hope of a glorious immortality which is begotten in each regenerated soul.

Then follow three practical things: one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; and, finally, the top stone, One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

Here are seven component parts making up the Unity of the Spirit that we are exhorted to keep (*v.* 3). Without these we cannot have that Unity for which the Lord Jesus Christ prayed. For, as verse 13 tells us, the goal is "the Unity of the Faith and of the Son of God."

The more we study the Son of God and grow in likeness to Him, the more shall we express the Unity of the Faith as He expressed it.

He was the Word of God, the Word made flesh, the very embodiment of the Faith; and that Unity only is of God which leads us together to grow up into Him in all things; to become together a living expression of the Word of God, in some faint measure like unto what He was.

In the light of such truths, how futile is any attempt to bring about a reunion of professing Christians, or even of all real believers as believers only, or even as members of the one Body, seeing that in any such unity many of the component parts must be wanting.

All the precious truths of God which we now enjoy were recovered by those who, like their Lord and Master, saw that a man must be set at variance even against his father if truth was to be secured; although all contentions and separations did not result in the recovery of truth, for of old there were those who "separated themselves, sensual, not having the Spirit," and also those who "please not God and are contrary to all men." But such may be sharply distinguished from those who were compelled to separate rather than allow precious truths to be trampled under foot and lost both to themselves and to posterity, who could say with Paul: "To whom we gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour: that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you."¹

We are well assured that the path of popular reunion will lead further and further from God and His truth, and that as "evil communications corrupt good manners," so error will have the best of the bargain.

There is but one path open to those who would be faithful to their Lord and Master, namely: praying and labouring for the Unity of the Spirit.

W. J. LENNOX.

¹ Gal. 2. 5.

THE SALVATION OF CHILDREN.

BOYS AND GIRLS.

IN a former paper we tried to show God's attitude towards unconscious babes ; we will now try to say a little about His thoughts concerning boys and girls during the dawning of consciousness.

There is in childhood a period in which no moral attribute, such as "good" or "bad," can be applied to actions, though the same actions in grown-up persons are sin. What in older ones are sins are in children, who have no knowledge of good or evil, without moral significance (Deut. 1. 39 ; Isa. 7. 16). For two elements are essential to sin, "knowledge" and "will." Knowledge of what God would or would not, and will to do it or leave it undone. "What is sin ?" the writer once asked of a Sunday School. "Please, sir," said a boy of ten, "sin is the will of a creature against the will of the Creator." Little Tommy had been well taught on this point ; for sin is neither more nor less than "creature wilfulness." If we take the definitions of sin in the Scriptures, we shall find them agree with this answer. Actual personal sin cannot be applied to the issues of the creature's will until the will of the Creator becomes known. A very young child God does not hold responsible as He does an older one.

This period of unaccountability, however, cannot last very long, for it is quickly followed by a time of twilight, during which the knowledge of right and wrong is forming itself in the mind. What Adam and Eve became conscious of all at once, in that terrible moment when they partook of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3. 2, 22), comes to their posterity gradually. In this way the understanding is unfolded, until at length God holds the young person responsible for his actions. We cannot stay to describe the progress of this development now.

It has been often asked, At what age does a child become answerable to God for its actions ? To which we would

reply, God has not left it to us to fix the boundary line. This is one of the secrets of the Divine mind. It is equally difficult to say at what age a child may become conscious of sin against God and trust the Saviour for salvation. The reader will very likely have known some very young children who have given unmistakable proofs of conversion. We believe there are many of such little ones who have come to the Lord Jesus, and God in His grace has provided means to bring about this desirable end. These we now pass on to consider.

God has revealed His attitude towards the young at this period of their life in two ways at least. First, by the solemn injunctions laid upon those who have the care of the young; the injunctions to teach and guide and train, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And, second, by the words He has addressed to the young people themselves.

One way to estimate the importance any subject has in the mind of God is to ascertain the place He has given it in His Word. Now God has given a large and prominent place to this subject in the Scriptures, by which we are able to understand what a large place God has in His heart for the young. Correspondently large will be the place it fills in the heart of every servant of God who is in touch with God, and the portion of his time and attention that it will occupy will correspond thereto.

Now, for our present purpose, we shall be able only to select one or two of the best known passages which bear on this subject. Prov. 22. 6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This is to parents and to those who stand in the place of parents to the young. The present day parallel is Eph. 6. 4, where believing parents are exhorted to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. So then God would have the child initiated in the ways of the Lord from the moment he is able to understand the first

principles of the oracles of God. As we feed the little ones, a little at a time, and of the right kind, in due proportion and season, milk, bread, strong meat, as they are able to receive it; so as the mind grows and the capacity for understanding increases, the training is to proceed. Instruction, correction, exhortation, encouragement and comfort must follow each other till the child is brought to understand the fear of the Lord.

Equally well known in this connexion is Deut. 6. 6, 7, "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." We have here, in addition to the fact that God wishes the children to be taught His Word, some valuable hints as to the manner in which this should be done. For example, this is to be a work of the heart as well as of the head; of the affection as well as of the intellect. Instruction has its best effect when it comes from heart to heart. The Hebrew word here rendered "teach" is expressive of diligence, industry and painstaking. Applied to teaching it means to repeat over and over again the same things, in this way and that, in order that they may penetrate the mind and heart. Not teaching them by rote merely—that were easy with some children; but causing them to understand what they have committed to memory. This only is instruction in the true sense of the word, and thus will they learn to fear the Lord and understand His will and word (Deut. 31. 12, 13).

Further, this duty is laid upon the parents, and is to be performed in the home. They must not entrust it to others. Even when the children were brought, in the year of release, to appear before God for the solemn public hearing of the Word, in the place which He had chosen, it was the parents who were to bring them. Believing parents have committed unto them, in the good things they have received from the Lord, a sacred trust, which they have to transmit carefully to their children. The father may not be pos-

sessed of any special gift for teaching in the assembly, but here is a sphere in which he can and must teach. God considers him capable and holds him responsible to do so. And as to the mother, whose heart the Lord has opened to attend unto the things spoken in His Word, here she finds her own special field of labour, so to speak, a little garden plot, which, if well cultivated, will yield the most precious kinds of fruit, and bring her lasting joy and honour in the time to come. We may not quite understand these things as we ought. But God has endowed Christian mothers with gifts and characteristics for this kind of work different from those with which He has endowed the fathers. Women, for instance, have sometimes more insight into the youthful character than men, as may be seen in the history of Sarah and Rebekah. Women are often stronger believers, if not wiser reasoners, than men. They are nearer to the children, better acquainted with childhood and child nature than men. This is why the mothers of Salem brought their children to Jesus, when the disciples would have driven them away. They understood the attitude of the Lord to the young better than men, even than the Apostles.

Again, it is God's Word that must be taught. The Scriptures are better than all the catechisms of all the churches in the world. "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light." "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" (2 Tim. 3. 15). Parents cannot save their children, but they can impart to them the knowledge of the Scriptures that tell of Him Who saves. At any moment some text, brought home by the power of the Holy Spirit, may flash conviction in upon the soul, and work regeneration through faith in Christ. This, of course, is the first thing to aim at in all teaching.

We must add a word about the children of unsaved parents. What of those whose parents are dead in trespasses and sin? God has justly called Himself the Father of

orphans, and He especially blesses those who labour for the salvation of these spiritual orphans. Sunday-school teachers and others who work the work of the Lord among the young stand in measure in the place of parents to these. They must take them as a sacred trust from the Lord, hearing Him say: "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages"; and so each one becomes a foster-mother or a foster-father to these little ones, striving in some degree to bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, at any rate teaching them God's Word, and seeking to bring them to Christ.

Now, by way of encouragement in this work, we would bring to the notice of the reader two scriptures bearing on this subject. "And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it" (Ruth 4. 16). Observe where she put the child: in her bosom. Note the suggestive genealogy that follows: "Obed is the father of Jesse, the father of David." Suggestive, though godliness comes not by natural generation. Obed is the father of Jesse, and Jesse is the father of David, and under God David gave us the Psalms and Solomon, who in turn gave us the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs. It would be interesting to know to what extent we are indebted to Naomi for these precious treasures.

"And he brought up Hadassah, that is Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother; and the maiden was fair and beautiful; and when her father was dead Mordecai took her for his own daughter" (Esther 2. 7). A touchingly sweet incident with a delightful and instructive sequel. Mordecai seemed to be fully aware of what a trust was left him in this fair and beautiful child. His little "Hadassah," his little myrtle, as he called her, as the writer thinks, to remind him that she was a tender plant given him to watch over, guard and tend for God. But "Hadassah is Esther," who shed the fragrance of her piety in the dark court of King Ahasuerus: the bright

shining star, the saviour of her nation, and the crown and reward of Mordecai's godly labours. Verily he had his reward. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord." But teachers and even parents are sometimes tempted to look upon them as thorns rather than myrtles; yet the most unpromising little bud may by godly training become a myrtle tree. When tempted to be discouraged in the good work of teaching the young, remember Naomi and Mordecai. Read Deut. 31. 9-13.

WILLIAM SAVIGAR.

"DESTROY NOT THYSELF."

Enter ye in by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby.

For narrow is the gate, and straightened the way, that leadeth unto the life, and few be they that find it.—*Matt. 7. 13, 14.*

As we ponder and consider these words from the lips of the blessed Lord Jesus, we are impressed with the solemn and important line of truth contained herein; for here we have an injunction that is true for all ages. It has ever been the downward pathway that has been trodden by the many, and few have been found treading the upward yet narrow and difficult pathway.

Do not, child of God, pass this by, and say that it is only the unsaved who tread a pathway that leadeth to destruction, or, alas! you will miss much precious instruction contained herein for your own special benefit and blessing.

We suggest the question, Is it possible for a child of God to destroy himself so that he ceases to be a testimony for God upon the earth, that so far as the truth is concerned he has made shipwreck? Is it possible? we ask again; Yea, verily, is the reply.

Looking back over one's own short experience, and thinking of the many one once knew who were valiant for the truth, contending earnestly for the faith, one asks, Where

are they to-day? Useless in the service of God, profitless to his people, and stumbling-blocks to the unconverted.

It is, as pithily expressed by John Bunyan in his preface to that remarkable book, *The Pilgrim's Progress* :—

“This book it chalketh out before thine eyes
 The man that seeks the everlasting prize ;
 It shews you whence he comes, whither he goes,
 What he leaves undone, also what he does.
 It also shews you how he runs and runs
 Till he at the gate of glory comes.
 It shows, too, who set out for life amain
 As if the lasting crown they would obtain.
 Here also you may see the reason why
 They lose their labour and like fools do die.”

Surely such solemn verities ought to beget in our hearts an earnest prayer to God, that we might be saved such a fearful catastrophe. Yea, taking more earnest heed to the words of the Lord Jesus, that we might seek to learn the characteristics of the pathway that leadeth to destruction. We shall not have far to seek, for we shall find them plainly and clearly marked out for us in the pages of Holy Writ.

When sinners receive eternal life through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, they are as to their position in Christ eternally secure, being brought into a relationship with God which can never be disannulled ; but, on the other hand, they have begun to live for God on the earth a life full of possibilities and privileges, and yet tempered with all the vicissitudes of an earthly pilgrimage.

They are like runners in a race or ships commencing a voyage ; the supreme question is, Will they win the prize ? will they reach the goal in safety ? Here is where the Lord Jesus stands, in the verse quoted at the head of this article ; and as He views the pathway, He exhorts His disciples to strive to enter in at the narrow gate as well as to avoid the pathway that leadeth to destruction.

What shipmaster, would you think, would put to sea

without first having made all necessary preparations : his ship water-tight, well-ballasted, plenty of provisions ; compass, charts, and so forth ; for he knows full well the risks, difficulties and dangers, that he must be prepared to meet, the storm and stress of weather, the ever changing winds and currents, the seen and unseen rocks, shoals and sand-banks, and what not else besides.

Even so is it with the life of the child of God ; for we must never forget, that while God has promised to do much for us, there is that which He expects and exhorts us to do ourselves.

In the book of the Proverbs—which contains much precious instruction, written from a father to a son, full of that touching parental care which comes home with weight to one who fears God—certain distinct characteristics of the downward pathway are plainly marked. We append a few quotations :—

Hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not.

Blessed is the man that heareth Me,

Watching daily at My gates,

Waiting at the posts of My doors.

For whoso findeth Me findeth life,

And shall obtain favour of Jehovah.

But he that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul.

All they that hate Me love death (Prov. 8. 33-36).

The wise in heart will receive commandments :

But the foolish of lips shall be overthrown (Prov. 10. 8).

He is in the way of life that heedeth correction :

But he that forsaketh reproof erreth (Prov. 10. 17).

He that is stedfast in righteousness shall attain unto life,

And he that pursueth evil doeth it to his own death (Prov. 12. 19).

He that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life :

But he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction (Prov. 13. 3).

Whoso despiseth the word bringeth destruction on himself :

But he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded (Prov. 13. 13).

Walk with wise men and thou shalt be wise :

But the companion of fools shall smart for it (Prov. 13. 20).

Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth correction (Prov. 13. 18).

In all labour there is profit :

But the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury (Prov. 14. 23).

Pride goeth before destruction,

And a haughty spirit before a fall (Prov. 16. 18).

He that hasteth with his feet misseth his way (Prov. 19. 2).

He that is careless of his ways shall die (Prov. 19. 16).

Cease, my son, to hear instruction

That causeth to err from the words of knowledge (Prov. 19. 27).

Make no friendship with a man that is given to anger ;

And with a wrathful man thou shalt not go :

Lest thou learn his ways,

And get a snare to thy soul (Prov. 22. 24-25).

He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck

Shall suddenly be broken, and that without remedy (Prov. 29. 1).

We refrain making any comments, but we would ask our readers to carefully ponder these solemn warnings, like faithful beacons put on record for our instruction and guidance.

Alongside of these may be put the Epistles by Paul to Timothy, which, like the Proverbs, were wise instructions of a father to a son, for the Apostle yearned with intense yearning for the preservation of his child in the faith.

And thus there is contained in these two epistles wise counsel and solemn warnings, which, if taken heed to by each one of us, would save us from much heartburning and sorrow.

But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned : from which things some having missed the mark have turned aside unto vain talking (1 Tim. 1. 5).

Holding faith, and a good conscience ; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the Faith (1 Tim. 1. 19).

Some shall fall away from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4. 1).

Refuse profane and old wives' fables (1 Tim. 4. 7).

But they that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition (1 Tim. 6. 9).

O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called : which some professing have erred concerning the Faith (1 Tim. 6. 20).

Strive not about words to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear (2 Tim. 2. 14).

Shun profane babblings (2 Tim. 2. 16).

Depart from unrighteousness (2 Tim. 2. 19).

Foolish and ignorant questionings refuse (2 Tim. 2. 23).

Thus did the Apostle, as directed by the Holy Spirit, point out to Timothy, in simple, definite language, the characteristics of the pathway that leadeth to destruction.

Could any word of ours emphasize the absolute necessity of these words being laid up in our hearts, yea, as frontlets to our eyes, to preserve and keep us at every turn in our pilgrim pathway from wandering from the commandments of the Lord, and thus making fearful and terrible shipwreck?

Allow nothing to be tolerated in your lives that would grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

Exercise yourself to have a pure conscience, and thus preserve yourself, spirit, soul and body, for the service and glory of God. It is difficult to detect evil at its commencement, and as some one has said, one sin unconfessed is a seed that multiplies greatly.

Therefore, as we seek day by day to cleanse our way, taking diligent heed to the internal influences of destruction within our own heart, we shall become keen of scent in the fear of Jehovah, swift to detect and avoid every appearance of evil, seeking unto God continually for strength and wisdom from Himself, that He might enable us to be overcoming ones.

Haste not, let no thoughtless deed
Mar the spirit's steady speed ;
Ponder well and know the right,
Onward then with all thy might.
Haste not, years cannot atone
For one reckless action done.

Haste not, rest not, calm in strife,
Meekly bear the storm of life ;
Duty be thy polar guide,
Do the right whate'er betide.
Haste not, rest not ; conflicts past,
God shall crown thy work at last.

A. ANDERSON.

Fragment.

LUKE 15.

HE came back, though the beauty of that returning is hid from the natural eye—back from the distant land of shame and famine, from all his aimless wanderings, from the bond-service, so unprofitable on the one hand, but which afforded such a grateful lesson on the other, and from the sin against heaven and before his father—back from poverty and misery to his father's home of mercy, peace and plenty. Oh, joyful and glad returning!

* * * * *

There can be no thought of returning to God by any of us until the truth of our forsaking Him is brought home by one or other of those gracious ways that it pleases Him to adopt.

* * * * *

The words are: "I will arise"—Who could better afford to do so? or, who ever was better fitted? "And will go to my father"—What a blessed prospect! "And will say unto him, Father"—What a homely word! "I have sinned"—What a solemn truth! "And am no more worthy"—What a contrite spirit! "Make me"—What a genuine and lowly desire! all speaking out the inwards—for the outwards very often speak well for themselves—of the awakened and returning one. But while he was yet a great way off, the father saw him—interested, watchful and loving father—and ran and, falling on his neck, he kissed him. What an unexpected welcome! Unspeakable kindnesses extended to him for all his wrongs and rags. Following this, too, there was a time of real happiness, for, as the father said, it was meet to make merry, and be glad at his son's return.

If perchance these few words should fall into the hands of any wanderer and waster, knowing somewhat of those experiences of a foreign land, their mission will be served if, as a finger-post, they direct attention to the God-given way of returning from the polluted land to the Father's home—the house of plenty, with enough and to spare.

For Youngest Believers

REDEMPTION AND JUSTIFICATION.

WHEN reading the helpful remarks on page 48, I remembered the preciousness with which Romans 3. 24 came to my mind one Lord's Day morning some years ago.

I was out for a walk before going to the breaking of the bread, and as I went along my thoughts upon the verse were something like these :—

BEING, that is, at the present time, not future, but now.

JUSTIFIED, this means cleared from guilt.

FREELY, gratuitously, nothing to pay.

BY HIS GRACE, that is, unmerited favour on God's part.

THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS—
not by anything I have done, but through what another has done for me.

I have often recalled the circumstance, and further meditation reminds us that we were in the power of the Adversary, and needed to be redeemed. Thank God for a "GOEL" or "Kinsman Redeemer." "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same" (see Heb. 2. 14). He became man in order to redeem man, and in this way only could He do it, by becoming like us in everything except sin: "Who gave Himself a RANSOM for all" (1 Tim. 2. 6).

It is helpful to further consider the subject of justification, and with this end in view we would suggest a reference to the following passages :—

Rom. 5. 9. The GROUND of justification—BY BLOOD.

„ 3. 24. The MANNER—BY GRACE.

„ 5. 1. The MEANS—BY FAITH.

1 Cor. 6. 11. The AUTHORITY—"in the NAME of the Lord Jesus."

Additional help may be gained by searching up kindred verses on GRACE and REDEMPTION. Thus one single verse will prove to be full of precious truth, food for the soul.

The Woman in her Sphere.

DALETH.

Seeketh wool and flax
And worketh willingly with her hands.

SHE whom Lemuel's mother recommended to him as a fit helpmeet was one of those women with a hunger for work whom one sometimes meets. The key-word of the stanza before us is "Seeketh." She is not content with the work that comes as it were of itself. She seeks the wool and flax to spin and weave, partly because her hands cannot be still, partly because she has an eye for future need. It does not generally fall to woman's lot to-day to spin and weave, but the virtuous woman is still known by her seeking material on which to occupy her willing hands. When the needle and thread are not wanted at home she will be looking out for others whom she can help, and a little sewing for an overburdened neighbour may make an entrance for a word of gospel grace, for which else there would only be a deaf ear.

Not only have we the seeking which speaks of the willing mind, but we have the wonderful Hebrew "And," which tells us that, as there is the readiness to will, so there is the completion out of her ability. She seeketh and worketh. It is not always so. There are some who are always ready to start on something new and then to leave it half finished, only perhaps to give others work in clearing up their unfinished labours. Let it be well noted, however, that the woman can do with her hands what she has learnt as a girl. If the mother neglect to bring up her daughters in a right way, if their hands are not in early years trained to the use of needle and scrubbing-brush they will be so much the less able to help others. Though, of course, where there is real earnestness, even a woman of mature age can learn a great deal that will make her more of a help to others,

A QUESTION.

I, a reader of NEEDED TRUTH, have been interested in reading "Woman in her sphere." Much has been said to benefit the married woman, also the unmarried woman, who may be anxious to work for others. Could some ways be mentioned whereby the young woman may prove herself virtuous, who has as yet no husband to honour and work for? How may she do good to those around her, and train herself for a future time, if she be spared? For the Lord looks upon all our doings, whether they be good or evil, and He knows whether we be busy workers or idlers. The Lord Himself would not eat the bread of idleness, when He trod this earth. Perhaps the answer to this question may be a help to others as well as myself.

AN ANSWER.

A busy house-wife first we view,
 The meals to cook, the work to do,
 Her little ones to tend.
 She willingly doth undertake
 Their clothes to wash, new ones to make,
 Their little socks to mend.
 A sister then, without these claims
 Upon her time, no lofty aims,
 O'er fancy-work doth bend.

That sister, if she will she may,
 With watchful thought find out a way
 The mother's work to share;
 The socks to mend, and others knit,
 Or sick child nurse. To care for it,
 Would ease the mother's care.
 Or, lying by, that piece of stuff,
 To make a frock, or skirt, enough
 For some poor child to wear.

Or help the young in other ways,
 Take them a walk on busy days,
 Or, when their mother's ill.
 If you decide that you will try
 To help some mother quietly,
 Then work with all your will,
 This home-work is in woman's sphere,
 Do it for Him, who left us here
 A quiet place to fill.

ONE WHO HAS TRIED IT.

ANOTHER QUESTION.

What is the spiritual application of verses 11 and 13 of Proverbs 31, concerning the virtuous woman;

The heart of her husband trusteth in her,
And he shall have no lack of gain ;

She seeketh wool and flax,
And worketh willingly with her hands ?

Help as to the spiritual application of these words is solicited from those who have some experimental understanding of their literal meaning. Those who know nothing of the primary application to things that are seen will be unlikely to give real help in the spiritual sphere. See John 3. 12.

PROVERBS 28. 13.

I would like to say how fully I appreciate the page for Sisters in NEEDED TRUTH. The word this month (May) "Doeth him good and not evil all the days of her life," came home to me very forcibly last Lord's Day afternoon. Being late in preparing tea, my husband and I missed the prayer meeting which precedes the preaching of the Gospel here. There were but few, and they thought that there seemed to be little heart for the Gospel meeting. One brother said they were inclined to give up. Was not this a lost opportunity—a sad failure on my part ? in that my husband was deprived of fellowship in prayer and also of being an example to others.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 18. (Continued from page 120).

From MANNHEIM. The sending forth of Barnabas and Saul to the work is very instructive and necessary for us, showing as it does the direct dealing of God ; the two prophets are sent not by the will of man but of God. Compare Luke 10. 2 : "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that He may send forth labourers into His harvest."

The attempt of Satan through Elymas did but show forth the power of God, and the proconsul believes, "being astonished at the teaching of the Lord."

"This teaching of the Lord" suggests to us the proclamation of a risen Saviour, which fact occupies so much of the preaching of the early disciples, Acts 5. 31, 2. 22-35, 13. 30-37. Compare Genesis 45. 9. Joseph rejected by his brethren, raised of God, inviting his kinsmen to share his glory.

What Paul says, verses 10 to 47, might be contrasted with Peter's words in Acts 2. 14-36. While Peter shows the rejected Jesus of Nazareth to be chosen of God and made by Him both Lord and Christ, verse 36, Paul rather proves Him to be the promised One of God, verses 23 and 32, by events known to them all, Acts 9. 22. Here Paul first takes up his calling as an apostle of the Gentiles, verse 47, see Romans 11. 13. Would not Barnabas also be an apostle of the Gentiles ?

It is by two suggested that, in the separating of Barnabas and Paul, the Spirit would be likely to speak to them through their brethren. Have we not grounds for believing that the Holy Spirit would make known God's will to the two apostles, and that the others would acknowledge it to be the mind of God ?

This is suggested to us by looking at the principles shown throughout the Book when God chooses certain ones for special work :—Exodus 3. 1-4, God appears to Moses out of the burning bush and calls him to be a deliverer, and Moses calls the elders and shows them the working of God, chap. 4. 29.

1 Sam. 3. 4. The Lord called Samuel. 1 Sam. 3. 8. Eli perceived that the Lord had called Samuel. 1 Sam. 3. 20. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

To Peter was first revealed the granting of salvation to the Gentiles, the brethren acknowledging him to have been guided by God (Acts 11.).

