

NEEDED TRUTH

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IN CONSULTATION WITH

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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.

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AGAINST PRIDE IN CLOTHES.

BY DR. WATTS (1674-1748).

Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain :
But a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.—*Prov.* 31. 30.

WHY should our garments, made to hide
Our parents' shame, provoke our pride ?
The arts of dress did ne'er begin
Till Eve our mother learned to sin.

When first she put her cov'ring on,
Her robe of innocence was gone ;
And yet her children vainly boast
In the sad marks of glory lost.

How proud we are ! how fond to show
Our clothes, and call them rich and new !
When the poor sheep and silkworm wore
That very clothing long before.

The tulip and the butterfly
Appear in gayer coats than I ;
Let me be drest fine as I will,
Flies, worms, and flowers exceed me still.

Then will I set my heart to find
Inward adornings of the mind :
Knowledge and virtue, truth and grace,
These are the robes of richest dress.

No more shall worms with me compare ;
This is the raiment angels wear :
The Son of God, when here below,
Put on this blest apparel, too.

It never fades, it ne'er grows old,
Nor fears the rain, nor moth, nor mould :
It takes no spot, but still refines ;
The more 'tis worn, the more it shines.

In this on earth would I appear ;
Then go to heav'n, and wear it there,
God will approve it in His sight ;
'Tis His own work, and His delight.

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NEEDED TRUTH.

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THE MOUTH OF GOD.

“God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, Whom He appointed Heir of all things” (Heb. 1.).

We might divide this opening statement into two parts.

Firstly. How God spake in olden times before the manifestation of His Son to the earth (1 Pet. 1. 20).

Secondly. How God spake in New Testament times.

In connexion with our first part shall we consider first of all what the Old Testament teaches as to who or what manner of man a prophet is? Unto this end let us turn to Exod. 4. 10-17, “And Moses said unto Jehovah, O Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant: for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And Jehovah said unto him, Who hath made man’s mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I Jehovah? Now therefore go, and I will be WITH THY MOUTH, and teach thee what thou shalt speak. And he said, O Lord send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send. And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against Moses, and He said, Is there not Aaron thy brother the Levite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him and PUT THE WORDS IN HIS MOUTH: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and it shall come to pass that he shall be to thee a mouth,

and thou shalt be to him as God." We quote this in full as it is a most important scripture for our present purpose. We find here that Moses put the words which Jehovah gave unto him into the mouth of Aaron. Exod. 7. 1 leads us a step further. "Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." Moses was the prophet of Jehovah—many scriptures might be adduced to prove this—Aaron was the prophet of Moses.

As a further proof of what a prophet really in the first place is, we might turn to Jer. 1. 4. "Now the word of Jehovah came unto me" (v. 9). "Then Jehovah put forth His hand, and touched my mouth, and Jehovah said unto me, BEHOLD I HAVE PUT MY WORDS IN THY MOUTH." We cannot too carefully notice these words; they are of supreme importance at the present moment. Lay them well to heart, reader. A similar expression occurs very frequently in other scriptures which we may have occasion to refer to.

In another passage referring to false prophets we find the following. "Thus saith Jehovah of hosts: Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you; they teach you vanity: they speak a vision of their own heart, and NOT OUT OF THE MOUTH OF JEHOVAH" (Jer. 23. 16). These latter words infer that the prophets of Jehovah did speak out of the mouth of Jehovah in contrast to those false prophets who did not. It is unnecessary to proceed further in order to prove that a prophet from the Old Testament standpoint, at any rate, is one whose mouth uttered the words of God. The foretelling of future events was quite a secondary thought, but it might well be expected at a time when there was not the complete revelation from God that there is to-day, that those who spoke from God, Who knows the end from the beginning, would speak of things yet to take place in the future. Thus by degrees it came to pass that a prophet was looked upon as a foreteller of future events.

Indeed, it is a significant fact that Moses though standing pre-eminently as a mighty prophet (type of Him Who was to come) is not conspicuous as a foreteller of future events. We are of course not forgetful of the fact that in his writings we find the germ of all future prophecy (see Gen. 3. 15), but not in the very pronounced and detailed way in which, for example, Isaiah and Daniel speak.

In connexion with our subject, we do well to ponder and weigh very carefully and fully the following New Testament scripture :

“For no prophecy ever came by the will of man : but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit ” (2 Pet. 1. 21).

Doubtless it has been noticed by many readers that the word “holy ” is omitted. This is correct ; nearly always where the R. V. makes such an omission, or alteration, the Revisers have ample grounds for doing so : and our own acquaintance with other scriptures might well lead us to doubt the fitness of the word “holy ” in this place.

A glance at a few scriptures will show that God at times was pleased to use men who were not holy to accomplish His purpose : admitting, of course, that usually God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets (Acts 3. 21).

In this same second letter by Peter we read “children of cursing ; forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the hire of wrong doing ; but he was rebuked for his own transgression : a dumb ass spake with man’s voice and stayed the madness of the prophet ” (chap. 2. 15, 16).

As this scripture should not be passed over lightly, let us turn to Num. 23. to see the detailed account of this, where we shall find much to instruct us in the present connexion (v. 11). “And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me ? I took thee to curse mine ene-

mies, and behold, thou hast blessed them altogether. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which JEHOVAH PUTTETH IN MY MOUTH." Balaam had before told Balak (chap. 22. 38) that he had no power at all to speak anything; "THE WORD THAT GOD PUTTETH IN MY MOUTH, that shall I speak."

How often do we find the familiar expression noticed before in Exodus and Jeremiah throughout this narrative; "PUTTETH IN MY MOUTH"; again (v. 16) "And Jehovah met Balaam and PUT A WORD IN HIS MOUTH" (see also v. 26 and chap. 24. 10-14).

Caiaphas is another who might be perhaps put in the same category with Balaam. "But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor do ye take account that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation perish not. Now this he said not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation" (John 11. 49-51).

Necho, King of Egypt, is another example, although, of course, one could not put Necho in the same category with Balaam—and yet he could not be classed very well with those spoken of in Acts 3. He appears to have some knowledge of the true God, for he says "God hath commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from MEDDLING WITH GOD, Who is with me, that He destroy thee not. Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho, FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD."

Furthermore, the words translated "came" and "moved" are from the same verb, and again translated in Acts 27. 15 and 17 by the word "driven." We see from this fact that the men whom God took up to speak His words had no choice of their own in the matter. As in the case of Balaam so in all: "what Jehovah speaketh that will

I speak"; they were "carried" or "borne along" or "driven" by the Holy Spirit. This is further evidenced by the fact that after they had spoken or written, as the case may be, the prophets sought and searched diligently—"searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto" (1 Pet. 1. 11).

It is evident that when Isaiah penned such words as are recorded in the fifty-third chapter of the book that bears his name, as found in our Bibles, he very little indeed entered into the meaning and depths of the sublime prophecy—the words not being from or of man could only be fully understood by Him Who indicted them. In a later day it was necessary for the Lord Jesus to open the mind of certain ere they could understand the Scriptures (Luke 24.).

1 Cor. 2. 10-14 comes in very appositely here; we quote in full:—"But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him? even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God. But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, NOT IN WORDS WHICH MAN'S WISDOM TEACHETH, BUT WHICH THE SPIRIT TEACHETH: comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Now, 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."

Let men talk of the ideas and thoughts being inspired if they will, for us the word of our God is sufficient. Note and mark well "WORDS which the Spirit teacheth."

With regard to the fact mentioned above that the words of God through the prophets were written at times, we

would make mention of two important and very plain scriptures. Deut. 31. 24: "And it came to pass when Moses had made an END OF WRITING THE WORDS OF THIS LAW IN A BOOK until they were finished . . . take this book of the law, and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God."

The other is in connexion with Jeremiah already referred to. "Then Jeremiah called Baruch the son of Neriah; and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of Jehovah which He had spoken unto him upon a roll of a book" (Jer. 34. 4).

When Baruch read the words before the princes they asked him "How didst thou write all these words at his mouth? Then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book."

Most readers will remember the solemn sequel to this when King Jehoiakim cut the roll with the penknife, and cast it into the brasier until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was in the brasier—suggestive, indeed, of the time that now is when Satan is using more subtle yet futile means of seeking to destroy the indestructible words of the Living God for "the word of the Lord abideth for ever." "For ever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. 119. 89).

In concluding our first part we will quote the words of Him Who spake as never man spake, when attacked by the great Adversary whom He came to conquer, of whom He was able to say "The prince of the world cometh and hath nothing in Me." Happy and well for us if we use the same all-powerful weapon "the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God."

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD."

J. CROSTHWAITÉ RADCLIFFE.

(To be continued.)

ZIKLAG.

“AND David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul” (1 Sam. 27. 1). What a gloomy view of the future David takes ; what needless fears. The way in which goodness and mercy had followed him up to this point should have been but a cause for increased confidence in God. Surely the remembrance of former favours should have been a guarantee of the continuance of the same favour in the future. Had not God said “I have provided Me a king” ? The holy oil had been poured upon him ; he had been singled out as God’s anointed. Must God’s purpose and promise come to naught ?

Fearlessness burns the bridges behind ; fear the bridges before ; faith undeterred by seeming difficulties steps forward and goes on. What Jacob considered his chief calamity as he said “All these things are against me,” was read in a different light when he looked upon the fulfilment of God’s purpose ; then he understood it was the “all things” working together for good.

“God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor. 10. 13).

The trial of David’s faith, like the trial of our own, is needed. The trial of Abraham’s faith is seen in the surrender of Isaac ; the way of escape in the voice from heaven staying his hand and revealing the ram caught in the thicket. The hill of Hachilah was David’s Moriah but a short time previously. News of David’s hiding-place has reached Saul, who goes forth to seek and find him. Every avenue of escape is closed ; the cordon of chosen men surround him. In this moment of David’s extremity, word reaches Saul that the Philistines have made a raid upon the land. Saul’s presence is required to repel the enemy in another quarter. How often in our own experience when the

future seemed dark and foreboding, has He not in His own good way, and at His own good time, opened up a way of escape ?

“ Speak unto the Children of Israel that they go forward.” Upon their advance, the Red Sea, which seemed an impossible barrier, is rolled back, disclosing a way opened up of God for His people.

In the light of his previous experience why speak thus : “ I shall one day perish ” ? Not only so, but in the light of previous testimony borne by Jonathan, Abigail, and Saul :—“ Thou shalt be king over Israel ” (1 Sam. 23. 17). The substance of Abigail’s prediction is the throne with the final overthrow of all his enemies (1 Sam. 25. 28–30). Saul’s own reluctant admission “ Thou shalt surely be king and the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.”

Surely a threefold cord not quickly broken. “ Better for me that I should escape into the land of the Philistines.” “ Better ! ” It may be easier, but it can never be better. And are not many of God’s saints to-day seeking an easier path, are not many of the Lord’s disciples turning back and walking no more with Him ? The trials of the path in which He leads are too great. An evil heart of unbelief may suggest an easier ; yet infinite love leads in the better path. Under these trying circumstances a Ziklag is presented and accepted ; the favour of Achish, king of Gath, sought as if preferable to the favour of Jehovah, and David is now in the service of those against whom he had formerly been ranged !

And does not history repeat itself ? Many of those who were one with us in the fight, and presumably contending for the same things, have gone back and are building again what they once professed to destroy, causing us to wonder whether it is a repetition of Lot seeking his level in Sodom, or David seeking a breathing spell in Ziklag. The burning of Sodom was Lot’s opportunity for ever gone ;

the accumulation of his life's labour consumed in the fire and gone up in the smoke of Sodom, and he himself "saved so as by fire." But the burning of Ziklag was an extension of Grace, another opportunity given. The seeming calamity may cause many a bitter tear. Oh! the grief of David as he looks upon that which was once so dear, now a smoking ruin and a desolation! "In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and He answered me."

"Bring hither the ephod"; David asks guidance and God answers. What a contrast to Saul, who, in the hour of his distress, in the darkness of the night—which was yet nothing to the darkness which reigned within—goes down to enquire at the Witch of Endor, and seeks to learn the secrets of heaven through the sorceries of hell. David, in the kindness of God's disciplinary dealings, is brought back, and the struggle is renewed until at last his efforts are crowned with success and the throne is reached.

How necessary the trials through which he passed! an experience gained, a personal fitness attained, all necessary in view of the responsible position he had to fill. And as we review the history of David, does it not remind us of a necessary fitness and experience on the part of those who would rule to-day in the assemblies of God? And in David we have one unto whom was given a greater share of responsibility than was given to others. David's first charge—a few sheep in the wilderness (1 Sam. 17. 20); next—a captain over 400 in the cave (1 Sam. 22); again the anointed one over the house of Judah (2 Sam. 2. 4), and finally over Judah and all Israel. Surely this shows possibilities attainable by those who would seek to progress in the things of God.

May God give delivering grace to those who, like David, weary in the conflict, have sought a Ziklag; and to those who are still fighting the good fight of the Faith, grace to continue in the way that is pleasing to Him.

WILLIAM REYNOLDS.

PRAISE YÉ JAH.

'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.

SURELY those who have known such a deliverance should not lack heart to buy up every opportunity of sounding the praise of Him who hath delivered them from so great a death, and blessed them with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenlies in Christ. Truly the first sensations of the newly born again one were aptly described by the one who wrote—

I feel like singing all the time,
 My tears are wiped away ;
 Christ Jesus is my Friend, e'en mine,
 I'll praise Him every day.

Would that the impulse that underlies those words was more prevalent to-day, when listlessness and carelessness characterize much of our praise ! Perhaps some of this can be traced to a certain antipathy to musical expression thereof which had its beginning as far back as the days when the late Mr. John Knox, in mistaken zeal, destroyed much that was commendable in the service (erratic though it was) of those to whom he was opposed. In this, as in all else pertaining to the service of the House of God, we must rely on the unerring Word of God for guidance, and referring to Old Testament Scriptures relating thereto, we are at once struck with the great care manifested in this department thereof. Some time ago the writer heard a brother in Christ expressing himself as being greatly opposed to music, describing it as one of the allurements of Satan which had come to us from Cain. This, we apprehend, was an allusion to Gen. 4. 21, where we find that Jubal, the father of all such as handle the harp and pipe, was a descendant of Cain. We were grieved to hear such an expression of mind,

since we read in the inspired Word, of David, the man after God's own heart, rendering praise unto Him accompanied by his beloved harp. However, since instrumental music forms no part of the Apostles' teaching concerning the worship of God in His House to-day, we will confine ourselves to the singing as that which is comely and according to the will of God for His people now. (See Eph. 5. 19; Col. 3. 16; 1 Cor. 14. 26.) These scriptures are conclusive as to the will of God for us in this dispensation of grace. But in this, as in all else, we must ever remember that God is a God of order, not of confusion. Alas, that in the day in which we live so many of God's people seem to regard disorderly singing as a mark of great spirituality!

But is it not possible that some young people with a natural talent for music might find legitimate scope for their abilities in this direction, who are otherwise in danger of being stumbled or repelled by the marked neglect with which music is often treated? But some may say that music should have no place now in the worship of God. Certainly there is no place for instrumental music. But we are indebted to some musicians for the simplest melody that voices our praise. Then the fact that we must sing together demands an order which can only be furnished by music.

Some might object on the score of never having learned music. To such we would refer certain that we have known, who, when newly born again, found themselves at a disadvantage through being unable to read. They set themselves to learn, because of their desire to know in order to be able to give pleasure to God, by doing His will. Prompted by such an incentive, that is, to give pleasure to God, we are assured one would make great progress in the practice of singing and the study of music.

Perhaps one or two references to the music that was characteristic of the House of God of the past dispensation would be helpful. 1 Chron. 25. 9 makes it clear that the singers were not miraculously instructed, but that as in

modern times they had to be taught; 1 Chron. 15. 22-27 shows us that there was a master or leader of the song skilful unto instruction, who, it should be noted, had no priority over his fellows when it came to the charges (1 Chron. 25. 9). Most interesting to us in these last days are the references in Ezra 3. 11; Nehemiah 12. 24, the latter reminding us that the singers still had need of an overseer (R.V.). It is true that in this, as in all else that pertains to the House of God, Satan is interested, and if by any means he can use it to the detriment of the people of God He will do so. Yet this ought not to deter us; if we apprehend it as His will rather it should cast us the more upon Him, for the help we ever stand in need of to resist the wiles of the Adversary.

In conclusion, we would emphasize the motive which ought to prompt us in this matter. We ought not to be influenced by any desire to make a vain show in the flesh, such as learning popular so-called Gospel hymns in order to attract a crowd to the open-air Meeting, but rather a desire that when we praise Him in His courts, we may do so in perfect harmony and order, consistent with the character and requirements of Him before whom we stand, and if the accomplishment thereof be at much cost of time and pains, who is more worthy of the very best that we can give?

J. BUCHANAN, JUNR.

OBEDIENCE.

“THOUGH He was a Son yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered” (Heb. 5. 8).

Here we are caused to pause and again consider “The great mystery of Godliness, He who was manifest in flesh” (1 Tim. 3. 16); and to search for a reason why such words should be penned in the Holy Scriptures. The more so when we cast our memory back to Old Testament Scriptures and therein read, “Behold my Servant whom I uphold, My chosen in whom My soul delighteth” (Isa. 42. 1). Again in the New Testament we have such words as these: “My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.” It cannot therefore mean that He required to learn to be obedient; His delight was in the law of the Lord, and on His law did He meditate day and night.

E'er He came to this scene He could read in the roll of the book that which was written concerning Himself and say, “Lo, I am come to do Thy will, O God (Heb. 10. 7).

Before Him was the will of His God and Father which had to be accomplished upon the earth; but how much lay between Him and the realization of such, when, as a babe, we gaze upon Him in yonder Bethlehem manger. What sorrow, what suffering, difficulties it would seem insurmountable when we gaze along that pathway of His to Calvary's Cross in the distance; how eager He was to fulfil His Father's purpose. Yes, it was He and none other who could say, “I do always the things that please the Father.” Who in turn could say, “My Son in whom I am well pleased.”

The Father's heart was ravished in His Son's obedience as it never was by any before or since. Yet there was before Him a pathway the sufferings of which the mind fails to grasp. Yea, the faculties of men and angels fail to grapple with it.

The many sorrows that He bore,
 And oh! that crown of thorns He wore,
 That I might live for evermore,
 Is more than tongue can tell.

As we trace out His pathway of obedience we at last come to the night in which He was betrayed, and it becomes one and all to draw nigh with reverent steps to gaze in awe at that scene which was enacted there.

The One who was afore called the Man of sorrows, whose daily companions were sorrow and grief, seems to be totally overwhelmed by them. Had He not met Satan in an hour of weakness after a forty days' fast and had overcome? He had been an outcast those years since then, the offscouring of all things, without where to lay His head. He had known what it was to be hungry and thirsty. Yes, and lonely so far as man was concerned, when obedience entailed the standing well-nigh alone for God, whom He loved and served with His whole heart, soul, mind and strength.

Now His soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. We do indeed wonder why the flesh did not give way under such a strain. A struggle is going on within Him of which the others, who are sleeping around, are unconscious. A wrestling with which Jacob cannot compare, for there is no sun rising on Him as was on Jacob in the morning. A thrice repeated prayer which finds no alteration of the will of God for Him Whose will was blended with His Father's. "Nevertheless not My will but Thine be done." Never has He learned obedience as He does now. Truly "He became obedient unto death, the death of the cross."

We cannot but gaze at the Cross and say, "For as through one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5. 19).

No man liveth to himself and none dieth to himself. What results have accrued from both? The one by dis-

obedience brought sin and death and everything coupled therewith, the Other righteousness and life and blessings innumerable.

To think that His obedience has won for us perfect righteousness, and at what a cost !

Yes, it would seem that because this gift of righteousness costs saints of God nothing they underestimate its inestimable worth ; and because it cannot be taken from them they go from lawlessness to lawlessness !

Let such again read Rom. 6. Newness of life does it say, but this is all gone, or nearly so. It lasted a little at the first. They loved to be children of obedience, not fashioning themselves according to their former lusts in the time of their ignorance ; neither thought they to continue in sin that grace might abound, nor did they think that because they were not under law, but under grace, they had liberty to do what they wished. They became obedient to that form of teaching whereunto they were delivered.

What has wrought the change ? Surely it was this little disobedience, and that little action which the word of God seemed not to clearly define the wrong ; though the Spirit acting upon their conscience said, " Do not do it, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Would that this picture was painted in unnatural colours and unreal ; but we fear it is the case with too many of God's saints. Let us all remember the Scripture which saith, " His servants ye are whom ye obey."

In following this subject a little further we could not do better than turn for a little to Old Testament Scripture and therein hear God expressing His desire regarding Israel. " Oh that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep My commandments always that it might be well with them and their children for ever" (Deut. 5. 29). God's craving after the people He loved is herein expressed. A people chosen, peculiar above all peoples, with whom He made a covenant. Who assured Moses (who read to them

the judgments of the Lord) that all that the Lord had spoken they would do and be obedient (Exod. 24.). Did they apprehend what they were saying, and had they heard correctly the words of the Lord by Moses the mediator? Could it be that they understood what God expected of them? He Who on the basis of that covenant was pleased to come and dwell in their midst? Surely they came far short, for their disobedience was of the most flagrant character, insomuch that He said that He would destroy them had not Moses, His chosen, stood in the breach (Psalm 106.). This psalm paints them in their true colours. God, who is indeed longsuffering, did display His grace unto them in ways manifold and varied. Yet His word (which was spoken through angels) did prove steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward. The question now comes to us, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" A chosen people as were those of Exodus according to the foreknowledge of God in sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1. 2). Chosen in the foreknowledge of God that we might be obedient. Yes, and to this end saved and called with a holy calling and a heavenly (Heb. 3. 1), not according to our works but according to His own purpose in grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal (2 Tim. 1. 9).

Please connect that already referred to in 1 Peter with Heb. 12. 18-19. Herein are contrasted Old and New Covenants, unto which they came and unto which we have come.

Let us see that we refuse not Him that speaketh, for there is the time of shaking coming; when only those things that cannot be shaken will remain and one of these is the kingdom which we have received, for it was the Father's good pleasure to give us the same. May we therein offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe, knowing the while that our God is a consuming fire.

JOHN MILLER.

LABOURERS AND THEIR WORK.

THE title of this article is suggested by the passage in Paul's first letter to the assembly of Thessalonians in which he recognizes in that very young company certain men as those that laboured amongst the saints, that were over them in the Lord, and that admonished them. May a wayfaring man suggest that the labour that is required of elders is scarcely adequately recognized and that the particular labour called admonition is often in danger of being entirely neglected? There are about ten passages of Scripture speaking of admonition; to these we desire permission to direct the attention of labouring men.

First, however, it might be mentioned that the root idea of admonition is "putting in mind," and that the verb "to admonish" occurs about eight times and the noun "admonition" about three times in the New Testament Scriptures.

In order of time we first come to the three occurrences of the word in the two letters to Thessalonica. From the first of these, already referred to; it is plain that one of the principal things which a labourer amongst the saints has to do is to admonish. To be more particular, we find two verses further on that this admonishing is called for when any one is found to be disorderly. "Admonish the disorderly." These disorderly ones are just those who have got out of touch, who are no longer walking in rank; they have begun to march and manœuvre on their own account. As seen here they have not got very far wrong, but the labourers are to put into their minds how they ought to walk and please God.

In the second epistle we again read of disorderly ones, or strictly of some walking in a disorderly manner, and to them and for them special words of admonition are given by the apostle himself with a view to their recovery. In the meantime orderly saints are to withdraw from them.