Acts 15. 6, we have the apostles and elders gathered together to consider a matter. Verse 28. The will of the Holy Spirit is revealed to James. Verses 14-21, he shows it to the other apostles and elders. Verse 22, it was accepted by the whole church. Is not there a connexion between Acts 13. 2 and 13. 47 ?

From BRADFORD. For a whole year Saul and Barnabas were together in the church in Antioch, teaching much

people (Acts 11. 26). After their return from Judea (chap. 12. 25) they are still seen publicly ministering to the Lord, together with others, when the Holy Spirit calls for their setting apart for the work whereunto they had been called. With this we would link Rom. 1. 1, as showing how he was constituted an apostle by call, he having answered to that call. Also 1 Cor. 1. 1, "An apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God." Gal. 1. 1, "neither through men, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father"; and 1 Tim. 1. 1, "according to the commandment of God our Saviour and Christ Jesus our hope"; and again, Acts 13. 3 and 14. 26, showing that their fellows also responded together with them and sent them away.

In the apostle's discourse it is well to notice two distinctions. Verse 23 was fulfilled in the days following John the Baptizer's preaching, as verse 24 makes plain. Verses 32 and 33 however are fulfilled in His being raised from among the dead; God so fulfilling the promises made unto the fathers. The kingdom of Israel cut themselves off from the house of David, of whom was the Christ (1 Kings 12. 16-20), and when He was come, those who remained of Judah and Benjamin rejected Him. But God in grace fulfils His promises and the blessings of David are sure. See, too, Eph. 3. 6.

God gave His "only-begotten" Son (John 3. 16) and raised Him up the "first-begotten" from among the dead, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence." He has been brought into the world as the "only-begotten" (John 1. 14 and 18), but He has yet to be brought in as the "first-begotten" (Heb. 1. 6). Ps. 2. 7 quoted in these passages seems to speak of the "first-begotten from among the dead." See also Heb. 5. 5 and 6.

From BARROW-IN-FURNESS. In the 13th chapter of the Acts we find enumerated certain men who were prophets and teachers in the church in Antioch, the capital of Syria. The first mentioned is Barnabas, the Syriac term of his name

meaning, "Son of consolation and exhortation." From Acts 4. 36 we find that he received this surname from the Apostles owing to his remarkable ability to console the afflicted and exhort the brethren. He was a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, sent by the church in Jerusalem into Antioch. He afterwards journeyed to Tarsus seeking for Saul and finding him, brought him to Antioch, and there they abode for an whole year with the church. Owing to great need arising among the saints in Judea the brethren in Antioch determined to send relief unto them according as God had prospered them, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. It is worthy of note the persons chosen and sent, and also to whom sent, to men capable of good and sound discretion in the work in which they were about to be engaged (1 Tim 5. 17). Barnabas and Saul having fulfilled their ministration returned to Antioch taking with them John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas (Col. 4. 10).

Symeon, that was called Niger, may possibly be the Cyrenian referred to in Matt. 27. 32, who, after the dispersion which took place after the martyrdom of Stephen, may have journeyed as far as Antioch preaching the Lord Jesus (Acts 11. 19, 20). As Symeon, Lucius, Manaen and the rest of the prophets and teachers were ministering unto the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit speaks and indicates Barnabas and Saul to be separated for the work whereunto He had called them; thus we see their call was a Divine call as also their work. And is it not evident by the signs and blessing that accompanied them during their mission that God was in and with them of a truth; but, alas! Satan does not leave them alone, but presents himself in the person and character of Elymas the sorcerer, who sought to pervert the right ways of the Lord, therefore the hand of the Lord came down upon him in judgment (Prov. 19. 5 and Rom. 8. 31, latter clause).

Does not the second verse of this chapter (Acts 13.) also

show distinctly the Divine personality of the Holy Spirit especially by the words, "Separate ME." . . . "Whereunto I," have called them, proving surely beyond doubt that He is a person and not a myth or the like; (also John 16. 8, 13, 14, 15.) Barnabas and Saul having gone through much trial and suffering during their journey are permitted by the grace of God to return unto Antioch whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had fulfilled (2 Tim. 2. 3, 4. 5).

From BLACKBURN. We agree with Brighton that the Holy Spirit spoke through the brethren gathered together. They would be well acquainted with the two men, knowing how Saul had preached at Damascus; and as far as Barnabas is concerned see Chap. 11. 24. The work of ministration Barnabas and Saul had been engaged in would also show the extent of confidence placed in them.

Contrast the choice of Matthias in Chapter 1. as regards the attitude of those together.

With regard to question from Jarvis Brook, we doubt not there had been exercise in the hearts of Barnabas and Saul brought about in this wise:—Saul was a chosen vessel to bear the Name of the Lord before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel. The time had now come for him to start on this great mission. Barnabas had already laboured with Saul in Antioch, and they had been together on the Relief Ministration to Jerusalem. Barnabas was also able to testify in the behalf of Saul if necessary (see chap. 9. 27). We do not consider it hesitancy to act on counsel from the apostles that the voice of the Holy Spirit is heard, but rather do we think that such exercise of heart characterizing them, they are together with brethren; the time has come, and they speak, "speaking as it were the oracles of God."

NOTE ON ACTS 1.-11.

FROM G. H. W. In reply to the letter from Glasgow in April, page 94, I would suggest the following:—

Paul, speaking of the gospel preached by him, three times designates it as "my gospel," Rom. 2. 16, 16. 25 and 2 Tim. 2. 8, for its great characteristic truths were revealed to none but him. Moreover we learn from Gal. 1. 12 and 2. 6-9 that he received nothing from those that were apostles before him. But the great fact is, not that they had failed to apprehend those truths, but God had not revealed them heretofore. His was the preaching of Jesus Christ according to revelation of a mystery, and a comparison of Rom 16. 25 and 26 with Eph. 3. 5, and Col. 1. 26 shows that these mysteries (including that of 1 Cor. 15. 51 and 52), together with the dispensation to which they belong, were both alike hidden from all previous generations.

But not so the testimony nor time of the early Acts. See Acts 3. 22 and 24. Of the seed of David, God, according to promise, brought unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus (Acts 13.). The One sent from God had brought to them good tidings of peace, but they denied Him and slew Him. God, however, fulfilled those same promises unto them in that He raised Him from among the dead (Acts 13. 32 and 33), and again is He sent unto them and repentance and remission of sins is preached in the Name of the risen and exalted One (Acts 3. 26, etc.). They therefore who believed the testimony received Him as the Christ appointed for them, and the professed hope of the people concerning a coming Messiah, bringing seasons of refreshing, was in them a reality (Acts 3. 19-21). They apprehended Him whom the heavens had received as such, and looked for His return according to Acts 1. 11.

The Holy Spirit given unto them, brought to their remembrance the Lord's words, therefore we find them together as a church, in the Fellowship. Yet it must be evident from the foregoing, that the constitution of the Fellowship in those days must have differed from that in the days of the revelation of the mystery. This however does not undermine the truth of its oneness, as see Eph. 2.

19. What saints are here referred to? Further, what legislation had they at that time for assemblies among the Gentiles being linked together into one Fellowship with them? Note 1 Cor. 3. 10. Together with those mysteries was revealed all the instruction relating to the Fellowship necessary for those to whom and for whom they were made known. Contrast also Rom. 15. 8 and Col. 1. 24-26.

If, then, this dispensation, and the mysteries connected with it, were kept in silence, hid from all ages and generations, any prophecy speaking of the salvation of Gentiles, together with such scriptures as Luke 24. 47, Acts 1. 8, etc., must necessarily refer, in their primary application, to something quite distinct from this present day, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to revelation of a mystery. Moreover, if we are unable to trace the carrying out of those scriptures, prior to that revelation, we must look for their fulfilment in a day yet future. Furthermore, the hopes and promises of Acts 3. are as yet unfulfilled, nor will they be realized in this day.

But God will have a testimony after the close of this dispensation, a remnant among the Jews, keeping the commandments of God and the testimony and faith of Jesus (Rev. 12. 17, and 14. 12). These same hopes shall be theirs, and to them shall they be fulfilled. This people will seek unto those same scriptures and by them will they be acted upon. Similarly, whatsoever instruction was given by the Lord Jesus when on earth as to assembly life and testimony must also be carried out in those days (together, of course, with any scriptures that may have been since given by God for that time), for which days, together with the time before the Apostle Paul's ministry, they were primarily intended. Therefore as those in the early Acts were seen together in assembly testimony, so also will those in a coming day, for it would then seem to be a continuance of the same testimony and of the same days, foretold by all the prophets from Samuel onwards.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Psalm 17.

FROM LONDON, S.W. This prayer is both interesting and instructive if considered in its three aspects, namely:— as used by David; as it might have been used by the Lord Jesus; and as it may be used by us.

Although used by David it could, more fittingly, be ascribed to the Lord Jesus. Verses 3 and 5 in particular were hardly fulfilled in David's case, whereas they were in that of the Lord Jesus. Further, it is the prayer of a perfect man; and there are, too, parallel passages in the Gospels; for example, compare the words in verse 2—"Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence"—with those in Luke 22. v. 42—"Father . . . remove this cup from Me, nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done"; and also verse 4—"by the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the ways of the violent"—with Matthew 4. v. 4—"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

There were many occasions on which David might have uttered this prayer, for example, those mentioned in 1 Samuel 23. 25; and 2 Samuel 15.

God answered David's prayer, but then remark his spiritual condition (not forgetting, of course, that there were occasions when sin marred David's communion with God). He approached God in absolute faith, and with unfeigned lips poured out his heart to God.

He had been tried by God, but he had borne the trial patiently, and, rising above it, had gone on with God's will, the better for it, like Abraham of old (see Heb. 11. v. 17).

"The word of Thy lips" had a mighty influence on David's life, in keeping him separate from sinners, and keeping, with sure foot, to the path in which God would have him walk (reminds us of the words in Psalm 119.—

“Thy word have I laid up in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee”).

By experience he learnt that the surest retreat from evil, from within and without, was beneath the sheltering wing of Jehovah; and it was by Jehovah's arm that he saw his enemies cast down.

David's pathway was fraught with many dangers and trials, yet he could look forward to the glad moment when he would awake, fully satisfied, in the presence of his God, and bear His likeness (calling to mind the apostle's word to us—“I am persuaded that the sufferings of this little while are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward) ” (Rom. 8. 18).

Our pathway is similar to David's; we have the same enemies to contend with; and we have the same God to deal with. Let us, therefore, learn the lesson God would teach us from David's experiences.

From PICKERING. The characteristic feature throughout this Psalm, acting as a mighty link, joining the plea for justice, the account of trial, and the prayer for preservation, is the confidence of the Psalmist in the One addressed. The Psalmist can place trust in Jehovah as being One of whom it could be said, “There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against Jehovah.”

In verses 1 and 2 David is pleading for just discrimination from One who is a just God (Isaiah 45. 21).

The attitude of the Psalmist is quite different in the third, fourth and fifth verses. David makes reference to trial: “Thou hast proved my heart; Thou hast visited me in the night; Thou hast tried me and findest nothing.” Here we find three kinds of trial: trial of heart, “Thou hast proved my heart.” Trial of confidence; “Thou hast visited me in the night,” or in seasons of tribulation and conflict. Continual trial, “Thou hast tried me and hast not found, and continuest not to find any evil in me.” This latter statement of the Psalmist seems somewhat pre-

sumptuous till we consider the cause. We find it is a spirit humbled before Jehovah that utters the preceding passage, and also declares, "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress," and a spirit that relies on Jehovah for strength. The same confidence in Jehovah's strength is seen in the fourth and fifth verses, which remind us of Psalm 119. verses 51, 87, 133.

Verse 6 commences the supplication for preservation, the same characteristic being observed as in previous verses. The ninth and tenth verses remind us of the words, "The cords of the wicked have wrapped me round, but I have not forgotten Thy law"; and again of, "The proud have forged a lie against me; with my whole heart will I keep Thy precepts. Their heart is as fat as grease. But I delight in Thy law." In verse 11 we have shown forth the subtlety of the adversary; even following our steps to find opportunity "to cast down to the earth" (or to try to bring our confidence to be placed on earthly things). The modes of the adversary's attacks are plainly shown in verses 1 and 2, reminding us of 1 Peter 5. 8, "Your adversary, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour."

Verses 13 and 14 seem at first sight a little perplexing; but after consideration we suggest to read as in the Authorized Version, "From the wicked which are Thy sword," or as in the margin of the Revised Version, "From men (men of the world), which are Thy hand."

In considering the first, turn to 1 Chronicles 21. 12. David has sinned, see verses 1, 3, 17, and as a punishment he is to choose one of three things, amongst which is mentioned, "Or three months to be consumed before thy foes, while that the sword of thine enemies overtake thee." See also Shimei, 2 Samuel 16. 7, 10, 11; also Isaiah 10. 5, 6.

The Psalmist returns to his former confidence in verse 15, saying, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake in Thy likeness."

THE ORACLES OF GOD.

FIRST of all we might mention that we have the word "oracles" four times in the New Testament. In Acts 7. 38, the first occurrence, it is "living oracles," the only place where "living" is connected with it. The English word "oracles" comes from a word meaning "to speak."

In the Old Testament we do not find the word in the plural, but we have it in the singular number several times.

Let us take Psalm 28. 2 as a typical verse. I think the marginal reading of the R.V. gives the sense, "towards the innermost part of Thy sanctuary." We will turn to a few scriptures illustrative of this. In Exodus 25. 21, 22, God says that He will commune with Moses from above the mercy seat. Leviticus 1. 1 confirms this, Jehovah spake unto Moses out of the tent of meeting. The most Holy Place is called "the oracle" in 1 Kings 6. It is mentioned eight times in this chapter (omitting *v. 17*, where it is in italics), and I think in every instance refers to the most Holy Place.

Acts 16. 16-18. The way the Scriptures have been spiritualized instead of reading them literally has obscured the meaning of this narrative as well as many others. Here we have a person who had a supernatural power and was connected with the Temple at Delphi, where the leaders of nations used to go to consult the oracle. It is a generally admitted fact that this oracle uttered supernatural sounds connected with the evil one—the oracle of Satan: many Scriptures in the Old Testament confirm this, the supernatural power of the Devil being apparent. "A spirit of divination," "a spirit of Python," R.M. She had an evil spirit and was able to do things because of that evil spirit; the 18th verse makes this plain. The Apostle Paul casts it out just as the Lord Jesus cast out the demons (not devils) in His time. I am leaving aside the question of people to-day being possessed with demons—this as it may be; it was so in the days of the Lord Jesus

on the earth, and will be so in the days yet to come, as seen from the book of Revelation, after the Church the Body has gone.

We find from 2 Samuel 16. 23 that the counsel of a man was put in place or on a level with the oracle of God. If there is a forsaking of the Word of God, there will be a betaking to devices and counsels of men instead (may Psalm 119. 24 be true of us). These men are used by Satan for his purpose and accomplishments.

When God rejected Saul on account of his disobedience he betook himself to the Witch of Endor. See 1 Samuel 28. 6, 7: "And when Saul inquired of Jehovah, Jehovah answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." He spake by dreams as to Jacob, and by Urim and Thummim, which means Lights and Perfections. How exactly God spake by Urim and Thummim is not known, but we know that He spake in the most Holy Place. At this time God spake by neither of the three, and Saul betook himself to the Witch. This is the more suggestive when it is remembered that Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

Acts 7. 38. "The oracles" here refer to the Old Testament; primarily to the Law of Moses: it could be translated utterances—an oracle is an utterance, "living utterances." There is something in the Scriptures that is not in any other book—the words of God not like the words of men: they are life-giving, like Him Who spake as never man spake. The Lord Jesus said when the Tempter came, quoting from Deuteronomy (that book most assailed by the so-called Higher Critics), "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

The word "proceedeth" is in the long tense and means continuation in the present, so that when one comes to the Scriptures in touch with the Living God, all sin having been

confessed and put away, the Scriptures are living to that one:—they proceed to that one and nourish the soul. “Proceedeth”: it is not proceeded in the past, but now, as I read them in fellowship with God. Note, “every word that proceedeth,” not some.

“Set your heart unto all the words which I testify unto you this day; which ye shall command your children, to observe to do all the words of this law. For it is no vain thing for you; because it is your LIFE” (Deut. 32. 46, 47).

“The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life” (John 6. 63); and again Peter, through the Spirit, speaking of the incorruptible seed through which we are begotten, says it is that which “liveth and abideth” (1 Peter 1. 23).

Let us look at the other places where the word “oracles” occurs:—

Romans 3. 2. We have seen that the oracles were given through Moses at the first, and then His ancient people were entrusted with them, and in the counsel and wisdom of God the Scriptures were preserved by the Jews. A provision was made that the king was to write a copy of the Law of Moses in a book, out of that which the priests the Levites had (see Deut. 17. 18); thus the copies of the Old Testament, as far as the Law of Moses was concerned, were in all likelihood greatly multiplied. To show how the Scriptures were preserved I give an extract from an old writer:—

“It is well known that among the Jews it was the profession of the Masorites, or doctors of tradition, to transcribe the Scriptures. We know to what extent these indefatigable scholars carried their respect for the letter; and when we read the rules under which their labours were carried on, we understand the use that the providence of God (Who had confided His oracles to the Jews) made of their reverence, severe exactitude, and even of their superstition. They reckoned the number of verses, words, and letters in

each book. They tell us, for instance, that the letter A occurs forty-two thousand three hundred and seventy times in the Bible; the letter B thirty-eight thousand two hundred and eighteen times; and so on to the end. They were scrupulous of changing the position even of a letter, though evidently misplaced, but limited themselves to noting it in the margin, supposing some mystery was involved. They tell us which is the middle letter of the Pentateuch, as well as of each of the books of which it is composed. They never allowed themselves to correct their manuscript; and if any mistake escaped them, they rejected the papyrus or the skin which they had blemished, and recommenced upon a fresh one; for they were equally interdicted from even correcting one of their errors, and from retaining for their sacred volume a single parchment or skin in which an erasure had been made. . . .” They were the custodians not only in preserving the Scriptures thus, but also in giving effect to them as a people of God; but they became unfaithful to the trust committed unto them. Yet they had an advantage, for first of all they were entrusted with the “oracles of God.”

Hebrews 5. 11-13. “The first principles of the oracles of God.” In the Old Testament Scriptures there are those things that the youngest can understand, as well as those things the most experienced in the things of God cannot fathom. As has been tersely said:—

“There are fords here for lambs, and there are deep waters where elephants swim.”

Timothy from a babe knew these sacred writings. On the other hand, “If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor. 8. 2).

This is one amongst many things which makes the Book of God wonderful, different from all others.

2 Peter 4. 7-11. “If any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God.”

We have here an exhortation and warning to those who speak: such are not to speak their own words, at least only so far as they are explanatory of the Scriptures and in accordance with them; not like those whom the Word of God tells us would arise: "For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts: and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (2 Tim. 4. 3, 4).

The Word must be spoken not to please the natural man, not for the sake of speaking and hearing a fine address, but in order that the will of God may be known, that it may be heard and received into the heart, that the same may affect the individual child of God unto the helping, building up and strengthening of the whole.

In summing up, we gather from the Old Testament then, that the Oracle is synonymous with the Most Holy Place—it was there God spake to certain persons. Then the heathen nations had their oracles where supernatural words were spoken as from the kingdom of darkness, for when the Living God is forsaken men turn to that which is of the evil one and to the powers of darkness. There can be no neutrality.

In the New Testament the oracles speak in the first three places of the Old Testament Scriptures, whilst the last place where they are mentioned (1 Peter 4.) may speak also of the Scriptures of the New Testament.

J. CROSTHWAITE RADCLIFFE.

TEMPLE OF GOD.

“ Know ye not that ye are . . . temple of God ” (1 *Cor.* 3. 16).

IN order to understand the ecclesiastical position of those to whom these words were addressed, it will be necessary to refer to Acts 18., where we get the record of the Word of God being first made known in Corinth which resulted in the formation of an assembly of God there.

The effect of the preaching is briefly stated in verse 8, with which also verse 11 should be linked : “ Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized ” ; “ And he [Paul] dwelt there a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them.” In this instance, as throughout the Acts, we find that the threefold commission of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples (see the closing verses of Matt. 28.) was continually obeyed ; there was no deviation then, and there should not be any deviation now. Alas, many children of God do not apprehend that these commands are as binding upon them to-day as they were in the day that He first gave them.

1. Disciples were to be made by the proclamation of the Gospel.

2. These were to be baptized into the Name (not sprinkled, but immersed, as the word signifies).

3. They must be taught all things, which would include the breaking of the bread in assembly capacity on the first of the week.

Where these injunctions are carried out, assemblies of God are formed, and nothing short of this will meet with God's approval, nor should anything else be tolerated by us. Saints who see the importance of these things will not countenance by their presence so-called revival services, where only part of the Lord's commands have a place, even though many may be born again at such meetings. We are persuaded that only assemblies formed in this way could *then*, or can *now*, be addressed as by the opening words of

this Corinthian epistle, namely, "Unto the church (or assembly) of God which is in Corinth" (chap. 1. 2). It was God's assembly, formed on Divine principles, and maintained according to His word; being the sphere for godly rule, or where the kingdom of God is seen; it was God's "tilled land" (1 Cor. 3. 9, Revised Margin), a "cultivated patch" in the midst of the desert of idolatry, "God's building." Such assemblies form the House of God, the place where He can dwell, as we read regarding such separated ones, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Cor. 6. 16).

The Temple of God suggests a place where worship, praise and prayer can be collectively given to Him through the Great Priest.

The two words "House" and "Temple" cause us to think (as God intends that we should) of His House, His Temple of Old Testament days; and the more we learn concerning them, the better we shall understand the words addressed to the assembly of God at Corinth and true of all His assemblies, namely, "Know ye not that ye are . . . temple of God?"

What an honour for those who were once poor, guilty sinners, and have been saved by Sovereign Grace, to be thus permitted by God to form a dwelling-place for Him, and what a privilege for such to be able to exercise therein their priestly functions (see 1 Pet. 2.)!

God said with regard to the Temple of Solomon's day, "Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually" (2 Chron. 7. 16). May we rise to this lofty position, and hold fast, firm unto the end (Heb. 3. 6), so as to be and to remain His House, His Temple.

Most believers think much of what they get from God, but little of what He looks for from them; and, generally, modern teaching discourages any attempt to return to New Testament principles, one thing on earth to-day of God and for God.

In the light of the remnant days of Ezra and Nehemiah, we believe that such is possible, even though the testimony be small in comparison with earlier times—one Community, one House, one Temple, one Assembly of Living God.

We are surrounded by counterfeits in these last days, and in this connexion would suggest the reading of Judges 17. and 18., for in those days false religion, an imitation of God's reality, had a prominent place among the people of God "all the time that the House of God was in Shiloh" (chap. 18. 31).

Let us therefore seek to maintain entire separation from all that would deny Him His place and authority, and let us fulfil our share in building and maintaining that which He can own by His presence in the midst; even that which He so much desires—a dwelling-place, a temple.

W. H. B. FULLARD.

THE LAW OF THE COMMUNITY.

A WORD TO TEACHERS.

ALL associations of men have laws and rules suited to the purpose for which they are associated. Laws or rules for the government and guidance of a community are as essential to its progress as rudder and compass to the ship that crosses the sea from port to port. Both would come to grief without them.

Now the people of Israel, in the dispensation which passed away on the day of Pentecost, was a community of God, having laws which had been framed for them by an Allwise and Benevolent Legislator, even Jehovah Himself. All these laws were given through Moses, and once for all; and after they had been recorded in the Divine statute-book, namely, the Law of Moses, they could be referred to at all times, and became the standard of appeal upon all matters respecting conduct, worship, service, and all that appertained to the individual and collective actions of the people.

To ensure a right understanding of these statutes by the people, Jehovah laid the responsibility of expounding them upon the house of Aaron. See Deut. 17. 8-12, and Mal. 2. 7. This wise and gracious provision conferred a high dignity upon the priestly house. Their honour in Israel was very great; but their duty and responsibility were correspondingly so. It meant that the Law of Jehovah must be continually in their hands, in their hearts and upon their lips; in it they must meditate day and night. This, we know, could bring them nothing but good. But we are not thinking of the blessing that accrues to the student of the Law of Jehovah, but of how much depended on the right understanding and execution thereof. A misinterpretation of any portion of the Law would set the community wrong, and render them guilty before God. Had we been Israelites we might have coveted the honour attaching to their office, but not many of us would have envied them their onerous duties and grave obligations. With what feelings of awe would a God-fearing priest engage in the exercise of expounding the Law of God, as he called to mind how it had been received amid the blackness and thunder of the Holy Mount, or out from the Holy of Holies from between the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy-seat!

That ancient community has passed from the scene, with its teaching priests; and in its place has come "the Fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1. 9). For the guidance and government of this community also God has graciously given laws and statutes through the apostles of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They were delivered to the churches of God which in their day first formed the Community. The manner in which they were received differed in some ways from the reception of the Law of Moses. There was no burning mount which might be touched, no tables of stone written by the finger of God. They were revealed gradually. We may almost say that they were caused to grow up with the churches which at the first they were to

govern, as they came into being through the preaching and teaching of the Word by the apostles and their helpers. As contingencies and difficulties arose new guidance was given from God, and thus, little by little, the complete will of God for the Community as a whole became known. Little by little this was committed to writing under the guidance and at the direction of no less a person than the Holy Spirit of God Himself. In these writings all that was required or would be required, until the Lord's return, has been recorded. Therein too is explained how to use the statutes and judgments of the ancient community in the new. In this Law of the Community of God's Son all that can be required for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for discipline in righteousness, in every possible circumstance in which the Community can be found, is recorded.

This law was committed to writing, and formally delivered, as a sacred trust, once for all, unto the saints; and it has been providentially preserved to God's people of to-day in the Holy Scriptures.

For the right understanding of this law God has also made provision as of old, thus: "God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers" (1 Cor. 12. 28). Stay here a moment. Apostles are no more, and prophets are no more, but all that they taught of the will of God is recorded in the statute-book for the teaching of the Community to-day, and the teachers remain. They are an abiding ordinance for its edification.

The attitude of the teacher towards this law is not to criticize, nor apologize, nor even to praise, but to explain; simply to explain. He had nothing to do with the making of it, and he must have nothing to do with altering it. Woe to him if he does, for the Lord of the Community will call him to account. What we have said regarding the solemn duties of the sons of Aaron applies in the case of the teacher in the Fellowship of God's Son. It is his business to learn accurately and teach clearly just only what he finds in the

statute-book. Here he will find everything he needs at all times, rules for worship, rules for service, rules for discipline, rules as to who should belong to the Community both as regards individuals and assemblies, rules for the private and for the public life of saints and assemblies. And above all, rules for himself regarding his relation to the church to which he belongs and to the Community at large, rules as to his relation to fellow-labourers, and to those whose especial business it is to see that these rules are properly administered, namely, those whom the Holy Spirit has made overseers. With all these he must make himself acquainted. He must teach them clearly and faithfully, not shunning to declare the whole counsel of God, and not forgetting to point out the need of a right apprehension of the spirit as well as the letter of the word, lest a dead formalism take the place of a living obedience to the will of the Lord. And at the Lord's return he will receive his reward.

WILLIAM SAVIGAR.

OBEDIENCE BETTER THAN SACRIFICE.

“BEHOLD, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams” (1 Sam. 15. 22). Thus spake Samuel to Saul when the latter tried to excuse his disobedience to the commandment of the Lord by the plea of preserving the best of the flock and of the herd to offer in sacrifice. God had remembered what Amalek did to the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt—laying wait for them in the way’ and smiting the hindmost of them, the feeble ones, when they were faint and weary¹—and now God’s time of judgment for them has arrived, and Saul is the one whom He chooses to blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven as had been decreed.² In this

¹ See Deut. 25. 17–19.

² See Exod. 17. 14–16.

Saul sadly failed ; and two things are brought prominently before us in the Scriptures arising out of his disobedience, namely, the burning of Ziklag¹ and Saul's own death.² Destruction and death follow in the wake of disobedience. One little knows what calamities may result from one such act.

These things are written for our learning (Rom. 15. 4). Let us look at Saul as typifying the child of God ; at Amalek as typifying the flesh. " Utterly destroy Amalek." " Make no provision for the flesh." ³ " Though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh." ⁴ It becomes us, then, as children of God, to cast down all our reasonings and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and have a readiness to avenge all disobedience when our obedience is fulfilled. May we guard against trying to avenge disobedience whilst our own obedience is unfulfilled.

The day is coming when we shall all require to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and then it shall be clearly seen that to obey is better than sacrifice.

May we follow Him Who was obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. See the reward of His obedience in the place to which God has exalted Him. He has made Him both Lord and Christ. In Him God speaks to us. What great responsibility is thus laid upon us to hear and obey !

J. H.

¹ See 1 Sam. 30. 1.

² See 2 Sam. 1. 8-10.

³ Romans 13. 14.

⁴ 2 Cor. 10. 3.

For Youngest Believers.

A GOOD BEGINNING.

“WHAT a great mercy that God should save me,” should be one of the first thoughts of the young believer. But to understand that God’s salvation for us is eternal will call forth far greater wonder. As we think of God’s mercy and truth towards us, our words are like those of Jacob : “I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant ” (Gen. 32. 10). And now that we know ourselves born from above, eternally saved from hell, it becomes us to obey the word of the Lord, for “to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat (best) of rams ” (see 1 Sam. 15. 22).

If we hear and heed the word of the Lord, we shall soon be enabled to give Him the best in sacrifice (see Heb. 13. 15 ; 1 Pet. 2. 5). Therefore have we submitted to the claims of the Risen One upon us, in being baptized, and in being joined to those already calling on the Lord out of a full heart. For God saves us that we might serve Him, and if we would please Him then we must do His bidding.

It will be wise and good for each young believer to grasp the truth of ETERNAL SALVATION, for this important truth is assailed on every hand to-day. The writer has come in contact with those who profess to be saved, and yet deny the simple and definite words of Holy Scripture concerning ETERNAL SALVATION. Surely nothing could be more clearly stated than John 10. 28, “I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand” ! Also Romans 8. 30, “Whom He foreordained, them He also called : and whom He called, them He also justified : and whom he justified, them He also glorified.” Since this is our eternally secure position and prospect, may our hearts be stirred up more and more to profit by the parting words of Paul to the elders of Ephesus, Acts 20. 32 : “I commend you to God,” and so forth.

I COME AGAIN.

SAD indeed must have been the scene in the upper room on that memorable night in which the Lord Jesus Christ kept the passover feast with His disciples, and nothing of what passed seems to have touched the hearts of the disciples more than the announcement to them of the departure of their Saviour and Master. For long they had accompanied Him in His journeys from place to place, they had been with Him in His sorrows and joys, they had beheld His wonderful power displayed in healing the sick, in opening the eyes of the blind, in cleansing the leper, and in raising the dead; they had listened to His gracious and life-giving words. They believed that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God; and they rejoiced in the knowledge of sins forgiven, and because of such they dearly loved Him, and at the hearing of such words sorrow filled their hearts.

But if they were made sorrowful, He was able to comfort their sorrowing hearts. Words fail us to adequately describe the compassion and tenderness of His heart toward them as He said, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14. 1-3).

What must have been their joy as they realized from such words that not only was it theirs to know deliverance from the consequence of their guilt, but theirs to be taken from a scene of sin and sorrow to a place prepared for them in His Father's house, where sin and sorrow could never enter, to behold His glory and to share in His joy through eternity.

And, fellow-saints, what a comfort it indeed yields in these days of difficulties and trials to know that the promise made to them is the promise given to us, and soon that promise will be fulfilled, and we shall be at home with Himself, never more to wander from Him, never more to grieve the heart

of our God with our murmurings and disobedience, but to bask in the sunshine of His presence in that one eternal day. What a hope, yea, what a blessed hope indeed ; and every one that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure (1 John 3. 3).

In these days of lawlessness and self-will nothing seems cheaper than vain words which lack the corroborative evidence of actions, for thousands speak of the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, who know nothing of living in the blessed expectation thereof ; so in our day, as in the day when the Apostle John wrote his first epistle, the waiting ones may be known, as we also may ourselves know from the unerring Word of God, when that hope is truly set on Him.

Truly the coming of the One Whom we professedly acknowledge as our Lord is a glorious theme to exercise the mind, but surely such a truth would teach us more than the thought of being caught up into His presence where there is fulness of joy, and to the pleasures which are at His right hand. Would such, we ask, not teach us that the golden opportunities which are ours to-day of serving Him will then be withdrawn for ever ? And if this be so, surely it calls upon us to cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7. 1); that whether at home or absent, we may be well-pleasing unto Him (2 Cor. 5. 9). Such cleansing can only be as we test our actions by the Word of God, for he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest that they have been wrought in God (John 3. 21). We would then be vessels unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work (2 Timothy 2. 21) ; [channels through which the message of grace could flow to the many around who know not God.

It is recorded of the Thessalonian saints that they turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven. Thus their waiting for God's Son

was made manifest in their serving the Living and True God, and so truly were they waiting for Him that the Apostle Paul in his first letter to them wrote : “ Ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit ; so that ye became an ensample to all that believed in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and in Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth, so that we need not to speak anything.” There were no empty words on their part, they were no idlers : the time and opportunity given by God were laid hold upon by them to the doing of His will, and such and such only declared how truly they were waiting for His Son whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus Who delivereth us from the wrath to come.

When we consider how energetic some in the sects and systems of men around us are, sparing neither time nor money in order to accomplish the objects they have in view, ought we not to feel ashamed ? Ought we not to be a pattern in every good work ? Surely it is our responsibility to lay hold upon the opportunities given by God to reach the many born again and unregenerate around us with the message of grace and truth, whether oral or written. Yes, the happy privilege and responsibility also are ours whether they hear or whether they forbear. God is faithful Who hath said, “ For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth : it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it ” (Isa. 55. 10-11).

Nor is this all that the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ would bring before us, for such would constantly remind us that we must all be made manifest before the judgment

seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad (2 Cor. 5. 10). Therefore, beloved, how careful we ought to be, for not only shall we receive for the good done, but also for our wrong-doings ; everything will then be seen in its true character, and every opportunity will be at end for us to make things other than they are.

Our God would have us to be rich in good works, and by so doing we shall be laying up for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come.

The Apostle Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, chapter 3., wrote : “ But know this, that in the last days grievous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, railers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding a form of godliness but having denied the power thereof.”

Do not such persons exist to-day, and are not they greatly on the increase ? So surely, if we are seeking to know the times, we shall not fail to understand from such a condition of things that we are living in the last days. So, beloved, if we would escape the snare of the fowler, it can only be as we flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness ; giving heed to the Word of God, which is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness ; that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

“ The grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world ; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ” (Titus 2. 11-13).

“ Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me; to render to each man according as his work is ” (Rev. 22. 12).

JOHN MOFFAT.

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW.

TO-DAY as you journey along,
 Oh, say, do the moments grow weary
 With sighing, instead of a song,
 That maketh the desert so dreary—
 That maketh the desert so dreary ?

Oh, pilgrim, why should you be sad,
 Or why bear a burden of sorrow ?
 Go think what is thine to be had
 In the light and the love of to-morrow—
 In the light and the love of to-morrow.

Below there's a rest to be found,
 And this is a heavenly treasure ;
 Oh, list, to the gladdening sound
 And taste of its limitless measure—
 And taste of its limitless measure.

The shadows around you but play
 With the clouds that over you gather ;
 Oh, then, let us hasten away
 To the Home of our Heavenly Father—
 To the Home of our Heavenly Father.

And sing of the blessings with me,
 Poured down from the windows of Heaven :
 And taste of the blessings to be
 In the joys of a sinner forgiven—
 In the joys of a sinner forgiven.

D. REID.

For Youngest Believers.

THE CHRISTIAN AND POLITICS. WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES ?

Much national feeling in connexion with the election of Members of Parliament is generally aroused, but the faithful child of God should take no part therein.

The Scriptures contain all that is necessary for the disciple's pathway. Phil. 3. 20 helps : " Our citizenship is in heaven " ; and 1 Peter 2. 11, foreigners here. Whilst living here we are called upon to behave in all temporal things worthily of the Gospel of Christ. (Phil. 1. 27.)

A clearer view of this subject will be had if the purpose of God in this day is rightly understood. Israel's calling was earthly ; their politics therefore was concerned with earthly matters, but things have changed. God's purpose for this dispensation is unique : a bride for His Son is being won out of all people, and He has given no legislation whatever regarding earthly politics for His people to-day.

An unsaved man, or a saved man in the sects, could not represent one gathered to the Name. A place with him in his sect of religion should not be, and the principle of truth applying here would also debar one in the Fellowship from becoming a Member of Parliament. See 2 Cor. 6.

Again God desires oneness, as the late F. A. Banks said : " We suspect a Conservative would hardly give God thanks for a Liberal Government, and if he prayed at all it would be ' Lord turn them out.' " (*Spiritual Growth*, page 155.)

Oneness in prayer would be lacking and the " Amen " could not be truly said. It should speak loudly to Christians that God has given full instructions regarding other relationships, but absolutely no warrant for His people to be identified with any political party. This world's politics would soon rob us of all spiritual power. We should, however, respect whatever government may be, for God's purposes will all be fulfilled. The heavens do rule (Dan. 4. 3). Our Man shall yet reign in power. May we be of service to Him now, and in His Kingdom then.

The Woman in Her Sphere.

HE.

She is like the merchant ships;
She bringeth her food from afar.

IN earlier days of civilization, in which Lemuel lived, people in general were more dependent than they now are upon what they themselves grew on their own ground. The huge network of commerce to which for many years everyone has been accustomed had then no existence. It was therefore a mark of the ability and industry of the virtuous woman that her household, instead of being confined, for their dietary, to the produce of her own estate, had it varied by healthy fruits of the earth drawn from distant climes. Were one disposed to apply this to the spiritual sphere, we might enlarge on the benefit that the young children of an assembly enjoy when the ministry of the word of God is not wholly in the hands of the local men, but fruits of God's giving are drawn from far and near.

In a more humble way, germane to the domestic character which we seek to maintain on this page, we may point out how much good a true helpmeet for an artisan may do to her husband and family if she give due consideration to the sources whence she can best obtain the food and other needful things for the requirements of her household. Many a penny that might be dropped into the Lord's box which godly women keep at home is wasted through improvident purchases at the nearest general shop, because of the forgetfulness or thoughtlessness of the negligent housewife, or perhaps because she has never had pointed out the benefit of seeking her food from far as well as from near.

It should be clearly recognized that God may be honoured by virtues in the domestic sphere. Little things are not without influence in greater matters. If a mother wishes her boy to serve God in a future day, no detail of his early training is too trivial to be pondered. The example of

Manoah and his wife deserves notice in this connexion. Yet how few women, whether as wives or as mothers, think of the importance of these matters! The youth who is brought up on plain wholesome food, who is caused in childhood days to take his porridge or bread and milk with hearty appetite, and has not his taste cloyed with sweetmeats, is more likely, other things being equal, to grow up with a sound mind in a sound body and be of use in the service of God.

It was Jehovah that delivered David out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, but he would never have been able in his youthful days to take a lion or a bear by the beard and smite him to death had not his muscles been nourished by the healthy plain food (see 1 Sam. 17. 17) that Jesse's wife provided for her boys.

How could Daniel and his companions have been content with lentils and beans to eat and water to drink if their mothers had accustomed them to all manner of dainties? Though they were of royal blood their training enabled them to say "No" in a time of crisis. Mothers, are your boys brought up that they can say "No" when the choice comes, the eternal choice that comes at some time to all men—God and His will, or the things that are pleasant in themselves without His approval?

A Scrap.

It is a strange anomaly in human nature that while death is that from which humanity shrinks, and to defer the hour of dissolution to as distant a period of the future as possible is a first object of life, yet how to pass most quickly and so most pleasantly the few fleeting moments that lie between them and the great eternity that lies beyond is another great object of our existence. "How shall we pass our time?" "How shall we defer the hour of death?"

Young Men's Corner.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Psalm 16.

(Continued from page 192.)

From BLACKBURN. It has been said that this Psalm expresses the Psalmist's satisfaction in God and his anticipation of an abiding joy at length in His presence.

Such seems so. Verses 2 and 5 allow the thought. Jehovah to David was all in all. Paul considered Christ his all in all (see Col. 3. 11). Job-like, David trusted God, and his strength was from above. Habakkuk said, "Jehovah, the Lord, is my Strength." Personal dealing with God. Contentment was one of David's characteristics. Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6. 6). All his goodness is centred in Jehovah. He says, "I have no good beyond Thee." No disappointments from God are anticipated. Jehovah changeth not. Time affects not His character.

Verse 10. Resurrection truth. The Christ is referred to. Compare Acts 13. 35-37. Remarkable how much regarding Resurrection truth is contained in the Old Testament. Its depth the Lord Jesus knew. See Matt. 22. 31 and 32, and page 33 of NEEDED TRUTH for February.

The "pleasures for evermore" will be fully realized in His presence; therefore how necessary to be shown the path of life. Verse 1 may help us in this. Trusting in God, for it is a walk of faith now.

Psalm 119.

THE WAY, AND HIS WAYS.

From BRADFORD. In the first verse of Psalm 119. to be "perfect in the way" is explained as walking habitually in the law of Jehovah. As "the law" here denotes the whole law of God, so "the way" in this passage is the complete way of Jehovah for His own, looked at in its

entirety. They who are perfect therein have respect unto His law in its bearing upon every phase of their life, not excelling in one particular prominent line of things and neglecting another. The Psalmist exclaims :—

I hate them that are of a double mind,
But thy law do I love (ver. 113);

and if that is also true of us we may further say :—

I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way (Psalm 101. 2).

Moreover we shall not be found with those who are otherwise minded, but

He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall minister unto me (Psalm 101. 6).

May it be our stedfast purpose so to walk, that we may minister unto Him and His.

Passing on we have :—

I have rejoiced in the way of Thy testimonies,
As much as in all riches (ver. 14).

Make me to understand the way of Thy precepts, etc. (ver. 27).

I will run the way of Thy commandments,
When thou shalt enlarge my heart (ver. 32).

Teach me, O Jehovah, the way of Thy statutes,
And I shall keep it unto the end (ver. 33).

As already pointed out for us, His “testimonies” are the records of His dealings with men in the past. Have we rejoiced in the way of these? See Rom. 15. 4, and also verses 24, 111 and 167 of this Psalm, and may these be true of each and all of us.

His “precepts” are what I learn from Him morning by morning, for my own individual guidance. To be well pleasing to Him, therefore, day by day, how necessary to understand the way of these.

I will never forget Thy precepts,
For with them Thou hast quickened me (ver. 93).

His “commandments” are things set up for us to conform

to. Is it our desire to “run” the way of these, or would we rather take our own time about the matter? The Psalmist could say:—

I made haste, and delayed not
To observe Thy commandments (ver. 60).

Can we, also, say this with truth?

Last, but not least, His “statutes” are those ordinances which are binding upon the whole congregation, abiding to the end. Apart from these it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him collectively. *Oh that we earnestly desire to know the way of these, that we may keep it to the end!*

Thus we have the complete, perfect way of the law of Jehovah, analysed and considered in the light of His testimonies, precepts, commandments and statutes, component parts of that one perfect law. Truly these are “His ways,” concerning which it is said that they who walk in them do no unrighteousness (verse 3), and of which the Psalmist says:—

I will . . . have respect unto Thy ways (ver. 15).

Alas! how many of His own have little or no respect either to His will or His ways. But may our intense desire be:—

Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity,
And quicken me in Thy ways (ver. 37).

QUESTION.

What is the spiritual significance of the pouring out of the blood of the sacrificial victims at the foot of the copper altar? Could anything be learnt from this bearing on the pouring out of the cup in connexion with the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ?

WHOM SEEKEST THOU ?

WE are ever seeking ; waking or sleeping. Not a moment in our history but finds us seeking either some one or something. In joy, seeking others to rejoice with us ; in sorrow, seeking comfort ; in distress, relief ; in sleep, rest ; and so on. But if we come to examine ourselves more minutely we shall find that there is generally in our lives one object which has the precedence over all others, one which we are seeking with diligence ; some portion which is filling our eyes and occupying our hearts. And, as we pause on life's way and look around, how much there is in the world to captivate the child of God. " The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life." How attractive !

Such thoughts were suggested to the writer, in contrast to two scenes brought before us in God's Word, one in the Old and one in the New Testament.

Turning to the Book of Lamentations, we are presented with a dark picture indeed. Weeping and wailing and the voice of lamentation heard on every side.

"How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people !

How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud
in His anger !

How is the gold become dim ! how is the most pure gold changed !"

As the man who was chosen of God to pen those wondrous utterances looked around on that scene of desolation and judgment, and viewed the feeble remnant that was left, what depths, what pathos, he puts in the words of chap. 3. 22 : " It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." How true ! It reminds us of the language of Psalm 124. Then turning from the remnant to himself, and, viewing the mercies of the Lord, he is able, though well-nigh consumed, and although in the heart of such desolation, to say of Him Who showed such mercy, " the Lord is my Portion, saith my soul ; therefore will I hope in Him." And why ? Because " the Lord is good unto them that wait for Him,

to the soul that seeketh Him." He seemed to be assured as to the truth of this. Whom seekest thou, reader? What is thy portion, in this day of grace and privilege?

Now, we have the truth and the blessed reality of Lamentations 3. 24-25 illustrated to us in many parts of God's Word, but to the writer's mind, particularly so, in John 20. 1-18.

In the course of His sojourn in this vale of tears, the Lord Jesus gathered unto Himself, in contrast to the many who followed Him in general, a little company. A few men; and certain women also which ministered unto Him of their substance. To these, the Master in Himself was the attraction. His love; His pity; His kindness; the glories of His Person revealed to the anointed eye. And thus, occupied with Himself, they laid their all at His blessed feet. They loved Him, they trusted Him, yea, they hoped in Him.

But there was one in particular, whose love and devotion are suggested as being deeper than those of the others? And who was that? One who was ever perfect? No. It was Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. A poor demoniac. But, forgiven much, she loved much.

And so, we say, their hopes and affections were set upon Him. And days passed, and weeks, and months. But at last the moment came when the scene underwent a mighty change. For He in Whom they trusted, and Who filled their hearts, was ruthlessly taken from them.

The news spread—oh, how quickly!—that the Master had been apprehended in Gethsemane, and was a prisoner in the High-Priest's house. He had offered no resistance, but was led indeed, even as a lamb to the slaughter. What could it mean?

Unlike you and me, dear reader, who have all that the Blessed One suffered given us in detail by God in His Word, these few who had clung to Him, no doubt heard but little of what was going on. The hours rushed past, and at length He

was led out, and the gates of Jerusalem closed upon Him Who had wept over her, and Who sought only her peace. Led on by betrayers and murderers, the few followed the multitude, dazed with sorrow and despair. Who can enter into their thoughts, as they witnessed the closing scene of that life? With their every hope shattered the end came, and they saw Him die. After that, they beheld His precious Body taken down and deposited in Joseph's tomb. Heartbroken, they are truly in the midst of desolation. And what lamentations! For remember, that as yet they knew not the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. So, we are told, they rested the Sabbath day, according to the commandment.

When we come to John 20. we are caused to think that one at least could not rest; for no sooner is that Sabbath past than we find Mary leaving her home while it is yet dark, very early in the morning, and hastening to the spot where the Portion of her soul lay. She was early, but there is One Who had been there before her. What a pang when she saw that the stone had been removed! How she ran back to the others to sound the alarm: "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we know not where they have laid Him." And Peter and John start running together, with Mary not very far behind. John came first, "and stooping, and looking in, he seeth the linen cloths lying; yet entered he not in." Then came Simon Peter, and, passing John, he "entered into the tomb; and he beholdeth the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, that was upon His Head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself." Then John went in and believed. And as they stood there—What thoughts! What doubts! What fears! The dulness of the surroundings! Ah, it is no place for us; "so the disciples went away again unto their own home." "But Mary" . . . How precious! "But Mary." Left there alone, and sobbing, she could not move away. Disciples may go, but Mary

cannot. She must find Him Whom her soul loveth. So she waited, and "as she wept, she stooped (just what John had done!) and looked into the tomb." And what did she see? Linen cloths and a napkin? No. "She beholdeth two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had lain." And she heard them speak: "Woman, why weepest thou?" "Because they have taken away my Lord"—not the Lord now, for disciples have gone, and she is alone—"and I know not where they have laid Him." And as she turned back, partly, no doubt, in fear, it was then that her tear-dimmed eyes caught sight of one she supposed to be the gardener. "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" "Sir, if thou hast borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." "Tell me where?" It is Him. He is the Object. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary." Just one little word, "Mary." Can it be Himself? Yes, it is Himself. "Rabboni; which is to say, Master."

Is He not good to them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him? Disciples went away. Mary waited. How true concerning her—

He restoreth my soul.

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;

Thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.