If the apostolic word is not obeyed by any they are to have no company with him, yet unlike the man of Matthew 18. who is to be as a heathen, this man as a brother is to be admonished—this being the third use of the word.

All admonition aims at the recovery of the admonished one. This must be regarded as possible and be earnestly aimed at if the admonition is to be real. Note how in 2 Thessalonians 3. the apostle begins by speaking in the plural of disorderly walkers; but having given his admonition in verses 7 to 12 he contemplates the possibility of its failure in individual cases only. Thus he gives expression to his faith in the word—

In the morning sow thy seed,
And in the evening withhold not thy hand;
For thou knowest not which shall prosper—
This or that,
Or whether both shall be alike good,

not both bad.

However, failure must be regarded as possible; alas! that admonition should ever be in vain. If a first and second admonition fail there is the dread possibility that the man may turn out to be heretical as Paul wrote later to Titus. The heretical man is the completed thing of which the disorderly walker is a germ merely. The heretical man is one to whom party is the great thing. A division amongst those whom the Lord Jesus died to gather together into one is that which an heretical person can contemplate without pain. He began by stepping out of rank himself, admonition failed and failed again, and after a first and second admonition he is found to be a party man.

How important then is that admonition which may in God's goodness save from such a fate!

From Paul's example we learn that we should admonish as a father would his beloved children; his admonitions were not confined to occasional meetings, but were given night and day; they were no mere dry words, but wet with

bitter tears. He admonished every man, but accompanied his admonitions with teaching and this in all wisdom.

Happy for us that the Old Testament Scriptures have been written for our admonition, for through them and the Scriptures of the New Testament we may become like those who were full of goodness and filled with knowledge and able to admonish one another.

This our admonishing of one another as well as our teaching of one another may in part be accomplished with psalms, hymns and songs that are spiritual. But oftentimes admonition needs to be coupled with discipline.

Having thus briefly linked together the occurrences of the words "admonish" and "admonition" in Acts 20. 31; Rom. 15. 14; 1 Cor. 4. 14, 10. 11; Eph. 6. 14; Col. 1. 28; 3. 16; 1 Thess. 5. 12, 14; 2 Thess. 3. 15; Tit. 3. 10; the earnest study of these passages is urged on young labourers that patient continuance in this excellent work may have in them more perfect fulfilment than has been customary hitherto.

WAYFARER.

Young Men's Corner.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Psalm 23.

FROM DERBY. The Psalmist says, "I shall not want," because he knew the Lord as his Shepherd. The cause of his boast is given by telling what the Shepherd does, He leadeth me: He restoreth me: He guideth me. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures (rest), He leadeth me beside the still waters (refreshment) (see Isa. 28. 9-12; Jer. 6. 16; Mark 6. 31).

"He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." We are told how difficult it is for an eastern shepherd to choose a safe path for the sheep—hence the need for the shepherd to go ahead, leading them in the right paths (Ps. 107.). Many of the best paths have deadly perils, instance verse 4, see also Jer. 2. 6-7, 13. 16. As

we follow in the paths marked out for us by our Shepherd, whether rough or smooth, dark or bright, may we remember the words of Hebrews 13. 5-6, and then our answer will be, "The Lord is my Helper; I will not fear; what shall man do unto me?" "Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." The rod for defence; the staff for guidance (see Psalm 2. 9; Rev. 2. 27, 12. 5).

Verse 5: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." We understand that the shepherd's most difficult task is to pick a safe feeding place for his sheep. Hidden in the grass are poisonous plants, and vipers' holes. In certain districts also there are dangerous wild animals. Then, again, there is another enemy—the sheep stealer. All these dangers demand from the shepherd bravery, skill, and judgment (see Gen. 31. 39-40; 1 Sam. 25. 7-8, 16. This helps us to better understand the words "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."

Thanks be unto God that we have such a Shepherd, Who cares and provides for us day by day. He has carefully marked out a safe path for us from our threefold enemy—The World (Gal. 1. 4); The Flesh (Rom. 8. 3); The Devil (Heb. 2. 14).

"Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." This is the closing scene of the day. The Shepherd now stands at the door of the sheepfold, and the rodding of the sheep takes place. With his rod he holds back the sheep, while he inspects them one by one as they pass into the fold. He attends to the wounded, and if there be one worn and weary he anoints its head with oil; and taking a large two-handled cup dips it into a vessel of water provided for that purpose, bringing it out brimming full for the weary sheep to drink.

The day's wanderings over, and the sheep now at rest, we get in verse 6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

Now come the final words—"and I will dwell in the House of the Lord for ever." A decision, a settled purpose. The Psalm opens with the Lord and closes with the Lord. The Shepherd with the sheep at the beginning. The sheep with the Shepherd at the close.

Psalm 24.

FROM BARROW. The primary thought of this psalm is doubtless the ascension of Christ, but firstly the psalmist endeavours to bring before our minds the works of the Creator, that we may in some measure realize the One into Whose presence we seek to approach. "Now the things that are seen, clearly demonstrate His Everlasting power and Divinity" (Rom. 1. 20). "God hath spoken unto us in His Son, Whom He appointed Heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds. . . upholding all things by the word of His power" (Heb. 1. 1-3). Unto Whom it was said :

Thou, Lord, in the beginning

Hast laid the foundations of the earth,

And the Heavens are the works of Thy hands (Heb. 1. 10).

He hath founded and established, and as the Creator of the earth, the world, and also of them that dwell therein, He saith :

Every beast of the forest is Mine,
And the cattle upon a thousand hills.

The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.

Ps. 50. 10-12.

Those who would ascend and stand before His presence must not neglect the fact that Jehovah requires that they who would approach Him should possess cleanness of hands and pureness of heart. Ver. 3-4. This is His Will in our day as expressed by the Apostle—"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holy Place by the Blood of Jesus. . . . and having a Great Priest over the House of God ; let us draw near with a true heart in fulness

of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water " (Heb. 10. 19-22). These verses would remind us of Him, Who was " holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and made higher than the Heavens " (Heb. 7. 26), for " we have such an High Priest Who sat down on the Right Hand of the Throne of the Majesty in the Heavens " (Heb. 8. 1) after having proved Himself

Jehovah, strong and mighty,
Jehovah, mighty in battle (ver. 8).

For " through His death, He rendered powerless him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil " (Heb. 2. 14),

If there is such joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth (Luke 15. 10), what joyous shouts of praise would ring through the courts of Heaven at the triumphal return of Him, even the King of Glory, Jehovah of Hosts. Unto Him the everlasting doors of Glory would be flung open wide and the angelic hosts that had watched His departure with wonder and amazement would hail His Presence.

Hark! these bursts of acclamation!
Hark! these loud triumphant chords!
Jesus takes the highest station:
Oh! what joys the sight affords!
Hallelujah! God has crowned Him
King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Psalm 25.

From BARROW. The psalmist in distresses and danger (verse 17) knew what it was to still retain his confidence in Jehovah. He had known His tender mercy and loving kindness in former days in giving deliverance in manifold trials, so realizing this, he could' approach in faith, trusting that his God would yet again deliver (v. 20). Confidence in God will not remain unrewarded, for the Lord is good to them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him (Lam. 3. 15). The one that trusts Him in trouble will experience far more

peace and happiness than he would have known had he remained trusting to his own finite strength, for our inability is made up by His all-sufficiency, "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he."

They that would seek His face in prayer must fully believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him : there should be the patient waiting upon Him daily and hourly (vv. 5, 15), thus we shall truly experience His promise that "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

Throughout the whole of this psalm David manifests his complete dependence upon Jehovah to assist ; surely such trust and confidence our God would delight to answer. The psalmist possessed faith to rely upon God alone, when in a condition which would depress many, for although harassed on all sides by his enemies, trials around incite him to look to God above, One Who is aware of our every circumstance and is abundantly able to deliver beyond our expectations. Without the prayer to our God we will fail to experience His Presence and Help, let us like David have our eyes fixed "ever toward the Lord." The prayer of David was that he might be shown His ways (v. 4).

He will instruct sinners in the way.

The meek will He teach His way.

He that feareth . . . shall He instruct in the way.

(vv. 8, 9, 12.)

David's sincere desire was that Jehovah (vv. 8, 9, 12) might "remember His own everlasting loving-kindness and mercy, and remember not the sins of his youth or his transgressions" (vv. 6 and 7).

How pitiable was the plight of the psalmist when he gave utterance to this psalm, "desolate and afflicted" (v. 16), in trouble and distresses (v. 17) cruelly hated and treacherously dealt with by his many enemies (vv. 3 and 19), but hated by them without just cause (v. 1). Yet David knew that the God of his salvation was able to succour him in his deep need, so is content to wait, still trusting.

For Youngest Believers.

A WORD IN SEASON.

THE New Year lies before us as an unwritten page. We cast our eye back upon the one we have just filled, and we deplore the blots and blunders that mar our work. Yet we are thankful for any letters, if we say not words or sentences, which reveal some effort at least after the realization of our Great Teacher's desires concerning us.

Freely and fully we own that we ought to have done better. But still, things are not so bad as they might have been, and we set our hearts to buy up the opportunity yet remaining to render more devoted service to the Lord Jesus Christ, that thus the now unwritten page of our life's history may in its completion magnify the grace of God and bring fresh glory to His own great name.

It is helpful to remember that

Little drops of water, Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean And the pleasant land,
Thus the little minutes, Humble though they be
Make the mighty ages Of Eternity.

How shall we make the record of our lives a worthy one? We must give heed to the right use of our minutes. If it be otherwise and, alas, we may experience that

Thus our little errors, Lead the soul away
From the path of virtue, Far in sin to stray.

As God's children we need never become the prey of him who

Finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do,

because we may always have our moments filled for God. Not by any means the least important way to be occupied is in the imitation of Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet, and heard His word (Luke 10. 39). Nor yet in the imitation of Epaphras, of whom the Apostle Paul writes: "A bondservant of Christ Jesus . . . always striving for you in his prayers, that ye may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God" (Col. 4. 12).

THE MOUTH OF GOD.

Continued from p. 6.

“GOD hath at the end of these days SPOKEN unto us IN HIS SON.”

This statement is what we have to consider in our second part. In our first part we looked at what kind of a man a prophet is, and this prepares us to understand in some measure a remarkable scripture that we find in that greatly assailed and discredited book, Deuteronomy, the one from which the Lord Jesus so repeatedly quoted.

“The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me ; unto Him ye shall hearken. . . . I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee ; and I WILL PUT MY WORDS IN HIS MOUTH, and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him ” (Deut. 18. 15, 18).

As doubtless most readers are aware, this great prophecy of the Messiah in His prophetic character is quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, as recorded in the third chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. “But the things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets that His Christ should suffer He thus fulfilled ;” again, “God spake BY THE MOUTH OF HIS HOLY PROPHETS which have been since the world began. Moses indeed said, A Prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto you from among your brethren like unto me ; to Him shall ye hearken in all things whatsoever He shall speak unto you ” (Acts 3. 18, 21, 22).

Though we have by no means little of the prophetic character of the Lord Jesus Christ set forth in what are called the synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, yet for our present purpose we cannot do better than look at a few very eminent scriptures in the Gospel by John—the book which more especially brings the Lord Jesus before us as the “One Who hath declared Him ” THE WORD OF GOD, the mighty Prophet of God, the fulfilment of all the prophetic types and shadows. The testimony of John the

Baptist is plain :—“ He that cometh from above is above all : he that is of the earth is of the earth, and of the earth he speaketh : He that cometh from heaven is above all. What He hath seen and heard, of that He beareth witness ; and no man receiveth His witness. He that hath received His witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true. For He Whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for He giveth not the Spirit by measure ” (John 3. 31–34).

The last verse is worthy of special notice, as it so corresponds with what we read in connexion with the Old Testament prophets, here in a higher and grander sense ; we also note how the operation of the Holy Spirit is mentioned. We read of the Old Testament prophets that the Spirit of Christ was in them (1 Pet. 1. 11) ; in the case of the Lord Jesus, “ He giveth not the Spirit by measure.”

Then His own words are plain as recorded in the following scriptures :—“ I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you ; howbeit He that sent Me is true, and the things which I heard from Him, these speak I unto the world. . . . When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me ; He hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him ” (John 8. 26, 28, 29). Little wonder that it is recorded of Him, “ Never man so spake.” In another place it is said, “ The multitude were astonished at His teaching : for He taught them as One having authority, and not as the scribes.” “ And if any man hear My sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world ; He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My sayings hath one that judgeth him : the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I spake not from Myself ; but the Father which sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that His command-

ment is life eternal : the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak " (John 12. 47-50).

There are many other kindred scriptures, which we do not propose to quote, as it would lengthen out the subject too much, which all combine to demonstrate the fact that the Lord Jesus is the mighty Prophet of Whom Moses spoke from the mouth of God many centuries before, of Whom it is said, " I WILL PUT MY WORDS IN HIS MOUTH."

Then we have the Lord Jesus speaking plainly Himself in words which cannot be misunderstood. " Moses wrote of Me " (John 5. 46). His references to the Old Testament scriptures as recorded in Luke 24. speaking of Himself are worthy of special note :—" These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms CONCERNING ME." In the twenty-seventh verse of this same chapter the Divine historian refers to the same fact, " And beginning from Moses and from all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF."

In these verses the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit sanction this threefold division of the Old Testament as handed down by the Jews. The Law of Moses, including the first five books of the Old Testament, commonly called the Pentateuch, meaning the five volume book. His Law was the base of all prophecy. Isaiah, writing by the Spirit says : " Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, FOR THE LORD HATH SPOKEN." We are reminded at once of Deuteronomy 32. 1, " Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak ; and let the earth hear the words of My mouth."

God's ancient people in their backsliding and apostate condition were ever cast back on the Law of Moses. The revivals in the time of Hezekiah, Josiah, Zerubbabel and Nehemiah were carried out strictly according to what was written in THE LAW OF MOSES. And almost the closing

words of Jehovah in a call to repentance of His back-sliding people are, "REMEMBER ye the LAW OF MOSES."

We see from all this the intrinsic value, importance and authority of the LAW OF MOSES. If this foundation could be shaken, all would have to go. We might add that the Apocrypha which is referred to in the marginal references of some of the later editions of the Revised Version has never had a place in the Hebrew canon (the word "canon" is "rule," and came to be applied to the Holy Scriptures as regulating life and doctrine), and is never quoted by the Lord authoritatively.

The above-mentioned three divisions of the Old Testament the Lord Jesus refers to separately in the following scriptures:—

THE LAW OF MOSES (John 5. 46, 47).

THE PSALMS: "And He said unto them, How say they that the Christ is David's Son? For David himself saith in the book of Psalms:—

The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on My right hand,
Till I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet.

David, therefore called Him Lord, and how is He his Son?" (Luke 20. 41-44).

This, of course, most are aware is a reference to Psalm 110., a Psalm which bears a very important place in the New Testament. It is quoted by Peter again on the day of Pentecost, and by Paul in the first chapter of Hebrews; quoted by the Holy Spirit in each case to prove a very different point. In the parallel passage in Matthew where this reference is found there is an additional statement which is important to notice. Instead of "David himself saith in the book of Psalms," it is "How then doth David IN THE SPIRIT call Him Lord." This proves that David wrote by the Spirit the Psalms.

THE PROPHETS: "But all this is come to pass that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled" (Matt. 26. 56).

It is not a little significant that the Lord Jesus so expressly re-attests the Divine authority of those two books of the Prophets, which, with Deuteronomy, are perhaps more assailed than any by the enemies of God and the truth : we refer to Daniel and Jonah. Matthew 24. 15, 16 is a plain unmistakable reference to the former ; Matthew 12. 39, 40 to the latter. This scripture, by the way, is one which evidently explains what the Lord Jesus says in Luke 24. : " Thus it is written that the Christ should rise again from the dead the third day " (see also Acts 17. 3, and 1 Corinthians 15. 4), " according to the Scriptures " ; it does not appear that a definite Old Testament scripture in chapter and verse, so to speak, speaks thus, but the fact is abundantly shown out by types and shadows.

Before we pass on from the utterance of the Lord Jesus in Luke we do well to notice how He re-affirms the Divine authority of all the Scriptures so abundantly quoted before His passion, " THESE ARE MY WORDS WHICH I SPAKE WHILE I WAS YET WITH YOU." Surely there is an answer here to the awful theory that the Lord emptied Himself (Phil. 2. 7) in such a way that He became merely like one of the Scribes and Pharisees as regards His knowledge, and that in quoting from the Scriptures, for example, Jonah and Deuteronomy, he shared in all the ignorance of those whom He addressed. The words of the Lord in resurrection give the deathblow to such a theory, even if we had not such plain words as we considered in the Gospel by John. It is grand to know that there was one Man on earth Who was perfect in His speech. He never spoke a word in the wrong place, never spoke when He should have been silent, never was silent when He should have spoken. What an example to try and be like (see 1 Pet. 2).

Now in resurrection He has many things to speak unto them which before His passion they were not able to hear. This leads us to look at a few scriptures where Christ is prophet in the sense of foretelling future events.

“ From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am He ” (John 13. 19 : see also John 14. 29).

“ But these things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come ye may remember them, how that I told you. And these things I said not unto you from the beginning, because I was with you ” (John 16. 4).

Prophecy in the sense of foretelling future events has always been one of the seals of Divine signature, one of the tests that has baffled infidels and sceptics at all times.

One of the most assailed books of Holy Scripture speaks so fully even to the minutest details of events that subsequently took place, and that hundreds of years before, that the enemies of the Scriptures can only get over their insuperable difficulty by saying that the book was written after the events recorded had taken place ; apart from other considerations, this is beyond all common sense : we refer, of course, to the Book of Daniel.

The Lord Jesus Himself in the scriptures quoted leaves Himself open to this test. “ And now I have told you BEFORE it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe.”

This again leads us a step further, to consider the promise of the Holy Spirit, a very important link in the chain, for some persons seem to think that the words spoken by the Lord Himself have more weight and authority than those spoken afterwards by the Apostles ; this is a very serious error, as we shall see, for far from the Scriptures admitting such a thought they most emphatically veto such a suggestion.

“ These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, HE shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you ” (John 14. 25, 26).

“ But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send

unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, Which proceedeth from the Father, HE shall bear witness of Me : and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning ” (John 15. 26, 27). “ I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when HE, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the Truth : for He shall not speak from Himself ; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak : and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. HE shall glorify Me, for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you ” (John 16. 12-14).

We feel the importance of these scriptures so much that we quote them in full ; we have also specially noted the emphatic pronoun used of the Holy Spirit denoting clearly that the Holy Spirit is a person, and not an influence only.

Acts 2. 1, 2 is the next scripture we would notice, leading us on a stage further. “ The former treatise ” (the Gospel by Luke, of course) “ I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the day in which He was received up, after that He had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the Apostles whom He had chosen.” This implies that what Jesus began both to do and to teach is carried on after through the Apostles by the Holy Spirit. In this connexion the words we have already quoted are important. “ He shall not speak from Himself, but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak ” ; what is said of the Lord Jesus speaking from the Father is said of the Holy Spirit speaking from the Son, “ He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you.” This is suggestive of what we in our early considerations noticed about Moses and Aaron. Moses speaking the words which God gave unto him to Aaron, and he again speaking those words unto the people.

In mentioning this we only point out the similarity, nothing more. This fact gives the writings of the Apostles through the Holy Spirit as much status and authority as

those words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, words which also be it noted, were not written by the Lord Jesus Himself, but by those chosen by God to write. It is a fact worthy of much attention, that though the Lord Jesus spoke He never wrote one verse of Scripture. This appears to be a distinctive feature of the Faith once for all delivered unto the saints, for most, if not all, systems of religion are characterized with writings from those who were their founders. This again shows us, as has so often been pointed out, that almost invariably God uses human instrumentality.

The mention of the Holy Spirit in connexion with the Lord Jesus giving commandment unto the Apostles is very significant, and from this we are led on to the sixth verse of Acts 1. “. . . and being assembled together with them, He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which said He, ye heard from Me, for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” Then verse 8, “But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” This prepares us for what we read in the second chapter, the filling with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. “. . . And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Seeing these things are so, is it any wonder we find the following words:—“But we received, not the Spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. Which things also we speak, not in WORDS which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which THE SPIRIT TEACHETH” (1 Cor. 2. 12, 13). Then again, “. . . We thank God . . . ye accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, THE WORD OF GOD” (1 Thess. 2. 13).

We see from a very important scripture in second Peter

that certain WROTE according to the wisdom given unto them, this scripture also proving that all the epistles by Paul were thus written, and Peter puts himself not one whit behind Paul or any other of the writers in this respect; these scriptures are yet again linked with THE OTHER SCRIPTURES demonstrating that what the New Testament writers wrote were Scripture. These scriptures again with 2 Tim. 3. 15, “. . . 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” (the sacred writings, of course, referring to the Old Testament writings) binds all the Scriptures, both Old and New, together as one God-breathed whole, for the next verse tells us that “every scripture is God-breathed.” The phrase “inspired of God” is one word in the original. Here we might say that the word Scripture and Scriptures is mentioned about fifty times in the New Testament, and is invariably used of the Divine writings. Though the word “Scripture” meant originally no more than “writing,” it acquired this higher signification in New Testament times from the Lord Jesus and the Apostles.

We quote words from one, himself an expert in these matters, which we think are worthy of repetition and consideration :—

“The ‘Bible.’—If we ask ourselves what the word means, and know that it means simply ‘the Book,’ so that there was a time when ‘bible’ in English would be applied to any book (in Chaucer it is so), then how much matter of thought and reflection is here, and in this our present restriction of the word to one book, to the exclusion of all others. So prevailing, that is, has been the sense of Holy Scripture being the Book, the worthiest and best, that one which explained all other books standing up in the midst—like Joseph’s kingly sheaf, to which all the other sheaves did obeisance—that this name of ‘Bible’ or ‘Book’ has come to be restricted to it alone: just as ‘Scripture’ means

no more than 'writing,' but this inspired writing has been felt to be so far above all other writings, that this name also it has challenged as exclusively as its own."

We will quote now in full the passage in 2 Peter 3. and emphasize certain words which we believe cannot fail to instruct if their true meaning and force are apprehended.

" . . . Even as our beloved brother PAUL ALSO, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you ; as ALSO IN ALL his epistles, speaking in them of these things, wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also THE OTHER SCRIPTURES, unto their own destruction."

We must now draw to a conclusion, as already our remarks have grown to undue proportions, but we feel the subject to be an increasingly important one. We close with an earnest appeal for a more thorough, systematic and prayerful reading of the Holy Scriptures, the only true light to lighten the encircling gloom—a lamp shining in a dark place : thus may it be ours to follow His steps, the One Who was pre-eminently the Man of prayer and of the Scriptures as set forth in the Gospel by Luke, the book which more especially treats of the human side of the Lord Jesus, the dependent Man, the perfect Man, the upright One Whose end is peace : thus in these days of rush and push and increasing business pressure, with some a very great struggle for the bare necessities of this life, may it be ours each, one and all, to remember and lay well to heart the Divinely-given words reiterated by those Divine, yet astounding fact, human lips !

" MAN shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the MOUTH OF GOD."

J. CROSTHWAITE RADCLIFFE.

“ FOLLOW ME.”

IN view of a past that shall yet be a living present, and a present that shall soon be past, with a future that shall remain, we are deeply conscious of the brevity of time and the unexpected changes which occur to our surprise. For this our guide, we have chosen the above title, which is found in John 21. 19 in view of some solemn warnings of the past year, with the good intention and most earnest desire that they may come to each and all in love and power from God Himself.