And now, beloved reader, Whom seekest thou? Can you and I say, "The Lord is *my* Portion, saith *my* soul; therefore will I hope *in Him*"? If so, blessed are we, for then "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life" will have no attraction for us.

May our desire be to know *Him* better, and to live more and more in the light and enjoyment of John 14. 21, where we hear that Blessed One say, "He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him." Amen.

NORMAN D. W. MILLER.

A PLEA FOR THE STUDY OF PROPHECY.

READ REV. 1. 1-7.

THERE is a curious and unprofitable prying into things not revealed, an effort to determine times and seasons which the Lord has expressly declared are, for us, indeterminate. This cannot be too strongly deprecated, but this is entirely different from the prayerful, reverential study of prophetic truth as it has been revealed to us by our God, for which we now plead.

We should not let ourselves be discouraged in the study of such portions of the Word as relate to future events because the subjects are hard to understand, nor because some have blundered therein. For it is certain that the Lord intended them to be understood. True, many things may remain hidden from the most diligent student of prophecy to the beginning of the end, but this should not deter him from the obvious duty of seeking to understand what has been revealed.

Thirty or so years ago very much more attention was given to this class of study than is given to it to-day. At that time there was a certain class of Christians who used to meet you with a cry of "Maranatha"—our Lord cometh. They seemed full of the blessed hope. But now one is almost inclined to ask the question, Where is the hope of His coming? we hear, comparatively speaking, so little about it. It is held as firmly as ever as a doctrine of the Holy Scriptures; and all, except perhaps the very youngest in the churches of God, are able to turn up many of the passages bearing on the subject. Ay, it is in the Book, but does it occupy the place of importance in our hearts that its weight demands? Is it having the same comforting effect as of old; does it purify and stimulate us in our life and labour as of yore? It seems our lamps need attention.

Again, is this precious theme exhausted; have we nothing

more to learn regarding the Lord's return? One thinks of how the Lord rebuked His disciples for not understanding the things relating to His first coming, and wonders what He would say to us, if He were with us, on seeing us so indifferent as to those relating to His return. See, fellow-saints, how the Lord would encourage us to study them: "Blessed is he that readeth and keepeth the words of this prophecy."

A few remarks on the Book of Revelation may encourage in this direction. If they do our reward is sure, and the object of the present attempt accomplished.

"Revelation" here means the manifestation of that which was hidden or is to come. In the days of His flesh the Lord made known to the apostles all that He heard from the Father. Precious as those unfoldings doubtless were, they were limited because the Lord Jesus was not yet glorified. The fulness of His Divinity and glory was veiled. Even those who in grace He called His friends were vouchsafed but momentary imperfect glimpses of the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father. In the Revelation, however, this is changed, the veil is lifted, and His glory shines forth. In almost endless variety of glory and beauty weakness gives place to power, humility to majesty, and obscurity to glory.

This Book of Revelation is given to the bondservants of Jesus Christ to arm them for quickly approaching conflict. Things are shortly to come to pass that will make the stoutest hearts among them tremble, and test their faith to its very foundation, though they were but incipient and partial, the prelude of things more terrible waiting their final accomplishment at His return. It must have been like a sheet-anchor to their souls, in those stormy days of pagan persecutions, to know that the things coming to pass were coming by the necessity of Divine decree, in fulfilment of the predetermined counsel of God, and not by the caprice of chance, nor the power and will of man.

This is avowedly the object of the book. It is an object at once gracious and serviceful. And since it is our birth-right to be "bondservants of Jesus Christ," what should be our attitude towards it ?

It was written and sent to the seven churches in Asia. That is to say, one of those groups of churches found together, in the days of the apostles, in different provinces, for worship, service and government in God's House.

A glance at the "glory word" is all we will attempt for the present. It follows consequent upon the titles just before enumerated, which set forth the Lord Jesus Christ as risen and triumphant, in place of highest authority and glory. It is an ascription of praise to Him for His inestimable, adorable and ever-abiding love. Out of that love came the Cross with all that follows, but it did not exhaust its infinite depths ; it endures now inexhaustible as ever. This love is the motive for every blessing, the pledge in advance of all that is to come.

One word to him who would explore this vast treasure store of precious truth. Though one may rank as an intellectual giant among men, yet here is a department of knowledge in which he is doomed to failure and disappointment, unless he approach it in the spirit of a bondservant of Jesus Christ. It is not a brilliant mind, but a will subject to the Lord Christ that is the key that unlocks its uncountable treasures.

To Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever.
Amen.

WILLIAM SAVIGAR.

When we fell we aye got up again,
And so will we yet.

BURNS.

THE TABERNACLE, ITS TENT AND COVERINGS.

AMONG the many helpful pictures and types contained in Old Testament Scripture, the tabernacle in the wilderness stands very prominent, especially when we remember what was enjoined upon Moses in Exodus 25. 40, "See that thou make them after their pattern, which has been showed thee in the mount."

Then in Exodus 26. God declares unto Moses in minute detail the materials of this tabernacle. Firstly, ten curtains were to be made of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim, the work of the cunning workman. Each curtain measured 28 cubits by 4; and five were coupled together into one. In like manner the other five; so making two curtains each measuring 28 cubits by 20. These two curtains were also linked or clasped together by fifty clasps of gold and one hundred loops of blue, so making "One Tabernacle."

Now, viewing that which God has brought together for a tabernacle or dwelling-place for Himself to-day, we obtain much help from that which has been.

The curtains are suggestive of the assemblies, and the fine twined linen would speak of the quality of the material that forms them. As we gaze upon the Blessed Son of God, how beautifully the fine linen is manifested; for linen in Scripture seems always to speak of righteousness (see Rev. 19. 8). So also in the colours that adorned these curtains, we behold the beauties and glories that were peculiar to Himself as God and man. Now, beloved fellow-saints, how much of this does God see in us? Surely this is a healthy exercise for each individual as well as for each assembly, for the material must of necessity be in the thread before it can be in the curtain.

These curtains on this tabernacle, stretched from side to side, formed the roof part of the building, which in looking up God's eye at once beheld; and how ravishing to His

heart, as He gazed upon that which indicated the internal value and worth of His Son.

Who is the Everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son,
God manifestly seen and heard,
And heaven's beloved One.

As it was impossible for one thread to form a curtain, so was it impossible for one curtain to form the tabernacle. But each thread in its place, each curtain in its set, and each set coupled together by the divine clasps, forming one tabernacle for the one God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob to dwell in.

So to-day, each individual of the described material in the assembly, each assembly in its set, which might suggest the county or country (or the grouping of the assemblies in a geographical compass), and each group or set Divinely clasped together, forming one tabernacle for the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And how wonderful the thought, that He is taking this not from among the Jews only, but also from among the Gentiles.

The careful reader of Exodus 26. and 36. will observe that as there was a tabernacle formed from the linen curtains, so was there formed a tent from the curtains of goats' hair. Eleven curtains in this case are joined together, five in one set and six in another, and these two are coupled together by clasps of brass, so making one tent. One tent spread over one tabernacle.

The tabernacle—from the Hebrew word *Mishkan*—means a dwelling-place. The tent—from the Hebrew word *Ohel*—means a meeting-place. Thus we can see that while the tent was a meeting-place for man, the tabernacle was a dwelling-place for God.

As the tabernacle had its tent, so the tent had its covering, composed of rams' skins dyed red. Again, there was a covering above this composed of badgers' skins. The beauty of the tabernacle was completely hidden from the

outward gaze of man. Only those who in the grace of God were permitted inside on priestly service could admire the beauty of the tabernacle.

Looking on from the outside there was no beauty that we should desire, nothing but the roughness of the badgers' skins, which indicated suffering and death, reminding us of Isaiah 53.: "As a root out of a dry ground, He has no form nor comeliness, and when we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him." Such was the Son of God in the eyes of men. But God, Who loveth truth in the inward parts, gazed into the intrinsic value of His eternal beloved One, and saw the spotless perfectness of the fine twined linen, adorned with the blue, purple, and scarlet, with cherubim.

As He was raised out of the waters of Jordan, and stood on its banks in the midst of the vast multitude that crowded around, the Spirit descended in dove form, and rested upon Him, denoting the only place where God could find everything that His heart could desire; while man, looking on the outward appearance, could only perceive the badgers' skins: the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs. But this One is now far above all heavens, and God has still that on earth wherein to dwell. Should we therefore marvel at the amazement of the thousands as they behold the outer covering of the tent, and perceive nothing—shall we say, from their bird's-eye view—but the rough covering of badgers' skins?

But we, who are privileged in the mercy and grace of our God to enter within His courts, yea, right into the Holy Place, can perceive the beauty of the Lord and exclaim, "He is the altogether lovely One, the fairest among ten thousands." For everything therein saith, Glory.

"How beautiful is Thy tabernacle, O Jehovah of hosts;
A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand.
I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God
Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

IN the letter which we reprinted in June issue of **NEEDED TRUTH**, the co-signatories thereto express their profound belief that the Lord Jesus Christ meant them to be one in visible fellowship. These co-signatories are representatives of leading Methodist, Episcopalian, Congregationalist, Presbyterian and Baptist communities. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster was also approached in connexion with the matter; he approved of the object sought to be attained, but significantly declined to co-operate, on the plea that they could best help by proceeding along the recognized traditional lines. (Would a corporate reunion lead back to Romanism?)

On what authority do these tell us of the desire of the Lord Jesus Christ? How may His wishes be known? The answer assuredly is,

FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Where then shall we turn to see what He has revealed for Methodists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Baptists, to do in order to be

ONE IN A VISIBLE FELLOWSHIP?

We take a concordance of the New Testament, and as Baptist is nearest the beginning of the alphabet, we try to find the passages bearing on the "Baptist Union." The word "Baptist" we find all right, but absolutely nothing pertaining to a "Baptist Union." Only one man is called a Baptist; and whilst it is true that he had disciples, yet there is no evidence that these disciples were called "Baptists," and moreover the leadership of John the Baptist was manifestly temporary in its character, his disciples in the development of the purpose of God becoming disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. John's own testimony was "He must increase. I must decrease."

Equally disappointing to the members of the other sects will be their search for the desired guidance. The reason is

not far to seek. Sectarianism, as has previously been pointed out, is "of the flesh" and not "of the Spirit," and God gives no instructions to His children how to behave in the sects. His speakings to such of His own therein, who would hear and heed and obey, are of the kind that entail a coming out therefrom, a being separate, and a touching not of the unclean. Neither for the names "Baptist Union" and so forth, nor for the systems identified with the names, is there any Divine warrant whatever. Denominationalism indeed is the offspring of sectarianism, and as is the root in the sight of God, so is the fruit. But some man may say :

"WHAT'S IN A NAME ?"

We question not that the rose under another name would smell as sweetly ; that it is perfectly true (as we read in our school books over twenty years ago) that "Zeal-for-Truth Thoresby was none the less a noble lad because his father had thought fit to give him an ugly and silly name" ; but these facts in no wise warrant us in concluding that one name is as good as another. With God the giving of names has ever been a most important matter. In His own names there is an unfolding of His character, and due consideration being given to the subject will shew that He discriminated in the use thereof in the revelation of Himself at different periods and under different circumstances. What's in a name ? Why, so very much, as God reckons, that there came a time in the history of Abram when this name was no longer good enough for him and

GOD CHANGED IT TO ABRAHAM.

So was it with Sarai. So was it with Jacob.

In the light of the foregoing it is not without significance that one of the special responsibilities laid upon Timothy by Paul in his second epistle was to

, "HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS."

This, moreover, be it noted, as "Thou hast heard from me."

Thus making it also one of those things which Timothy in turn had to commit to faithful men, competent to teach others also.

What's in a name? Let Hosea, chapters 1. and 2., be well pondered, and some appreciation of the importance that God attaches thereto will surely be begotten in the heart.

* * * * *

The co-signatories to the letter already mentioned admit a share of responsibility for producing and perpetuating divisions which they are now desirous to abolish. Please read Galatians 2. 18.

In the June number of NEEDED TRUTH several writers told of the

UNITY THAT GOD DESIRES.

It is a serious mistake, however, for any to think that division is necessarily the work of Satan. Instances have already been furnished in proof of the statement that

GOD ALSO IS A DIVIDER.

Indeed the truth is that the great work of Satan is to seek to scatter that which

GOD BRINGS TOGETHER,

whilst God seeks to scatter that which

SATAN BRINGS TOGETHER.

A most interesting Divine division was ordained in connexion with the tabernacle in the wilderness. See Exodus 26. 31. "The veil shall divide." In ver. 33 it is stated, "Thou shalt bring in hither within the veil," and in ver. 35, "Thou shalt set the table without the veil." God is a God of order and arrangement. Oh! the importance of recognizing this. What folly for man to interfere with God's arrangements! The creature to seek to improve on the Creator's ways! The Pentecostal order still remains unabolished: Receive the word; be Baptized; be Added; Continue in the Apostles' Teaching, the Fellowship, the Breaking of the Bread and the Prayers. See Acts 2. 41, 42.

Let not the lessons of Perez-uzzah be forgotten or unheeded (2 Sam. 6. and 1 Chron. 15. 13).

In Numbers 8. 14 we read, "Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be mine. And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tent of meeting." God's Divine arrangement in Division. This division is a first necessity unto this service. After that. Yet, alas! that those thus blessed and put into sphere of special privilege, brought nigh to do the service of the Tabernacle of Jehovah, should forget this mercy. Surely a high honour had been conferred upon them. There was ample opportunity for service. Yet how comes it that Moses has to say, "Seek ye the priesthood also" (Num. 16. 9)? What swift and sore judgment from God befell them! Numbers 16. 31-35. Compare diligently Ps. 50. 16; Heb. 5. 4; 2 Tim. 2. 21; and 1 Tim. 3.

Those censers were made a covering for the altar to be a warning that none but sons of Aaron draw nigh to burn incense before Jehovah, that he be not as Korah and as his company. Alas for those dreamers who defile the flesh, despise dominion and speak evil of glories! Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. See Jude. God's glory He will not give to another. Holy and reverend is His name and His name alone (Ps. 111.).

God separated Israel from among all the peoples of the earth to be His own inheritance (see 1 Kings 8. 53). In Titus 2. 14 we also read of our Lord Jesus Christ that He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works.

Reader, is this His purpose being realized in thee and me?

If there be indeed sincerity in the desire that the will of the Lord Jesus Christ should be realized, that, not Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists and Presby-

terians, but the Children of God who are scattered abroad be gathered together into one (see John 11. 52), then let the provision He has made for this be accepted. Let His Will be paramount in everything. Set Him apart as Lord in the heart (1 Pet. 3. 15). His leadings towards Himself bring the disciple to the waters of baptism (not sprinkling—see Acts 8. 38). His further leading brings the baptized one into, not the Baptist nor the Congregational Union, nor the Methodist nor the Presbyterian nor the Anglican Church, but into

THE COMMUNITY OF GOD'S SON, JESUS CHRIST, THE LORD (1 Cor. 1. 9). This for administrative purposes the disciple will further learn is made up of the Assemblies of God (see 1 Thess. 2. 14), of which there is never more than one in any city (see 1 Cor. 1. 2); albeit in any city where the saints are numerous the one Assembly of God therein may have many meeting-places, the companies meeting there being known as assemblies of saints (1 Cor. 14. 33), the assemblies at the house (Rom. 16. 5), or assemblies of Christ (Rom. 16. 16).

The unique, concrete thing—the Community—into which saints are called by a faithful God is co-extensive as we understand with the House of God (Heb. 3. 6), the Church of the Living God (1 Tim. 3. 15.).

Thus will the obedient one learn that the secret of Jehovah is with them that fear Him. These know the blessedness of—

“In God we boast all the day long
And praise Thy name for ever” (Ps. 44. 8).

And also the bitterness of—

“For Thy sake are we killed all the day long,
We are counted as sheep for the slaughter” (Ps. 44. 22).

Yet with the writer of Psalm 119. they can truly say—

“Great peace have they that love Thy law,
And nothing shall stumble them.”

J. P. A. TAYLOR.

The Woman in her Sphere.

“WOMAN’S Sphere” is so varied according to age, circumstances, and ability, that it is impossible in a single article to do more than touch on the subject.

There is no doubt that there is work for the youngest sister, provided she is in a fit condition for the Master’s use. First let there be an earnest desire that God shall be glorified in the every-day life, then there may fittingly be an endeavour to serve.

“Ye are not your own ; for ye were bought with a price ; glorify God therefore in your body ” (1 Cor. 6. 19, 20). “Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things ” (Titus 2. 10).

Let the young sister ask herself : “ Am I seeking to shine for God at home ? ” “ Am I dutiful to my parents ? ” “ Does the constraining love of Christ so move me, that by my kindness and forbearance all with whom I come in contact may see something of the Spirit of that Blessed One, Who pleased not Himself, Who when He was reviled, reviled not again ; but ever sought the well-being of those around Him ? ”

How difficult it is sometimes to check the hasty word, to curb the bad temper, to endure the wrong-doing of others. Yet we are persuaded that only in measure as the life thus speaks for God will there be power in whatever service may be taken up.

Whether it be at home or at school, in the mill or the shop ; wherever the lot in life may be cast, let daily duties be done “ not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart ; with good will doing service as unto the Lord, and not unto men ” ; so shall the joy of the Lord be experienced and His name glorified.

As to what is generally called “ The Lord’s Work,” there is much scope for the willing sister.

Every one may not be able to teach a class in the Sunday School, though this is a work, the importance of which cannot be over-estimated. To gain the love of the young, so

that their interest in the truths of God's Word may be awakened, is surely of the greatest moment; specially in these dark days when older people so readily turn aside to the seducing theories of Satan. Through the Sunday School, too, there is a possibility of reaching parents who otherwise might never be reached.

The Tract Distributor has also a wide field, and the fruit of this service, like "bread cast upon the waters," shall be found after many days. The one who would serve the Lord in this way should certainly cultivate the kindly manner and pleasant word. Then there is the sick neighbour to be inquired for, and if in the country a few flowers might be welcome, and perhaps in time a closed door would thus be opened where the message of salvation might reach an unsaved one.

One other sphere might here be mentioned, where young unmarried sisters are certainly more qualified than brethren, and in many cases have also enough spare time for the work. We refer to the cleaning of our halls. It would be sad to think that any Christian women could keep their homes in the dirty condition in which so many of the Assemblies' meeting-places are kept. A filthy entrance and staircase, a hall in which you almost dread to sit down, with dirty windows and a general appearance of neglect, too often characterize the places where we meet. This ought not to be. Young sisters! here is work for some of you. Could you not spare an hour or two occasionally to scrub out the hall, or wash the seats? Why should the hall be dirty, or extra money be paid for cleaning it, when you can do this for the Lord?

Perhaps in an article of this character a few words regarding dress may not be out of place, for in this, as in everything else, God's glory should be our aim.

There seems to be a growing tendency amongst young sisters to wear chains, rings and other jewellery, and also showy garments.

Now, to be specially odd-looking, or untidy in dress, is by no means a sign of godliness. But these fancy adornments are unnecessary, and the Word of God tells us to adorn ourselves in modest apparel, not with gold and pearls and costly array (see 1 Tim. 2. 9, 10, and 1 Peter 3. 3, 4).

In this particular let each sister strive to be a pattern. The young sister will often be influenced by the older one; and the girl in the Sunday School may in later years call to remembrance the demeanour of her teacher in this, as in much else.

We think we hear the Christian mother remark—

“ Well, my time is so fully occupied in my own family, that I can do nothing in the Lord’s Work.”

Mother, yours is the greatest work of all. If spared, your children will one day fill different spheres in life, and whether they grow up in the love and fear of God or not greatly depends on your present dealing with them.

Remember that if you encourage in your little ones a love for worldly entertainments—pantomimes, dancing-classes, etc.—you must not wonder if they grow up with no desire to be saved, and with no regard for the things of God.

Make home the happiest place on earth; win the confidence of your children; and seek by God’s grace to train them for Him.

And to each and all, from the Christian mother downwards, is the cheering assurance: “ Ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord ” (1 Cor. 15. 58).

A QUESTION.

A sister asks what benefit it is for her or good to others for her to be present at the prayer meeting seeing she cannot pray aloud to God.

We shall be glad to receive helpful brief replies to this question. These need not exceed 200 words in length.

N.B.—We are sometimes unable to print a question or answer because correspondents forget to give name and address.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

(Continued from page 216.)

From JARVIS BROOK. "To the Jew first, and also to the Greek." At Salamis they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews; at Antioch in Pisidia they went into the synagogue, and there proclaimed the word of God, resulting in its acceptance by some and rejection by others—the occasion calling forth the words, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles," another mark of a transitional period. The Gentiles were glad . . . the Jews stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas. They pass on to Iconium, and again the place of testimony is the synagogue of the Jews, and "a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed"; the adversaries are enraged and stir up embitterment against the brethren; the Lord supports the testimony, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. The persecution increases and the Apostles flee to the cities of Lycaonia. The work of God, and of the adversary, are evidenced at Lystra and Derbe.

Notwithstanding the persecution Paul and Barnabas are found returning to Lystra and Iconium, and appropriate indeed was the work, amidst such circumstances, of "confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God; and when they had appointed (or pointed out) them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed." What had been accomplished in the journey and work fulfilled? Disciples made, separated, and brought together; churches established; elders pointed out; the Fellowship extended.

From BRIGHTON. Paul and Barnabas, in pursuing that work unto which they were separated, leave now the Isle of Cyprus; setting sail from Paphos, in due course they

arrive at Perga which was the capital of Pamphylia. Here they do not linger (and are not discouraged from continuing in the work on account of the departure of John Mark, who had accompanied them as attendant); but pressing on, as with an object in view, they halt not until they arrive at Antioch in Pisidia, having thus passed practically through two provinces; Antioch being a northern city of Pisidia, which province was also to the north of Pamphylia.

Here they turn to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Apparently they were noticed as being strangers in those parts, which may have been the reason why the ruler of the synagogue sent to them. Encouraging it must have been to these brethren who had journeyed so far, encountering untold dangers and difficulties by the way, to obtain such an opportunity to deliver the message from God entrusted to them.

Whatever was in the mind of the ruler of the synagogue when he sent to Paul and Barnabas, it proved to be the opening of a door for the spread of the glorious gospel, Paul recounting in their hearing God's dealings in the past with them as His chosen people (for though Antioch was a Roman colony there appears to have been a large number of Jews and Jewish proselytes there, hence the existence of the synagogue) leading up to the theme of His message, Jesus the promised Saviour, of the seed of David. How He was condemned by the rulers of them that dwelt in Jerusalem, though nothing worthy of death could they find in Him. The One Who came according to promise they rejected, crucified and slew. They did their worst, but God raised Him, and He Whom they thought worthy of the cross God exalted to the throne at His right hand.

A climax is reached when the apostle announces that through this man is proclaimed unto them the remission of sins, and that by Him every one that believeth is justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.

It is as though God was giving His own people in this place a chance of deciding for themselves as to whether they would accept or reject His Christ, for it was to Jews that the apostle had been speaking.

Paul brings his address to a close with a warning to his hearers, who, as having access to the Scriptures, could verify what had been said, and could read from the law and the prophets of the Christ, concerning Whom they had heard such a testimony borne to them. Some were evidently more than impressed, as following upon the breaking up of meeting many sought after Paul and Barnabas, who encouraged and exhorted them to continue in the grace of God. Thus not in vain had the gospel been proclaimed.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

(*Psalm 18.*)

FROM PICKERING. How very suitable are these words to the child of God set apart to glorify His name. Such an one must be a brave and able warrior, and it is in such utterances as this Psalm that one discovers the source of the soldier's exceptional strength. What a revelation of strength is in this Psalm: Jehovah is a Rock, a Fortress, a Deliverer. Then in Ephesians 6. 11-17, we get the equipment of the one who inhabits the fortress.

A rock reminds us of Psalm 40. and the words, "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord, is laid for your faith in His excellent word. . . . In vain then Satan doth oppose, for God is stronger than His foes."

"The Horn of my salvation," the strength of a beast is in its horns, and Deuteronomy 33. 17 speaks of Joseph's horns as like the horns of the wild ox, so God is our horn, or place of strength. It is He that delivers us.

The expression "High tower" yet adds one more feature to these verses. By a knowledge of God, one can discern the enemy afar off, and prepare the sword (the spoken word of God). Acquaintance with God enables one to detect the

wolf in sheep's clothing, the flesh, pride and every other thing that exalteth itself against God, even in the best disguise.

Verses 4 and 5 would lay before our minds the experience of a believer who manifests he has communed with God. He endures with cries of distress the scoff of his old companions.

In reviewing these opening verses we see a fortress ; its foundation the rock ; its strength the horn of salvation, God ; its " Look out," knowledge ; and its occupant leaving the ranks of his enemies to go and hold fast to the truth.