Departure from God and His truth is not without a voice of present warning, and lessons, too, of Divine instruction, whereunto we all would do well to carefully and prayerfully take heed lest we also be found turning aside after the same fearful fashion.

Suffice it further to say, if we would still be preserved, still sustained and maintained—if we would yet know and experience more of that great salvation which delivered us from such a death and brought us out of the kingdom of darkness into the glorious light and liberty, to be found in the kingdom of the Son of His Love, then surely it becometh us to hear and to heed the words of the Lord Jesus spoken to Peter, in anticipation of his future sacrifice with its difficulty, danger and death, all that would have caused the stoutest heart to quail—words also which are fraught with light for every step of the journey, comforting in our sorrow, guiding in our perplexity

“ FOLLOW ME.”

It is “ Me,” and “ Follow.” Then there is no circumstance or trial through which we will not pass in triumph, yea, and be more than conquerors through the leadership of Him Whose courage is our courage, and Whose strength is our strength.

Then, for the year into which we have now entered, we pass along as a motto to our readers the seasonable title of this article with the following injunction of the

poet, the lack of giving due weight to such being doubtless the cause of many a disaster and shipwreck, and also the cause of many a floating derelict so fraught with danger and destruction to every pilot on this ocean of life :

“ Tread not unheedingly
Where the Lord trod,
Beauteous exceedingly
Radiant of God.
Parched though the mountain be,
Faint though the fountain be,
Footsteps of Jesus have hallowed the sod.”

And thus shall it come to pass we shall have good testimony borne to us when there is good testimony coming from us, and we shall escape the words which speak of the grief of God, and which interrogation we venture to repeat, “ Was it not with them that had sinned ” (Hebrews 3. 17).

This, then, lies at the root of all departure which oftener than not, if unchecked, carries us back just to where we began, and sometimes farther, with some sorrowful differences of course. A great amount of our life is lost, if not all. And in short, unless God in His Grace and Mercy interposes (which we doubtless would rejoice to see), a corruption sets in, and a darkness probably more deep and dense than the ignorance that reigned in Nineveh, of the inhabitants of which we read—“ That cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand.” Oh, then, in conclusion, with heart to heart and hand to hand learning and profiting at the enormous expense of others, which now it is our lot to be, may the dark background and gloomy surroundings only serve to bring the object into fuller light and prominence. That the Fellowship may be more visible and from it emanate a light clearer and brighter than ever before, as if just fresh from the use and operation of the golden tongs of the lampstand of the Tabernacle. And this can only be as we place the necessary importance on the words

“ FOLLOW ME.”

D. REID.

BAPTISM! WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?

THE Son of God in the days of His flesh, said on one occasion, "Ye do err not knowing the Scriptures"; and this is sadly true even now in the experience of many who profess to be Christians. For the true child of God thus to err is surely sorrowful indeed, and fatal likewise to the purpose and will of God concerning him or her becoming known and accomplished. May it not be so in the experience of the reader or writer; but may we be like those of Berea of old (Acts 17. 11) who were accounted noble, and "search the Scriptures daily"; and bring all to the test and standard of the Scriptures. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to My Word, it is because there is no light in them," saith Jehovah of old (Isa. 8. 20); and again, "Cease . . . to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge" (Prov. 19. 27). What saith the Scriptures? should ever be the question and inquiry as to the will of God concerning us in all matters and in every sphere.

"Baptism! what saith the Scriptures?" is the subject before us; in its application to disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, those who have believed in Him and been saved from wrath through Him, and who in subjection to His authority have responded to His words as found in Matt. 11. 29, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Thereafter the inquiry will come, "Lord! what wilt Thou have me to do?" which reveals true disciple characteristics, and which answers to the condition, "If any willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." Before we go further it might be as well to inquire, Is such a condition found in the reader? Is such a characteristic true of you? Can you honestly and sincerely answer, Yes; I desire to know and do the will of the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, then doubtless it will be truly fulfilled in your experience, "*he shall know.*"

Paul, who speaks of himself as a *pattern* to them who should hereafter believe unto life everlasting, presents a

pattern also in this respect; and having seen the Lord in the way he inquires, Lord! what wilt Thou have me to do? and afterwards arose and was baptized, thus displaying further characteristics of a disciple as spoken of by the Lord in the words, "If ye continue in My word then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8. 31). All this is in agreement with the will of the Lord Jesus Christ as made known to apostles whom He had chosen, and whom He commanded on the eve of His departure to the right hand of God, saying, "Go ye therefore and make disciples, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," adding further, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28. 19, 20).

Here, then, is a pattern disciple; and the pattern for disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ during this present age, and until the end of the age, so that the reader may test himself thereby and see whether or not he has answered thereto. God's Word for His redeemed people of old was, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern"; and this was necessary unto having Jehovah's approval and so is it now. How solemn to reject God's pattern, or to alter God's pattern in any respect whatever! Some do so by substituting baby sprinkling for disciple baptism, others by putting baptism in the place of regeneration, or by saying that regeneration is incomplete without baptism. The disciples say, "Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30. 6). Is such not adding to His words, for where in the Scriptures is any word of the Lord authorizing baby sprinkling, or any example where such were sprinkled, or any word of the Lord for baptismal regeneration?

Is it not so that in this there is what the Son of God

referred to in the prophesy He quoted, "But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men," and said, "Full well do ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your tradition." But you ask, What is baptism? and he who as a subject thereof presents the pattern, is he through whom also God hath revealed the doctrine of baptism. In Romans 6. 3-5 we read, "Are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized unto Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him through baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him by the likeness of His death, we shall be also by the likeness of His resurrection." Herein is the deep wondrous significance of baptism, that is, a likeness of the great reality of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The reality that was to Him no sprinkling, but a going down under the waves and billows of God's wrath on the Cross, as in the anguish of His spirit He cried, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?" This is that of which He spake when He said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished"; that which was present to His view as into the waters of Jordan He went at the commencement of His public ministry, saying to John the Baptist, who would forbid Him, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," receiving from the opened heavens the expressed approval and appreciation of His Father God in the voice that came to Him, saying, "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." Does any yet ask, Wherefore serveth baptism? we still reply, What saith the Scriptures? and in 1 Peter 3. 21 we read, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh), but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Is this worth anything, a good conscience

toward God ? Surely it is ; then if so, this is what gives it, obedience to the revealed will of God. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "He commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 10. 48).

Yet in baptism there is something more expressed, as declared in the question asked "certain disciples" in Acts 19. 3. See also verses 4 and 5. It might fittingly be asked of many to-day who have been baptized, "Into what, then, were ye baptized?" and in the experience of many might it be gravely questioned, whether it has been into the name of the Lord Jesus; for the authority of that name has little power over them; the claims of that name are disregarded by them, and the honour of that name is little to them. All this is but too clearly evidenced by their associations that deny the authority thereof on the one hand, and their ways that bring dishonour thereon, on the other hand. The authority and claims of that name demand obedience to the word, "And let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." "Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth, and some unto honour, and some dishonour. If a man, therefore, purge himself from these he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work;" which outpurging is from vessels unto dishonour, and is a necessary prelude to the experience and bliss of being "gathered into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," where is to be found "the House of God," over which Christ is as Son and Lord; so that baptism is "unto Christ," and "into the name of the Lord Jesus" to answer to the Divine pattern, and to have the approval of and be to the pleasure of God. "And now why tarriest thou, arise and be baptized."

DAVID SMITH.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 27 (Acts 17. 16-34).

PAUL AT ATHENS.

FROM LONDON, S.W. On his arrival at Athens the Apostle sent back an urgent message to Silas and Timothy "to come to him with all speed." It was his first intention to await their arrival before commencing his work, but his spirit was so stirred when he found the place "wholly given up to idolatry" that he could keep silence no longer.

He was *alone* in a city which, though the seat of learning and culture, yet was given over to paganism, to the worship of "things of nought"; and the objects of worship were so numerous that the satirist Petronius observed with no little truth, "It is easier to find a god in Athens than a man"; and Xenophon states that there were twice as many religious festivals there as in any other city.

There was a synagogue of the Jews at Athens, as at Thessalonica, and according to custom he first proclaimed the Gospel there, but he also reasoned with the philosophers daily in the market place.

Here was a man with a new teaching, and they flocked to hear him; but when they heard that he preached Jesus and the Resurrection, some mocked and derided; others were interested and desired to hear a fuller exposition of the subject, so they brought him to the Areopagus, the highest court in Athens.

His spirit was stirred to its very depths by their idolatry, yet he did not begin by attacking their gods, but rather by complimenting them (it certainly was not a rebuke as might be gathered from the Authorized version) on their religious zeal, which he proceeds to show was wrongly directed, and taking up the inscription which he had found on one of their altars, "To the Unknown God," directs them to the one true God "that made the worlds and all things therein"—

this opposed to their own pantheism and naturalism—for He being Lord of heaven and earth did not dwell in temples made with hands, neither was served by men's hands as though He needed anything; no! being Creator, Possessor, Proprietor, He was the *Giver*—"He giveth life and breath and all things." Paul now proceeds to tell them of the unity of man, thus correcting the idea they held of their own origin as compared with the rest of mankind, and how that God had determined their seasons and the bounds of their habitation, to the intent that they should seek God, if perhaps they might feel after Him and find Him.

"Canst thou by searching find out God?" says Job. How the Athenian philosophers had been searching after Him, yet they had not succeeded in finding Him—witness their idolatry—though He was not very far from each one of them, "For in God we live and move and have our being." Even as their own poets, Aratus and Cleanthes, had said,

"For we also are of His offspring."

This they said referring to Zeus or Jupiter, but Paul applies it to the living God, to the One Whom he knew to be the true God. At this point Paul reproves them for their idolatry, though in such a way that they could not take offence, and calls on them to repent, "inasmuch as He (God) hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead some mocked; but others said "we will hear thee concerning this yet again." How like the unregenerate of the present day when they hear the Gospel proclaimed; some mock, others procrastinate. . . .

Question. Did Silas and Timothy join Paul in Athens or not? From Acts 18. 5 it would appear that they joined him in Corinth, while it seems from 1 Thessalonians 3. 1 that Silas at any rate joined him in Athens.

From BRIGHTON. Hitherto the labours of the Apostle

and his associates had been mainly among a class vastly inferior, from a human standpoint, to that which this Athenian concourse represented. Witness, for example, the nature and character of the Lycaonians at Lystra (chap 14.)—at one moment deifying the Apostle, and at almost the next stoning him and leaving him for dead, or the character of the Philippian multitude (chap. 16.), which was scarcely less barbaric than that of the Lycaonians. The contrast serves to show the distinct superiority in culture and learning of the Greeks. Cultured and refined, however, though they were, the closing verses of this chapter bear out sadly the truth that “not many, wise after the flesh; not many mighty; not many noble, are called” (1 Cor. 1. 26); for, of the many who heard the Apostle, there were but few who did not either mock, or merely give the matter the passing interest aroused by one more of the many “new things” (ver. 21).

The Apostle appears to have ordered his address, not to dispute, but to verify the issues of the Athenians' own reasoning. God was preached to them in the character, and with the attributes, with which they themselves clothed the “Unknown One,” whom they worshipped in ignorance. But the disposition of human reason here asserts itself. Whatever did not transcend their own conceptions they accepted, but “when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked” (ver. 32). Faith and human reason cannot unite in perfect agreement when the things of God are in question.

The Apostle does not seem to have limited the Gospel message to the theme of Christ and Him crucified. Whether we consider the cases of the Lycaonians, or Philippians, or Athenians, the initial message appears to have been adapted to the peculiar necessities of the people. Is not this a lesson for the present day?

From BARROW. The Apostle, although waiting for his fellow-workers to come from Berea, was not idle in the Lord's

service, but earnestly sought to spread the glorious Gospel that was entrusted to him. Whether in the synagogue or in the market place he endeavours his utmost to tell forth of One Whom God hath ordained, and raised to sit at His own Right Hand.

Athens, full of idolatry, was an incentive for increased zeal and eloquence on his part. All around the Apostle were temples set up wherein were the objects of their adoration, but the Creator, "the Lord of heaven and earth." was unknown by them : worshipped in ignorance.

The language of Paul regarding the Eternal as he addressed these Athenians would remind us of Solomon when upon his knees with hands spread towards heaven, saying "O Jehovah, . . . there is no God like Thee in the heavens or in the earth" (2 Chron. 6. 14). "Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee" (2 Chron. 6. 18). Melchizedek also, when bestowing blessing upon Abram ; "Blessed God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth." Time and space would fail us to speak of the sublime declarations of the prophets, Moses, Isaiah, and others.

The wisest and greatest of kings have humbly owned the exceeding greatness of His Power and Wisdom. Solomon's wisdom and understanding were given to him ; Nebuchadnezzar's greatness was brought to nought by the Almighty Ruler, the King of the nations ; Darius confessed Him to be the Living God ; and as to David, all are aware of his love and veneration towards the Most High.

Yet notwithstanding all that the aforementioned have uttered concerning the Creator, He was still the Unknown, even the Son Who descended from heaven's height to declare Him passed through the earth, few realizing Who He was. According to Paul elsewhere the preaching of "Christ crucified" was to the Greeks foolishness, and judging from this portion even "Christ raised" is equally an object of disdain and ridicule unto the same, for the mere mention of resurrection of the dead is the cause of mocking on the part of some.

But the word spoken is not without the desired effect altogether, for some know now the One Whom heretofore they had worshipped and served ignorantly; thus the labour of the Apostle was not vain in the Lord.

From GLASGOW. This was a memorable experience in the life of the Apostle. His spirit of restless activity would not allow him to rest, though he must have been borne down by the stress of the stirring scenes through which he had lately passed.

His spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols. Let us picture to our minds the Apostle, a lonely man, walking through the streets and looking at the idols and the altars dedicated to each, his heart stirred and his spirit provoked by reason of the gross darkness prevalent. So, reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and in the market place every day, he is encountered by certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, the former followers of one Epicurus, who taught that pleasure was the chief good, while the latter held as their duty indifference to pleasure or pain, but we doubt not that they would join in opposing the Apostle.

Paul's address or oration is, we think, a perfect example of what such should be. He begins with something they understood. He refers to some of their own poets as proof of what he is saying, and then after he has gained their ear and their interest, he drives home the truth, in that wonderful climax concerning Jesus and the resurrection.

From DARWEN. Whilst Silas and Timothy were at Macedonia (Acts 18. 5) Paul is alone at Athens (1 Thes. 3. 1). In this centre of Grecian philosophy the Apostle preaches Jesus and the resurrection, reasoning with the Jews, devout persons (proselytes) and philosophers, both in the synagogue and market place.

Were it not for the fact that the world through its wisdom could not know God it might be reasonably supposed that the philosophy of the Athenians would have been favourable to them in this respect.

To silently observe the different objects of worship in this idolatrous city was a matter of very great concern to Paul, and to find an altar amongst others with the inscription "To an Unknown God," might well move his heart. Here was the opportunity presented, and on Mars Hill Paul seeks to make known the God Whom he sought to honour.

In the notable crowd around him are to be found the mocker, the procrastinator, and the believer. As a result of Paul being at Athens some believed, and honourable mention is made of Dionysius and Damaris, though never again in the Scriptures are their names mentioned.

FROM YORKSHIRE WEST. Those who would engage in aggressive work for God may here learn another lesson from the Apostle Paul. At Athens we note how as a wise and tactful servant of the Lord he makes himself thoroughly acquainted with the thoughts and ways of these people. He observed the objects of their worship and found an altar with an inscription. He does not ignore their wisdom and philosophy, but meets them on their own grounds, comes down to their thoughts, and tactfully and carefully would lead them on from there into a truer knowledge of the true God.

The record before us presents the Athenians as thoughtful, knowledge-seeking men. This is evidenced in their careful and critical reasoning that though they had images to many deities, there was One Being above all these [rather there might be another beside these—ED.] to whom they had put up no altar or temple, hence the erection of the altar with its inscription.

But in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew Him not. Quite abreast in abstract wisdom with anything of the present day we judge, yet the Athenians were ignorant of the God they reasoned of, the Lord of heaven and earth. They never learned to worship Him as the Creator, but with a kind of veneration or reverence as to a God that needed something, who, Dagon-like, might fall and

need lifting upon his feet again. Well might the Apostle be to them as one that set forth strange gods.

The God that made the worlds, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is He served by men's hands, as though He needeth anything. He giveth to all, life and breath and all things, and in verse 26 we have that which should bear witness to us of the everlasting power and divinity of God, whereby man may seek after Him and feel Him and find Him. The fact that He made of one all nations for to dwell on all the face of the earth ; that He appointed to each their seasons ; that He appointed the bounds of their habitation, gave to each race their place upon earth, and fitted them for that place (all as fulfilling their part in His own great Sovereign purposes in connexion with the world we doubt not), and, as is elsewhere said, "gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons," should all speak to us of Himself and His power and greatness. He is the source of all life, and we are His offspring, the work of His hands, and in Him we live and move and are, like as the all things created by Him are said in Colossians in Him to hold together. Being then His offspring, how ignorant to think the Divine Being is like unto gold or silver, graven by art and device of man.

Having reasoned with them thus, the Apostle boldly proclaims God's command to repent. He will overlook the ignorance no longer, for He has made Himself known in His Son. He has appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, and the proclamation of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus brings that home to the conscience. Certain cleave to him, while others would hear him again and yet again. But the good servant of the Lord, ever ready to lead men to a true knowledge of God, will never let that be used by others as an opportunity for argument and endless genealogies. "So Paul went out from among them."

For Youngest Believers.

UNADULTERATED MILK.

“As new born babes, long for the spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation.”¹ “Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”² “He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”³ “As ye abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge, and in all earnestness, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also. . . . For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich. If the readiness is there it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not.”⁴ “What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? . . . It is written in the law of Moses, ‘Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.’ Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith He it altogether for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking.”⁵ “The brethren when they came from Macedonia supplied the measure of my want.”⁶ “Ye did well that ye had fellowship with my affliction. And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the Gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving, but ye only; for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need. Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account.”⁷ “To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”⁸ “Let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and truth.”⁹

¹ 1 Peter 2. 2.

² Acts 20. 35.

³ 2 Cor. 9. 6, 7.

⁴ 2 Cor. 8. 7, 9, 12.

⁵ 1 Cor. 8. 7-10.

⁶ 2 Cor. 11. 9.

⁷ Phil. 4. 14-17.

⁸ Heb. 12. 16.

⁹ 1 John 3. 18.

DO ALL TO THE GLORY OF GOD.

I.

How comprehensive is this word ! How it is designed to cover the whole of the operations of the Christian life !

Man is naturally self-centred, viewing things as they affect him and judging of things according as they are pleasing to him or otherwise. There are indeed not a few who bring within their view those who are related or who are otherwise in touch with them, and they acknowledge that the good and convenience of such must have a place in their consideration. Well were it if this were more generally acknowledged !

But what of the Christian man ? From what standpoint shall he view things and by what principle shall he regulate his behaviour ? Shall he be less mindful of his obligations to relations and to men than others ? Nay, indeed ! But shall he be guided by the principle of acting aright to others, or is there a higher principle for him ? The answer is given in the words at the head of this paper, which are quoted from 1 Cor. 10. 31. There we read, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" ; but while that is the principle, the profit of men as affected by our behaviour is not lost sight of as in the verse following, "Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God."

Would it not be well for us honestly to bring this word to test our own behaviour ? Have we our minds set upon the glory of God in the regulation of our lives ? Without going into many details, the writer desires to refer to one matter which has been pressed upon his attention, and which he would urge saints, who have not been exercised therein, to view in the light of this principle. Should a

Christian smōke ? Is there need to put such a question ? Is the habit indulged in by Christians ? We are bound to answer that it is followed by vast numbers of Christians, and not by those who bear the name merely, but by men who profess a special regard for the truth and will of God.

Drinking is generally condemned, and if carried to excess leads to deplorable results, so deplorable that not a few who regard the welfare of their fellows, while holding their Christian liberty to drink wine in moderation, have resolutely set themselves to abstain therefrom, according to the principle of 1 Cor. 8. 13. But drinking something is necessary, drinking is a natural habit, against the abuse of which only we must guard ; but what of smoking ? Is it according to nature ? Nay, verily, but very much opposed to it. May we not use the query of the Apostle, “ Doth not even nature itself teach you ? ” Is it not well known that a sense of sickness and revulsion is produced when the habit is commenced ?

Is it not a fact, too, that smoking and drinking are generally allied, like twin brothers, and that the proper sphere of their indulgence is the drinking bar with all its revolting associations ?

It is a well known fact that most Christians worthy of the name, if they smoke, do so clandestinely, acting as men who are ashamed ; who feel they ought not to smoke, but who lack the faith to break it off.

Do not smokers dishonour their own bodies, by doing that which is evidently outside the design of the Creator ? Will such a habit accord with the fact of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit ? Can we thus glorify God in our bodies ?

Then descending a step lower, we may enquire how the responsibility of a steward is discharged by the smoker in

respect of his money? What return does he get for his expenditure? Does it not all end in smoke? And in view of the great needs to be ministered unto the Lord's servants and work, His poor, the world, etc., what answer shall he give, what account of his stewardship? Should a Christian be a waster? But this is surely what a smoker is.

Descending a step still lower, let us remark upon one fact which is daily forced upon one's notice, and that is the real danger and annoyance the smoker is to others with whom he comes into contact when engaged in the act. How much property has been destroyed by fire, how many lives sacrificed by this thing?

Then, again, may we ask, Is there not a necessary connexion between the habit of smoking and selfishness? Probably when not under the immediate influence of the weed the man may be obliging and considerate, but when smoking he seems far too often to become oblivious of the ordinary courtesies of life, and, without apology, will envelop in a cloud of smoke the person who is so unfortunate as to be in his company.

One refrains from further enlarging on the subject, but enough has been said surely to show how unpleasing is this habit both to God and man.

If some, having read the above, should express surprise that such a subject should be referred to, the writer can only say that he had thought there could hardly be the need; but he has been made painfully aware that the practice is getting a hold on some, and he thinks it well that it should be condemned in no uncertain way.

S. J. HILL.

HUMAN SYSTEMS OF RELIGION.

WHAT are these human religious systems? Whence did they originate? Whither do they tend? These and other like questions no doubt often arise in the minds of saints, and it may be helpful to look at the Scriptures, to see if we can find answers to our questions, and we trust that the issue will be helpful in keeping the Lord's people entirely separate from them, for there is a blackness of double wickedness about them that we may be aware of only in part.

We fully admit that being systematic in our ways, in our homes, in our business, is a very desirable thing, yet when we come to the things of God, it should be His system or order of doing His will that should be the desire of our hearts and the aim of our life, but human systems leave God out as Controller, and substitute man. It is in a sentence man's order of doing his own will in matters pertaining to things of God.

The word system is defined, firstly, as "a whole compounded of several parts or members;" secondly, as "a body of persons leagued together by the same laws and institutions," or a "confederacy," so that any company or companies of persons who are associated and bound together by human causes form part of the great human confederacy, which stands in definite opposition to the divinely-united companies of persons that have been gathered together and are held together by the Word of God, in other words, the fellowship of the churches of God. The first-mentioned companies may be independent of one another (as the so-called Church of Rome and the Baptist Church) and may have much in them that pleases the eye and ear; God may be patronized and even the Gospel preached, but God views it as part of that which is not of Himself, and therefore He can have no pleasure in such systems.