Verse 6 is paralleled by Hebrews 4. 16, and shows a continual feeding and strengthening.

An occurrence similar to verse 7 is found in Acts 16. 26, and would speak of God applying His power to remove the yet remaining earthly ties.

In verse 17 we notice God's way of deliverance. When the flesh has become exhausted and every effort failed, then God steps in and overcomes the oppressor.

God's deliverance is quick and safe to those whom He delights in. In order that God may delight in us, we must do His will. Then our deliverance will be quickly and surely accomplished (verse 19).

Alas ! how few of us will be able to say verses 20-22 at the end of persecution when we have been tried !

How readily one can accept verses 25 and 26. The wonders of God are only found by seeking, as for precious stones. How often has one looked for words in connexion with love, grace, worship, and has had passages revealed that have never seemed to contain one atom of information concerning the subject, at previous times. Verses 33 and 34 show God's dealing with His people. He first puts the feet right, that His servants may run at His commands ; He then teacheth defence, lest any one should rob them of their prize—the truth. " He teacheth me to war." God teaches a use of sword and bow. A sword for hand-to-hand encounter, a bow for those who are afraid to go near.

The words of verse 48 are very comforting : " Thou

deliverest me from violent men." One who testifies for God need not be afraid. God will deliver him.

Verse 49 speaks of worship and reminds us of the words :
 "'Tis we, O Lord, whom Thou hast shown the deadly bitterness of sin ; we who forgiving love have known may fitly bring thank offerings in."

SOMETHING TO LOOK FOR.

In the early chapters of the Acts we are told that certain sons of Israel who had turned to God showed by their conduct of their temporal affairs that their hopes were fundamentally different to those of Old Testament Saints. This was a direct fruit of the teaching of the Apostles, and the facts can be expressed in six or seven words that describe the transactions of an Old Testament worthy and of a New Testament worthy in striking contrast.

For Youngest Believers.

GOD HAS EVER BEEN INTERESTED IN MAN.

It is grace indeed that He should ever give His attention to this earth, considering how far in sin man had gone. He sent His Son : a great evidence that He was interested. Men misunderstood Him Who was bringing salvation ; hatred filled their hearts, and He was crucified and slain with wicked hands. Still God was gracious, and on the basis of that death declared salvation to men, "that through His Name every one that believeth on Him should receive remission of sins" (Acts 10. 43).

He now desires believing ones to be in that which is of Himself, the Fellowship of His Son into which He calls.

Baptism is the first step along the pathway. The young believer who would obey His Lord and Master will realize this. It is not much to do compared with what He has done, but there is much in it. There is a telling to others of having died at the Cross, of burial and of being raised up in life which is new, to live for Him. See Rom. 6. 3, 4 and 11.

The next step is being received into the Fellowship of

God's Son. 1 Cor. 15. 1-3 speaks of some who had believed the Gospel message ; 1 Cor. 1. 13, that they were baptized ; 1 Cor. 1. 2, that they were in a church of God (in Corinth) ; and from 1 Cor. 1. 9 we learn they were therefore in the Fellowship.

There is now the privilege of remembering the Lord. On the first day of the week we can (and ever should) come together as an assembly and with the " loaf " and " cup " remember Him in a special way, and proclaim His death till He come. The " loaf " and the " cup " ; a special way of remembrance. We should forget Him if we had not this. How we ought to try and never miss doing this. This remembrance will touch our hearts also in a special way, that we will speak words which become praise to God. We are then doing Divine service as a Holy Priesthood (1 Pet. 2. 5), offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Real remembrance will bring real praise, and this in turn will bring a real life during the remainder of the week ; then when the next opportunity comes to remember Him, when we again gather together our hearts will be full, that without delay we shall again make proclamation of His death, and God will get much fruit.

Our lives thus will please our God. And what a mercy that we can please Him.

But what will help us through the week, for we must not just think of the past Lord's Day ? God wants us to know His will, to know it fully, in wisdom that is spiritual and in an understanding that is from His own self. How is this to be ? Psalm 119 shows us.

" Thy word " is mentioned many times, knowing God's word daily. A verse learnt and thought of. Every word entered into (see *G. & T. Book Almanac*, page 11). Daily bread to live upon. Praying " Teach me, O Lord ; teach me Thy statutes." We will then be able to walk worthily of the Lord, to please Him, to bear fruit in every good work, and we shall know more about God (Col. 1. 10), Our lives will be of value to God. God help us in this.

HIS BODY, THE CHURCH.

It is now more than eight years since we essayed to comment in these pages on the sublime promissory words spoken by the Lord Jesus at Caesarea Philippi,¹ and we now seek to write on so much of the fulfilment thereof as we find recorded in the Scriptures of Truth.

WHY AT CAESAREA PHILIPPI ?

In the first place, however, we wish to direct attention to the circumstances under which the Lord made the promise recorded in Matthew 16. 18. As these are presented to our notice in the gospel according to Matthew, we learn that after the Lord Jesus had performed many signs, and in particular after the feeding of the four thousand with seven loaves, the Pharisees and Sadducees came and tempted Him by asking to have a sign from Heaven shewn them. This was hypocrisy, for no sign would have been accepted by them ; and it was scepticism, for they were refusing to accept abundant evidence already given.

To them He replied not with a sign, but with convicting words and a significant prophecy. Then He left them. Their hypocrisy and unbelief drove away from them the only One Who could save them or the People whom they ruled. Where, then, did the Lord Jesus go ? He was already many miles away from Jerusalem, the seat of rule of the kingdom which was His by right. Any but Himself might have been expected to have returned thither and asserted his rights in opposition to the faithless men who sat on Moses' seat. He goes yet further away, till in Caesarea Philippi over a hundred miles separate Him from Jerusalem. As surely as He left the Pharisees and Sadducees on this memorable occasion and departed farther from the place which belonged to the King of God's earthly People, so surely was He marking the turning of His purposes away from those who thus rejected Him.

¹ NEEDED TRUTH, vol. x., page 25.

Here around Him in Caesarea Philippi there are but few, but they were such as received Him; they were the men to whom He gave the right to become children of God. For much of which Matthew and Mark give us a detailed account is summed up for us by John thus:—

“He came unto His own things, and they that were His own received Him not.

“But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name, which were born, (or begotten) not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Compare with this:—

“Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Who is in Heaven.”

So that the significance of Peter's name is manifest; it means a piece of rock, and on the Rock of which he was a piece the Lord promised to build His Church. Observe, too, the significance of the two names. Simon was the name his parents gave him, whilst Peter speaks of the new nature which was his as begotten again; not, as the first time, of corruptible seed, but of the living and abiding word of God which is an incorruptible seed.¹

We should pay attention here both to the likenesses and the differences between the passage in Matthew 16. and the first chapter of the Gospel according to John. Here (and not in Matthew) we get Peter's first acquaintance with the Lord Jesus, and the Lord says to him: “Thou art Simon, the son of John, thou shalt be called Cephas.” This name Cephas being translated into Greek becomes Petros, or as we say Peter, and, like it, means in English a piece of rock. At this first interview the Lord speaks in the future, “Thou shalt be called Cephas.” But in the later day of Matthew 16. 18 we read, “Thou art Peter.” And this

¹ 1 Peter 1, 23.

marks an infinitely important development of the Divine work in the heart of Simon. If space permitted we might follow it up in its stages. Suffice it now to point out that after the few days spent with the Lord Jesus both Andrew and Peter and James and John returned to their nets and their fishing. But when next we read of them Peter learns, in the presence of the Lord's almighty power, the great lesson of his own sinfulness, and though in that hour of humiliation he asked the Lord to leave him, he quickly responded to the Lord's call and began to learn the further lessons which fitted him for his life-work of catching men alive.¹ Chief of these lessons, and as one may say inclusive of all else, was this, that he learnt to know the Lord Himself till he could say in the words of John 6. 68-69, when the Lord asked, "Would ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and know that Thou art the Holy One of God;" a confession that probably was a little earlier in time than that before us in Matthew 16.

These things we note down here because in this progress of the Divine work in Peter we see those characteristics which mark the material that the Lord was about to use in the building of His Church. It is such and such people who know and own Him, with whom He was about to occupy Himself, as He turns from the nation, whose rejection of Him was now beyond doubt. That the People of Israel were yet to have further opportunities is perfectly certain; that the heart of love of the Lord Jesus yearned after all is abundantly manifest, but it is here in Caesarea Philippi that He first commences to uncover the Divine purposes, the hidden wisdom foreordained before the worlds unto our glory, as it is written:—

Things which eye saw not and ear heard not,
 And which entered not into the heart of man,
 Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love Him.

¹ Luke 5. 1-11.

THE PROMISE OF ANOTHER ADVOCATE.

It is very little He says here, and we may for our present purpose pass on to the night in which He was betrayed, the very night before He died, and bring to remembrance in brief a few of those sayings recorded in the thirteenth to seventeenth chapters of John, and these we wish to specially connect with the men who were then around Him rather than with others to whom they also have an application.

We learn from the thirteenth chapter the character of the men present as being clean, the one exception being Judas, who went forth, from the presence of the Light which lighteth every man, into the blackness of an eternal night. This cleanness we learn was effected by the word which the Lord had spoken unto them. And as it had no effect on Judas we can clearly see that the reception of the word was essential to its operation.

Simon Peter's questions, "Whither goest Thou?" and "Why cannot I follow Thee even now?" deserve attention. The disciples had been following the Lord and leaning on Him in the days of His flesh, and the thought of His leaving them was insufferable. They loved Him so much that they could not bear to think of His going away, and He knew better far than they how helpless they would be when the strength of His presence was removed. This, then, introduces the sublime discourse in which He tells of the provision He was about to make. Their hearts' trouble He thus sought to quiet, and yet not as one who would heal the hurt slightly or say, "Peace" where there was not peace. Hence the conclusion, "In the world ye have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

It will be found that the Lord's discourse of chapters 14. 15. 16. has in it two main lines of teaching, which are, however, not a little interlaced together. One is summed up in the words: "If I go and prepare a place for you I come again, and will receive you unto Myself."

The other finds expression in the words that tell of the

Comforter's coming, and His work especially in the little while before the Lord's return. It is to the latter that we now wish to direct attention. "I will not leave you orphans, I come unto you," are His words; not here speaking of His own personal return, but of the Coming of the Advocate. This Holy Divine Person they already knew, He was with them then. For on the Lord Jesus Christ He had descended as a dove out of heaven, and on Him and in Him He abode, and all that the Lord said or did, He said or did in the Spirit of God.

The promise He here makes ¹ is that the Father should at His request send the Comforter, Who is the Spirit of Truth, to abide with them for ever. The world could not receive Him because it could neither behold Him nor know Him, but they knew Him as indwelling the Lord Jesus Christ, and should also have Him to indwell themselves. This promise of the Holy Spirit to indwell them was something altogether in advance of Old Testament prophecy, and as we shall see was closely linked with the other promise of Matthew 16. 18 with which we are specially concerned.

It may be interesting to point out these results of the Spirit's work:—1. That they would behold an absent Lord; 2. That they would live because of His life; 3. That they should know the Lord Jesus to be in the Father, they in Himself, and He in them. In all of which we have foreshadowings of the good things in store for those to whom the word of the Lord had come. But we must not tarry longer in these fruitful chapters.

I WILL.

Before leaving this gospel we must direct attention to so much in the Lord's prayer in John 17. as is specially germane to our subject. It is in the first place interesting to note that we not only here find mention of those whom the Father had given the Son, let us say, for the present,

¹ John 14. 16, 17.

the eleven apostles ; and of them that believe through their word, which is a very inclusive phrase ; but also of that which the Father had given Him ;¹ a thing composed of persons ; concerning whom He prays that where He is they may be with Him.

We also read of a double Unity. First He prayed that they might be one as the Father and the Son are one, that is a perfect, indissoluble unity. He also said that He spake these things in their hearing in the world that they might have this joy of unity fulfilled in themselves. Both these are blended in the prayer of verses 20, 21, 22, 23. He prayed that all might be one, that as the Father in the Son and as the Son in the Father, so that all the given ones might be one in the Father and in the Son. But He also asked that they might be perfected into one. This speaks of something progressive, something that may have hindrances, but which will reach ultimately to that which is set forth, namely a unity of all according to God and His word.

Whatever difficulties of interpretation there may be in the matters of which this prayer speaks, it is perfectly clear that the Lord here contemplates certain Divine purposes which were to be accomplished with a chosen company whilst He was still rejected by the religious world of Jewry.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

(To be continued.)

A BLESSED RELATIONSHIP.

“**AND** there came to Him His mother and brethren, and they could not come at Him for the crowd. And it was told Him,—‘Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee.’ But He answered and said unto them,—‘My mother and My brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.’”—Luke 8. 19–21.

¹ John 17. 24.

For Youngest Believers.

HEARKEN.

THIS word is one we often meet in reading the Holy Scriptures. It is a very important one, as we see from the scripture quoted in August number of **NEEDED TRUTH**: "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

When Satan got the woman's ear in Eden, his complete triumph was well-nigh assured. It is a dangerous thing to hearken to wrong teaching. The wise man thus admonishes his son: "Cease, my son, to hear instruction that causeth thee to err from the words of knowledge." How sad it is that children of God so often forget that their eyes and their ears are not their own, to be used after their own thoughts; that these members of their bodies are to be used as instruments of righteousness; and thus it is that books are read and words are hearkened to that can only hinder the work of God in the soul.

Surely to us there is no book like the Bible! The more we search its sacred pages, looking for the help of the Holy Spirit to understand what we read, the more shall we value it, and the less inclination shall we have to turn to polluted earthly streams. God had often to complain of His ancient people that they would not hearken to His voice. And what loss they sustained through turning a deaf ear to Him! See, for example, Psalm 81. 8-16 and Isaiah 48. 17-19.

What a contrast we have to this in the 50th chapter of Isaiah, verses 4-9! Do you ask "Of Whom speaketh the prophet this?" If so, then Acts 8. 35 will give the answer. Read also Hebrews 5. 8. May we strive to be like Him in this. Herein truly He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. Like newborn babes, may we long for the milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby unto salvation.

The Woman in her Sphere.

Vau.

She riseth also while it is yet night
And giveth meat to her household
And their task to her maidens.

THE special feature of the virtuous woman's character that is here brought out is, we think, her patient continuance in well doing. The Hebrew letter Vau is specially significant in this respect. Whatever the past may have been, the present claims her attention, and no accomplishment of days gone by is allowed to serve as an excuse for idleness in the present. "She riseth also . . . And giveth . . . And . . ."

A woman's work is never done.

Thus it comes to pass that her household get their need supplied, and her maidens, in particular, lack neither a portion to eat nor a task to perform.

In commenting thus on the verse before us, we would not be unmindful of the failing health or weakness of body that is the lot of many women, and hinders them from attaining to the standard of industry which Lemuel's mother here sets up. Of such, of course, it is well if it can be said—

She hath done what she could.

But it is desirable to make very plain how great is the responsibility of every mother and such like person who has maidens in her house, to train them in habits of industry. This can only be done when precept and example are happily blended. She must be an early riser, and get her daughters up in good time. She must be a worker, and make her daughters work; not merely telling them to work, but showing them the beauty of industry and inculcating in every way the dignity of labour. Then in her household, cleanliness, tidiness and order will not be lacking,

and however virtuously her daughters may behave, she succeeds in surpassing them.

FOR YOUNGER SISTERS.

“ My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me.” He was in the world, but not of it ; if we would follow Him we must be willing to follow His footsteps. He was a friend of publicans and sinners, despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He said, “ The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests ; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.” Many gracious words fell from His lips, many wonderful works He performed : healing the sick, giving sight to the blind, making the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, giving life to the dead, speaking words of comfort to the weary ; yet for all this He was despised, many refused to believe in Him although eye-witnesses of His wonderful works ; nor could they be satisfied until He was crucified ; “ Away with this Man ” was their cry.

But He, once dead, now liveth, this same Jesus, risen, seated at the right hand of God, ever liveth to make intercession for His people. “ God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus Whom ye crucified.” “ If any man would come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.” Are we willing to take up the cross and follow Him, or do we count the cost too great to go forth unto Him outside the camp, the place of rejection, to sit at His feet and learn of Him Who is meek and lowly in heart ? Do we love the world and the things that are in it ; its pleasures and fashions ? “ He that doth not take up the cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.”

Can we expect a better place than our Master ; is the servant better than her Lord ; are we seeking the applause of men ; do we expect laurels where He, the Lord of life and glory, had thorns ? If so, we are not following Him, we are not walking in His steps, nor seeking so to do ; we are

not doing His will, but are like unto those of whom it is written, "For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God" (John 12. 43). May our God enable us by His Holy Spirit to "walk worthily of God, Who calleth you unto His own Kingdom and glory," seeking earnestly to adorn the teaching of God our Saviour in all things, "Not with the outward adorning of plaiting the hair and of wearing jewels of gold, or of putting on apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." For "Ye are a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him Who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Peter 2. 9). Oh, may we seek His glory in all things! For Christ said, "If any man serve Me let him follow Me, and where I am there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me him will My Father honour." "Them that honour Me I will honour, they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Samuel 2. 30). He is coming, we know not how soon; may we so walk as not to be ashamed before Him at His coming.

SHE WORKETH WILLINGLY WITH HER HANDS.

Some sisters have asked, cannot we have a Young Women's Corner? Well, there is one in every kitchen. Besides, there is often a vacant corner at the prayer meeting where a young woman might be sitting. It was at the place of prayer that Lydia was found, and she would ever thank God that she was there; for the Lord gave her the honour of entertaining His servants, Paul, Silas and Luke, whom she brought back to her hospitable home.

Many sisters plead that their work in the day prevents their coming to the prayer meeting, little realizing how the assemblies suffer from the neglect of prayer. The empty seats at the prayer meeting tell a sad tale of indifference sometimes.

A little less indulgence in the bed,
 A little more contrivance in the head,
 A little more of Jesus in the mind,
 Would quite prevent our being so behind.

Then, again, young women might consider the possibility of using their needles for needy saints in the household of the Faith. Winter is coming; what can be done to ease the heart of the anxious mother, whose children are thinly clad? There are needy sisters, too, in like case. 1 John 3. 16-18; James 2. 14-16. If there was thoughtful endeavour on the part of a few to look up what materials they could find and make the best of them, much might be accomplished. Let it be done in the Name and for the Name, and with true love. Similar work might be used to go forth to the poor world in its poverty and need. Let us be always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

"Rise up, ye women that are at ease, hear My voice
 Ye careless daughters, give ear unto My speech."

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
 We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.

LUKE AND "CHURCH OF GOD."

In this article we propose to briefly consider the historical account given by Luke as to the planting of certain assemblies, especially in relation to the statement sometimes made that so long as it was the mind of God for the disciples to frequent the temple or the synagogues they are never designated "Church of God" but only disciples, or saints.

The consideration of Acts 5. will be sufficient to partly disprove the accuracy of such a statement. From verse 20 of this chapter it is clear that at this time it was in keeping with the mind of God that the apostles should go to the temple, yea more, that such was the express command of the angel of the Lord: "Go ye, and stand and speak in

the temple to the people all the words of this Life," whilst in verse 11 we do not read that great fear came upon the disciples or the saints, but that "great fear came upon the whole church."

It is evident from these scriptures alone that the statement referred to in our opening paragraph, requires at least some correction. We use the words "partly" and "at least" advisedly, because so far, we have only shewn that the disciples were designated the church at a time when the temple could still be frequented in fellowship with God, and consequently the absence of the words "of God" after "church" still remains to be explained. We submit as a point which will bear the closest scrutiny that, where he is himself speaking of the disciples,

LUKE NEVER CALLS THEM CHURCH OF GOD,

and this, be it specially noted too, though speaking of those who were undeniably found together in different places as churches of God. Indeed, if we accept the recommendation of the American Revisers in regard to Acts 20. 28, and read "church of the Lord" instead of "church of God," then we may say that the term "church of God" is one which Luke never uses at all, and consequently it is inadmissible to base any teaching on the absence of the term in the earlier chapters of the Acts. As we have said, it does not occur in the Acts at all, save in the questionable reading of chapter 20. verse 28, where Luke quotes the words of the apostle. Moreover, Luke wrote of the disciples as disciples and not as the church of God long after the disciples had been gathered together as churches of God. Thus, throughout his account there is, in this respect, a uniformity of description, and absolutely

NO DIFFERENCE

is discoverable between his earliest method and his latest method of speaking of those who were together, under the

authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Compare Acts 5. 11, 8. 1, 12. 1 with Acts 15. 4, 18. 22.

We have seen from Acts 5. 11 that those thus together in Jerusalem were designated the church by Luke. Of this same company we read again in chapter 8. that a great persecution arose against the church in Jerusalem, and of Saul we read that he laid waste the church. In the light of what we have previously stated it needs no explanation why the words "of God" are omitted in these passages. Had it been that up to a given point Luke was wont to describe the disciples as simply the church and thereafter invariably to speak of them as the church of God, there would have been reason for asking "Why this difference?" but the facts of the case prove that no room exists for the question, because there is no difference. And can it be doubted that, had Luke been guided by God to habitually use the term "church of God" wherever he rightly could, he would here have followed the example of the Apostle Paul, who, speaking of the circumstances referred to in Acts 8., said, "I persecuted the church of God and made havock of it" (Gal. 1. 13)? See also 1 Cor. 15. 9.

Pursuing our course through the Acts we come to chapter 11., in verse 26 of which we read "When he (Barnabas) had found him (Saul) he brought him to Antioch. And it came to pass that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the church." Surely this was the church of God in Antioch—yet the words "of God" which in any case might have been out of place in this passage do not appear when Luke speaks of this same company in Acts 13. 1, where the words "of God" could have been fittingly added.

Thus he writes of the church in Antioch exactly as he has done of the church in Jerusalem. See Acts 8. 1, 3, 11. 22, 12. 1. It is "church," "church," "church" and never "church of God." Indeed, even in the case of Ephesus, when he tells of Paul sending from Miletus and calling the

elders unto him, they are not designated elders of the "church of God" but elders of the "church." Yet who would say that because Luke does not say the church of God therefore it could not be called the church of God? Surely, no one. Besides, if the text of the Revised Version be the correct rendering of Acts 20. 28, then it establishes from this portion of the Acts alone what we have advanced, that in Luke's "church" in the city, we see Paul's "church of God" in the city. If additional proof be required that it is an untenable position for one to assume, because the words "of God" are not added to the word "church" therefore the "church" thus described could not be a "church of God" we might refer to Romans 16. 1. Here even Paul himself, whom we have seen to use the term the church of God where Luke simply says the church, also drops the words "of God," and speaking of that which doubtless he himself had planted as a church of God—see Acts 18. 18—he says: "The church in Cenchreæ."

Reading on in Acts 18. our thoughts turn to Ephesus. In verse 19 we are told that Paul entered into the synagogue in Ephesus and reasoned with the Jews. From verse 20 it is apparent that there was at this time a willingness to hear the apostle's teaching. They requested him to abide a longer time with them. He would not, but promised to return again if God willed it so.

We know from verses 18, 19, 24, 26 that Priscilla and Aquila were left in Ephesus, the last-named verse making it clear that these two had now become Christians. Had the apostle any other fruit from his first visit to Ephesus? Can any evidence be given to shew that, not only was there willingness on the part of the Jews generally in Ephesus to hear him, but some of them had actually accepted the message of God through him and were by him planted as a church of God? This evidence we now propose to consider.

In Acts 18. we find that after the apostle's first visit to Ephesus he left those there who could be rightly

called "the brethren"; that these "brethren" had such standing that when Apollos went from Ephesus to Achaia they could furnish him with a letter that he might be received. True we are not told that these "brethren" of verse 27 were "the church of God" in Ephesus, but neither are we told that the "disciples" of verse 27 were the "church of God" in Corinth, or in Cenchreæ, but what do we learn from 1 Cor. 1. 2 and 3. 6? Can "he helped them much" be regarded otherwise than Luke's method of describing what Paul himself means when he says, "Apollos watered"?

As we do not find the ministry of Apollos described in the Acts as "watering" God's tilled land so also we do not find the work of the Apostle Paul described therein as "planting." See Acts 18. 1-11. Indeed those in Corinth here, among whom he taught the word of God for a year and six months, are not only not called the "church of God" in Corinth but they are not even called "the church," nor "disciples," nor "saints."

If by the term the "brethren" in Acts 18. 27 we are compelled to see at this time a corporate testimony for God in Ephesus, then it follows that what we have in Acts 19. 9 is not the planting of the assembly there but simply the separating of the disciples in such a way from the synagogue that henceforth they would not be found therein, as Paul himself had been on his first visit, as Aquila and Priscilla had been after his departure and during the time when "brethren" were found in Ephesus, and as Paul himself again had been AFTER he had returned to Ephesus and baptized twelve men into the name of the Lord Jesus, going in and speaking boldly for the space of three months. Opposition THEN reached such a height, that complete separation became inevitable.

That there was an assembly of God in Ephesus is undeniable. In Luke's account he does not call the brethren of whom it was composed by the term "church of God."

Neither does he designate the "disciples" in Ephesus after over two years' work of the apostle amongst them, "the church of God." See Acts 20. 1. Yet this is years after the separation from the synagogue as recounted in Acts 19. 9. As we have seen, we have no reason to expect that Luke would call them the church of God, yea, rather we have good reason to expect the opposite.

Thus we find those together in the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and the acknowledgment of Him as Lord who were in

Jerusalem, called by Luke "church,"

by Paul "church of God."

Corinth, called by Luke "disciples,"

by Paul "church of God."

Ephesus, called by Luke "church,"

by Paul "church of God."

Truly a threefold cord of Divine testimony which will not be quickly broken, proving that it would be quite as reasonable to conclude, because Paul in writing to the Ephesians after he went to Rome calls them "the saints at Ephesus" and not "the church of God," that therefore the synagogue was not completely set aside, as to conclude it was because of this that Luke also used it not.

Surely we are not warranted in saying that had the temple been completely set aside and the disciples forbidden to enter it in the times viewed in Acts 5. or Acts 8., Luke would have called the disciples the "church of God" in Jerusalem and not simply the "church." For similar reasons would not he have spoken of the church of God in Ephesus, the church of God in Antioch, the church of God in Corinth? The disciples in these cities were undoubtedly brought together by Paul and by Paul and Barnabas as churches of God, yet as we have seen they are not described thus by Luke, but share with Jerusalem his customary phrase, "the church," or "the disciples."

JOHN P. A. TAYLOR.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 19. (Acts 15. 1-29.)

THE CONFERENCE AT JERUSALEM.

FROM BRADFORD (G. H. W. and others). It seems to us that a firm grasp of the historical setting of this chapter is of immense importance in answering many of the questions arising therefrom. If its date can be fairly accurately established, it should save us from a mistaken interpretation of its doctrine and from misunderstanding the relationship existing between the two great apostles and their teaching. We submit, therefore, that it is identical with the time of Galatians 2., and we think these two chapters themselves supply the proof of that.

“Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem” (Gal. 1. 18), “Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem” (Gal. 2. 1), or altogether seventeen years after his return from Arabia, which must come in the middle of verse 19 of Acts 9. Note Galatians 1. 17. Of the goings up to Jerusalem in the Acts, therefore, that of chap. 9. 26, must be excluded as being far too early. That of Acts 18. 22 must also be excluded, for “I went up . . . with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me.” Barnabas had separated from him at the beginning of that journey of which this was the close. We are left, therefore, with Acts 11. 30 and Acts 15. as being the only recorded journeys to Jerusalem with which it is possible to link Galatians 2.

In Galatians 2. 2 the apostle says that he laid the Gospel he preached before those of repute, lest by any means he had run in vain. This would be far more likely to refer to the first journey through Cyprus, Pisidia and Lycaonia, than merely to the one year's teaching at Antioch of Acts 11. Furthermore, fourteen years from Acts 9. 26 (even approximate only, if Galatians 1. 18 is not considered

identical) would take us beyond that year's teaching in Antioch. It was after that year's work and the subsequent journey to Jerusalem that they were definitely called and sent forth to the Gentiles in the regions beyond. Finally, it is most improbable that if this same question had been considered as in Galatians 2., it would again have been considered as in Acts 15. at some later date. If that were possible, how can we understand Acts 15. 25 in face of Galatians 2. 7-9 ?

We have here, therefore, two accounts of the same conference of apostles and elders, dealing with the one question. But each is in keeping with the purpose of the book in which it is. In the Acts the church in Antioch is troubled by certain who spake falsely, to whom no commandment had been given, therefore Paul and Barnabas are chosen to go up to the apostles and elders for counsel and guidance. All we are told of them here is, that they made known what God had done through them, and accept and take back the common judgment of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. In Galatians 2., however, we see the apostle of the Gentiles in all the dignity of his apostleship. He went up by revelation and laid before them that Gospel which he preached according to the revelation of the mystery given to him. But more, those who were of repute imparted nothing to him. He made known to them the purpose of God, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, of which they had as yet learnt little, and when they saw with what he had been intrusted and perceived the grace that was given to him, they gave to him and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship. He received nothing from them, but they fully and unreservedly accepted the revelation of the mind of God that he made known to them. But even here we find him most careful to lay it first before those who were of repute, lest by any means he had been running or should be running in vain. Could we have a more beautiful illus-

tration of the perfect subjection one to another of the greatest in the Community, even the greatest among the apostles ?

And when we turn to consider the words of these men, we find the same perfect harmony, the same oneness of mind and expression. Paul, writing to the Galatians concerning this question, shows how they received the Spirit through the hearing of faith and not by works of law ; and this was not only true of Gentile but of Jew. " We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, yet knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of law " (Gal. 2. 15, 16). Peter's words in Acts 15. are equally clear and to the point, and in perfect unison with this passage. When God in early days sent him to Gentiles in the case of Cornelius, and the word was preached to them, God bare them witness, for He knew their hearts. They heard the word and believed it, and God made no distinction between them, cleansing their hearts by faith. He gave them the Spirit by the hearing of faith. Why, therefore, tempt God by making their salvation conditional upon their being circumcised, seeing God made no condition. " But," he further adds, " we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they."

The decision of Act 15., upon the face of it, only determines the relationship of the Gentile converts to the Mosaic Law. With regard to the Jews, it seems to be left in doubt as to whether they had still to be subject thereto. The attempt to put the yoke upon the Gentiles is abortive, but it seems plain that the yoke was still upon the neck of some at least of the Jewish believers (Acts 15. 1, 5). None apprehended as did Paul the relationship of Jew and Gentile. Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2.), apparently influenced by James, makes a mistake. This mistake is that which

the Galatians were making. As the apostle, in seeking to set them right, gives them the history of Peter's backsliding and uses it as a basis for his exhortation, there is no doubt that Peter profited by Paul's rebuke, for in Peter's epistle, written after the Apostle Paul had written many of his epistles and much later than Acts 15., we find that Peter and Paul wrote to the same people, namely, those who had obtained like precious faith with them in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. With these, then, Peter links both himself and Paul.¹ 2 Pet. 3. 15, 16 most certainly shows that at the time of the epistle unity between the two apostles was unbroken.

We therefore conclude that Peter saw the error of his action in Galatians 2., and that with regard to this matter his walking contrary to the truth of the Gospel was soon at an end.

The outcome of this meeting in Acts 15. was that all, apostles and elders, came to one accord. The unity of the apostles is fundamentally necessary to the carrying out of their particular work in delivering the faith once for all to the saints.

NOTE ON ACTS 1-12.

From A. A., GLASGOW. In the letter from G. H. W., Bradford, in July, p. 187, there are a few points to which we take exception, and to which we desire to reply, at the same time deprecating any needless and prolonged controversy.

We consider that too much is made of the expression "my Gospel," for it is "my Gospel" as it is "my doctrine" (2 Timothy 3. 10), thus showing how completely the apostle made his very own the charge committed to his care.

As to the great characteristic truths of the Gospel being revealed to none but the Apostle Paul, we certainly allow that he had a grasp of its great and mighty truths equalled

¹ Note 2 Pet. 1. 1, with 3. 15, 16; see also Eph. 4. 5, and Jude 3.

by none, but this is altogether different from saying that these were his own special and exclusive revelation.

We would ask, What of the many sayings of the Lord Jesus Himself, where we have the gospel, as preached by Paul in its very essence? take John 3. 16-21 as a sample.

We admit that in Acts 2. that which Peter preached is different in certain points from the gospel preached by the Apostle Paul, though in the great foundation truth of "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" they are identical, yet Acts 2. is a unique occasion and is never repeated, for in Acts 10. God is teaching Peter and gradually unfolding mighty truths that in a later day were clearly apprehended by all.

We would suggest that the construction put upon Gal. 2. 6, that Paul received nothing from them that were apostles before him is unwarranted, because in it there is no thought of independence on the part of the Apostle Paul, nor do the other apostles seek to hinder him, but rather gave to him and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship.

There was no difference between the Gospel preached by the Apostle Paul and that preached by the other apostles, the difference lay in their sphere of operations, see Gal. 2. 9-16 and notably Gal. 1. 23. "He preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc."

It is allowed that the Apostle Paul had a wide knowledge of Divine truth, and that he preached Jesus Christ according to the revelation of a mystery; nevertheless, he was not alone in this, but links others with himself as being stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4. 1).

We fail to see that the constitution of the Fellowship in the early days of the Acts was different from that of a later day; in its manifestations there is certainly a difference, but in foundation principles they are one and the same; for instance we have (1) Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; (2) Baptism in the Holy

Spirit ; (3) Baptism in water into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ; (4) Their being joined together in a visible Community ; (5) The Apostles' Doctrine ; (6) Breaking of the bread in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At no time were these great principles abrogated, rather on the other hand were they extended and amplified, therefore we submit that there is absolutely no difference in constitution, that in foundation principles they are one and the same, the chain binding Acts 2. 42 with 1 Cor. 1. 9 being continuous.

In reply to the question as to what legislation they had for assemblies amongst the Gentiles being linked together in fellowship with them, we reply, none ; but God gradually revealed His purpose to them, as see the very distinct manifestation of the Holy Spirit in connexion with the Samaritans, Acts 8. ; Cornelius, Acts 10., and Antioch in Acts 11. Further in Acts 15. 14 we have the purpose of God in having a people for His name, God's building, a habitation for God through the Spirit. The foundation of this building is laid in Acts 2., gradually it evolves until in the days of the Apostle Paul we see it come to full perfection.

The foundation of God's present building is Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3. 11), spoken of in 2 Tim. 2. 19 as the Firm Foundation.

In this Foundation are the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2. 20), not one apostle merely ; to these apostles and prophets the mystery of the Body was revealed (Eph. 3. 5). These were set in the Church (Eph. 4. 11 ; 1 Cor. 12. 28) ; following this out shows us how incompatible is the idea that Paul is THE apostle of the present dispensation.

We do not understand how that Luke 24. 47 ; Acts 1. 8 ; Matt. 28. 16-20, must necessarily refer to something quite distinct from the present day.

Where have we authority for saying that this commission was unfulfilled (albeit the twelve apostles may have failed

in the first instance)? Does not Col. 1. 23 prove the contrary?

Moreover, had not the purposes of God as to the restoration of the Jews nationally been postponed consequent upon the rejection of their Messiah?

Had not the Lord Jesus disowned the earthly temple in the words, "Your house is left unto you desolate"?

Does not Matt. 16. 18 refer to the present dispensation? Again, when the Lord Jesus instituted the feast of remembrance on the night of His betrayal, was it not intended for the present dispensation?

Again, we submit that it is not in the early Acts we have to look for the change in the purposes of God, but rather to the Gospels, and that, prior to the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. One point we would note, and that is when He sent His disciples preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, He commands them not to go to the Gentiles nor to the Samaritans (Matt. 10. 5), but rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Whereas, when He gave them the commission after His resurrection, they are commanded to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Does not this prove a change in the purpose of God?

[With this interesting contribution we propose to close the discussion for the present. There is not, we believe, a great difference between our two friends, and this, we think, is proved by the article on "The Conference at Jerusalem" above (p.257), which comes from G. H. W. and others at Bradford. Besides, there is perfect agreement not only as to the hearty fellowship subsisting between the apostles as to the Divine purposes which were unquestionably indicated in Matthew 16., and were gradually developed till the complete revelation was given through the Apostle Paul; but also as to the identity of the foundation principles of the Fellowship, whether as expressed in the church of God in Jerusalem in Acts 2., or later when churches of God con-

taining Jews and Gentiles were united together throughout the Roman world.]

We are now looking for contributions from others on Acts 15, and on Psalms 18., 19., 119.

“Something to Look For” has not been found out up to the time of writing this.

Question and Answer.

QUESTION.—A sister in a situation being unusually late at the meeting through no fault of her own, the breaking of the loaf in remembrance of the Lord was over before she arrived, and a hymn of praise was being sung. Should the bread and the cup have been passed to her ?

ANSWER.—It seems to us that the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ in the breaking of the loaf being a collective act can only be shared in by those present together, Now the eating and drinking are so closely linked with the collective act that it would seem impossible for one to take part in the eating and drinking who had not taken part in the giving of thanks and in the breaking of the loaf and the pouring out of the cup.

QUESTION.—Can any definite scripture be given to support the statement that the words of 1 Peter 2. 10, “which in time past were no people are now the people of God,” apply to Gentiles as well as Jews ?

ANSWER.—Yes. Romans 9. 23-26 is conclusive on the point.

QUESTION.—Who were the holy apostles and prophets of Christ beside the Apostle Paul, to whom was revealed in the Spirit the mystery of Christ, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel ? See Eph. 3. 5, 6.

ANSWER.—The same, undoubtedly, as those of Ephesians 2, 20,

HIS BODY, THE CHURCH

(continued from page 246).

THE words of the Lord, "I will build My Church," we accept in all simplicity as referring to a future action of His. However high may be the place reserved in future glory for men like Abraham, Moses or Daniel, and however ineffable their future bliss, we understand that His Body the Church is something in which they have no share. We proceed to set forth what we apprehend to have been the beginning of the fulfilment by the Lord Jesus of His words,—

"I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH."

Inasmuch as the complete revelation of the mystery which Paul was chosen to make known was not given till after the dispersion of the church that was in Jerusalem and the conversion of Paul himself, it has often been discussed whether the Church which is the Body of Christ could have had a beginning so early as the Day of Pentecost. The reasons for believing that the Lord Jesus Christ did on that occasion commence to build His Church are of very great weight and in our judgment are absolutely conclusive and unanswerable.

It is not asserted that the Church was at its commencement called the Body, or that the special truth making that name appropriate was or could be revealed at that time; but that the Lord then commenced to build using at the first only Jews and proselytes as material. The addition of Samaritans was later and that of Gentiles later still, and the revelation of the mystery followed afterwards in its appointed time.

Consider the words of the Lord Jesus recorded in Acts 1., when He, after speaking with the Apostles of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem till they received the promise of the Father, of which He had told them. This is the promise contained in John, chapters 13. to 17., to which we have previously referred. It is certainly something far beyond

anything of which the Old Testament speaks; for we read nothing there of the Divine Advocate coming to dwell in mortal men. Then in Acts 1. 4, 5 the Lord associates with the coming of the Advocate Whom He had promised their baptism in that same Holy Spirit. "Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence." Now on the Day of Pentecost there were great manifestations of the Spirit's power and that which the multitude saw and heard corresponded so far as it went with the prophecy of Joel. But the actual event on the Day of Pentecost went far beyond anything of which Joel spake or could speak, inasmuch as Joel said nothing of the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in men as the Lord had promised. Again, on the other hand, it is evident that Peter was not asserting the actual fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, because there were no such wonders as the sun being turned into darkness or the moon into blood.

We therefore understand that far in advance of anything revealed to Joel or to any Old Testament prophet we have on the Day of Pentecost a personal coming of the Advocate, God the Spirit, and a baptism by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Spirit.

To this too agree Peter's words in his first letter where he refers especially to himself and others preaching the gospel by or in the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven as a thing greatly different from the operation of the Holy Spirit in Old Testament times.

Now the baptism we have here on the Day of Pentecost, which is baptism by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, we connect with that spoken of by Paul at a later date thus, "In one Spirit were we all baptized into one Body whether Jews or Greeks . . . all made to drink one Spirit." That is to say the first baptism of Jews in the Holy Spirit was on the Day of Pentecost whilst the first baptism of Gentiles was that of Cornelius and his household recorded in Acts 10. As to the latter Peter said, "As I began to speak the

Holy Spirit fell on them even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord how that He said, John indeed baptized with water but ye shall be baptized with (or in) the Holy Spirit. If then God gave unto them the like gift as He did also unto us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

In considering this passage let it be remembered that Scripture does not speak of baptism by or of the Holy Spirit but in or with the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Baptizer. Note also the words "as on us at the beginning"; what beginning could this be but the Day of Pentecost? Further, observe the reference to the Lord's words recorded in Acts 1. 5, baptism in the Spirit, not as in John the Baptist's words recorded in Matthew 3. 11, 12, baptism with or in the Holy Spirit and fire. Yet again note that though the Jews who turned to God on the Day of Pentecost needed to be baptized in water before they received the Holy Spirit yet the faith which led them into the water is mentioned by Peter rather than the water baptism itself, thus making more manifest the harmony of the Divine work. For it was on believing that Cornelius and his company received the Holy Spirit. And so too with other Gentiles, as for example the Galatians whom Paul asks, "Received ye the Spirit . . . by the hearing of faith?" So, too, it was on believing that those addressed in the letter to Ephesus were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the Promise.

All this goes to show that on the Day of Pentecost the twelve apostles and those with them first, and then the three thousand, were built by the Lord Jesus Christ into His Church, the Holy Spirit being the Divine mean or medium in which this building was effected; which is elsewhere described as baptism or immersion in the Spirit into the Body.

If it were otherwise, that the Lord did not begin the formation of His Body till a later date, it would be evident that we should have to learn of some subsequent time at which

the twelve apostles and the three thousand pentecostal additions needed to receive a second baptism in the Holy Spirit in order to introduce them into the Body. For it is clear on the one hand that they were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost—"not many days hence" were the Lord's words. On the other hand it is equally clear from 1 Cor. 12. that introduction into the Body is effected by baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Again, we might ask of any who deny that the commencement of the Body was on the Day of Pentecost in regard to others such as Cornelius and his household, or the Galatians, or the Corinthians (1 Cor. 6. 19), all of whom received the Holy Spirit and were baptized in the Spirit on believing, when and how they received the Spirit or were baptized in the Spirit in some second or different manner in order that they might have a place in the Body? We know that something of this kind is taught by some but know no Scriptural basis whatever for any such thought as a second reception of the Spirit or a second baptism in the Spirit.

The Ephesians are reminded that it was on believing¹ they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the Promise. Surely this refers to the Lord's promise of John, chapters 14., 15., 16., which, whilst fulfilled to the twelve and the three thousand on the Day of Pentecost, came to others including Gentiles as to the Ephesians on believing. Surely, too, it was on believing that the Ephesians became participants in the blessings in the heavenlies of which Paul speaks to them. We say on believing, and by this we mean believing on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. We do not understand that their sealing or their seating in the heavenlies or their place as fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the Body and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel depended on their appreciation or understanding of these precious things.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

(to be continued.)

¹ Not some time after as the English Version is sometimes supposed to mean.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

UNDER the reign of the Heavens, or the reign of God, there have been different forms of government presented at different times during God's dealings with man on the earth ; as, for instance, in the law from Mount Sinai, given by Moses, and later the preaching of repentance by John the Baptist and others. These marked epochs in the history of the Israel people, as we see from the significant expression of Matthew 3. 1, " In those days," and elsewhere. There were other epoch-making and marking times in the history of this same people, as well as in the history of man upon the earth. For example, a very important epoch occurred in the history of the people of Israel, when, consequent upon the rejection by them of the preaching of the Baptist, and the Christ, and the twelve Apostles, He, the Christ, turns from them as rejected by them, and pronounces the solemn and weighty words of Matthew 11. 20-25. Consequent upon this again is the even yet more important epoch in the history of mankind, when the reign of the Heavens that had already and was yet about to suffer the violence done to its ambassador and to the King, seizes upon the opportunity of the blackest and darkest hour of man's history to unfold purposes of wonderful and unspeakable grace :— " From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples how that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and the third day be raised again " (chap. 16. 21). It is in association with that time and those words that there are the revelation and confession of Him as the Christ the Son of the Living God, and a commencement of the unfolding of God's purpose in association with the mystery and building of the Church, which is Christ's Body ; and Peter, under the reign of the Heavens, is the chosen instrument to have the keys, and to use them.

In such circumstances, and from such a time, is un-

folded likewise the character of the reign of the heavens, during the present interval, which is viewed prospectively in the parenthesis of Matthew 16. 13-18. 35. What monarchy or world power but would have demanded satisfaction on such an outrage on prestige and honour as the slaying of their ambassador and King, and have waged war without quarter or mercy? Yet to the greatest of all tragedies, the tragedy of the Cross, what answer does the reign of the Heavens give? "It suffereth violence"; yea more, to the insults done, to the outrage upon honour, in the crucifixion of the Lord of glory, the answer, that is the present answer, is, "Grace reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life."

These are the unfoldings of Matthew 16. But there is government also, government that has grace as its basis; and a form of government presented by the reign of the Heavens, of which chapter 18 speaks. It is "mercy rejoiceth against judgment"; and the trespassing one is to be gained and forgiven. How often? Unto seven times? Yea, unto seventy times seven! reminding us of the long period of God's dealings with Israel to lead them to repentance, in the 490 years of Daniel's prophecy; 483 of which had their fulfilment prior to the Cross, at the end of which, had they even then repented, the kingdom and blessing would have been theirs; then comes in the present interval, at the close of which the last of the seven weeks shall have its fulfilment. In the Cross, the Messiah was cut off, "having nothing for Himself," yet to the people of Israel was given the first offer of grace and forgiveness. By the Lord Jesus Christ, as risen from among the dead, was enunciated, during the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, the character, and form and laws of government of the reign of God, for and during the present interval (see Acts 1. 1-3 compared with Matthew 28. 18-20), which is different from all previous forms of government presented to Israel. We would now seek to point out some of the differences.

In that to Israel, the commission was circumscribed by those words, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" (Matt. 10. 5). In that of the present dispensation it is world-wide, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark. 16. 15). "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28. 19). Then the message to Israel was, "Preach, saying the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." In the present, it is "Preach the Gospel; make disciples." Thus the former was "Into John's baptism"; the latter, "Into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." In the former the laws of the kingdom were expressed in the sermon on the mount; in this, it is the " whatsoever things I have commanded you," as expressed in the Faith once for all delivered to the saints. Then it was the kingdom in relation to the earth, and the will of God done on the earth; now, it is the kingdom expressed in the churches of God, and the will of God done in and among these. The preaching of the kingdom of God formed the subject matter of the ministry of the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, including Saul, in the Acts of the Apostles.

Such a message enunciating both grace and government came to the ears of the betrayers and murderers of Israel's King. Rebels though they were, yet from the sons of Israel were gathered the first-fruits of the great amnesty of God's favour; and laying down their arms in surrender, they accept the terms of peace and government, in the acknowledgment of and submission to Him Whom God hath made both Lord and Christ. This was on the day of Pentecost, or fifty days after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, when the Spirit of God was sent down from heaven. This answers to the new meal offering of Leviticus 23., which was to be brought out of their habitations the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, or the fiftieth day from the presentation of the sheaf of first-fruits (that speaks of Christ in resurrection), and

which shows the present dispensation, from its beginning to its close, in the next feast which follows, the Feast of Trumpets, or the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. This, then, is the present interval, associated with which are present purposes and present truth, as to what we should be and do, "till He come."

The kingdom of God is next preached to the Samaritans (Acts 8. 12); and of these also there were those who accepted the grace and the government, and in submission to the authority and will of the Lord Jesus Christ men and women were baptized.

Further, to the Gentiles came the preaching of the kingdom of God, with like results (chap. 19. 8-10). It is true there are differences in the messages to and the manner of dealing with each, but such are consistent with the character and standing of each, on the principle "to the Jew I became as a Jew," and so forth.

What is contended for is that all hear the same preaching of the kingdom of God, and in accepting the form of government therein presented they are found together in the Fellowship of God's Son, which was expressed in the churches of God. This form of government remains in force until now, and will do so till the end of the age, and has for its purpose and object the honour and authority of the Chosen and Anointed One at God's right hand, in this the day of His rejection and denial of His rights, by Israel, and by the earth; so that the character of the kingdom now is suffering, and not reigning. "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom." Thus may we be "counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer." But the reigning time will come; and "if we suffer, we shall reign with Him; if we deny Him, He will also deny us; if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; for He cannot deny Himself."

Such words are indeed present truth for the present times; and while on the one hand they offer encouragement and strengthening for fainting hearts and slackening hands in

holding the fort, they are on the other hand freighted with solemn warning to such as deny the Lord, and deny the Faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was said of one of old, "He preacheth the Faith which once he destroyed"; but alas! there are those to-day who destroy the Faith which once they preached. Jehovah's message of old to those who feared Him in the remnant day of Israel's history, "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and judgments" (Mal. 4. 4.), has its parallel at the present; it is, "Contend earnestly for the Faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1. 3). This is present and needed truth. At the same time, let all who have and hold and preach the Faith, take heed to themselves, and seek to aim at and imitate the example of him who said, "Ye yourselves know from the first day that I set foot in Asia after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials," and who yet testified the gospel of the grace of God; who preached the kingdom of God; who shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God; and who day by day had anxiety for all the churches of God.