God ever delights in those who do His will ; for instance, when He first opened the heavens and uttered the words over His Son “ This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased ” or, as another translation gives it, “ in Whom I have found delight,” which is more expressive still (Matt. 3. 13-17), was it not just after the Son had said “ Suffer it to be so now ; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness? ” and He ever showed His love for the will of His Father by His obedience to “ every word that cometh forth out of the mouth of God,” even though it cost Him His life.

Does man’s confederacy delight in the will of God ? No ! men prefer doing that which is right in their own eyes. For, to take the very first thing, baptism ; how and under what circumstances it is carried out. If infants are to be baptized, where in Scripture is the precept first with example following ? Nowhere. Or, if adults are to be baptized, as necessary for salvation from the wrath to come, where is the authority for it in the Word ? There is no such authority. Again, can any point out any one company of unbaptized persons in the Word that is addressed as a church of God ?

In like manner, the same can be asked of all that God has set forth as His will concerning the saints of this dispensation, and it will be found when the questions are answered, that man is having his own way, thinking it better than God’s way, making himself wiser than God. Let us, then, cleave fast unto this, that a church of God is characterized by adherence to the Word of God, and by going on to learn what is taught there, whilst human systems of religion are based on human thoughts and characterized by man’s ways equally, whether it be that system known as Rome or that of people who break bread weekly, without due regard to the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and saints who are therein are not in the path of obedience. They may gain temporary

pleasing of the senses, but eternal loss will be theirs at the judgment seat of Christ. Paul could anticipate a crown of righteousness for right doing according to the will of God, not according to his own will, but can many a Christian to-day make the same claim? Verily no. So that we need to see to it that our paths are His paths, our ways His ways, our will His will, for when time is done with we can only look forward for that for which our past life will commend us.

When did human religious systems begin? As soon as sin got into man, for that is one of sin's first effects, to cause man to leave God's way and take and maintain his own. Turn to Gen. 3. Without referring to sin in the individual as seen in Adam, we will look at Cain, for in our own reading of the Scriptures we take him to be the head of man's religious confederacy. First he approaches God as a natural man, not as a sinner through a substitute. But where is God approached? At the east of the garden, we read, God "made to dwell" (*Newberry, margin.*) "cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the tree of life." Note cherubim and a flaming sword.

On looking closely into verses 23 and 24 we find that man is driven out of the garden (and did not that rebel retaliate by driving God in the person of Christ out of the world?) and it is evident that it was anticipated there would be an attempt to gain access to the tree of life, for man with sin in him is capable of anything. Remember Israel's deliberate defiance of Jehovah's commands and Moses' protests. Instead of "turning to-morrow and getting into the wilderness," they got up early in the morning to go up into the mountain to take the land before them (Num. 14.).

So that God sends a flaming sword, the office of which was to keep the way of the tree of life. This was not in the hands of the cherubim (as we, in our careless way of reading, at one time thought), the cherubim had another

office altogether, they were made to dwell at the east of the garden as the representatives of God, to receive from man something for God, provided it were brought on the ground of sacrifice. All that God required from man in that day was an acknowledgment that he was in himself a sinner, and could only bring anything to God through the death of another. That is why God could never make a covenant with man in any dispensation without sacrifice. God was willing enough to make conditions and terms with man at any time, but not as natural man, like Cain desired. The sacrifice was to keep ever before man that God was only making these conditions and terms through the death of His Son, first in type, then in substance.

But before leaving the consideration of the sword which kept the way of the tree of life, we notice that though man had eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil which only gave him knowledge without power, as one has very beautifully expressed it, "man now knows good without any power to do it, and evil without strength to keep from it," he must not be allowed access to the tree of life, for God had said that he should die, and man rather than accept the decree would under the impulse of sin seek to avoid sin's penalty by eating of the tree of life, and so placing himself in a position worse than before, that of perpetuating a life of sin here upon earth. Why does the Christian to-day so ardently long to be "with Christ which is very far better?" Is it not because he cannot get rid of the "plague of his own heart," and the environment of sin around him?

Returning now to the cherubim, we find that Abel brings an offering which was accepted. In what manner it was accepted we are not told, but would gather from the manner in which offerings were received in other parts of Scripture, that it was by fire (see Abraham, Manoah, Elijah and Leviticus); but notice that Abel *brings*, there is evidently a place in which the offering was made, and that we take to

be at the east end of the garden, to the cherubim. Cain's offering is refused because, as we have before noticed, there was no acknowledgment of his sinnership, and an evident desire, as seen in what follows, to be received as a natural man with the best that he can do, and when expostulated with by God, or rather reasoned with, he maintains his own way, and insists upon his own course, even when told that a sin offering croucheth (*Newberry, margin*) at the door, and when he finds his offering refused he murders his brother, turns his back upon God, and departs to the land of Nod away from the appointed place of sacrifice. He will not take the appointed way of approach, but being naturally religious as man is (albeit a murderer) he makes his own image, and that after the similitude of the cherubim, yet altered to please himself. For this image we think was very likely the winged bull of Babylon, it having all the features of the cherubim, a description of whom is given in Ezekiel 1. where they are once more seen as the active representatives of God upon earth. The cherubim are described as having the likeness of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle, while the winged bull of Babylon has just these same features too, so we see here at this stage of man's history the commencement of human system, man's own way of doing his own will in matters concerning the soul, the head of it a murderer, the tail of it a murderess, drunken with the blood of saints too, Rev. 17. 5, where she is described as the "mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (notice how forceful these little words like "and" are when they occur in the Word). That is these things had their origin in Babylon, and though God blotted man from the face of the earth by the flood, yet Nimrod reappears as a rebel, for that is the meaning of his name, "and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel," not that he was the first to build Babel, for it would seem as if it had been already founded, and Babylon seems to be regarded in Scripture, both liter-

ally as well as spiritually, as the originator of human system.

This image, then, was the creature of man's hand, and the creature worshipped, rather than the Creator, by all who went the way of Cain, who turned his back upon the presence of God. The east of the garden was the only spot that was hallowed by the presence of the cherubim, and there was no other way of approach than through the one appointed way, and there never has been any other spot or way than that ordained by God all through time. Look at the tabernacle later; there God dwelt and could only be approached in His own way, for we well remember that when some dared to approach unbidden, with that which was not commanded, the fire consumed them instead of their sacrifice (Lev. 10. 1, 2). The same order obtained in the Temple, and the king that approached out of that order went away a leper (2 Chron. 26. 19). It is no different to-day. God left the tabernacle for the temple and the temple for the church, but laying down once and for all how all was to be done in each, and let us ever remember that anything outside that order is not acceptable to Him, no matter how morally good the intention may be. It is looked upon by Him as part of that which is man's system or order of doing, and in the cases cited already, it was the Lord's people who were the transgressors. So that this is why we are where we are, we wish to be well pleasing to Him while down here, and how can we be thus? Colossians 1. 23 tells us that we can only be presented in His sight (*or* before Him) "unblameable, and unrepovable if we continue in the Faith," not in faith, but in the Faith, "the Faith once for all delivered to the saints," as stated in Jude 3, and who would not covet such a presenting? This, "the Faith, once for all delivered to the saints," not to be written again and again, but for us to take it that this is God's mind regarding us of this present dispensation, takes in all that

God has spoken through the apostles and prophets, and has been recorded for us, albeit we have to be continually reminded of what is written by those who are over us in the Lord.

The line of truth found in Colossians and Hebrews, as well as in like Scriptures, is all to this point ; there must be continuance in the things that are written, no turning to the right hand or left, no leaving out any one of His commandments, no bringing in any one thing of man, if we would be well pleasing and rewarded when we appear before Him. God hates human systems of religion, and when fully developed, as seen in Revelation, such will receive the heaviest judgment of God. Rev. 2. 6, 15 show us plainly that God hates the deeds and doctrines of Nicolaitans, while Jude 11, describes the Nicolaitans that in the first place, Cain-like, they turn their back upon God and His way ; Balaam-like for base gain ; and then Korah-like speak evil of the way and claim that their way is equally acceptable. Should we have any fellowship whatever with such systems or any part thereof ? Should we touch or taste or handle ? for remember, if we step out of a church of God we step into man's system ; if we leave the House of God, it is to enter man's house with its evil spirits, even be it ever so cleanly swept morally and garnished ; there is no middle ground. Jehoshaphat was asked if he should love those that hated the Lord, when he only desired to help in battle, saying his people were as Ahab's people, and these haters of the Lord were of his own nation the children of Israel, yet children that had instituted their own worship for that of Jehovah, in time, place, manner and object.

The Lord dearly loved the Nazarite, it was real joy and rejoicing to His heart that out of love to Himself one would seek to keep himself free from every form of defilement and uncleanness, and He loves the spiritual Nazarite to-day as then. The man of Psalm 1. was a true Nazarite, so too

was the one of Psalm 119, and set forth Christ Who was the true Nazarite, Who has left us an example that we should follow in His steps.

The apostle Paul followed hard after, and beseeches us to be imitators of himself as he was of Christ, and the repeated exhortations given throughout the epistles are to this one end, to keep from all forms of evil.

When will human system end? When sin ends. It began with sin, and it will only end when sin shall be no more, as we have already said that God has reserved His heaviest judgments for that awful originator of system, Babylon the mother of harlots. It finds its consummation in Antichrist—that seed sown in Genesis becomes a full-blown flower in Revelation, and this one will not Cain-like leave those free to worship God if they like, but will set aside every form of worship for that of himself, a true son of the mother of harlots, for the harlot is the strange woman of Scripture, and man is told to be ravished away with the love of his own wife. To depart from this and to seek unto the stranger, the harlot, there is only retribution, and God looks at departure from His ways and seeking unto human system, as leaving the wife for the harlot; the result can only be spiritual disease and death.

What is its effect while allowed to continue? Robbery. God is robbed in time, and man is made a beggar for eternity. Would he build and get rewarded? It must be in God's way, not man's. Would he have a crown of righteousness? There is only one way, "fight the good (good in the sense of beautiful) fight of the Faith" (1 Tim. 6. 12). "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the Faith" (the Faith, the fight, the course, there is only one Faith, one fight, one course), and what is the result? a reward of the crown of righteousness (2 Tim. 4. 7), only to be gained in one way, and that the way of separation from man but unto God. Any one thing in the way of reward for ourselves has to be earned in the same way as the apostle

earned his. Upon this we cannot lay too much stress, and we feel that we cannot be reminded too often of it. These are the last days, "the coming of the Lord hath drawn nigh," and while on every hand there is apostacy, because of what time pretends to offer, let us be of those who endure to the end because of what eternity has in store for us. The effect of human system upon the Lord's people is bad indeed, it makes the conscience dead and leads him in the end to be so much like the worldling, that only "the Lord knoweth them that are His." The worst part or form of the human religious system is that which appears to have the most truth about it and yet lacks the principles of a church of God.

"Little children keep yourselves from idols."

New Zealand.

H. G. D.

EVENTS SUBSEQUENT TO THE RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH.

WHEN we consider the gross evils and mistaken notions current among men concerning this period of the world's history, it is one that ought to engage our earnest attention. Moreover, when we think of how much it occupied the minds of the Old Testament prophets, of how much the Lord Jesus spoke of it to His disciples, that the Apostle Paul made it a subject of special ministry to his Thessalonian converts, and lastly that the Revelation of Jesus Christ is almost entirely devoted to a descriptive survey of the stirring events that will take place at this time, we must admit that the knowledge of these things will conduce to the help and blessing of the saints of this present dispensation.

It is natural for the human mind to try to peer into the future; nevertheless all human speculations are vain and worthless. Man knows nothing of the future, save what God has been pleased to reveal in His holy Word.

The moment we step outside the region of human speculation and take our stand on the unerring word of God we are on solid ground, the world's history and doom, the future destiny of all, lie clearly marked out before our gaze.

The period that lies between the coming of the Lord for His saints and His coming with His saints is a period full of important and thrilling events, some of which we have set in order as far as we know the mind of the Lord :—

- (1) Restoration of the Jews.
- (2) Rebuilding of the Temple.
- (3) Preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom.
- (4) Testimony of the Two Witnesses.
- (5) Ten Kingdom Confederacy.
- (6) Man of Sin's Covenant with the Jews.
- (7) Setting up of the Abomination of Desolation.
- (8) Breaking of the Covenant.
- (9) Commencement of the Great Tribulation.
- (10) Destruction of Babylon.
- (11) Gathering of all nations together at Jerusalem.
- (12) Coming of the Son of Man.
- (13) Destruction of Beast and False Prophet.
- (14) Judgment of the Living Nations.
- (15) Ushering in of the Millennial Reign.

We do not, of course, profess to have included everything that will happen during this period, nor have we endeavoured to put them down in their correct chronological order. In the first place, we do not know exactly how long after the rapture of the Church that the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy will commence. Certain are we of this, that events will move rapidly.

There will be unrest amongst the nations. Out from that confusion will arise the Man of Sin, aided and abetted by a Ten-Kingdom Confederacy.

To suit his own ends he will make a covenant with the Jews for seven years, allowing them to rebuild the temple and to re-establish the ancient worship ; this will be the

commencement of the Seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy.

Meantime the judgments of God will commence, gradually it may be, as seen in the ever-increasing intensity of the seals, trumpets and vials of the Book of the Revelation. At this time the Gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to the Jews, and the Two Witnesses will witness in Jerusalem for three and a half years.

But the moment the Man of Sin breaks the Covenant and sets up the Abomination of Desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, then commences the period called the Great Tribulation; the Two Witnesses are slain, the Man of Sin proceeds to crush everything that is opposed to his rule and authority. All who refuse to receive his mark are slain, save for a remnant whom God will preserve in Edom, Moab and the Land of the Children of Ammon.

As the fire of persecution rages, so will increase the judgments of God in their severity.

During this period kindness to a Jew will be salvation for a Gentile. During this period also, the Everlasting Gospel is preached by an angel in mid-heaven. Men will have to decide whether they will acknowledge the God of Heaven as God, or worship and acknowledge the Man of Sin, putting him in the place of God.

This will be a terrible time in the world's history, which will reach its climax in the gathering of all nations to battle at Jerusalem under the leadership of the Beast and False Prophet; and then will the Son of Man be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. As Son of Man He will execute the terrible judgments of the Great Day of the wrath of Almighty God, then will follow the judgment of the living nations, and thus will be ushered in the peaceful and glorious reign of Him Who will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

A. ANDERSON.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 28 (Acts 18. 1-18).

THE WORK IN CORINTH.

FROM BARROW. Corinth is now the sphere of labour for the Apostle; therein the Lord had much people, therefore in obedience to His will Paul dwelt and taught amongst them for a year and six months at least. Directed by his God he meets Aquila and Priscilla, who were manifestly servants of the Master. Further on in this chapter they are used of God to expound the way of God unto Apollos, a learned man and mighty in the Scriptures (vers. 24-26). Fellow-workers in Christ Jesus unto the Apostle (for his life they laid down their own necks), with him they fulfil their daily occupation, working with their hands.

Constrained by love and by the Word (ver. 5) Jesus is the theme of Paul's discourse, whether unto the Jews or to the Greeks; and many of the Corinthians put their trust in Him and owned His claims as Lord.

What a comforting vision and revelation was that of the Lord unto His servant—"I am with thee!" How often that same promise spoken centuries ago unto the patriarchs and prophets proved to be a stay and support, imparting strength to enable them to continue in their life for God! It would also remind us of the commission of the Risen Saviour unto His disciples, with the assurance attached thereto, "Lo, I am with you always!" 'Tis the same One that now reveals Himself unto Paul in a vision of the night and says, "Be not afraid, but speak, for I am with you." How it would cheer the heart of the Apostle, nerving and inciting to fresh endeavours, making him to serve the more during the time that remained.

FROM GREENOCK. In previous chapters we notice that Paul on visiting a city where there was a synagogue invariably found access thereto. His ministry to the Jews in Corinth

would not have been countenanced if he had lodged with a Gentile; therefore, as he speaks in 1 Cor. 9. 20, "To the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain Jews." There were doubtless many tentmakers in Corinth but with a Jew did Paul reside, bringing himself thus into bondage that he might gain Jews. On their opposition, however, to his testimony that *Jesus was the Christ*, he could, in the mind of God concerning them, say, "From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." There was now no necessity for Paul to continue as a Jew and he did not. He went into the house of Titus Justus, one that worshipped God. Following after his declaration that he turned to the Gentiles we may take it that this man was a Gentile, though we are unable to find any further clear mention of him in the Scriptures.

Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue believed on the Lord from the testimony of Paul. And, in the light of verse 17, probably left that position.

The workings of God are manifested in God's gracious assurance that, "I have much people in this city." Persecution and opposition might continue, but that word would remain unaltered.

Let us therefore take heart, and, as we see on every hand a lack of interest in the things of God, even sometimes rank opposition to these very things, remember that God's purposes shall be fulfilled; blessed are we if He condescend to use us as His instruments to their fulfilment.

The Jews became very jealous of Paul as they saw the number of the disciples increasing and sought to use the law of Cæsar to punish him.

There exists a great similarity between this particular persecution of the Apostle and that of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

The charge against both was that they taught things contrary to the law. They were both brought before the judgment seat of an officer of Cæsar's; they were both found guiltless of any wrong, but where God in His infinite

wisdom saved His servant Paul from death, through the wisdom of Gallio, there was in His purposes of grace toward us, but a weak conciliatory Pilate to deliver the Lord Jesus up to be crucified.

Well might we exclaim, "Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God; how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out."

Section 29 (Acts 18. 18-19. 7).

EPHESUS I.

From BARROW. Proceeding from Corinth, after having taken leave of the brethren in that place, Paul set sail for Syria. Upon their arrival at Ephesus he entered alone into the synagogue, but after reasoning with the Jews there he took leave of Priscilla and Aquila and set sail again from thence and landed at Cæsarea. His journeyings then bring him down to Antioch and throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order. Passing through the upper country he returns again in the will of God to Ephesus (ver. 21).

From the first day the Apostle set foot in Asia . . . he served the Lord with all lowliness of mind (Acts 20. 19), declaring unto them that which was profitable, teaching them publicly and from house to house. Unto both Jews and Greeks alike (19. 10) he taught repentance toward God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. For the space of three years (not like the visits of ministering brethren in this our day) the Apostle was with them, unceasingly admonishing every one night and day with tears. By the labour of his hands he met his own needs and also the needs of those that were with him, thus giving them a practical lesson that they might be incited to help the weak.

Upon his arrival in this place he meets with about twelve men, who having believed (19. 2) had not as yet been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Eph. 1. 13). But after his departure from Ephesus he heard of the faith in the Lord

Jesus which was in them, which also they showed towards all the saints and the knowledge of such caused him to give thanks and to make mention of them in his prayers on their behalf (Eph. 1. 15, 16). They who were once dead in trespasses and sins, Gentiles in the flesh, strangers and sojourners, became fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God (Eph. 2. 1-11-19).

After Paul had left for Cæsarea before his return to Ephesus, Priscilla and Aquila still attend the synagogue and hear Apollos boldly yet carefully teaching the things concerning Jesus, who though instructed in the way of the Lord yet was in need of teaching regarding the way of God. Making the most of their opportunity these two take him apart and expound unto him even more carefully; thus the eloquent teacher becomes the willing learner and in his obedience to the will of his Lord he seeks to do further service. Being desirous of passing onwards unto the disciples at Corinth that he might strengthen and help them through grace, having been commended by both Aquila and Priscilla, he proceeds on his journey. Thus though the Corinthian Church was planted by Paul, yet Apollos watered and God gave the increase. "What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him. . . . God's fellow-workers."

From GREENOCK. Apollos comes to Ephesus after Paul has set out on a second visit to the disciples in Phrygia and Galatia. Apollos has been instructed in the way of the Lord, and being mighty in the Scriptures and besides having a fervent spirit he enters the synagogue and speaks boldly what he knows.

Priscilla and Aquila hear him and, perceiving his ignorance of the Way, they take him to themselves and show him more carefully the way of God.

Apollos having received more light does not go and seek to show the disciples (who must have heard him many times)

the revelation he has received, but is minded to go over to Achaia and the brethren encourage him.

One might have thought he was the very man to lead the disciples out of the error he was but lately in, but this is left for another. Why ?

Question and Answer.

What does the Apostle mean in the words written to the saints at Corinth, " But be it so, I did not myself burden you ; but, being crafty, I caught you with guile (2 Cor. 12. 16) ?

This was one of the charges made against Paul by the adversaries (as Chap 11. 13), and which he here refutes—verses 11–18.

H. E.

For Youngest Believers.

EVERY GOOD WORK.

WE might read through the New Testament to profit, with a view to seeing what is termed a good work, and striving to imitate what we may see portrayed in the lives of others. An incident is narrated in two of the Gospels which the Lord Jesus speaks of as a good work wrought toward His Person (Matt. 26. 10 ; Mark 14. 6). This woman's humble action showed in a measure her appreciation of Himself, and such honour bestowed, such love manifested, will in a coming day be fully recompensed. She laid hold of the opportunity afforded, and declared her estimation of Him ; nothing was too costly to pour upon His head, even the indignation of others could not deter her from her purpose ; it was in this way she honoured the Son, and for such she herself will be honoured of God.

Now there are many opportunities for us to manifest

that He is our Lord and Saviour, and though perhaps our service may be in privacy, not being rendered before many as this work was, yet the Father Who seeth in secret will openly reward.

The Lord Jesus has departed from this scene after having accomplished His great work satisfactorily before God, and unto Him has been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Now although the Master sojourns no longer here on earth, yet He has "given authority to His servants, to each one his work" (Mark 13. 34). From this parable the lesson to be learnt is the necessity of watching, for we know not when the Lord cometh, perchance coming suddenly He may find us sleeping. If we are watchful, waiting for His return, the knowledge of His near approach will constrain us to be found working when He doth appear. Many will be found idle there is no doubt, but recognizing this sad fact, we should urge ourselves and incite others also, that we be not as the many.

Early in the morning a diligent man that was a householder went forth into the market-place to seek for labourers to toil in his vineyard, and he hired certain and sent them forth to do that which was expected of them. Again and yet again he sought in the market-place for men who were desirous to serve him as their master, yet always there were some who remained in idleness, because no man had hired them. But they were awaiting the master's call, and though the fruit in the vineyard was ripe and ready, it was their duty to wait until he invited them to go forth and labour (Matt. 20. 1-16; Matt. 21. 34).

Matthew the publican heard the call of the Master when at the place of toll, and without delay he arose and followed (Matt. 9. 9). Walking by the Sea of Galilee, the Lord Jesus saw two brethren, Peter and Andrew, and He invited them, "Come ye"; in obedience to His invitation they straightway left their nets and followed (Matt. 4. 18-19). James and John, too, heard His voice and willingly obeyed

(Matt. 4. 21), and Philip also heard His "Follow Me" (John 1. 43).

But why did He call them? As He gazed upon the multitude, moved with compassion, He saith unto the disciples, "The labourers are few. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest" (Matt. 9. 38; Luke 10. 2). There was the deep necessity for labourers then, and in this our day there still exists the same.

Now the call of the Master has gone forth, "Go work" (Matt. 21. 28), and if hands are idle it is not for the want of work but through lack of desire to do the work which He would have us to accomplish for Him. The work that lies at our hand is the work which He wishes us to do, and it is ours to see that it is done well, for all around there are those that are shirking their responsibilities (Matt. 21. 30), who fail to realize the wishes of that One Whom they serve. In His vineyard there is need for the constant labour of all, and in it there should be none that are unemployed. The sphere in which the lot of each one is cast requires our earnest attention, and whatsoever we do, little or much, it should be done heartily as unto the Lord, and with all our might, for we serve the Lord Christ.

In all labour for Him there is profit, and although, perhaps, the results may be hidden from our finite eyes, yet the coming day when sower and reaper shall rejoice together will manifest that God has blessed the united but feeble efforts, in giving the increase (1 Cor. 3. 7). Every man will then receive his own reward according to his labour; thus it is essential for diligent care to be bestowed in regard to our work, that it be such as may abide the test to which it will be subjected (1 Cor. 3. 15), therefore let each man prove his own work (Gal. 6. 4).

The desire of Paul for the saints at Corinth was that they should be always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they knew that their labour was not vain in

the Lord (1 Cor. 15. 58). How needful it is that we realize that our efforts in His service will not be futile, that His Word will not return unto Him void, but will accomplish His purposes, even though it is but an earthen vessel that bears the treasure. How very often the sower, instead of scattering the precious seed expectantly, appears to care little whether it falls into good ground or not, and perhaps that is the reason that there is so little blessing known by many.

The church of the Thessalonians in God the Father was continually in the remembrance of the Apostle for their "work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ"; for from them sounded forth the Word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place their faith to Godward was gone forth (1 Thess. 1. 3; 2 Thess. 1. 11). Thus an assembly of God can abound in the work of the Lord by the proclamation of the Word of the Lord.

The ministration to the saints in need is also a good work in which all may participate according as God has prospered (2 Cor. 9. 1). There is the deep necessity of purpose of heart in regard to this matter, for the ministration of this service not only filleth up the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God (2 Cor. 9. 7-12). He is able to make all grace abound unto us that we may

ABOUND UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK.

His promise to such as have scattered broadcast and given to the poor is that He "shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness" (2 Cor. 9. 10).

The purpose of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ in giving Himself for us was not only that we might be saved from the penal consequence of sin, but (Titus 2. 14) that He might possess a people

ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.

The grace of God hath appeared instructing us, for it is essential that we learn how to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world (Titus 2. 11). It is only as we have been instructed unto a knowledge of the will of God that we will be enabled to walk well-pleasing before Him. According as we walk worthily of the Lord (Col. 1. 10) unto all pleasing we shall be

BEARING FRUIT UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK.

There is also the work of oversight in and amongst the assemblies of God, in which many labour who are to be esteemed exceedingly highly in love for their work's sake (1 Thess. 5. 12-13). If one seeks to labour and care in this manner amongst saints of God, he desires a good work (1 Tim 3. 1), for which, if faithfully carried out, by making himself an example to the flock, when the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested, he will receive a never-fading crown of glory (1 Pet. 5. 3-5).

Elder sisters, too, have the opportunity afforded them of serving their Lord and Master, for it is possible for them to be well-reported of for good works (1 Tim. 5. 9), children to be trained up in the fear of the Lord, as did the mother of Timothy and also his grandmother, Lois (2 Tim. 1. 5); also hospitality unto strangers may be practised (Heb. 13. 2), and the necessities of the saints met (Rom. 12. 13). The afflicted can be well tended and comforted in trouble by their care and consolation. Our God will not be unrighteous to forget the many other numberless acts of kindness which sisters have done and may yet do, the work and love which they, have shown towards His name; the desire of each should be that the same diligence may be maintained unto the end (Heb. 6. 10-11). Mothers of men of God like Timothy may well be appreciated and held in estimation, "for a woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised." . . . "Let her works praise her in the gates" (Prov. 31. 31).

All who seek to be like Timothy are called upon to be vessels unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use,

PREPARED UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK.

(2 Tim. 2. 21.) To abide in the things which have been learned from the sacred writings, which are profitable for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete,

FURNISHED COMPLETELY UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK.

(2 Tim. 3. 14-17.) Many of the works that Timothy-like ones, led on by God, may accomplish for Him can be easily discerned by a consideration of the two epistles addressed to him, and the Epistle to Titus, amongst which are—sobriety in all things, the suffering of hardship, the work of an evangelist, the fulfilling of ministry (2 Tim. 4. 5) and (Titus 3. 1) to put the saints in mind to be

READY UNTO EVERY GOOD WORK.

So let each and all of us endeavour our utmost to fulfil the task which God has appointed for us, and to be controlled and guided by Himself in all our ways, for He is able to make us

PERFECT IN EVERY GOOD WORK,

to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ (Heb. 13. 21). It would be well to have His promise in remembrance, "Behold I come quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render unto every man according as his work is" (Rev. 22. 12).

Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, Who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort our hearts and establish them in

EVERY GOOD WORK AND WORD.

(2 Thess. 2. 16-17.)

T. M. W.

“THE PRESENT TRUTH.”

IN previous issues of these pages we have already referred to “the present need,” and “the present opportunity,” and now wish to direct attention to the above, as forming a fitting and a needed strand of a threefold cord which cannot be quickly broken.

It is in the second epistle by Peter (1. 12) that “the truth that is with you,” or “the present truth” (A.V.) is spoken of, and that in association with putting in remembrance, and having always in remembrance, things which although known may be forgotten, and not only forgotten, but let go. Doubtless it is true too frequently that things that should be forgotten are remembered, and things that should be remembered are forgotten.

This second epistle by Peter is like the second and third epistles of other writers, in dealing particularly with the last days (see chap. 3. 1-3), presenting many characteristics of the same, such as false teachers, railers, mockers, cunningly devised fables, destructive heresies, feigned words, great swelling words of vanity, and the like, which show their perilousness and ensnaring character. Amidst such characteristics there is yet another, that we especially desire to notice, which has been in the past, and is yet in the present, in abundant evidence as characterizing the last days, namely, the way of the truth is evil spoken of.

The way of the truth like the way of salvation is one, applicable alike to the conditions and needs and circumstances of the last days, as well as to those of the first days of the present dispensation; presenting the revelation of the Lord's will for those who are His; as the one way of salvation presents the same for those who are not His. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” abides for the last days, as it was for the first days, as the one and only way of salvation for the sinner; and the will of Him Who is both Lord and Christ, as made known in

whatsoever things He hath commanded, presents the one and only way of the truth for such as are His disciples, as He hath said, "If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Then again, the way of the truth leads to and finds its expression in "the House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and stay of the truth" (1 Tim. 3. 16), and consequently is that which is assailed on all hands; against which the adversary's and adversaries' attacks have been made at all times, in their varying character of force and subtlety as best suited their purpose, concerning which one of old wrote, "We are not ignorant of his devices."

To understand these in some measure, God has caused to be written for our learning and warning, the interesting account of the way and work of God, in the last days of the history and experience of His people in a past dispensation, as recorded in the book of Nehemiah, from which we may, as we now hope to do, learn to profit.

Nehemiah, as his name signifies — "Consolation of Jehovah,"—suggests provision for the circumstances and needs of His people at that time. He Who is "the God of all comfort, Who comforteth us in all our tribulations," is never at a loss for an instrument or means through which He may minister the same; yet he who would comfort others must first know the comfort of God himself, actually and experimentally. The sorrow of heart, which finds such manifest expression in the sad countenance, which cannot fail to escape the king's vision, and calls forth remark, is caused by the contemplation of the desolation of the House of God, and of the city of His choice. Would to God there were more sad countenances as expressive of such sorrow of heart! How sad, alas! to know and note, that God's House in these days gives many of His own scarcely any thought or concern, either as to its desola-

tion or its prosperity, as if it were a matter outside their scope of responsibility altogether. With Nehemiah it was far otherwise indeed. The one with sorrowful heart and sad countenance has learned what to do in the circumstances. He does not do what the hymn says, "Go bury thy sorrow," nor does he go about and tell it to everybody. But into the open and listening ear of the God of heaven, he pours his tale of grief and woe, with confession and humiliation before Him, as he acknowledges, "We have dealt very corruptly against Thee and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which Thou commandest Thy servant Moses"; yet in the experience of the mercy and forgiveness that belong to God, for with Him is forgiveness that He may be feared, on behalf of himself and others 'who, as he says, "delight to fear Thy name," he prays for and secures the help of God for the effecting of the purpose of their heart, and for the work that lies to their hand. This reveals the real nature of this work of God in its beginning and progress, for it displays principles and characteristics as necessary and befitting now as of old, in the experience of God's remnant people, delivered from Babylonish captivity, and from its principles and ways, that they may be found in His House and building the wall. Such need ever to remember these principles, and to ponder over them; confession and humiliation on the one hand, and yet confidence in God, as well as dependence upon God, will lead to our proving His help and blessing in the effecting of His purpose and His will.

Other principles are also revealed, for Nehemiah's dependence upon God does not make him independent of the fellowship and help of his brethren, but leads him to seek for it and to secure and foster it, that as workers together, that may be realized which is expressed in the words "Let us rise up and build"; "so they strengthened their hands for this good work."

Yet this good work is not allowed to pass unnoticed, nor is it free from criticism nor opposition from its enemies and opposers ; and it is now that their enemies appear and the opposition begins, so we read, “ But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us and said, ‘ What is this thing that ye do ? Will ye rebel against the king ? ’ ” Such words, and such scorn and evil insinuations, were doubtless intended to dismay and discourage the people, but failed in their object, and to them the reply is given, “ The God of heaven, He will prosper us ; therefore we His servants will arise and build ; but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem.” Herein is displayed the secret of their courage ; it is God’s work they are doing, and they are His servants. In the city and the House where God finds His portion and His delight it is right and pleasing in His sight for them to be, where they may raise their memorial to His honour ; as finding fitting expression in His service, and in giving Him the glory due to His name. Such in the estimation of God are surely valuable offerings and are appreciated by Him the more, the greater the cost at which they are rendered, and the difficulties under which they are given. Yet all this is hateful to the adversary—Satan ; who ever seeks to rob God of His portion, and to blight the realization of His expectations in and from His people at any and every time ; and here he sets himself to work by all the methods he can devise, to frustrate God’s purpose, and to destroy His work. Let us trace and learn that we may not be ignorant of his devices.

The work makes progress ; the wall is being built, and at the same time is being joined together ; for the wall is one ; and the gates and doors are likewise being built and set up. “ But it came to pass that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation and mocked the Jews. And he spake before

his brethren, and the army of Samaria, and said, 'What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, seeing they are burned?' Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, 'Even that which they build if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall.'" Such taunts are hard to bear, but they do not do much harm. May we learn how to treat such. "Hear, O our God, for we are despised." So, "He was despised and rejected of men," and "He committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously," and left us an example that we should follow His steps. May we learn of Him Who was meek and lowly in heart, and seek grace to be and do likewise.

Sticks and stones
 May break our bones,
 But names can never hurt us.

"So we built the wall, and all the wall was joined unto half the height thereof; for the people had a mind to work."

Thus the work progresses in spite of all the opposition; yet that opposition does not cease but becomes more pronounced. The adversaries become more bold and determined at every stage of progress the work makes, and so we read, "But it came to pass that when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem went forward, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth; and they conspired all of them together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion therein." Things are assuming a more serious aspect. The enemies are increasing, and it is not by taunts and scoffs and scorn now, that the opposition is, but war is threatened, and the enemies' hosts are marshalled to come and fight against Jerusalem, and to cause confusion there; but it is not by open warfare, but by cunning device that they determine to effect their purpose,

and say, "They shall not know, neither see, till we come into the midst of them and slay them, and cause the work to cease."

But do they forget, and do the enemies of God's truth and God's work forget that "He doth know, and He doth see," all the hidden crafty devices and malicious methods which are devised against His people, and against His work? Let His people be comforted by the fact that He knoweth and seeth such, and He hath said, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness which is of Me, saith Jehovah" (Isa. 54. 17). May we never reply by such methods, remembering that the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but let us be like Nehemiah and those with him who made their prayer unto God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them. We have an adversary; and there are many adversaries; so we need both to watch and pray, without ceasing, day and night. What abundant provision has thus been made for us, and what powerful weapons are these at our disposal! May we take full advantage of them and use them effectively. For truly the eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous, and His ears unto their supplication. But the face of Jehovah is against them that do evil. "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? But, and if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye; and fear not their fear, neither be troubled."

Thus these of old acted, and thus may we act in similar circumstances to-day. But while we are watching and praying we need not cease working, and so we read, that every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon, so we may watch and work at the same time, "so we wrought in the work."

Still the enemy's opposition does not cease, though his

tactics fail, so another method is now adopted. It takes the form more of his wiles than his power, and "it came to pass . . . that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me saying, Come, let us meet together in one of the villages of the plain of Ono." It seems such a simple and harmless thing, just to meet and talk over matters: to remove misunderstandings it may be, and come to terms. Let us beware of the adversaries' wiles; they are more to be dreaded than their force and strength. "But they thought to do me mischief." Mischief is in their purpose and intention. It is almost incredible, did facts not bear witness to the same, that any professing honesty, far less godliness, could or would stoop to such methods, yet nevertheless it is so. The hypocrisy thus revealed is contemptible in the extreme, and words can scarcely be found strong enough to expose it and condemn it; professing one thing by word of mouth, even friendship or sympathy and good, and in reality and at heart, only enmity and malice and revenge; but such to a very great degree characterizes the last days, so let us beware, and try words, and try the spirits. The answer is an emphatic refusal: no parley nor compromise with adversaries. "I am doing a great work so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" One would have thought that such an answer would have been sufficient, but the adversaries are persistent, and send four times after this sort, and are answered as persistently in the same manner. What purpose of heart is needed for this; no half-heartedness nor faint-heartedness is able to stand against the snares and dangers of the last days, which are neither few nor small. May we, with purpose of heart, cleave to the Lord, on the one hand; and on the other hand, like Daniel, purpose in our heart not to transgress the law of God.

One almost feels enough has been said in this strain, were it not that the times and circumstances are so similar

in the present to those of the past, and the need for plain words and faithful warning so imperative as to necessitate and justify our pursuing the subject yet further ; so we read of a further wicked attempt to hinder the work, and this time it is in the form of a slanderous report concerning God's servant and honoured instrument in His hand in connexion with this work, "Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand, wherein was written, 'It is reported among the nations and Geshem saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel, for which cause thou buildest the wall, and thou wouldest be their king, according to those words. And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah ; and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now, therefore, and let us take counsel together.' " The Satanic subtlety of all this is not quite apparent on the surface, and is not easily detected, yet is it there ; for it is not said who raised the report, but it would not at all be unlikely that the report was raised by the adversaries themselves. Of course they profess not to believe it, and feign concern as to the results and effects of it to the workers and to the work of God, and suggest a consultation as to what is best to be done in the circumstances. Could hypocrisy be more complete, or such wickedness be surpassed when we consider that it is but a device on the part of the adversaries to stop the work ?

It seems almost incredible that such can be repeated and practised, even in this dispensation of grace in the year 1908 ; yet we have heard something very like it. Fearful and simple souls, who are generally the ones to whom false statements are made, are liable to be affected by them, although a little enquiry would show that they are utterly without foundation. The adversaries of the truth, in speaking evil of the truth, are not scrupulous in the means

they use to affect the minds of certain against the truth ; to which we need only reply as of old, " There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart." It were impossible to notice all the artful and malicious tactics and devices of the adversaries of old to oppose and stop this work of God, in which, however, they failed, for it went on in spite of all the malice and hate and opposition, and the wall was finished ; " which, when our adversaries heard thereof, they were much cast down in their own eyes, for they perceived that this work was wrought of God."

Whether the enemies of the truth to-day perceive this or not, they would do well to accept and act on the counsel of a wise man of old, who said, " Refrain from these men and let them alone ; for if this counsel or work be of men it will be overthrown ; but if it is of God ye will not be able to overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God " (Acts 5. 38, 39).

There is but one more, alas ! ever too successful device of the wily adversary to which we feel it is incumbent upon us to draw attention. This is that concerning which we read in chapter 6. 17-19, " Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son-in-law of Shechaniah, the son of Arah ; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah to wife. Also, they spake of his good deeds before me, and reported my words unto him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear." This is one view of the matter and there is yet another ; chap. 13. 4, " Now before this Eliashib the priest, who was appointed over the chambers of the House of God, being allied unto Tobiah, had prepared for him a great chamber, etc. But in all this time I was not at Jerusalem . . . and after certain days asked I leave of the king : and I came to Jerusalem and understood of the

evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the House of God."

Such traitorous conduct of some within communicating with the adversaries without, and conveying information from within to without, was worthy surely of the strongest condemnation; but for some to betray the sacred trust committed to them in association with the service of God's House, and the keeping of His courts, and opening the gates and the doors, and allowing in and giving place within to the sworn enemies of God and His people, was surely the most serious of all crimes: and saddest of all, it was he who was first mentioned as having wrought in the work, although not opposite his own door (see Neh. 3. 1, 20, 21, and compare 1 Tim. 3. 5), that was the guilty party. In any country where law and order obtained, such conduct would be punishable with death itself. This is the sad sequel to, and the natural consequence of the unequal yokes, and the unholy alliances of the separated people of God and the enemies of His truth, so reprehensible, and so emphatically forbidden in the word of God (Deut. 7. 2-4; 2 Cor. 6. 14, 18); and ever associated with the direst calamities, that we feel stirred to the very depths of our being to cry out aloud against it, and protest with all the vehemence and power we possess, against this snare of the Devil to weaken and destroy the testimony of God at all times. This is the cause we believe of much of the sorrow and disaster that have been experienced by the separated people of God, throughout all their history, both in the past and present dispensations, and natural relationships and friendships have been the source of it to a very great extent.

The characteristics of the sons of Levi are rare indeed, concerning whom it was said of old, "Who said of his father and of his mother, 'I have not seen him'; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew he his own children, for they have observed Thy word, and kept Thy covenant,"

to which, even in the dark and apostate days of the book of Malachi, testimony is borne as follows, "My covenant was with him of life and peace, and I gave them to him that he might fear, and he feared Me, and stood in awe of My name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips: he walked with Me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity."

Surely this is the day when it is said "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them; or where is the God of judgment"; yet the word abides to-day as of old, "Judgment must begin from the House of God" (1 Peter 4. 17); and, "smite . . . spare not, neither have pity . . . and begin at My Sanctuary" (Ezek. 9. 5, 6). To a certain extent, perhaps, this is acknowledged and given effect to; the person guilty of immorality is dealt with; there seems no difficulty as to this character of iniquity; but, when it comes to be iniquity of another character—ecclesiastical evil, that touches more intimately the place and authority and honour of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Son over God's House, many pretend not to see it, or think it is of very little account. Of this character of evil, was that of which the Apostle wrote in his letter to show how men ought to behave themselves in the House of God, and wrote concerning some, who concerning the Faith had made shipwreck; "of whom is Hymanaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan that they may be taught by discipline not to blaspheme." Then again, it is this character of evil that is spoken of in Paul's later epistle to Timothy (chap. 2. 19), where the further development of the evil calls for the word of the Lord, "The Lord knoweth them that are His; and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work."

Response to such a call and discipline of such character are thus necessary and imperative in connexion with the House of God, and the behaviour that ought to characterize the same. But we go a step further and ask, What is to be the behaviour of those in the House of God to those thus disciplined? And here again some seem to make a difference between immoral conduct and evil of different character; the one disciplined for immorality they seem quite clear about, "with such an one, not to keep company; with such a one no, not to eat" (1 Cor. 5. 11), but of the other, against whose moral character may be nothing as in this case, yet toward whom action has been taken at the bidding of the Lord, how do we speak, and toward such how do we act? At our homes a visitor is announced, we will not go so far as to say he is there by invitation; and he is one toward whom we have taken part in an action of discipline. How do we act? "Oh! I am so glad to see you,—come in;" and in the most friendly manner he is made to feel at home; and invited to tea, and a friendly conversation ensues. Is it so? and if so, do such know what they are doing by thus acting toward such an one? The inconsistency of it is surely so patent as needeth neither note nor comment, but the wrong of it certainly merits the strongest condemnation. No wonder saints get disturbed and affected in their minds against the truth, if such is their attitude toward the enemies of the truth, who by fair words and good speeches deceive the hearts of the simple and unwary.

Such conduct is traitorous to the interests, and well-being and prosperity of the Community, which professedly they have at heart, and is emphatically forbidden by the word of the Lord, in 2 John 10, 11: "If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching (the teaching of Christ), receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting; for he that giveth him greeting, partaketh in his evil works." Need more be added. "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. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech, they beguile the hearts of the innocent. For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I rejoice, therefore, over you, but I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple unto that which is evil. And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you" (Rom. 16. 17-20). Amen.

DAVID SMITH.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

ALTHOUGH this is a very common expression among Christians, we are afraid that many do not take the trouble to investigate the Scriptures for themselves, in order to learn what is taught therein respecting the subject.

The present writer does not profess ability to elucidate the matter, but desires to offer a few remarks which may help to that end.

A kingdom involves a king and subjects, so in Psalm 10. 16 we read, "Jehovah is King for ever and ever"; and in Daniel 4. 3 Nebuchadnezzar says, "His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom."

These are foundation principles, although the Kingdom may take different forms at different periods of the world's history, and are not affected by the statements made in Psalm 2. 66: "Yet I have set My King upon My holy hill of Zion," and Isaiah 32. 1: "Behold a King shall reign in righteousness," which show that One was to come as King, delegated by Jehovah Himself, to rule for Him.

When John the Immerser commenced his ministry to the children of Israel, he came with the announcement

that "The reign of the Heavens hath drawn nigh," and this was repeated by the King (as recorded in Matt. 4. 17) when He presented Himself to His own people who professed to be looking for the Messiah—God's Anointed.

Upon the rules of the Kingdom being promulgated—the keynote of which was righteousness, the people showed their unreadiness for its establishment, and actually put the King to death, fulfilling the words of the parable, "We will not that this Man reign over us" (Luke 19. 14).

Let us notice, first, the call to repentance: "Repent ye" was the cry of both; for the nation, through disobedience, had forfeited all right to the Kingdom, all claim to the fulfilment of those precious promises made to Israel, and expressed by Zacharias (see Luke 1, 67), such also as the aged Simeon was waiting for (Luke 2. 29) and Joseph of Arimathæa, "Who also himself was looking for the Kingdom of God" (Mark 15. 43).

The Gospel according to Mark is very plain (see chap. 1. 15). "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent ye, and believe in the Gospel." The time had been foretold, but they are not ready, not ready to become as little children, "For of such is the Kingdom of God." This is not necessarily a kingdom composed of little children, but "whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein" (Mark 10. 13-15). Please read the three verses, for in them we have—

- (1) The character of the Kingdom.
- (2) The Kingdom to be received.
- (3) The Kingdom to be entered into.

Unfortunately, they were looking for outward signs of its being set up, and in reply to the question of the Pharisees they were told that "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation (outward show), for, lo! the Kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17. 20, 21). They were not ready for the Kingdom of God to commence within them.

Perhaps the highest way of presenting the Kingdom is found in the words of the Christ to Nicodemus recorded in John 3. 5, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

Although at that time a few were eligible, the many rejected all advances made, and at last this aspect of the Kingdom was postponed "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11. 25).

Up to this point the instructions of the Lord Jesus Christ had been scrupulously obeyed, namely, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles . . . but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10. 5), but now, the command is, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16. 15). Not understood by the disciples at the time, the Kingdom was about to take a new form, and the risen Christ did not see fit (for good reasons) to enlighten them just at the time when they enquired, "Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1. 6)? but by reading the divine record of the "Acts of the Apostles" we are able to learn something of the present phase of the Kingdom of God.

Although these words are not used in Acts 2. yet here was the commencement of it, three thousand believe the words preached, and are immersed, and added together.