Who is sufficient for these things? Let him who proved it so, speak, "I commend you to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20. 32).

DAVID SMITH.

WORDS OF WARNING.

"TAKE heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the Living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."—Hebrews 3. 12, 13.

“YE TAKE TOO MUCH UPON YOU.”

WE find these searching and solemn words in the 16th chapter of Numbers, among the many precious things written aforetime for our learning, that through patience, and through comfort of the Scriptures, we might have hope.

To see Moses, when the Hebrews were among the brick kilns, labouring under the lash of their taskmasters, standing in company with Aaron before Pharaoh and working such wonders on their behalf, we would naturally think that he was assured of an abiding place in their hearts. No doubt he had a place when they stood by the Red Sea and saw the great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians, but their after history reveals that the place he had was far from an abiding one, and makes plain to us how unable they were to sanctify Moses in their hearts, much less Jehovah Himself. As we scan that history, we see murmurings and rebellion strewn all over their path, while on the other hand, the compassion, and forbearance, and kindness of Jehovah lighten up well-nigh every line of the sacred page. We might wonder that Israel were so perverse, if it were not for the heart that is within us each; a heart so prone to wander, a heart so prone to sin.

But if Israel failed to appreciate the service of Moses, the Lord appreciated it. He Himself humbled Moses on more than one occasion; but when others sought so to do, then God stepped in on his behalf. Even Aaron and Miriam are no exceptions. They spake against him, and said,

“Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses?
Hath He not spoken also by us?” (chap. 12.)

Not very deadly words one might say, and yet the Lord heard it . . . and spake suddenly, with the result that Miriam becomes leprous, as white as snow, and is shut up without the camp seven days. And moreover, the progress of the whole congregation is hindered,

And if the Lord will not suffer Aaron or Miriam to speak against His servant, neither will He allow the company of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, even although these have with them two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, called to the assembly, men of renown. No, for God it was who had fitted His servants Moses and Aaron to go before His people, and He had in Moses one who had given up much for His sake, accounting the reproach of Messiah greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, yea one who had refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather to be evil entreated with the people of God. The Lord knew the man Moses as very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth. Not so Israel. And Korah and his company say :

“Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the assembly of the Lord ?”

Had Moses and Aaron lifted up themselves above the assembly of the Lord ? Oh, no. Whatever, then, caused such thoughts to take possession of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram ? Listen !

They *envied* Moses also in the camp,
And Aaron the saint of the Lord ” (Psalm 106. 16).

It is not our desire to go into the details of the chapter before us, but let us consider the end of the matter ; how that the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up . . . so they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit : and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the assembly.

Envy ! we see it in Aaron and Miriam, and it did not end in the company we are considering ; for on the morrow (verse 41) all the congregation murmured against Moses and against Aaron, with the result, the solemn result, that fourteen thousand and seven hundred died by the plague ;

the consequence of wrath having gone out from the Lord.

So that it is a serious matter to speak against those whom the Lord has fitted to serve Him.

We have seen that "ye take too much upon you" is the language of envy, and having sought to look at the words as they affected Israel, we will now, for a moment, seek to consider them in a different way.

Moses was of God. Alas! that he should have met with so much opposition from that which was also of God, even the congregation.

And what about that which is of God to-day? We read, for instance, in Acts 18. 8, that many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized. That being so, Paul continued there for a year and six months, teaching the Word of God among them. And the result? That when Paul writes to such, it is unto the church of God in that city, with all that call upon the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, and so on. But this is known and generally conceded. If, however, those who to-day are saved by the grace of God, and baptized in obedience to the Lord, seek, through the teaching of the same Word of God, to carry out the principles of that Word, and become imitators of the church of God in Corinth, or, as in 1 Thessalonians 2. 14, "imitators of the churches of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus," what then? Ye take too much upon you, seeing "all the congregation" are holy. Is it not so? But we would not complain, nor would we be unfeeling or unkind.

Let us guard against anything that savours of envy in ourselves. For is it not written:

"A sound heart is the life of the flesh;

But envy is the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. 14. 30)?

Envy! how foreign it is to Him Whom we are called upon to imitate! He Who is meek and lowly in heart, and Who

said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13. 34). "Love envieth not." No. Where there is love, there is no room for envy.

Do we sometimes murmur? and do we not very often complain? And yet God does not like murmurers and complainers (Jude 16).

Let us "put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3. 12-14). The bond of perfectness is that which will cement us together,

If we do, so shall we keep rank, and prosper in the Lord's hand. Amen.

NORMAN D. W. MILLER.

A THING TO BE DESIRED.

"BEHOLD, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
That ran down upon the beard,
Even Aaron's beard;
That came down upon the skirt of his garments;
Like the dew of Hermon,
That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion:
For there Jehovah commanded the blessing,
Even life for evermore."—Psalm 133.

The Woman in Her Sphere.

A QUESTION.

IN reading through Proverbs 31., in verse 16 the question arises : What might be meant by the *field* that the virtuous woman considereth and then buyeth, and with the fruits of her hands planteth a vineyard ?

Would it be right to think that it is the household work which is to her hand, which she does to the good of all, which must bear fruit in years to come ? or is it something outside the household ?

A QUESTION ANSWERED.

A sister asks what benefit it is for her, or good to others, for her to be present at the prayer meeting, seeing she cannot pray aloud to God ?

In the first place she is doing the will of God, she is there on purpose, in fellowship with her brethren, she is in co-partnership with them as they seek to make known their requests unto God with thanksgiving. She will be as Mary was in Acts 12. 12, one with the many, breathing out her heart unto God for something special. Let us all bestir ourselves for something special. Is any among you suffering, let him pray, Jas. 5. 13, R.V. In this I think we are all one in Christ Jesus, every one of course, in their own place.

Now, what good to others ? At other meetings, as well as at prayer meetings, she can strengthen the hands of her brethren. Through her presence she may do much for the godly order and quietude of a prayer meeting, and at Gospel meetings she can help in no small measure in holding up the hands of those who may be the instruments in God's hands for the proclamation of His message. It is most encouraging to see a good turn-out of sisters at a prayer meeting.

ANOTHER ANSWER.

In answer to the question in September number of NEEDED TRUTH, I look forward with great joy to a prayer meeting.

I derive great benefit by going to this meeting. Hymn 302, Believers' Hymn Book, always comes very forcibly to my mind when assembled with brethren and sisters for prayer. The reason I enjoy this meeting so, is because I have little time alone with God in my home, so this is one hour I can spend with Him in prayer. How short the time seems, when we think of all we have to thank Him for and all we have to ask of Him. It also brings great joy to my heart to hear beloved brethren speaking to Him in prayer just as friend holds conversation with friend. I do not wish you to think I do not pray at home, I could not do without it. Every little thing I do I always lift up my heart to Him for guidance and help. I know those who think it foolish to pray about work, but I can speak from experience; everything, however small, is much more pleasant to do when you have told your Heavenly Father about it. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer! 1 Tim. 2. 11; 1 Thess. 5. 17; 1 Tim. 2. 1; 1 Peter 4. 7; I am sure too, that it cheers and helps the brethren to see sisters at the meetings for prayer.

A THIRD ANSWER.

Seeing the question in NEEDED TRUTH, and knowing somewhat of the power of prayer, I thought just a few words would be helpful. Dear sisters, do not think it is of no benefit to you to be in the prayer meeting, for God hears the silent prayer of a sister. I know a man very dear to me who was saved through a sister's prayer. Being myself very much alone I make a companion of the Lord Himself, and I have had answers to prayers as soon as I have asked them, although going about my work asking them; and some of the hymns we can help to sing are prayer to the Lord. And then I think of Rhoda in Acts 12. If she had not been at that prayer meeting she would not have been able to open the door to Peter when the Lord opened the prison doors and let him out. They were astonished, and we shall be also, at the answers, if we will but pray more. Pray without ceasing.

For Youngest Believers.

PRAYER.

“LISTEN to God” was the burden of last month’s message. “Speak to God” is the burden of this month’s. THEN we had the example of the Lord Jesus Christ brought before us as recorded in Isaiah 50. 4. Now we remind ourselves also of what we sing of Him—

“O, Thou by Whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way;
Thyself the path of prayer hast trod,
Lord, teach us how to pray.”

This is needed, for we know not how to pray as we ought.

It will prove helpful to search the Scriptures so as to see the Lord Jesus Christ treading the path of prayer. There is truth in the saying that if we were more like Him in this we should not be so very unlike Him in other things. He has left us an example in this matter, and He teaches us by precepts also. He encourages unto continuance in prayer though the answer be delayed. Answers He directs us to expect. But we are not to seek from God what we are not prepared ourselves to give to others.

The Psalmist said, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (Ps. 68.). The Lord Jesus says, “Whosoever ye stand praying, forgive if ye have aught against any” (Mark 11.) for “if ye forgive not. . . neither will your Father forgive” (Matt. 6.)

Our prayers should be for the things our hearts desire, as with Paul (Romans 10. 1), but our affections must be controlled by the will of God, else God will have to say of us :

“Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss,
That ye may spend it in your pleasures” (James 4. 4).

Listening much to God will help us to pray scripturally. We shall do well also, as young Christians, to cultivate that brevity, simplicity and definiteness so beautifully seen in the prayer of Jabez, who asked not thus in vain. See 1 Chron. 4. 10.

“Go, and do thou likewise.”

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 18 (continued from page 237).

From BLACKBURN. The Isle of Cyprus is the first scene of the Apostles' labours and toil, and their special work at both Salamis as a starting point and Paphos as a finishing point seem to show that they had gone through all the island proclaiming God's purposes.

The provinces of Pamphylia and Pisidia next receive similar attention, then Lycaonia.

The journey of the Apostles is accompanied with success. The Gentiles hear the Word, disciples are made and established, elders have been appointed, churches have been formed. Chapter 14. 27 reminds us of the Apostles' labours in an island and three provinces, of churches having been formed, and thus we see the work which began in Judea advance across the sea to Cyprus, and then to the provinces of Pamphylia, Pisidia and Lycaonia—the extension of the Fellowship. Hearts are now brought together in fellowship where faces had never met.

God must have been cheered as He viewed the outcome of His Son's death and the labours of His people. How encouraging!

From BRIGHTON. The attitude of the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia towards Paul and Barnabas makes manifest how completely Satan had blinded them to the truth, and also confirms what Stephen, at the close of his address of defence before the Sanhedrim Council, charges the Jews with—that is the hardness, or as he put it, the uncircumcision of their hearts and ears (Acts 7. 51).

Apparently it is owing to the attitude assumed and maintained by the Jews that Paul utters those words: "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles." They, the Gentiles, were glad, and glorified the Word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed (John 3. 16), and though Paul and

Barnabas are cast out, this is more than counterbalanced by the fact that the Word of the Lord is spread abroad throughout all the region, and that the disciples were filled (in spite of persecution) with joy and the Holy Spirit.

Leaving Antioch (in Pisidia) they pass on to Iconium, a city of Lycaonia, and here persecution also is their experience, causing them to flee to Lystra and Derbe. The Lord was with His servants, and bore witness unto the Word of His grace by granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands. At Lystra a helpless cripple hears the Word to his salvation, and apparently while Paul is bearing witness to the lovingkindness of God in the hearing of the well-meaning but misguided men of Lystra, the persecuting Jews of Antioch and Iconium arrive on the scene, and after persuading the multitude, perhaps that what was done had been accomplished by evil influence, they pour out their hatred on Paul by stoning and dragging him out of the city as one dead.

But the Lord overrules to accomplish His purposes, and Paul rises as one from the dead and again enters the city, and on the following day sets forth to Derbe, where many disciples are made.

Paul and Barnabas pressed on as with an object in view, and as we trace their course on their return journey, we can note what had been effected as, passing through the same parts, they are able to confirm the souls of the disciples and exhort them to continue in the faith, and that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God (of which they themselves had a very practical experience), and also in the pointing out of fit ones for the work of oversight in the newly-formed churches.

This having been done, they return to Antioch in Syria, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God. To the church there they relate their experiences, even all that God had done with them, and how that He had opened

a door of faith unto the Gentiles ; and thus the Fellowship widened out, though Antioch was now the centre.

Section 19 (continued from page 260).

FROM BRADFORD (*continued*). It has been on our minds to pursue still further the points raised in our last contribution in reference to the unity of the apostles. We pointed out what we believed to be the connecting links between Acts 15. and Gal. 2. 1-10, and noticed how those who were pillars—Peter, James and John—gave to Paul and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, and then how the conference of apostles and elders resulted in their all coming to one accord. We now propose to follow this out to the close of their work, so far as we read of them in the Scriptures.

The next definite mention of them is, perhaps, Acts 16. 4, where we read that Paul and Silas delivered unto the disciples among the Gentiles the decrees to keep which had been ordained of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. Here we see the apostle of the Gentiles abiding by, and exhorting the disciples to abide by, the counsel of the other apostles. So the churches were strengthened in the Faith.

The next point is, we think, Gal. 2. the latter half, and perhaps a few suggestions as to when this letter was written will be helpful at this juncture. We notice three points here in this epistle : Firstly, there is no mention of bonds or imprisonments as in almost all Paul's epistles¹ after his last journey. Secondly, verse 13 of chap. 4 implies that it was written after a second visit there. Thirdly, forasmuch as there is no mention of any accompanying minister such as Timothy and others in the epistle, in contrast to all other epistles written before his imprisonment to saints he had visited,² we suggest that he wrote at a time when such were occupied elsewhere. We therefore suggest

¹ The exceptions are 1 Timothy and Titus, both written evidently after his first imprisonment.

² Rome he had not visited, but Timothy was with him when he wrote. See Rom. 16. 21.

Ephesus as the place from which Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians, counting Acts 16. 6 as the first visit,¹ and Acts 18. 23 as the second; and on turning to Acts 19. 22 we read that the Apostle sent Timothy and Erastus, two of them that ministered unto him, into Macedonia, but he himself stayed in Asia for a while.

From the foregoing, Peter's visit to Antioch of Gal. 2. can be limited to one of the two recorded returns of Paul to Antioch, since the conference of Acts 15.—namely: Acts 15. 30-35, and Acts 18. 22. Further enquiry as to which particular instance agrees with Gal. 2. 11 is not now necessary. The chief point to notice is, that some time before writing the epistle Peter had a fitting and becomingly administered rebuke by Paul because of his conduct contrary to the vision and his own words of Acts 10. 11 and 15. That this, however, is not to be taken as an instance of opposition among the apostles is clear from the fact that Peter, writing to the Galatian saints along with others at no distant date from Paul's letter to them, recognizes them as being built a spiritual House according to the Divine pattern,² although those assemblies were planted and linked together through the work and teaching of Paul and Silas. Here, also, it is instructive to note how in chap. 5. ver. 12 he speaks of Silas (who most probably was with Peter while Paul was on that journey during which he wrote to the Galatians), who had been associated with Paul in his labours among those disciples as "the faithful brother, as I account him," by whom also he wrote: "exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God: stand ye fast therein."

Still one more instance have we of the unity and harmony existing between the very foremost of the apostles in those

¹ This verse seems to say that from Lycaonia they intended to go into Asia, but being forbidden went through Phrygia and Galatia instead. We think Lycaonia is not here considered as part of Galatia. Note the reverse order in Acts 18. 23.

² See 1 Pet. 2. 4 to 9, and 5. 1-3.

well-known verses in Peter's second letter (chap. 3. 15 and 16), evidently written at a very late date, wherein he fully recognizes the place Paul's epistles have among the other Scriptures in which he speaks of "these things." Surely if there was any opposition between those two apostles Peter would here be pronouncing judgment upon himself (ver. 16).

Last, but not least, is the testimony of one who wrote when the apostles' labours were all but ended: "Remember ye the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 17). They who were exhorted to contend earnestly for the Faith once for all delivered unto the Saints knew full well from what manner of persons they had received it and of what things they wrote (compare also 2 Pet. 3. 17), for they delivered them the one Faith once and for all.

[It is desirable to point out that Lycaonia was a part of the Roman province of Galatia. Though the names of provinces and countries varied in their significance from time to time, we regard it as very doubtful that Acts 16. 6 gives the first visit to Galatia. This we say as bearing on the correct historical interpretation of the Holy Scriptures.—ED.]

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

(*Psalm 119.*)

"THE CLEANSING OF THE WAY."

FROM PICKERING.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."

The realization of the truths of new birth and eternal life bring about a desire in the heart of a believer to walk according to faith. At this period the adversary puts forward the numerous moral improvements that man has formed for believers to aspire to, and in this way many are ensnared. Even our fleshly nature desires reformation, but let us seek to cleanse our way by the application to God's truths. In order to do this we must regard our deeds,

and not merely that which we thought to do, for we are so liable to make resolves which are harder to practise than to utter. And we young ones are often found wavering a little as to the harm in doing certain things which we were accustomed to do. It would be well for us to make resolves in a spirit like that of the Psalmist when he utters—

“ I have sworn and have confirmed it,
 That I will observe Thy righteous judgments;
 * * * * *
 Teach me Thy judgments.”

Our departure from God's commands is hardly observed, because our steps backward seem of so little importance. It would also seem as if the smallness of the departure caused us to think it not detrimental to our usefulness to God.

“ Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity ;
 Quicken me in Thy ways.”

Our life in time past was ruled by vain thoughts (Eph. 2. 2 ; Col. 3. 7). Therefore it is now our privilege to turn away from such life ; and in order to do this, let us consider a few of the things which some find hard to define, whether they are wrong or right. One of the most common practices of worldly men is that of smoking. Some young believers find it very difficult to discard this practice and cannot see any harm in it. Another worldly practice is the frequenting of places of amusement. In this also many young believers find it hard to keep unspotted from the world.

Both these practices are opportunities wherein the child of God can easily distinguish himself from the children of the world. And this should be our aim, as did the Thessalonians : “ Ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy in the Holy Spirit ; so that ye became an example to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia ” : remembering also the words of 1 John 2. 15 : “ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and

the vainglory of life, is not of the Father. . . . And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." The abandonment of the afore-mentioned habits may make a line of distinction between the worldly and the spiritual person, which distinction is often hard to maintain. What pleasure should a child of God derive from worldly entertainment, arranged to pass away time, and to keep God and eternity out of men's thoughts? Let us not encourage this dangerous practice, but much rather seek to use every available opportunity, meditating on God and His love. If we have time to spare, let us spend it searching the Scriptures and learning new truths, that later we may be able to help others, that they may profit by our words, looking unto ourselves that we be not ensnared. If we cannot decide what things are good in the world, but continue in that which is error, how shall we be fit to reign with Him? "Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?"

Much of this uncertainty is brought about by looking at what other believers do, instead of going back to the Law and to the Testimony. Let us not rely on every man's counsel, for the Psalmist did not even count princes any authority in God's matters, but God's testimonies were his counsel :

"Princes also sat and talked against me :
But Thy servant did meditate in Thy statutes.
Thy testimonies also were my delight
And my counsellors."

Let us each endeavour to maintain the spirit of the words, "Wherefore if meat maketh my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble."

May our conduct be such as will enable us to say :

"Let those that fear Thee turn unto me,
And they shall know Thy testimonies."

Paying great attention to the principle of the Psalmist when he utters :

"Let my heart be perfect in Thy statutes,
That I be not ashamed."

“Thou art good and doest good.
Teach me Thy statutes.”

And may God in His loving kindness and care

“Confirm His word unto His servants,
Who belong to the fear of Him.”

FROM S. S. PILAR DE LARRINAGA. “*For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth*” (Hebrews 12. 6). These words prove the fatherly character of God to His child. If His hand is heavy upon us, it is to bring us closer to Himself. The voice that speaks may be rough, but the hand that smites is gentle. Like Jonah, we would never have awaked, but for the storm. We are apt like aged Jacob to exclaim when in trouble, “All these things are against me” (Genesis 42. 36). But at last he had a juster verdict. “His spirit revived.” How we should each covet the spirit of the apostle Paul, whose seemed, whether in prosperity or adversity, to realize the Father’s hand (Romans 8. 28–31. Philippians 4. 11 to 13). We should not pray so much for trials to be removed but rather for grace to bear up under them, so that we may glorify Him in the fires.

“’Tis my happiness below
Not to live without the cross.
But the Saviour’s power to know,
Sanctifying every loss.
Trials must and will befall ;
But with humble faith to see
Love inscribed upon them all—
This is happiness to me !
Trials make the promise sweet,
Trials give new life to prayer,
Trials bring me to His feet,
Lay me low, and keep me there.”

SOMETHING TO LOOK FOR.

If our friends look back to what was said in September they will see that they have not completely solved the question. We may suggest to two that Abraham and Jacob are scarcely adequate instances especially in light of Acts 7. 5.

HIS BODY, THE CHURCH

(Concluded from page 268).

IN the Acts of the Apostles it is very clear that the history of God's people is so recorded that we are chiefly told of what transpired, viewed, as one may say, from an earthly standpoint. So that we read more of what was said and done than of the hidden springs of motive and the like. For example, in the very beginning of the book we read of those that were possessors of lands and houses, that they sold them. But we are not told that this was due to the Lord's teaching "My kingdom is not of this world." This we are left to infer. If we compare the two facts :

JEREMIAH BOUGHT A FIELD,
BARNABAS SOLD ONE,

it is easy to see that behind these two surface facts lay the foundation truths that to one had been given a promise as to restoration to earthly possessions, whilst the other had promises associated with Christ Jesus in the heavenlies. Here, indeed, the heavenly calling of the Church the Body is manifest ; because when the Gospel was in these days preached in the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, it produced in those who believed it this fruit, that they set light store on what to them as natural children of Abraham was very precious, namely, the land which God had promised to him, because God had called them to something higher and better associated with His purposes connected with the Lord Jesus Christ.

We are not arguing for any great measure of intelligence on the part of these early disciples. We simply note this as a fruit of the indwelling Holy Spirit wherewith they were filled that they sold that which to them as Israelites after the flesh was of great value, because they understood that God was doing a new work ; however little they might be able to enter into it before the time of revelation came.

Throughout the Acts, therefore, we must not look to see

that which has to do with the Body, the Church, on the surface, but rather behind the page.

Stephen is pre-eminently brought before us as a man full of the Spirit, both in general, Acts 6: 5, and particularly at the conclusion of his final testimony, Acts 7. 55. What was the burden of his testimony? Surely the continued and repeated opposition of Israel nationally to God and the purposes of God and the culmination of this in the betrayal and murder of the Righteous One. This closed the testimony to Israel nationally; the Lord was not only betrayed and murdered, but His mercy from heaven was rejected, and we never again read of such a message being proclaimed as is contained in Acts 3. 19-22.

God, however, was not taken by surprise, and He continued that work to the glory of His Son which had been commenced in Acts 2. and continues to this day; a work foreshadowed in the mystery of Genesis 1. 27 and especially 2. 21-24.

The questions then that we have to consider are :

1. Where shall we find evidences of God's work in this respect ?

2. Will this be a new beginning after Stephen's death or at some later period, or will it be a continuation of work already begun ?

Immediately after Stephen's martyrdom the church, saving the Apostles, was dispersed abroad. Philip, whose name comes next to Stephen in Acts 6. 5, and who is later expressly distinguished as the Evangelist, went down to Samaria as a herald of the Christ. His work was blessed and multitudes gave heed and believed Philip when he told the good news concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. They were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus when they received the Word of God, but they did not then and there receive the Holy Spirit. This required, in their case, that the Apostles should lay hands on them, which they did through the hands of

Peter and John. These, we understand, were the first believers, not being Jews or proselytes, who received the Holy Spirit; they were by natural birth Samaritans, and the Apostles were sufficiently acquainted with the Lord's mind to be willing to be identified with them. Perhaps the incident of John 4. had its weight here. Be this as it may, Peter and John as representatives of the Apostles unhesitatingly expressed their fellowship with Samaritan believers, and the Lord was graciously pleased to await their expression of fellowship before He immersed these believers in the Holy Spirit and thus into the Body.