Chapter 8. shows Philip "preaching good tidings concerning the Kingdom of God" in Samaria, the message is believed, and men and women are immersed; thus the Kingdom is being extended, with a further extension recorded in the tenth chapter by means of Peter's preaching to Cornelius and his house. We suggest that the foregoing and subsequent incidents agree with the principles referred to in the Gospels, "Of such is the Kingdom of God."

In Acts 14. 22 we have also an allusion to entering into the Kingdom of God, namely, "through many tribulations," the which necessitated a continuing in faith, namely, the

Apostles' Teaching. To make shipwreck of the Faith was to avoid tribulations, and, consequently, to cease to enter into the Kingdom of God.

Several times more in the Acts we have "persuading," "preaching," "testifying" the Kingdom of God (see chaps. 19., 20., 28.).

In every case we find the Apostles carrying out the threefold commission of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in Matthew 28.—

- (1) Make disciples (by preaching the Word of the Lord).
- (2) Immersing them.
- (3) Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I commanded you.

We might also link up the precious words of Revelation 1. 6, "And He made us a Kingdom," even those who are "loved" and "loosed" and had been gathered together of God, with the Son of God in the midst (chap. 2. 1), bringing to mind the words, "and lo I am with you alway."

Do we desire to give effect to the Kingdom of God? then let us seek to imitate the example set forth in the Acts and in the Epistles, so shall there be even now on earth that which is "Kingdom of God."

W. H. B. FULLARD.

For Youngest Believers.

“THE THINGS CONCERNING HIMSELF.”

It is recorded of the Lord Jesus Christ while He was seeking to set at rest the doubts and disappointments of the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, that beginning at Moses and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke 24. 27).

It may be with much profit we too begin at Moses and see some of the things which concern Himself. There are many things which concern Himself previous to Exodus 25. in the writings of Moses, but in this chapter Moses is in the mount receiving the tables of stone, and the pattern of that wonderful structure in which the Holy God promised to dwell, in the midst of His people Israel, which He had triumphantly brought out of Egypt unto Himself, “That they may serve Me.”

This structure was to be built by cunning workmen, under the control of God-appointed overseers, guided by Moses, who had seen the pattern of the tabernacle and all its furniture in the mount; who also had graven on his heart the words of Him Who had promised to come and dwell therein, when it should be complete. “According to all that I show thee, the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof, even so shalt thou make it” (Exod. 25. 9).

We can imagine what care these workers together would take to put everything in its right order, not misplacing the least thing, arranging all according to the pattern shown to Moses. Some things they put into the most holy place,¹ while other things were placed on this side of the veil; thus meeting God’s approval.

Now amongst the holy things which went into the most holy place was the mercy seat (Exod. 25. 17-21). This was

¹ Three things which completed the ark.

made of pure gold, and out of the two ends thereof, of the same piece, or material, forming one piece with the mercy seat, were two cherubim spreading out their wings on high overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces looking towards each other, towards the mercy seat. "And here," says Jehovah, "I will meet with thee and commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the cherubim."

Now, as every part of this wonderful structure, in some way or other, figures forth Christ, each kind of material used has something to teach. For example, gold tells us of that which is divine. In reference to Christ it shadows forth His divine nature as Son of God. Silver, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Copper, His mightiness to save, on the ground of atonement. The ark of acacia wood overlaid with pure gold within and without stands for His incarnation. Acacia wood; sinless, incorruptible humanity: overlaid with gold, His divinity. Hence we have Christ as man, and yet God (John 1. 1, 14). and so on. . . . It is at the mercy seat of pure gold that the Holy God meets with man, who is not only a worm, but a sinner; on the ground of sin righteously covered. How precious are thy thoughts!

But it is not the material of this mercy seat alone that constitutes a place where God and the sinner meets, but the mercy seat sprinkled with the blood which had been poured out at the bottom of the copper altar, in the court of the tabernacle, to meet all God's righteous claims. "He poured out His soul unto death." The blood on and before the mercy seat told of God's claims and the sinner's need, both met in Him "Who counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself," and came down from God to be the Saviour of the world.

The cherubim have also a voice for us. In Genesis 3. 23 these symbolic creatures are seen, "and the flame of a sword turning every way, guarding the tree of life." The

right to eat thereof had been sacrificed by Adam when he heeded the Devil's lie, instead of the truth of God. Here it could not be otherwise, for God judgeth righteously. But it was in the eternal counsel of an unerring Godhead to deal with man in mercy, hence in the tabernacle built according to the pattern, instead of the cherubim being against those who would come into the presence of God, their faces are towards each other and gazing on the blood on the mercy seat.

Blessed truth, all that was against us through sin is now for us through Him whom God set forth to be a propitiation (or a mercy seat) through faith, by His blood (Rom. 3. 25). The truth and justice of God were against man because of sin, but now in the person and work of Christ mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other; and so sealed our near relationship to God. So near, "I will commune with thee." Not only this, it proved to be a kind of meeting-place for them, where it pleased God to meet and commune with them annually in Aaron as their mediator. They did not merit it, but the Lord is full of pity and merciful. What depths, both of wisdom and knowledge, are shown in this work of grace towards a people so undeserving. All this, which was in figure to those of old time, is a blessed present reality to us since Christ has come Who was full of grace and truth. Although everything was once against us, yet now through a new creation we can say, "Who can be against us?" Blessed truth! How it ought to make us say in real earnestness, "For me to live is Christ."

Moreover, this mercy seat and its service is typical of the entrance of the Lord Jesus Christ into heaven itself, now appearing in the presence of God for us as an atoning priest, with His own blood to establish our covenant relationship with God (Heb. 9. 24). It is also the ground of our communion, "If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of

Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (John 1. 7). "And truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." It is a comforting thought that nothing can touch our security, grounded as it is on the atoning work and priestly office of the Lord Jesus Christ. But it is different with our communion (which is with the Father and with His Son). This can truly be hindered, and often is hindered, by unjudged sin. Sin unconfessed makes that relationship with God which is in its very nature the closest and sweetest possible in our experience, a distant and doubtful one. It is there where sin is judged and put away, where God's righteous claims are acknowledged and met. "I will commune with thee." What the mercy seat was to Israel the throne of grace is to the children of God to-day, where we are exhorted to draw nigh with boldness . . . that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in time of need (Heb. 4. 16), that we may enjoy our security in unbroken communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

H. M.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

THE FAMINE.

THIS is a most interesting and instructive book, especially for young disciples. It begins with the history of a family in the times when the judges judged, and we get the remark there was a famine in the land (ver. 1).

Twice in the book of Judges we read the soul-painful words: "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The nation had departed from God, and was in a lawless, democratic state, acknowledging no rule or authority, and no wonder that God caused a famine to be in the land. God had forewarned them, that if they would not hearken unto Him then He would punish them for their sins . . . and make heaven as iron and earth as brass, and their strength

should be spent in vain, their land should not yield her increase, neither should the trees of the land yield their fruits (Lev. 26. 18 and 20).

So this famine was a result of disobedience and lawlessness, and God out of love to His people had sent it to reach their hearts and bring them back to Himself. What searchings of heart this should have produced, and upon their faces they should have been in humility and confession.

How like this picture is, of many believers who to-day are in the place where they should render allegiance and be loyal-hearted to Christ as Lord (unto Whom God has given all authority), but, alas! do not give that willing obedience unto Him or hearken to His voice in ordering their daily life before Him; hence the spiritual death and famine that exist. And many complain of lack of power and blessing, and start to work up revivals, losing sight of the fact that the only way that God will open the windows of heaven is by confessing the sin of departure from Him and rendering whole-hearted obedience to His voice as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and Christ being set apart as Lord in their hearts.

The family in Israel before us was composed of Elimelech and his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chillion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-Judah.

This was a severe trial for them, but it was a rare opportunity for proving the faithfulness of the God of Israel, had they but humbled themselves before Him.

A hasty way of escape out of the trial led them to take their departure into the country of Moab, to sojourn with those who were God's enemies.

Family considerations and the attractions of Moab, alas! often lead to serious backslidings amongst God's children. Even Abraham, when there was a famine in the land, went down to Egypt; but though he escaped the famine, he did not escape the sorrow and judgment that followed him there (Gen. 12.). God, in His faithfulness,

restored and delivered him, and brought him back to the place that he had left, but the lost time was never regained, and the opportunity of trusting and learning out God in His love and faithfulness on this occasion was lost also.

When later (Gen. 26.) there was a famine in the land, Isaac listened to the voice of God which said, "Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I will tell thee of; sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee and bless thee." Having God and leaning upon His promises can support us even in the time of famine. Isaac proved God's faithfulness, for in that same year he received an hundredfold from the seed which he had sown (ver. 12). All around him was famine, but he had plenty. If we are faithful to God's precepts, He will be faithful to His promises.

It may be that our reader is in an assembly where there is no apparent spiritual blessing, no outward manifestation of God's presence or power, and it is a time of spiritual dearth and famine, and your soul is sadly tempted to leave the land. Do not let Satan turn you aside and cause you to give up a right position because of wrong condition of soul that may exist. But rather may we learn from the failures of God's people in the past; for these things happened unto them by way of an example, and were written for our admonition (1 Cor. 10.).

Hearken to the voice of God; be like Gideon of old, and in the time of distress and famine confess your own weakness and failure and the sins of God's people. Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed (Ps. 37. 3). Prove God in His promises, and you will not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine you shall be satisfied (ver. 19). Go not down to Egypt, nor to the land of Moab, but know rather the blessedness of the man who trusteth in the Lord and whose hope the Lord is. Such an one will not be careful in the year of drought (read Jer. 17. 7 and 8).

Behold the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him,

upon them that hope in His mercy. To deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine (Ps. 33. 18-19). Thank God our Joseph ever liveth, and has abundance of corn for those who seek Him.

J. DORRICOTT.

Young Men's Corner.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Psalm 24.

(Continued from page 22.)

From LONDON, S.W. In Psalm 22. the Lord Jesus is prophetically manifested to us as the GOOD SHEPHERD; the Good Shepherd Who layeth down His life for the sheep. In the twenty-third He is manifested as the GREAT SHEPHERD (Heb. 13. 20), and in the Psalm now before us as the CHIEF SHEPHERD (1 Pet. 5. 4).

These three Psalms thus form one group, showing forth the death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The last of this group, the twenty-fourth, was probably written by the Psalmist on the occasion of the bringing of the ark of the covenant from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David (2 Sam. 6. 12). If such were the case, the first part would appropriately have been sung as they left the house, where the presence of the ark had resulted in such blessing, and the second part (vers. 7-10) as they approached the gates of Jerusalem.

The Psalmist opens by declaring that the earth and all it contains, including all its inhabitants, are the Lord's. Why? Because God created all—"He hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods" (ver. 2).

In verse 4 a threefold purity is presented to us: of hands

(works), of heart (thoughts), of mouth (words). Clean hands and pure heart seem to indicate the necessity of repeated cleansing and purification, for it is our nature to be found with unclean hands and impure hearts, and our constant prayer should be—

“Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me.”

Verses 7–10 are prophetic of the time when the Lord Jesus and that small band of disciples were gathered together on Mount Olivet, and suddenly “He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” Surely as He entered heaven to sit down at the right hand of God (Mark 16. 19), a Conqueror over sin and death, no more appropriate psalm than this could be sung.

Our minds seem to be directed also to the Second Coming of the Lord, to the time when the Church, the Bride, will be taken to be with Him in the home that He has prepared for us, who, through faith in Him, form part of that Church.

Psalm 25.

From BARRHEAD. The reading of this Psalm reminds us of the words of Paul to Timothy, “All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” That the pleasing of God was the burning desire of the Psalmist’s heart is abundantly clear from verses 4, 5, 15, 20 and 21. Godliness is both the outcome of and the cause of waiting on God all the day and having the eyes ever toward Him. The Psalmist thus realized in measure what was true in fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ, “They hated Me without a cause.”

From verses 2, 15 and 19 we learn how numerous were the foes, whose delight it would have been for his feet to be caught in the net they had spread for him, but the Psalmist’s trust was in Jehovah, and thus he triumphed. May it be ours to do likewise.

THE SCREEN AND THE VEIL.

IT was a memorable day for the Children of Israel when God delivered them from the much hated bondage of Pharaoh, with a high hand and a glorious manifestation of His power ; when He made for them a way to life and liberty through the Red Sea.

In setting the Children of Israel at liberty God had certain purposes to fulfil in connexion with them ; He freed them from Egypt's slavery that they might be at liberty to serve and please Him—not themselves—and they were not long in the wilderness before He gave them, through Moses, instructions for the erection and maintenance of the Tabernacle—His dwelling-place, and their place of service.

In the course of time the Tabernacle was set up in the midst of their camp. In order to convey to our minds some idea of how it appeared when it was erected, we must go back in mind to the time when it stood in the wilderness and take an imaginary walk to that scene. Walking through the camp we come to a strange looking wall, composed of pure white linen suspended from bars of solid silver, which are in turn supported by pillars of wood crowned with silver. This wall forms a large court. We now walk around to the east end of this court and there we find its only entrance ; passing through this entrance we see an altar made of copper, upon which a sacrifice is burning, and further on a large bowl made of copper upon a base or foot also made of copper ; and beyond this still, we see a peculiar structure covered with strange looking skins ; this structure, like the court by which it is enclosed, has but one entrance, which is also at the east end, and is hung with a screen of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine-twined linen.

Mystified and curious at all we see, we inquire of an officiating priest as to the meaning of these things. He

informs us that the altar is known as the Copper Altar, upon which sacrifices are offered to God, and that the large copper bowl is known as the Laver, where the priests cleanse themselves before going into that peculiar structure which lies beyond, and which he informs us is divided in the interior by a veil—similar to the outer veil or screen at its entrance—into two compartments ; the first of which is known as the Holy Place, and the second the Holy of Holies, or the Holiest. He informs us that there is in the first compartment a table, upon which is placed the Shewbread, and over against that is a lampstand having seven lamps, whilst before the veil is set a golden altar, upon which sweet-smelling incense is burned, the fumes entering the Holiest through the veil. He also informs us that the Holiest contains the Ark of the Covenant, on the top of which is placed the Mercy-Seat of God, on which stands a golden cherub at the one end, and a golden cherub at the other end. The golden Cherubim spread out their wings on high, and with their faces one toward another, cover the Mercy-Seat. Between the Cherubim—which represent the Heavenly Host—and over the Mercy-Seat, is the dwelling place of God.

Late at night we take another imaginary walk ; passing through the camp we make our way to a hill near by which we ascend, and turning round we look down upon the camp, which is now veiled in the darkness of the night (the many small lights which we saw in the tents earlier in the evening having been extinguished) and all we see is one peculiar light shining out in the darkness, which we judge from its position to be in the centre of the camp. We continue to gaze at this light, for it shines out in various colours, and is the most beautiful light we have ever seen. As we stand there gazing in wonder, the colours are drawn aside for a moment, and a dark figure seems to enter the light, then the colours appear as before. Whilst wondering at this strange sight, the words of the priest suddenly come to our

minds, and we at once conclude that this must be the light in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, which shining through the Screen hung at its entrance, shows out the beautiful colours with which it is interwoven, and the dark figure we saw was a priest entering the Holy Place to do service.

Having seen how the light of the Holy Place shone into the outer darkness through the screen, we try to imagine the scene in the inner compartment—the dwelling-place of God. That compartment, though it had no windows, was never in darkness, but was flooded with a more beautiful light than that we saw shining through the screen into the outer darkness, even the Shekinah glory of the Eternal.

The Tabernacle days have long since passed away, and we are all more or less acquainted with Israel's ungratefulness and unfaithfulness to God their Redeemer. But, you say, what has all this to do with us in this day? If we refer to Hebrews 9. 9, we read that the Tabernacle "is a parable for the time now present." We all know the simple definition of a parable, that it is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Thus we see that the Tabernacle was the earthly thing which spoke of the heavenly thing which is now present; it was made of earthly material and its ordinances were carnal, by which our finite minds can draw parallels and in this way understand the spiritual thing of to-day.

Now we know from the Scriptures that the Screen and the Veil of the Tabernacle, composed as they were of blue, and purple, and scarlet and fine-twined linen, spoke of Christ and His excellencies, so we see that the priest in the Holy Place was shut off from the outside world by the Screen, which spoke of Christ, and from the Holiest—from God—by the Veil, which also spoke of Christ. Is it not so with us as God's people who are in the separate or holy place to-day? Is Christ not the Screen between us and the world, and is He not the Veil between us and God? When we were baptized as believers—did we not there and then, by our confession, place Christ as the Screen between us and

the World? Did we not thereby make public confession that henceforth we were cut off (dead) from the world, to walk in newness of life with Christ?

We read in the Scriptures that the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom at the same time that the body of Christ—our Veil—was rent upon the Cross; signifying that the way of access into the Holiest was then made, and not only was the way of access made through His precious body given, but from the same rent in His side came forth the means of access—His precious Blood. Thus we read in Hebrews 10. 19-20, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which He dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.”

It is very significant that we never read of the Screen, or outer Veil, being rent in twain from the top to the bottom. God has made a way of access through Christ to Himself, but He has not made a way of access through Christ to the world for those whom He has brought into the separate, or holy place. Christ is the dividing line between us and the world; He is our leader, and should always go before us; where He leads we can safely follow. Can I join in the world's pleasures? No! Why? Because Christ could not, and by so doing I would have to step over the dividing line; I would have to leave my Leader behind; I would have to push aside the Screen.

As a people whom God has separated unto Himself (see 2 Cor. 6. 17) we are spoken of as a priesthood, and as such we have a two-fold character, a two-fold service and a two-fold testimony.

Our two-fold character is plainly seen in 1 Peter 2. 5 and 9; there we are spoken of as a holy priesthood and a royal priesthood.

As a holy priesthood we serve God and Him alone, and our place of service is in the Holiest which we enter together in the Spirit, through the Veil which is His flesh, during

the Lord's day morning meeting, and our service when in the Holiest is to offer "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

We come out of the Holiest a [royal priesthood] to serve God in one respect by serving one another, and this service is much the same as that of the priest in the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, whose principal duty it was to keep the lights trimmed and burning brightly. So it is our duty to keep the lights trimmed and burning brightly to-day. But how can we do this? If God is getting His portion from us as a holy priesthood, He will in return give unto us as royal priests such a blessed portion that, like the Psalmist, we will be able to say "my cup runneth over"; then we can out of our fullness and according to our ability serve our brethren (see 1 Cor. 12. 28 and Ephesians 4. 11, 14). Then we would not forget the beautiful example set us by our Lord, when He washed the disciples' feet, and if we see a brother becoming indifferent, whose feet have become defiled in the way, let us bear in mind the fact that as royal priests we are responsible to seek to restore him in love—figuratively speaking, to wash his feet. Is a light becoming dim? then let each one of us remember that it is our duty to trim the lights. We can safely say that if this service is faithfully performed by each and all in the Fellowship of God's Son, there will be no fear of lampstands being moved out of their places (see Rev. 2. 5) and that cry "How is the gold become dim!" will not be so frequently heard amongst us, but on the contrary, our collective light will be shining so brightly that greater glory and honour will accrue to Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. Alas, how this service is neglected!

H. W. WATERS.

“PREACH THE WORD.”

SUCH is the responsibility God lays upon His servants. Where this is done in faithfulness we may expect fulfilment of that wonderfully comforting passage of Holy Scripture, Isaiah 55. 10-11. “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.” Thus there shall be showers of blessing. God shall open yet wider His windows, and what a sunshine! The north wind shall come and sweep away all clouds, and the south wind shall visit the garden. Into and out of God’s heritage shall still flow waters from the sweetest well. Of this sweetness some of us are now tasting and, like the Psalmist, unto others we each exclaim,

“O taste and see that Jehovah is good.”

Of the river of His pleasures He has given us to drink. With the fatness of His House we are abundantly satisfied (Ps. 36. 8).

But what is this form of things, dry, hard and stale into which men are sinking deeper and deeper, and towards which the balances of men by nature tend to turn? It is like a counterfeit coin which none but foolish or inexperienced bankers would pass. There is the profession of godliness without possession, the form without the power, the name without the life. Separation has lost its charm and has ceased to be a governing principle in their lives and associations. Avowedly a feast it is rightly a fast; a fun fight rather than real soul contention for the Faith once for all delivered to the saints; a poor substitute by man for God’s great reality, the Community of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

What can there be in such a human invention (characterized as in the days of the Judges, very largely by every man doing that which is right in his own eyes, as if there were not One unto Whom had been committed all authority in heaven and upon earth, as if Christ were not Son over God's House) to satisfy one who has pledged himself a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ? Unhesitatingly we say, "Nothing." Many excuses may be forthcoming for self-justification in departure; some gratification may arise from freedom from the rule of God's House; but to true heart rest such backsliders must be strangers, just as really as the poet says:

"The world can never fill
The heart that's tasted of Thy love."

Of such backsliders there are at least two kinds, those who have gone into this human system with their eyes wide open (oh that they could remember all they have themselves said in past years, and know God's mercy and grace to act consistently therewith!), and those who have been too simple and have been led blindfold. These latter, at all events, we may help.

Figuratively speaking, we might say that the bars of this great cage are carefully protected in order that they may not crumble down nor become a ruin in a hurry. The unclean and hateful birds¹ which seem at home in such a dread abode, may only have such a character when viewed in the light of God. As seen otherwise our homely peacock with its famed pride and beauty, perhaps, would stand little comparison with some of these vaunting birds. Some song birds are in the cage, too, but alas! their song has long since ceased to gladden the heart of God; long is it since they saw the blue sky above them. Dark, thick clouds have gathered around them, and were they but as honest with themselves and

¹ Revelation 18. 3.

others as were those of the days of old who, like them, were away from the place where God had been pleased to cause His name to dwell, like them they would acknowledge

“How shall we sing Jehovah’s song
In a strange land ?”¹

The rivers of Babylon are but the transitory pleasures of time for the many ; yet they are also the tear wells of such as have tasted that Jehovah is gracious, who have drunk out of the river of His pleasures.

Our object in writing is to help any reader fettered in such system, into whose heart the desire may have come to extricate himself out of the snare into which he has fallen, whilst we ever seek to remember

“Looking to thyself lest thou also be tempted.”

D. REID.

NATURE AND GRACE.

As man sees things by nature.

It rose and fell and fled
Upon life’s troubled sea—
A wave that swelled to vanish
Into eternity.
Oh, mystery and wonder
Of wings that cannot fly,
Of ears that cannot hearken,
Of life that lives to die.

ANON.

As we may see them by grace.

Christ rose, He rose triumphant,
Victorious o’er the tomb
A light that shone in darkness,
A star that broke the gloom.
Oh, mystery, oh wonder,
Of life that cannot die,
Oh, joy of ever living
With Him, enthroned on high.

J. A. B

¹ Psalm 137. 4.

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

ESSENTIALLY, prayer is simply a communion of the Creature with the Eternal Creator. It is the means by which we make known our desires to God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

And we must always remember that as breathing is necessary to the existence of the natural man, so prayer and habitual prayer is essential to the spiritual growth and development of the inner man.

If we would be rich in grace let us be much in prayer. It is a privilege of immense value, influencing not only our own lives but carrying the blessing to others, communion with God assimilates our souls to Him, and, like a Moses, we are enriched with the beams of His Holiness, raising our souls heavenward and promoting the purification of our lives.

Prayer may be divided into supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings (1 Tim. 2. 1), each having their place according to the circumstances and need of the suppliant.

How, then, shall we pray ?

This strikes at the very root of our spiritual condition and reminds us of the words of the Lord Jesus to His disciples, "Be ye not as the hypocrites," or, again "Use not vain repetitions as the Gentiles which know not God."