We proceed to the case of Saul himself (who was called Paul). It is deeply significant that of all the wonderful things that were revealed to Paul, one of the most striking is actually contained in the very words addressed to him on the Damascus road. Saul had been persecuting to the death disciples of the Lord Jesus, and when the heavenly light shone round him and prostrated him to the earth, the voice he heard asked him "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" When he asked, "Who art Thou, Lord?" the reply came, "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest." That is to say, those whom he was persecuting were not merely disciples of the Lord, they were His members; members of His Body, not merely in the sense that He loved them very much; but that they were actually united to Him by the Holy Spirit in Whom they were baptized.¹

If we suppose that the account in Acts 9. 1-9 was given to Luke by Paul himself, who there tells how he first learnt this great lesson, it may afford some explanation of the fact that Paul apparently only once ever uses the term disciples himself to describe believers, although such were fittingly so called by other inspired writers. Thus, for

¹ Contrast Matt. 25. 31-46, where the Son of Man, as King on an earthly throne, recognizes Israelites as His brethren according to the flesh. In Acts 9. 1-22, the voice is from heaven and speaks of union there with the Lord, Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God. We seek in vain for "Son of Man" or "King of Israel" in Acts 9. 1-22.

instance, in Acts 16., Timothy is spoken of as a disciple, but Paul more endearingly calls him his true child in the Faith.

Saul's reception of the Holy Spirit does not differ from that of other of Israel's seed sufficiently to claim special attention here. That which was remarkable about him was not his introduction into the Church, the Body, but his work as a steward of the mysteries thereof.

In the somewhat well-known chapters Acts 10. 11. we have the history of Cornelius and those who with him became disciples of the Lord Jesus. We note especially here that Peter was evidently rather slow to understand God's purposes, but that he showed no spirit of opposition to that which he learnt. He then, when he had re-learnt the lesson that all things were now made clean, went down to Caesarea and just told what he knew, and got at least so far as this, that even the Old Testament prophets had borne witness that sins would be remitted to every one who believed on His Name. And then God worked—for the hearers as they listened and believed the testimony, not only received the forgiveness of their sins ; on them was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. That this was indeed baptism in the Holy Spirit Peter makes quite plain in his recital of the circumstances. And the whole of the passage Acts 10. 1 to 11. 18, must be read and read again and yet again and again to fully grasp how perfectly it was recognized by Peter in the first place and then by others, that as at the beginning with Jews, so here with Gentiles, it was a question of baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to believing ones ; at Pentecost, indeed after baptism in water, but here before. In both cases, however, the basis is the same ; viewed from the manward standpoint it is faith, yet viewed from the higher plane it was God in His unmerited grace.

We note the expression "They of the circumcision" in Acts 10. 45 ; 11. 2. It may be only used to describe cir-

cumcised persons, as in Col. 4. 11, but we think it indicates men who had an undue sense of the importance of circumcision, who did not understand that the day when this rite was of value was rapidly passing away.

On this account it became the policy of the Adversary to encourage in Jewish believers an inflated idea of the value of circumcision and other ordinances of the Old Covenant and thus to foster the growth of a sect within the Community which much hindered the work of God in the hearts of His people. Against this heresy much of Paul's letters to Rome and Galatia was directed. The attempt to bring Peter and Barnabas under its domination had at one time a momentary success, Gal. 2. 11-22; but apart from this Peter as well as James and John stood firmly against its inroads. The attitude of Peter and James being clearly defined in Acts 15. 7-11, 14-21, 23, 24, 28, 29; 21. 25, whilst John is as stern in Rev. 2. 9; 3. 9; as Paul in Titus 1. 10, 11.

It is evident that, in a sense, we have in each attack of the circumcisionists an assault upon the Church, concerning which the Lord had promised that the gates of Sheol (Hades) should not prevail. We say "in a sense" because the integrity of the Church the Body did not and could not depend on any faithfulness of Peter or his fellow apostles. The Christ Himself, is the Saviour of the Body. But it will be evident that when certain came down from Jerusalem and taught the need of circumcision¹ they were really undermining the foundation truth of the Church. For they were saying that, in order to be saved, a Gentile must become a Jew by means of the rite of circumcision, whereas it was by the essence of the gospel message as revealed to Peter in the case of Cornelius, and as preached by Barnabas and Paul, that Jews and Gentiles entered into the enjoyment of equal blessings on the ground of faith. This we understand to be what Paul referred to in Galatians

¹ Acts 15. 1.

2.; he privately laid before James, Cephas and John, as men of repute, the gospel which he heralded among the Gentiles.

Note how the essential identity of this gospel and that preached to the Jews is asserted in Paul's words to Peter in Galatians 2. 14-21. "We being Jews . . . believed that we might be justified by faith." "Thou, a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles."

All this is pertinent to our subject because it shows the great efforts that were made to distinguish where God made no distinction. In connexion with the Mystery and also in connexion with the dispensation or administration thereof, there is no question of Jew or Greek, circumcision or uncircumcision, bond or free.

The revelation of the Mystery goes beyond this, of course, but of its further depths we do not now propose to speak. We are, however, anxious to emphasize the organic connexion of these preliminary matters with that which was to follow.

We have already directed attention to the clear manner in which the baptism in the Holy Spirit first of Jews and then of Gentiles was manifested by the miraculous gifts that accompanied it. These served their purpose and were not needlessly repeated.

Thus we have a fulfilment of the Lord's promise to Jews and a like blessing to Gentiles, and as we see these and those thus baptized in the Holy Spirit we recognize that which Paul described in 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.

When Paul first commenced his oral teaching as to the Mystery we cannot say, but it is clear that the Church had

already been in building for many years, and that both Jews and Greeks had already been built in before the special revelation given to him made appropriate the term which he uses in his epistles concerning the Church, namely, that it is Christ's Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

C. M. LUXMOORE.

THE LIVING GOD.

It has deeply impressed the writer that the great need of our day is the realization that God is the Living God. Truly He has not left Himself without witnesses to this truth, but the testimony of these is misunderstood and His judgments are explained away. The spirit of the age is in the direction of banishing God from the earth. Eternal realities are openly scoffed at ; people say that Christianity is played out ; that the Bible has served its day and may now be discarded as other obsolete literature. Socialism avows itself the true hope of humanity.

But it is not alone or chiefly from the unregenerate that the progress of the truth meets opposition, it is not only they who appear to forget that God is the

LIVING GOD.

On the contrary, many of those who have been born from above, and know what it is to have eternal life with the assurance that they shall never by any means perish, are often found in opposition to the truth and appear forgetful of the Living God. Alas, that it should be so ! History again repeats itself and occasion is found for the Lord to complain as David did :—

It was not an enemy that reproached Me
Then I could have borne it.

As of Israel so, alas, He has of others to say to-day :—

I have nourished and brought up children
And they have rebelled against Me.

No danger to a man is so great as that which is associated with the experience of the truth :—

A man's foes are they of his own house.

No war is so much to be feared for the destruction of state or country as an internal war, a war amongst the subjects. The Lord Jesus Christ performed many miracles. By what power? Oh, the power of Satan, said His enemies. But the Lord said, a house divided against itself cannot stand, a kingdom divided against itself must be brought to nought.

But what has this to do with the subject of the Living God? Much every way. When are we in danger of being consumed one of another? It is when we bite and devour one another. And when do children bite and devour one another, think ye? Is it when they see their parents' eyes upon them? Oh, no! It is when they think themselves free from observation. So is it in spiritual things. Too often the truth learned in childhood days is forgotten, that

“THOU GOD SEEST ME,”

and so, in the forgetfulness of this, that God is the Living God, Who sees us constantly in darkness or in light, we become guilty of unbecoming behaviour. Had Achan remembered that the eye of the Living God was upon him as he secreted yon Babylonish garment and gold in his tent, think you he would have persisted in his avarice? Had David remembered this, would the foul blot of adultery have blackened the fair page of his life's history? What pith there is in David's words :—

His eyes observe the nations,
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves!

One is looking on, in silence it may be, but yet the One Who judgeth according to each man's work,¹ and Who asserts

¹ 1 Peter 1. 17.

His prerogative as the Humbler of the proud.¹ Thus He challenges poor Job to show his power :

Hast thou an arm like God ?
 And canst thou thunder with a voice like Him ?
 Deck thyself now with excellency and dignity !
 And array thyself with honour and majesty !
 Pour forth the overflowings of thine anger :
 And look upon every one that is proud and abase him,
 Look upon every one that is proud and bring him down.
 And tread down the wicked where they stand.

No wonder in the light of these and other things which reveal the

OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD

and the

IMPOTENCE OF MAN

that Job confesses on the one hand

I know that Thou canst do all things,
 and on the other

I abhor myself.

In this direction lies the secret of power, the knowledge of self and the knowledge of God ; the knowledge of the weakness of self, and the knowledge of the might of God ; as the Apostle Paul so beautifully yet tersely puts it :—

When I am weak, then am I strong.

God is jealous for His character as the Living God. This pre-eminently marks Him off from all other gods. He alone is the Living God.

The knowledge of God that Moses had, he put to practical use in his intercession. How he could stir God up, as it were, to vindicate His own character !

Israel had sinned. God was wroth with them, and justly so. All the manifestations of His mighty power exercised on their behalf seemed to be forgotten. Despondency and ingratitude reigned where confidence and thankfulness

¹ Job, 38-42.

should have filled the heart. And God said, "How long will this people despise Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, for all the signs which I have wrought among them? I will smite them." Note what Moses said—"Then the Egyptians shall hear it: for Thou broughtest up this people in Thy might from among them, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land: they have heard that Thou Jehovah art in the midst of this people . . . Now, if thou shalt kill this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of Thee will speak, saying, 'Because Jehovah was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore unto them, therefore He hath slain them in the wilderness.' " And what was the answer of God? How did the suggestion that He was unable to bring in those whom He had brought out affect Him?

"As I live, saith Jehovah, surely as ye have spoken in My ears, so will I do to you; your carcasses shall fall in the wilderness, but your little ones, which you said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have rejected."¹

"They could not enter in because of unbelief." Wherefore, "take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the Living God; but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called, To-day, lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin; for we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end."²

We have no thought that a child of God can so fall away as to be lost eternally—John 10. 28 puts that beyond question—but that there is the sad possibility of failing to have God's present purpose concerning us realized is equally certain, being demonstrable from the same unerring word of God. Is not this what Paul means when he entreats the saints at Corinth not to receive the grace of God in vain? 2 Cor. 6. 1.

¹ See Numbers 14.

² See Hebrews 3.

That there ever has been the danger of ingratitude characterizing the children of God and leading to other manifestations that can only be a grief to God will be denied by none who have truly learned of God. "We walk by faith and not by sight," but it is appalling sometimes the lack of faith our walk evidences. The word to the disciples of old, who witnessed a most singular example of the truth that

No word from God shall be void of power,
in the destruction of the fig tree which the Lord cursed,¹

"HAVE FAITH IN GOD"

is needed truth, because oftentimes to-day it is neglected truth. As faith in God decreases there is a resorting to the things of sight, a returning to things from which in the power of faith a former separation had been known. The unequal yoke is often but an evidence of lack of faith in God. At other times we fear it rather indicates the presence of the love of money, which is a root of all kinds of evil. True endurance for the Christian can only be known in proving the presence and power of the Unseen Eternal God, 'even as of Moses we read :—

He endured as seeing Him Who is invisible.²

The limits of our space will not admit comment on all the occurrences of the expression

THE LIVING GOD,

and we must ask our readers to themselves read those of them to which we now direct attention, assured that their doing this in the right spirit cannot but have the effect of humbling them in the presence of this Mighty One, yet leading them on to have greater confidence in Him and to render Him more implicit obedience than has hitherto characterized them. The passages omitted are also well worthy of being sought out. Here we have nuggets of greater value far than any for which the sons of men have toiled

¹ Mark 11. 12-23.

² Hebrews 11. 27.

in the mines of earth. Read Deut. 5. 22-23. The voice of the Living God. Joshua 3. 9-17. The Living God is among you. 1 Samuel 17. The armies of the Living God reproached. 2 Kings 19. The Living God reproached. Jeremiah 10. The Living God, Who He is and what He does. Jeremiah 23. The words of the Living God perverted and the sorrowful sequel. Acts 14. Turn from these vanities unto the Living God. Romans 9. Children of the Living God. 2nd. Cor. 3. The Spirit of the Living God. 2nd. Cor. 6. Temple of the Living God. 1 Thess. 1. To serve the Living and the True God. 1 Tim. 4. Our hope set on the Living God. Prayerfully pondered, these, and the other occurrences of this term, by which in part God maketh Himself known, cannot fail to beget in us somewhat of that spirit which caused the Psalmist to exclaim :

As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after Thee, O God,
My soul thirsteth for God,
For the LIVING GOD.

JOHN P. A. TAYLOR.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 19. Acts 15. 1-29.

The Conference at Jerusalem

(Concluded from page 285).

FROM JARVIS BROOK. There had been persecution and trouble from without, but it was trouble from within that occasioned the appeal to, and the conference of, the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas had been "confirming the souls of the disciples," and so forth, work engaged in and carried out with the full fellowship of their brethren; while others, without being sent, came and taught, "except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved," causing trouble and subversion of souls. That this contrary teaching was being pressed

is evident insomuch that "Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them"; it was also supported by some at Jerusalem, see verse 5.

In the end of the conference, the apostles and elders, writing unto the brethren in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, not only make mention of those to whom they "gave no commandment," but commendable mention of others they were sending forth, who should tell them "the same things by word of mouth." It is thus seen that no place was given for independency, and that the apostles and elders exercised responsibility and care throughout the Community; note too the words, "it seemeth good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things. . . ." see ch. 16. 4, and "so the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily."

From BELFAST. Wherever God is working in a constructive manner, Satan is also busy in a destructive manner; and as this specially characterizes Satan, we therefore need not be ignorant of his devices, but by reason of use have our senses exercised to discern good and evil.

Paul and Barnabas have fulfilled their first journey, through the grace of God, to which they had been committed. They had planted churches, which also they commended to the Lord, and having arrived back at Antioch they are face to face with a most insidious attack upon the glad tidings which they had been heralding forth. It was a sort of compromise of the Devil—the gospel of Christ perverted. The place of origin of this new doctrine was Judea, where appeared certain men of the sect of the Pharisees who believed, saying "Except ye be circumcised after the custom of Moses, ye cannot be saved."

Now it was clearly evident to Paul that if this proposition were true, then the grace of God was void, and righteousness coming through the law made of no account the death of Christ. Therefore, he and Barnabas had no small discussion and questioning with these men.

[Our friend goes on to suggest that perhaps it was during these discussions at Antioch that Paul rebuked Peter, as recorded in Galatians 2., regarding Acts 15. 5, as not chronological, so that Acts 15. 24, and Galatians 2. 12, may refer to the same persons who went out to Antioch. But this does not seem to us reliable in view of the recorded utterances of Peter, and we prefer the explanation of the relation of these passages given elsewhere.—ED.] Anyway the question was of such a serious nature that it was decided to send representative men up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders about it, namely Paul and Barnabas and others. Now all this is an unfolding of principles of God for our learning, because God had given through Paul an inspired revelation upon the whole question, but nevertheless He reveals to Paul the expediency of going up to Jerusalem, and note that the expense incurred by these men going up to Jerusalem is met by the church in Antioch.

When they were come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church, and the apostles and the elders. Now, having regard to the fact that over fourteen, and perhaps nearly seventeen, years had rolled by since the scattering of the church at the stoning of Stephen, it is reasonable to think that the church had again increased in numbers, and that it was gathered in companies as found expedient, within the area of the city, see Acts 12. 5, 12, 17, compared with ch. 4. 23, and ch. 21. 20. If so one might profitably ask, How did the church receive these men? Did they come together into one place or did the men divide themselves over the city?

Afterwards, the conference of apostles and elders is convened, but before it takes place, Paul has a private meeting with those whom he counted as pillars, thus showing his love of order and arrangement, and his desire that the leaders might understand each other.

During the meeting of the apostles and elders and others there was much disputing, but the only speeches recorded

are those of the apostles. Peter rose first and gave his voice in favour of Paul's teaching. His opening word, "Men—brethren," seems to show that only men were present at this meeting (or church). Then Barnabas and Paul make known how God was working through what they preached among the Gentiles (same argument as Acts 11. 17).

James follows, giving his weight to what Peter had said ; his conclusion and judgment appear to meet with unanimous approval. A letter is composed by the apostles and elders making known their conclusions, and two men, Judas and Silas by name, are chosen from among themselves to make these conclusions known by word of mouth. These they send on with Barnabas and Paul to the brethren in Antioch, Syria and Silicia.

From BLACKRIDGE. Here is clearly seen the principle of representation, and the brethren's representatives are the best they could possibly have sent.

On their arrival at Jerusalem they are received by the church, the apostles, and the elders, and rehearse in their ears that which they had already spoken to the brethren in Phoenicia and Samaria ; and the same heresy which had found its way to Antioch is seen in those described as "certain of the sect of the Pharisees who believed."

The apostles and elders are gathered together to consider the matter, but while they are a consultative council, they are also an executive, for upon the goodly counsel of James they come to one mind, that this was the right course to pursue, verses 22-29. See the Divine authority in verse 28, "It seemeth good to the Holy Spirit."

Now as to the door opened to the Gentiles. They are brought into the same heavenly blessings as the Jews before had, and are joined together in earthly testimony. The same elderhood was over all, which can be most clearly seen. Apostles and elders at Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas, representatives to them, the brethren (or elders) at Antioch,

and others are its composition. Thus they were tending the flock of God (1 Pet. 5. 2).

With those labours of Paul and Barnabas, concerning the Gentiles, Peter links himself on in front, declaring that he was the one whom God chose, that by his mouth the Gentiles should hear the Gospel (Acts 10). These were the first Gentiles (manifestly seen as such) to be saved and in-dwelt by the Holy Spirit. Notice the words "And He made no distinction between them and us," Jew and Gentile both saved in the same way, verse 11.

Peter here looks upon the fundamental principles, which are alike, but as to the words used and baptism before the reception of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2. is different from Acts 10.; but Peter's words are significant.

James clenches home the whole matter when he says "Simeon hath rehearsed how first God did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name; and to this agree the words of the prophets: as it is written. After these things I will return."

Shall we put two and two together? A remnant of Israel saved, Acts 2. to 9., see Rom. 11. A people for His name out from among the Gentiles, Acts 15. 14. Both growing together on the same olive, Rom. 11. 17. Both in one Body, Eph. 2. 11-19, and on the same Foundation, verse 20. Note Peter's remarks, "He made no distinction between us and them" (however much this may have astonished Peter), "we will be saved. . . in like manner as they."

From LONDON S.W. We suggest that this chapter reveals definitely the principles and methods of government which should obtain in the Fellowship. The latter, itself a unity, is composed of smaller units, namely, churches of God, which, in turn, consist of still smaller units, namely individual saints.

In this organization, independence is not recognized, and just as individual saints are related to one another and are thereby dependent upon one another (compare 1 Cor. 12).

so churches of God, as part of a larger whole, are dependent upon one another, and must work harmoniously. This was true of the Fellowship in the early days, as it should be true of it to-day : therefore let us consider the lesson in Acts 15.

Antioch had been disturbed by men who tried to enforce erroneous doctrines. The elders (overseers) of the church endeavoured to decide the difficulty themselves, but finding this impossible, it was resolved that the matter (a matter which, since it was of moment to Antioch, was of importance to other churches, and therefore to the Fellowship) must be laid before a higher authority. There were in the Fellowship then (as there are to-day) men who had been gifted, and who had been educated, by God, to deal with matters of more far reaching importance than those which merely concerned individual assemblies, and it was to these men that the representatives of Antioch came. And note the spirit of unity and concord among these men, and how they forebore with each other, and worked towards an unanimous decision.

When that decision was given and despatched, it was not received in Antioch with dissatisfaction, nor in a critical spirit, but with thankfulness and joy.

It is worthy of note that when Paul and Barnabas passed through Phoenicia and Samaria (v. 3) they did not impose a burden of anxiety on the saints by relating the events which had troubled Antioch, and which had necessitated their present mission, but rather encouraged the saints with news of God's continued grace to the Gentiles—news which occasioned "great joy."

"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God." We read in Acts 13. 13 of John Mark turning back on the threshold of a journey into Asia ; and surely this was evidence of his unfitness for the hazardous work which is contemplated in verse 36. But, in spite of past experience, Barnabas desires to take John ;

and here ensues a sad sequel to John's turning back—the parting asunder, in an angry spirit, of two who had before together “hazarded their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

From BLACKBURN. Acts 15. This should be no doubt studied with the Galatian Epistle. The dealing with a serious controversy in the days of the apostles is recorded ; shewing how, when brethren are disagreed in a particular place, the grievance should be taken to a larger assembly than their own, or to some large meeting or gathering of brethren from various parts in order that unanimity may be arrived at.

Whilst it is very important to observe the point of disagreement, the way in which the matter was dealt with is of as much importance, if not more so, especially in view of the organization of this new earthly testimony.

Although conscious of being right, Paul did not object to journeying up to Jerusalem ; Barnabas and several others accompanying him on that long and perilous journey. In Galatians 2. it is seen that Paul went to Jerusalem by revelation.

On arriving in Jerusalem they told the church there all the things that had happened on their recent tour, to the great joy of all the saints ; but it is only a company of competent men who consider the matter in question, and prior to this, Paul and Barnabas had laid the matter before men of repute privately, as see Galatians 2. 2, 9.

In the dissension occurring when the matter was being considered, Peter delivers a sound, weighty argument that none present dare oppose—“And all the multitude kept silence,” verse 12. The word “multitude” refers to the company of apostles and elders who were together. Then after Barnabas and Paul have recounted God's working, James speaks, particularly pointing out the things to be considered and observed in the Christian life, and in this present day such things find their counterpart in the statutes (Psalm 119).

When everything was settled peaceably, men were chosen and sent down to Antioch to give the result of the decision arrived at in Jerusalem.

We send greetings to our friends in the different corners, and would like to say we had one of the Editors at a recent meeting, and were profited by his presence.

NOTICE.

We are extremely thankful for the articles contributed on Acts 15. 1, and in order to conclude this in the current year, we are crowding out several interesting communications on the Psalms (18., 19., 119). It will be convenient to adopt a suggestion from BLACKBURN and give a list of the next few sections of the History of the Fellowship, on which contributions are invited, namely Section 20, Acts 15. 36-39. The separation of Paul and Barnabas, together with notes on passages of Scripture elucidating their subsequent relations.

Section 21, Acts 15. 40 to 16. 5. The first journey of Paul with Silas, through Syria, Cilicia and Lycaonia—(we trust the use of the letters to Timothy as bearing on his early history, may not be neglected).

Section 22, Acts 16. 6-10. The journey through Phrygia and Galatia, and the causes of their crossing to Macedonia. Who joined them at Troas ?

Section 23, Acts 16. 11-15. The work at Philippi, part 1. Lydia.

Section 24, Acts 16. 16-24. The expulsion of the Python and the consequences.

Section 25, Acts 16. 25-40, Psalm 119. 62, and what followed.

Note, under Sections 23 and 25, a few well-considered and pithy observations on so-called household baptism may be included.

We must beg even our best and most valued contributors to study brevity and conciseness (these are two things). But we also beg each and all not to be weary in well doing.

Alternately with the contributions on the History of the

Fellowship as above divided, we look for notes on Psalms 19., 20., and so forth, and on Psalm 119., and finally on other matters of interest. The order of the insertion of all this we shall make our care that it may be to general profit as well as encouragement.

SOMETHING TO LOOK FOR.

The precise seven words asked for on page 239 will be found on an earlier page of this number in an article by C. M. L. (page 289). We have here to put on record the replies received. C. B., who is scarcely one of the younger men, correctly supposed that we referred to Baruch and Barnabas. We should say Jeremiah rather than Baruch (Jer. 32.). R. D. C. (October 9) refers to Jacob buying a parcel of ground as "suggestive of earthly blessing and prosperity in contrast to Barnabas, who sold it because of his apprehension of the heavenly character of his inheritance in Christ." I. P. (September 5). "Abraham bought a tomb because he looked forward to death, Barnabas sold a field because he looked forward to the speedy return of the Christ." J. M. (September 16). "God in blessing His earthly people promises them, and gave them earthly possessions. Abraham begins by buying the field of Ephron (Gen. 23.), and God blesses his seed until they possess all the land of Canaan (Josh. 21. 43). Christ however, the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 9.), teaches thus, 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon this earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven' (Matt. 6. 19). And Joseph, called Barnabas, follows this teaching at the beginning of his life, for he sells his field and lays the money at the apostles' feet (Acts 4. 36), thus obtaining treasure in heaven" (Luke 18. 22). See Acts 7. 5, 15. Still later Naboth (J. M.) and Boaz (J. A.) have been contrasted with Barnabas. We are glad so many have seen the significance of Joseph Barnabas' sale, and we are not sorry that such varied Old Testament contrasts have been discovered.