For whatsoever we may ask of Him, we must ask in faith, nothing doubting, yea, our faith in God must be so strong and vigorous that in the words of the Lord Jesus, "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye shall receive them" (Mark 11. 24).

"For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him."

Let this living faith and confidence in the Living God be lacking, and all our prayers are but as water spilled upon the ground.

Yet, how precious is it to know that

“The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon Him

To them that call upon Him in truth

He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him

He will hear their cry and will save them ” (Ps. 145. 18).

Then, as to when we should pray, we remember the words of the Psalmist :—

“Evening, morning and noon will I complain and moan
And He shall hear my voice ” (Ps. 55. 17).

“O Lord, in the morning shalt thou hear my voice

In the morning will I order my prayer unto Thee and
will keep watch ” (Ps. 5. 3).

Again, we have the example of Daniel who kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks to God ; what a beautiful exemplar we have in Daniel as also in this respect the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, Who exercised Himself continually in habitual prayer to His God and Father, as we read in Hebrews 5. 7, “Who, in the days of His flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death, and having been heard for His godly fear though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.”

Then we have the example of the Apostle Paul, who was a man of continual and habitual prayer.

Of the Romans he says : “How unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers.” Of the Colossians he says : “For this cause we also since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you.”

As well as his oft repeated exhortation

“Continue stedfastly in prayer.”

“Praying at all seasons in the Spirit.”

Thus we see the necessity that to have power with God we must study to exercise ourselves constantly in the beautiful work of continual and habitual prayer.

Then, what shall we pray for ? In the first place we

must remember that what we ask for, we must ask according to the will of God, albeit we know not how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

We believe the following are some of the things that ought always to be before us in approaching the throne of grace, whether individually or collectively

(1) Pray one for another ; (2) for all men ; (3) for kings and rulers ; (4) pray for them that persecute you ; (5) watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation ; (6) pray ye the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest ; (7) for the strengthening and extension of the Fellowship ; (8) the exercise of the prayer of faith for the sick.

All of which and many more which we cannot recapitulate here, are essential to the well-being of our souls and the maintenance and existence of the Fellowship.

Do we realize this ? Do we complain of weakness and spiritual poverty, then here lies a weapon to our hand, a power that will move the hand of Him that holds the universe.

The value of prayer and the strongest encouragements for it, appear in the numerous promises made to it with which the Scriptures abound.

“They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.”

“The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.”

“Call upon Me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify Me.”

“The Lord is nigh unto them that call upon Him, unto them that call upon Him in truth.”

“Ask and it shall be given unto you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you, for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth.”

Let faith lay hold of these promises, plead them earnestly,

and patiently await their fulfilment; as one has said, a believer so praying cannot be denied unless God denies Himself.

“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.”

God may keep us in suspense a while, but He expects us to live upon His word and depend upon it till the promise is fulfilled. Who can express the powerful victory of a believer's prayer.

How many beautiful examples do we find to this end.

Abraham prayed for Sodom, and if ten righteous persons had been found in it, God would have spared it.

Lot prays on behalf of Zoar and his prayer was answered. Jacob, alarmed at Esau's approach, wrestled in prayer with God, and Esau became his friend.

Moses stands in the breach and pleads for a rebellious people, at the very time when God would have exterminated them, and they were spared.

Hannah, in the anguish of her heart prays to God for a son, and her prayer was answered. When Israel was oppressed by the Philistines, Samuel prayed and the invaders were scattered.

Elijah prayed earnestly, that it might not rain, and it rained not for the space of three years and six months.

On another occasion while vindicating the honour of God, he prayed again and fire came down from heaven in answer to his request.

Hezekiah, near to death, prayed and fifteen years were added to his life. His country was invaded by the Assyrian army, he prayed, and in one night 185,000 of that mighty host were destroyed.

Daniel and his companions when threatened with destruction because no one was able to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, prayed, and the dream and its interpretation were made known to them.

Jonah, in the midst of the deep, lifted up his voice in prayer to God, and God caused the fish to vomit him on dry land.

And thus we might go on multiplying examples, which clearly demonstrate, the value, efficacy and the Power of Prayer.

A. ANDERSON.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

(Continued from page 95.)

THE JOURNEY TO MOAB AND ITS RESULTS.

IT appears that the intention of this family was only to sojourn for a little while in the land of Moab, but we read the words, that they continued there (ver. 2), and dwelled there (ver. 4). Little did they think when they started on that fateful journey, turning their backs upon God, His people and the land, what serious consequences would result therefrom. And we never know where one false step will lead us to, and the influence it may have upon others, for no man liveth to himself.

Elimelech (whose name means "My God is King," which he appears to have forgotten) leads his wife and his two sons astray through his departure from God, causing them to marry strange wives who were idolaters, and in the end father and sons were visited by God's hand of judgment in death, and they were buried in an enemy's country. None can tell how many times God had spoken to Elimelech to return unto Him, but the warnings and pleadings appear to have been stifled and unheeded, and at last the heavy blow fell. On Elimelech's memorial stone we may write: "Because I have called and ye have refused. . . . Ye have set at nought all My counsel and would none of My reproof" (Prov. 1.). The departure of this family from God surely would teach us that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. Let

us be careful to maintain communion with God, and humble ourselves to walk with Him, lest an evil heart of unbelief leads us to depart from the Living God.

Small beginnings oftentimes have great endings, and if secret prayer is neglected and the inner man not constantly nourished by the Sacred Scriptures, backsliding sets in, and we become an easy prey for the enemy of our souls. It may be some secret fault is indulged in, some sin unconfessed, and at last the heart becomes hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. This is all the more serious and heinous before God when our outward appearance before fellow-saints is such as leads them to believe that we are going on well by our attending to outward observances. How possible it is to come forth on Lord's Day morning as professed worshippers, yet do so without self-examination, without self-judgment and without confession of sin. The soul has kept silence and decay creeps in, the voice of God which says, "Return, O backsliding children, for I am married unto you," falls upon deaf ears, and spiritual death follows. If the kind hand of God is unheeded in His discipline of love, the soul never awakens to enjoy past communion, and the hand of God falls in judgment and the soul's eternal loss is only known at the judgment seat of Christ.

One has said that prior to being saved he thought it was a solemn thing to die, but after conversion he learned that it was a very solemn matter to live so as to be well-pleasing unto God.

The writer remembers a very solemn case of a sister in Christ who had not maintained communion with God becoming engaged to an unsaved young man. Brethren in the assembly visited her and warned her of the consequences of the unequal yoke, but entreaty and warnings failed, and she eventually married him. Shortly afterwards she was taken ill, and brethren went to see her and asked if they might pray with her. She replied, "Don't

pray for my recovery, for I have sinned and am dying under the hand of God," and a day or so afterwards she passed away.

Oh, let us learn to fear the Lord and keep close to Him, lest we fail to hear His voice and thus become like those that go down to the pit. "Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, To-day if ye shall hear His voice harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, like as in the day of the temptation in the wilderness."

We can remember many who once ran well, but who, alas, have gone back, some like Lot who had their hearts set on well-watered plains; others, like Hymenaeus and Alexander who have made shipwreck concerning the Faith and again, others like Demas, who having loved this present evil age forsook Paul. The Holy Spirit has left no record of Hymenaeus, Alexander, or Demas ever being restored to God.

We do well to remember that repentance to a child of God is sovereign, it can be granted or refused. Read tremblingly Hebrews 12. 14-17, and note well the words . . . "He was rejected (for he found no place of repentance), though he sought it diligently with tears."

J. DORRICOFF.

NEEDED TRUTH.

"BE not unequally yoked with unbelievers; for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? . . . Wherefore 'Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate,' saith the Lord." (2 Cor. 6. 14-18.)

For Youngest Believers.

HUMILITY IN SERVICE.

“COME unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

So spake the One concerning Whom it is written, “Man never so spake.” And He alone could give expression to what we find here recorded, for He was indeed humility personified.

In the Epistle to the Philippians we would suggest that what stands out prominently is the word humility, for therein is brought before us the greatest instance of self-abnegation that was ever known or heard of. We read in chapter 2. “Who being in the form of God humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” And the next words are “Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him;” from which we would gather that the path to exaltation is humility; and agreeable to this we read in Proverbs 18. 12. “Before honour goeth humility.”

It would seem that in Philippi there were those who were glorying in something else than humility, and so we have the Lord Jesus in His humility brought in, and please take note of these words, “Have this mind in you.”

Fellow-saints, if that which characterized the Lord Jesus obtained more among us, would it not be better for us, both as individuals and as a community?

We have also the humility of the writer of this Epistle brought before us in a very marked manner. Listen to what he says: “For we are the circumcision who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh: though I myself might have confidence in the flesh: if any man thinketh to have confi-

dence in the flesh, I yet more," etc. What a pedigree he had to glory in had he wished! But instead he says, "Howbeit, what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily; and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for Whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may gain Christ." Yes, the more he learned of Christ, the less he wanted to know of himself.

And this characteristic is very marked in all God's servants, for He has declared . . . "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble (ones), and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

John the Baptist is another wonderful example of this. He kept himself in the background and set before the people another Person, the latchet of Whose shoes he was not worthy to unloose.

In John 1. 35, we read, "Again on the morrow, John was standing and two of his disciples, and he looked upon Jesus as He walked and said, Behold the Lamb of God; and the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus." And here, no doubt, he learned somewhat of the truth he afterwards gave expression to, "He must increase, I must decrease."

And this incident is suggestive as to how we might learn to walk, and that is by standing still, and looking at Him as He walked, for He hath left us an example that we should follow His steps.

Fellow-saints, may the desire of our hearts be like unto that expressed in the words:

Give us Thy meek, Thy lowly mind;
 We would obedient be;
 And all our rest and pleasure find
 In fellowship with Thee.

S. NIVEN.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 28 (*Acts 18. 1-18*).

THE WORK IN CORINTH.

(*Continued from page 65.*)

From LONDON, S.W. Leaving Athens for Corinth Paul entered on a scene very different from that which he had left, for as the former was the seat of learning and culture, the latter was that of commerce; the one was a free Greek city, the other was a Roman colony with a large population.

The Jews in Corinth were very numerous, especially at this time, for Claudius had banished them from Rome, and a great many settled in this city. Among them were Aquila and Priscilla with whom the apostle Paul abode because they were of the same trade, tent-makers, which was a common employment in Cilicia where he had passed his youth, and as all Jewish boys, no matter what their social standing, even the sons of the Rabbins, learnt a trade, this probably was the one to which he had been placed. His knowledge now served him in good stead, for during the week he laboured at his tent-making, but on the Sabbath he reasoned with both Jews and Greeks in the Synagogue. Although Aquila and Priscilla may not have been Christians when they first came in contact with Paul, there is no doubt the connexion soon resulted in their conversion.

Paul's resolve not to be burdensome to the saints, which he several times refers to in his epistles, seems to apply peculiarly, if not exclusively, to the Corinthian Church, for in 2 Corinthians 11. 8, he says, "I robbed (or spoiled) other Churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you." When Timothy and Silas arrived from Macedonia (verse 5), they probably brought with them assist-

ance which, in some degree, relieved him of the necessity of working with his hands (see 2 Cor. 11. 9). The news which these fellow labourers brought, also probably caused him to write **THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS**, which seems to have been occasioned by his wish to express his affection to the Thessalonian Church, to encourage them under their persecutions, and to put right some errors into which they had fallen, regarding the second coming of the Lord.

About this time the opposition of the Jews became so great that Paul left them and turned to the Gentiles. The conversion and baptism of Crispus the ruler of the synagogue may have increased their opposition, for the difficulties under which he laboured had now become so great that he is favoured with another special revelation for the purpose of strengthening his faith. "The Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city."

We are now approaching the time when **THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS** was written. The errors which he had endeavoured to correct in his first letter appear to have increased; they believed that the second coming of the Lord was imminent, and it may be that it was consequent upon this belief that some had forsaken their daily employment (2 Thess 3. 11). It would even seem from 2 Thessalonians 2. 2, that letters purporting to have been sent by Paul had been written supporting their erroneous beliefs. So Paul writes to them and reminds them (for he had already told them of these things when he was with them) of certain signs that were to precede the coming of the Lord.

The Jews still opposed his work, and when a new proconsul of Achaia, Gallio, had been appointed, they rose openly against Paul and brought him before the judgment

seat. Gallio was the brother of Seneca, the philosopher, who tells us that he had great abilities, he also praises him for his disinterestedness, amiable disposition and gentle manners. This description of his character is perfectly in keeping with his action on this occasion, for he refuses to hear the Jews as it is a question about their own law, "And he drave them from the judgment seat."

The apostle Paul now had less annoyance in carrying on the work of the Gospel, and its results were soon manifest throughout Achaia.

From YORKS, WEST. When the Apostle came to Corinth he "came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom proclaiming the mystery of God," but his speech and preaching were "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Evidently when he wrote those words he had in mind his departure from Athens, and the words of 1 Corinthians 1. 26 well portray the fruits of his labours there. The rather less cultured Corinthians seem more responsive to the Gospel than the Athenians, and their faith stood in the power of God and not in the wisdom of men.

It was because Aquila was of a like trade with the apostle that he abode with him; but evidently Aquila and Priscilla had an open and ready mind for the things of God. It is feasible to suppose that they were not only devout Jews, but had probably heard of Peter's address on the day of Pentecost, seeing they were of Pontus by race (Acts 2. 9). In them the word of God is effectual, so that in later years the apostle calls them his "fellow workers in Christ Jesus." Their obedience to the word is seen in that they lay down their own necks for the apostle's life, for which to whom, not only he, but all the Churches of the Gentiles give thanks. See Romans 16. 3, and 1 John 3. 16.

The working of the apostle with his hands gives us a noble example of the combining of diligent labour with genuine spirituality. Then we know that while thus

working he was praying continually with thanksgiving on behalf of the Thessalonians and others.

He felt it was incumbent on him thus to work for the sake of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 9. 13 and 14 notwithstanding), for he knew the obloquy to which he was likely to be exposed, and he was prepared for it. What an example of Christian self-denial worthy of our imitation!

The first recorded example of such conduct was at Thessalonica, and so well did the Thessalonians learn through him, and such was the operation of the word of God in their hearts, that they have active fellowship with him in his labours, by supplying his needs, so enabling him to maintain the same conduct at Corinth (2 Cor. 11. 9).

The wisdom of all this is fully shown in the epistles to Corinth, and the gain he had over the Corinthians, without which his letters would have been lacking in power.

The arrival of Silas and Timothy with the news of 1 Thessalonians 3. 6 was stimulating to the zeal and energy of the apostle. Does the word of Deuteronomy 8. 3 throw any light upon being "constrained by the word"? Was the then present and continuous proceeding that which constrained the apostle?

It should be noted that Timothy and Silas are probably the brethren who came with help from Macedonia (2 Cor. 11. 9).

"I was with you in weakness, and fear, and much trembling" (1 Cor. 2. 3). The attitude of the Jews reveals two things: first, the opposition of the natural heart to the word of God, and second, the great responsibility of those who are entrusted with that word (see Ezek. 33. 6-9). How cheering the vision would be to the apostle after such opposition. We think it speaks of the fruits among the Gentiles, rather than a reversal of the apostle's words to the Jews of verse 6.

Sosthenes was probably a successor to Crispus as ruler of the synagogue. He evidently reaped much good from

his persecution, which he endured, causing him to go forth with the apostle (1 Cor. 1. 1).

From GLASGOW. The narrative in the Acts does not betray to us aught of the conflicting emotions, the internal struggles and external sufferings, that the apostle endured at this period.

We must study carefully the two epistles to Corinth to learn how that, borne down by the weight of physical sickness, in want and poverty, struggling to maintain himself by the labour of his own hands, the apostle refused to accept assistance from the Corinthians, in order that he might not be a burden to any man.

Moreover, in his preaching, he eschewed all external show and eloquence, depending solely upon the mighty manifestations of the Holy Spirit of God, with this object that their faith might not stand in the fleshly wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

So much so that his enemies flung that cruel and bitter retort at him, "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." And over and above all this there was the continual, crushing opposition of turbulent fanatical Jews, which culminated in his being dragged before Gallio the proconsul.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Psalm 26.

From DERBY. Judge me, examine me, prove me, try me, such is the language of the one whose affections are toward the House of the Lord (ver. 8).

Verse 1. So perfectly had the Psalmist endeavoured to walk before the Lord, that he can say unto Him, "Pass sentence upon me." See 1 Kings 9. 4, and Psalm 7. 8 and 9. Though such a walk needed effort on his part, his confidence is not in himself but in the Lord, therefore he says, "I shall not slide" (Psalm 125. 1).

Verse 2. Others may behold his walk but only Jehovah

knew what was in his heart. See Jeremiah 17. 10, and Revelation 2. 23. The reins. Is not the mind here indicated? (Ps. 16. 7; Prov. 23. 16; Eccles. 8. 11).

The heart (Luke 6. 45):

Verse 3. As he views the loving kindness of the Lord, he is stimulated to walk in His truth. How opposite to this is the experience of the one in Psalm 73. with his eyes upon his surroundings, his feet almost slipped.

Verses 4 and 5. Vain persons, dissemblers, evil-doers, the wicked. He knew the effect such associations would have upon him, and realizes the importance of separating himself from them all if he is to accomplish his purpose of presenting thanksgiving unto the Lord.

Verses 6 and 7. In reference to this see Leviticus 10. 3, and compare Deuteronomy 21. 1-7. In this condition he is found encircling the altar to publish with the voice of thanksgiving and to declare God's wondrous works (Ps. 9. 1, and 14, Ps. 107. 21, 22). Though he had separated himself from those who would have hindered him coming to God with thanksgiving, yet this could only be accepted as it was brought by way of the altar. This is a principle we do well to remember (Deut. 26.; 1 Peter 2.; Heb. 13. 15).

Verse 8. How great his affection was for the House of God is seen from 1 Chronicles 17. and 1 Chronicles 29. for therein was the dwelling-place of Jehovah's glory (Exod. 40. 34, also compare 2 Chron. 5. 14, and 7. 2; Ps. 29. 9).

Verses 9 and 10. Now he desires that he may not be taken away with sinners and men of blood, for these with their right hand full of attractive rewards, were seeking by their bribery to carry out their wicked plans. See Proverbs 1. 10; Psalm 55. 23.

Verse 11. In the past he had walked in his integrity, and again he purposes to continue so doing. For this he requests preservation and mercy from the Lord.

Verse 12. The Psalmist closes by saying, My feet standeth in a plain or even place. In the congregations will I bless Jehovah.

From BARROW. Because of the lovingkindness of Jehovah before the eyes of the Psalmist (ver. 3), he was enabled to walk in his integrity and possess unwavering trust in God. Amidst all our cares during our life down here, 'tis well to remember that the requirements of our God are: to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Himself. For if we are to realize His guidance in right paths, it is essential that we acknowledge Him in all our ways. It is not sufficient to walk in our own integrity, but also to walk in His Truth (ver. 1-3); therefore, the one who would walk well-pleasing to Him must search His Word wherein His Will is revealed: daily meditation for the daily walk. In the Scriptures there is One shown Who ever walked acceptably, the seat of vain persons and the wicked (vers. 4 and 5) had no attraction for Him, for He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separated from sinners (ver. 6). His Voice of thanksgiving was ever heard by His Father and God. He could truly say, "I know that Thou hearest Me always!" "The wondrous works of Him (ver. 7) Who is perfect in knowledge" were not passed unnoticed by His observant eye as He trod this earth, but to eager multitudes He could tell them forth. He endured the gain-saying of sinners (ver. 9), until ultimately by wicked hands (ver. 10) He was crucified! But His feet, that sank in the mire and the clay where there was no standing, were raised and enabled to stand in His Presence: truly "an even place" (ver. 12). He Who would not sit with the wicked now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high. There in the heights of glory our thanksgivings and praises ascend, and He in the midst of the congregation now (contrast ver. 5 and 12) doth bless Jehovah's Name and sing His praise (Heb. 2. 12).

I GO A FISHING.

After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias; and He manifested Himself on this wise (John 21.).

How many precious thoughts do the first three words of this passage suggest to both reader and writer! as they point to the many and varied events of that wondrous pathway of obedience, which culminated in death, even the death of the Cross; that Life, typified by the fine flour, the oil, and the frankincense of the meat offering; that Death, of which the burnt offering and the peace, sin and trespass offerings speak so loudly. It is He Who in all things must have the pre-eminence.

And if the first three words are suggestive, so likewise are the last three, giving us, as they do, the manner of that blessed manifestation by the Sea of Tiberias.

It is perhaps well, ere we begin to consider the chapter before us, to remind ourselves of the chief characteristics of the four Gospels (so called), in each of which we have a different presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ: in Matthew as King; in Mark as Servant; in Luke as Son of Man; and in John as Son of God.¹ We believe there is abundant internal evidence to prove that the Holy Spirit has indeed presented Christ in each of those aspects, and if, when reading in the Gospels, we keep each view of the Lord distinctly before us, then we cannot fail to observe beauties, which otherwise will be hidden. Observe especially the opening and the closing portions of each Gospel.

Turning to John 21. itself, which we desire briefly to consider, we surely have here a most beautiful picture of the Lord Jesus as the Great Shepherd of the Sheep. As the Good Shepherd of Psalm 22. He gave His life for the

¹ This must of course be read in the remembrance of the manifoldness of each Gospel. Thus in Matthew the Son of God character and the Son of Man character have also their place.

objects of His love; as the Great Shepherd of Psalm 23. "He tends with sweet unwearied care the Flock for which He died;" while as the Chief Shepherd He shall appear, of which Psalm 24. is at least suggestive. What a wondrous moment it was when He rose from among the dead! Alive for evermore in the power of an endless life. Death conquered. The Devil laid low. Yet all unknown to the world. But oh the intensity of His love for these few men! As for the world, they were rid of Him, and understood nothing of God's purposes of love. Neither did the many in David's day understand him. The Lord Jesus found the disciples after His resurrection together in fear, and He met their need then by showing them His hands and His side. Those hands, and that side so lately pierced. Reader, what of those wounds?

Those deep, deep wounds, they tell
The Sacrifice that frees us
From sin, and death, and Hell.

And having met their need then, He will meet their need now as He finds them by the Sea of Tiberias. It was on this wise. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples. The very order here is somewhat unusual. I feel persuaded that had you or I been writing, we would have mentioned Peter and James and John, those whom the Master granted to be with Him in the Holy Mount at the time of His transfiguration, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory, "This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." They were with Him too amid the intense gloom of Gethsemane, in the hour of conflict. But here James and John are only spoken of as the sons of Zebedee, while Peter, Thomas and Nathaniel are brought prominently before us. "I go a fishing." "We also come with thee." How strange! They had left all to follow the Lord, but now things are somewhat changed. Before His death,

while He was their Lord and Master, the Lord Jesus had been to them Friend and Companion, although most truly He breathed a different atmosphere, even the calm and peace of Heaven. They knew He was alive, for they had seen Him and were glad. But now He only appeared to them occasionally. As far as the eye could see, He did not walk about with them as He used to do. Hence, no doubt, the reason of Peter's decision. What is to become of us? We must do something. And however unintentionally, yet the Lord is, for the time being, shut out. Does it not, reader, almost savour of Exodus 32. 1? The Lord Jesus, you will remember, was in Caesarea Philippi, and He asked the question of His disciples, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?" And then He challenged His own with the question, "Who say ye that I am?" And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." So Peter is here. Then when Thomas found himself within, and face to face with the Master, there came from him the confession, "My Lord and my God . . . because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." And what of Nathaniel? When grace reached Philip, then Philip found Nathaniel, and said unto him, "We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph." "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" "Come and see." And when Nathaniel did come, and the Master revealed Himself as the One Who knew all things and all men, he had to confess, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art King of Israel." So that even such men as these had to learn the great truth, that we walk by faith and not by sight. Is it to be wondered at, that that night they took nothing? No. For they were out of touch with the Lord, Who had said, "Apart from Me, ye can do nothing."

Let us leave them for a moment as they toil on the lake, and view that wondrous sight on the beach. Whom have

we here? The High and Lofty One is seen preparing fire and food for His poor followers. The very men of whom it is written; "they all left Him and fled." The One Who had met their spiritual need, as in chapter 20., can just as easily meet their need here, as we have it before us. There was no limit to the possibilities when they cast the net on the right side of the boat in fellowship with Him, and having His Word. Now they were not able to draw it. Did that wondrous catch not remind Peter of his condition when the Lord had called him? At that time, after getting the use of his boat, Jesus gave to him and to his partners such a draught of fishes, that Peter had to say, in the presence of such Divine power, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" God will be no man's debtor. And it was surely good return for the simple use of Peter's boat. Once more, therefore, the disciples are brought consciously into the Divine Presence, and when they reached the land, they would doubtless, Hezekiah-like, tread softly, especially so Simon Peter, whose heart the Lord was so soon to reach, as He only can.

The Lord's dealings with Peter, as here recorded, are surely precious. "They see a fire of coals there." Would that of itself not make him ashamed in the presence of such grace? For possibly the last fire of coals which Peter saw was in Pilate's Judgment hall when Jesus stood there dumb, even "as a sheep before her shearers"; when Peter, having followed afar off, walked right into the midst of the enemy's camp and sat down to warm himself there (see Prov. 6. 27). But it was not long until the cock crew; and the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. What pity, what tenderness, in that one look! He went out, and wept bitterly. "They see a fire of coals there." Surely this must have touched some chord in his heart. In the fire and the food there is doubtless a lesson to be learned in connexion with Peter's lifework, that great work of feeding the lambs, and of tending and

feeding the sheep. How necessary to be warmed by Him and to be fed by Him, ere we can tend or feed others. And love is still the spring of all service. We have, in the Word, a daily supply of food, abundance for all; but do we hear at all that sweet voice say, "Come and dine."

It was when they had broken their fast that the Lord addressed Peter with the thrice repeated question, "lovest thou Me?" In Peter's answer, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," it is worth noticing that the word "lovest," as used by the Lord Jesus, and the word "love," as used by Peter, represent two different words in the original. Simon, in perfect keeping with the characteristics belonging to him, going beyond the Master, and using a word to intensify his ardour, "Thou knowest that I fondly love Thee."

But would any one suggest that the Lord doubted Peter's love? Surely not. He was dealing with the heart of His servant, as seen in His own use of Peter's word, when speaking for the third time. "Simon, son of John, fondly lovest thou Me?" This touched Peter. It grieved him more, doubtless, than the thrice asked question even suggesting his threefold denial. The Lord knew Peter, just as He knows each one of us, and as he affirmed his love, so the Master laid down the proof. Feed My lambs. Tend My sheep. Feed My sheep. Those precious lambs! Let us not forget that they are His first care. They have a place, even in His bosom (see Isa. 40. 11).

We may not all have the same work given to us, which will try our love, but we may rest assured that our love, like our faith, will be tried. The Lord Jesus here saw the end from the beginning, and knew what effect His grace would have upon His servant. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. Now this He spake, signifying by what manner of death he should

glorify God." Solemn, and yet gracious words. For the time was when Peter could go where he liked, and do and say just what he liked, but the grace of God would instruct him and mould him for his Master's service.

In Gethsemane he failed altogether to manifest grace, and instead, drew his sword. But the Lord looked forward and anticipated the moment when men would come to bind Peter, a moment when, instead of offering resistance, he would only stretch forth his hands, and allow himself to be led to that death, which, the Master signified, would glorify God. So, with each one of us, before we were apprehended, we walked in strange ways, and served ourselves, but now "the grace of God hath appeared . . . instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously, and godly in this present world" etc. (Titus 2. 11, 14).

As Peter's mind had thus been turned to his own pathway, his curiosity was evidently at once aroused as to what should befall John, that favoured disciple—Lord, and what shall this man do? If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou Me. An answer, truly, which never suggested that He was likely to remain away for well-nigh 2,000 years. There is no place here for such words as, "My Lord delayeth His coming." Let us rather consider His example, and follow His steps. Let there be the patient continuance in those things so pleasing to Him. "I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no one take thy crown."

How soon the Lord's words were taken up and misconstrued! for surely there is something, even pathetic, in the fact recorded, that "this saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die." And God has been careful to record this for us; perhaps because there is a danger of similar sayings even yet finding their way abroad among the brethren (see Ecc. 3. 15).

In conclusion, may those three little words, "Lovest

thou Me," sink deep into the heart of both reader and writer, and may the answer, in very deed, be found in our seeking, with renewed earnestness, to respond to the three like precious words, "Follow thou Me." It is Christ Himself Who hath said, "Lovest thou Me?" It is He Who hath said, "Follow thou Me." Amen.

NORMAN D. W. MILLER.

THE CHILDHOOD OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"AND the Child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom : and the grace of God was upon him " (Luke 2. 40). This is a very arresting verse, both because it deals with features in the early life of the Lord and also because those features refer to matters of growth, which were characteristic of Him according to His human nature and which may therefore be characteristic of others. Three particulars are enumerated, and then they are crowned with the manifestation of God's approval. We shall do well to consider these things, especially having the profit of young Christians in view.

1. "And the Child grew." We suggest that the thought here is physical growth and that this word should lead us to consider what care should be taken of the body for its proper development, so that it may become more fittingly an instrument for the doing of God's will.

The body requires food, exercise and rest, and regard should be paid to these, especially while the body is coming to maturity; temperance in these is essential, neither too much nor too little.

Much is made of physical culture in these days, and while it is possible to overdo it, yet it has its importance, and young Christians should realize increasingly that their bodies are for the Lord. They should abstain from every indulgence which would weaken or defile the body. Their food should be suitable and taken in moderation. They

should observe regular habits, rising early and retiring to rest early. Then the question of exercise should be considered. Doubtless in the case of the Lord He was employed in Joseph's workshop and found sufficient exercise in the bodily labour which that calling entailed. This may suggest the desirability of some such bodily exercise, particularly for those whose calling is of a sedentary character. But in addition to such work, it may be safely said that it is right and fitting for young men to engage in moderation in some such recreation as walking or swimming. It may be objected that many outdoor exercises require the association of a number of persons, in the form of a club. To this we are bound to say that such associations at any cost should be avoided. Recreation should never be viewed as an end or object in itself, but only as a means to an end, and that end the fitting of the body more perfectly for the service of God.

In this particularly it is well to bear in mind the word "bodily exercise profiteth a little," and the place in one's life it should hold should be in proportion to its profitability.

2. "And waxed strong." The old version adds "in spirit," though the R.V. omits these words. In view of the fact that they appear in Luke 1. 80 in reference to the early days of John the Baptist, and that evidently this clause refers to a part of the person other than the body, we shall view them as applying to the spiritual part of the man. The spirit is the highest part, the knowing part, that by which men are mainly distinguished from the lower creation. In early childhood, there is an elementary character, a feebleness of knowledge, an acting by instinct rather than by reason and judgment. But in normal healthy growth a time arrives when intelligence is awakened, when reason asserts its sway and when the beginning of the man is seen. Then the eye is turned to the desired goal and the life directed thereto by principles

of truth found in the word of God. How interesting to watch such development! how satisfactory to the anxious watcher (parent or tutor) when the man thus emerges from the boy and when the childish things are left behind! A dignity is imparted to the character, an appreciation of powers and abilities and a courage to use those powers in a profitable manner.

That such progress from childhood to manhood, and in no wise in His case implying imperfection, was made by the Lord is not only here indicated, but may readily be seen in a mature form at a later date. What manly courage did He possess! what perfect mastery of His powers! what dignity is seen in Him! He was able even, when but just past thirty years of age, to take the leadership of twelve men, many of them doubtless older than Himself. He was perfectly competent to teach, exhort, reprove and indeed to exhibit a power of spirit which marked Him out as a man—a perfect man.

Would it not be well for Christian youths and young men to seek this strength of spirit, to apprehend the dignity of manhood, to estimate rightly their powers and to show courage in using those powers to the glory of God!

Let us pass on to such the word to Timothy in 2 Tim. 1. 6 and 7: "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee . . . for God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline." If this were heeded there would be less holding back from taking part in worship and ministry, through fear of man.

3. "Filled with wisdom." Not only must the body be developed, not only must the spirit be made strong, but the soul must be stored with wisdom. The Holy Scriptures are a repository of wisdom to which the Christian should betake himself. These if communicated to him by God's Spirit will produce in him the fear of the Lord which is wisdom. Then will be seen in him that wisdom which is described as first pure, then peaceable, gentle,

easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variance, without hypocrisy. The Lord Jesus in His early years stored His mind with the word—the Holy Scriptures. This is suggested to our minds as we see Him at the age of twelve in the midst of the teachers hearing them, and asking them questions ; but we have a surpassingly excellent illustration of this in the temptation in the wilderness, where the Lord by His appeal to “it is written” showed that He was strong, having the word of God abiding in Him and so overcoming the Evil One. He truly, more than any other, lived by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God.

We must observe that mere knowledge of the word—mere acquaintance—is not the same as wisdom. Wisdom is that knowledge having become matured in the experience of the soul. How important for young Christians to be thus filled with wisdom and manifesting the same in the excellence and beauty of their ways.

And how did God the Father view this lovely combination of excellence in the Child Jesus ? We read, “and the grace of God was upon Him.” God found great delight in the contemplation of His Son. That Son grew up before Him as a tender plant (Prov. 4. 3), in the midst of an arid scene, and the evidences of the favour of God were manifest. In after years the Father on several occasions publicly testified to His delight in Him, and when even a Child it was manifest, as this verse tells us, that the grace of God was upon Him. No wonder that in addition thereto He was in favour with man, for before His preparatory experience was ended, and ere He commenced to bring men to the test of the Truth in His public ministry, they could not but acknowledge the beauty and perfection of the Child Jesus.

It would be a pity if in reading this scripture young Christians should regard it as beyond their reach. It is not beyond their reach, but by faith and a diligent and

prayerful effort that which is said of the Child Jesus may in measure be true of them, so that in spirit and soul and body they may glorify God. May it be so indeed!

S. J. HILL.

GOD HATH SPOKEN.

HEBREWS 1. 1.

THE mind of man cannot but fail to comprehend the Infinite, for if much that is natural is beyond our conception, how can we expect to fully understand that which is spiritual? The Psalmist has said regarding the years of man that they are threescore and ten, or by reason of strength fourscore years; but what can be learnt in that small duration of time of the Eternal, whose dominion is throughout all generations? Though the years of mankind upon the earth are so short, yet what wonders and triumphs have been achieved by their ingenuity, what havoc and destruction wrought by the strength of man and the power of nations! The past century has revealed wondrous things previously undreamt of, the art and skill of man have produced much, yet even a thousand years are as one day in the sight of Him Who through countless ages has reigned by His own omnipotence! All the boasted knowledge of man, yea, all his power and strength, is but as a grain of sand to an immense seashore in comparison with the Eternal Wisdom and Might of the Infinite. As to the language of mankind it is utterly inadequate to describe the glory, greatness and majesty of the Most High, the wondrous works of Him Who is perfect in knowledge!

The contemplation of the Psalmist upon the wonders of creation caused him not only to exclaim "How excellent is Thy Name in all the earth!" but made him also to realize his own insignificance and impotence—

What is man that Thou art mindful of him,
And the son of man that Thou visitest him!

Man must confess his inability to describe the Almighty, for we are far from possessing a right understanding of Him. Heights there are in things natural that cannot be attained, depths which cannot be fathomed. Much more in our knowledge of God there are heights and depths which are far beyond our finite conception.

When giving answer to the words of Bildad the Shuhite, after making mention of much which tells forth His wondrous power and might and also His exceeding knowledge and understanding, Job owns in amazement—

Lo, these are but the outskirts of His ways :
 And how small a whisper do we hear of Him !
 But the thunder of His power who can understand ?

Language failed him to express the Ineffable Being whose wisdom and ways are alike unfathomable ; and, like the Apostle, we also are constrained to exclaim : “ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out ! ”

As has been said, man has accomplished much by his finite knowledge and power, in that—

He putteth his hand upon the flinty rock,
 He overturneth mountains by the roots,
 He cutteth out channels among the rocks
 And his eye seeth every precious thing.

But what have all his strength and skill availed ? All the wealth taken from the earth cannot procure what man most needs, yea, the combined might of nations is paltry and powerless in comparison with that of Him whose way is in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet, at whose presence adamantine mountains quake and the hills melt, the earth is upheaved, yea the world and they that dwell therein ! Before whose wrath the isles will flee away, mountains will not be found. Oh, that men would but realize the greatness and the power of the One they have to meet ! A right knowledge of Him

will implant in our hearts a love and veneration which will incite us to uplift our voices in thanksgivings and praises unto the Eternal, causing us to exclaim, in the language of the inspired writer—

Blessed be the Name of God for ever and ever,
For wisdom and might are His !
Praise and extol and honour the King of heaven,
For all His works are truth and His ways judgment !

Even the wisest and greatest of kings of the earth have humbly owned His supremacy, the exceeding greatness of the power and wisdom of the Almighty Ruler of all. The wisdom, knowledge and understanding of a Solomon were not attained by his own efforts, but were bestowed upon him by Jehovah ; and if Sheba's queen could declare unto one of the wisest of men " the half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me, thou exceedest the fame that I heard "—surely as our feeble minds reflect upon the infinite greatness and wisdom of the Creator we shall be urged to utter as did Solomon when upon his knees, with hands spread towards heaven, " O God . . . there is no God like Thee in the heaven or in the earth ! "

Nebuchadnezzar, walking upon the royal palace of Babylon, surveying the wondrous and magnificent architecture wherewith he was surrounded, contemplating his own glorious kingdom and the majesty and greatness thereof, said—" Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the royal dwelling, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty ? " While the word was in the proud monarch's mouth, there came a Voice from the heights of heaven, for

GOD HAD SPOKEN.

The Most High had conferred upon Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom, greatness and might, but his heart was lifted up because of his glory and majesty ; thus he was deposed from his kingly throne until he knew that the Most High

ruleth over all, and praised and honoured Him that ruleth for ever — “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honour the King of Heaven, for all His works are truth and His ways judgement, and those that walk in pride He is able to abase !”

All the greatness of the Babylonish Empire is not to be compared with that of the Almighty, for the sphere of His operations and rule extend far beyond our finite vision or even our widest imaginations ; yet those works of creation that are visible clearly demonstrate the invisible things, even the perpetual power and Godhead of the Creator.

Truly God doeth great things and unsearchable, and as we consider His wonders upon the earth beneath and the heavens the work of His Fingers, the moon and the stars which He hath ordained, we must own that He is wise in heart, mighty in strength.

He alone stretcheth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea ; He maketh the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades and the chambers of the South. He doeth great things past finding out, yea, marvellous things without number. He alone can bind the cluster of the Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion ! It is He that leadeth forth the Mazzaroth in their season, and can guide the Bear with her train ! Thus, Amos the prophet incites us to “Seek Him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion . . . Jehovah is His Name.”

“To whom will ye liken Me, that I should be equal to him ?” saith the Holy One. “Lift up your eyes on high, and see Who hath created these, that bringeth out their host by number : He calleth them all by name ; by the greatness of His might ; and for that He is strong in power not one is lacking.” Though the host of heaven cannot be numbered by man, yet God telleth the number of the stars ; He giveth them all their names. Great is our Lord and mighty in power, for guided by His unerring Hand

these countless worlds continue on their appointed course throughout the vast infinitude of space, dependent on His might even as the myriads of inhabitants of this earth depend on His gracious Providence. Not one of them is lacking, all in their own allotted sphere are fulfilling His designs: the will of their Creator and Upholder, Who alone supports and governs the universe.

“Jehovah, the God of Hosts, is He that buildeth His chambers in the heaven, and hath founded His vault upon the earth.” It is He that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in, by His understanding! Possessing this knowledge we, like Nehemiah, should bless Jehovah our God, from everlasting to everlasting:—“Blessed be Thy glorious Name which is exalted above all blessing and praise: Thou art Jehovah, even Thou alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and the things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and Thou preservest them all, and the host of heaven worshippeth Thee!”

“The days of man on the earth are as a shadow, and there is no abiding,” but though the created passeth away, yet there remaineth One unto whom we can look, whose years have no end. The High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, the Everlasting Creator of countless worlds—He is “our dwelling-place.”

Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting
Thou art God!

And

Thy years are throughout all generations;
Of old hast Thou laid the foundations of the earth;
And the heavens are the work of Thy Hands.
They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure:
Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment,
As a vesture shalt Thou change them,

And they shall be changed :
 But Thou art the same,
 And Thy years shall have no end.

Upon the Eternal and Unchangeable, we may rest our weary souls as we tread along life's way ; One whose almighty power and everlasting strength none can withstand. Our lack of strength is made up by His omnipotence, for He Who is aware of all our weakness is abundantly able to meet our every need. Ofttimes we are like unto the patriarch as he trod his dreary journey ; weary and footsore he sought to rest, for the night was already at hand ; darkness had fallen upon his way. With head resting "upon one of the stones of that place," in a vision of the night he beheld angels ascend and descend upon that ladder from earth, and thereupon heard heaven's message, for

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to him :—"I am Jehovah, I am with thee and will keep thee." In the knowledge of that promise he could arise strengthened in his God : thus the promised presence and help of the Eternal with Jacob was to be his stay and support. The deeper the knowledge of our dependence upon His own Omnipotence, so much firmer will be our trust and confidence ; nerved and refreshed by the consoling reflections of His All-sufficiency, we will continue to pass the time of our sojourning in joy and peace.

Before ever Moses could act as a leader for the people of God, it was essential that he should have a knowledge of God that he could not attain in the court of Pharaoh. Being brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he became learned in all the wisdom and knowledge of the Egyptians, mighty in words and works ; yet it became him who was to be a deliverer, that he should dwell alone ; thus we see Moses fleeing from the face of Pharaoh, directed

of God into a wilderness wherein he could learn the purposes of Him by whom he had been chosen.

* * * * *

Now it became the duty of Moses to guide the flock of his father-in-law, unto places where they could eat of the tender grass, on the other side of the desert: here they could rest beside the waters that proceeded down the side of the mountain of God; and it was in this place that Jehovah could reveal His Will unto His servant. While he sat and gazed upon Jethro's flock, no doubt his meditation would be concerning that people sighing by reason of the tyranny and oppression of their Egyptian taskmasters. As he considered these things the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him in a flame of fire in a bush, and wondering greatly, Moses turned aside to see why the bush was not consumed. But whilst he was drawing nigh, the voice of Jehovah spake to him, saying, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob," and also informed him of a great deliverance that He was to effect on behalf of His people, the children of Israel.

On Horeb's height, another prophet of God is seen, within a cave, dwelling in solitude, to whom the voice of Jehovah came, "What doest thou here, Elijah? . . . Go forth and stand upon the mount before Jehovah!" But God does not reveal Himself in the fire, as in the aforementioned incident, "Behold Jehovah passed by and a great strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks; but Jehovah was not in the wind." "He Who hath gathered the winds in His fists," is not holden to one way of manifestation unto His servants. We might have thought that Jehovah would have spoken in the earthquake or in the fire, but not so, in that solemn silence "a still small voice" is heard by Elijah; he knew that it was the Voice of God that spake unto him.

Bethlehem's plain appears to have been the training

ground of David—there he diligently tended to his father's sheep, it was there that he learned of the might and greatness of the Eternal and His wisdom and never-failing goodness ; and put his trust in the Living God. To Him David could exclaim, " O Lord, there is none like Thee, neither is there any God beside Thee ! " All through his life his confidence remained unshaken ; he possessed an unwavering trust in His God, for he realized in no small measure the true character of the One he served. Towards the end, he could speak these words unto Him in praise : " Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power, and the glory and the victory and the majesty : for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine, . . . Thou rulest over all ; and in Thine hand is power and might : and in Thine hand it is to make great and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee and praise Thy glorious name ! "

Centuries after, shepherds on the plain of Bethlehem were keeping night-watch over their flocks. Unto such the glad message is revealed : " Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people, for there is born to you this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord ! " Angelic hosts in the presence of the Eternal may have heard His Word ; when He cometh into the world He saith—

Lo, I am come . . . to do Thy will, O God !

T. M. W.

Questions and Answers.

Psalm 18. title and 2 Samuel 22. 1 speak of a certain day. When was this day ?

We understand this to be the day of his final deliverance. See end of Ps. ver. 44.—J. A. B.

Do the Scriptures show that in the present day the servants of the Lord should fast ?

We know of no command to fast, but if it is a help to any saint in the things of God, why not fast to-day as in early days ?—J. A. B.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 30. (*Acts 29. 8-41.*)

EPHESUS II.

From GLASGOW. The Apostle's visit to Jerusalem, in fulfilment of the vow that he had taken upon himself, is passed over with little comment. Travelling overland through Cilicia, Galatia and Phrygia, he finds himself again in Ephesus, the capital of Ionia and the glory of Asia.

It contained a vast mixed population, composed of Persians or Phrygians, Greeks, Romans, Phenicians and Jews and was the centre of a decaying paganism.

Here Paul starts on that memorable three years of faithful ministry. Night and day with tears he ceased not to admonish and testify, both to Jews and Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

During this period he was sick nigh unto death, in want and poverty, working with his hands to meet bodily wants, and above all borne down with the care of all the churches, increased by the receipt of terrible news from Corinth of dissension and false doctrine that was likely to undo all his labour and toil in that city. And yet in the face of bitter opposition and crushing disappointments, the truth prevailed, so much so that all in Asia heard the word of the Lord.

From GREENOCK. In verse 8 we find that Paul entered into the synagogue and spake boldly for the space of three months, reasoning and persuading as to the things concerning the Kingdom of God.

He spake boldly, because he had been sent with a message. He exhibited the longsuffering of God in also reasoning and persuading. God did not require to reason. The Jews should have been ready, but they were not, and Jehovah is a God Who can say, "Come and let us reason together."

Up till this time, the disciples may have looked, to a casual observer, but a sect of the Jews, as indeed they were called; but when some were hardened, Paul in his God-given shepherd care for the saints separated them from the synagogue associations altogether.

A question has arisen as to whether Paul at this time travelled through Asia and preached, as from ver. 10. "All they in Asia heard the word of the Lord." It has been suggested that the disciples (among whom were Timothy, Erastus and Aquila) who had received the gift of the Holy Spirit and spake with tongues and prophesied (ver. 6) may have travelled through Asia preaching the word, Paul meanwhile preaching in the school of Tyrannus daily.

The Levitical priesthood had been foremost in crucifying the Lord Jesus whom Paul preached, yet, for their own exaltation, and possibly gain, these sons of a chief priest condemn themselves by adjuring the evil spirits to come out in that Name.

It is remarkable that God should so answer them as He did, though we are not told that anything happened to the strolling exorcists. Is it like a judgment on their inconsistency?

What earnestness is shown by these new converts! We read that many that practised curious arts brought their books together, valuable books they were too, and burned them in the sight of all. The question arises, where did they get commands so to do?

The key seems to be contained in the words (ver. 20), "So mightily grew the word and prevailed." Where was the word of the Lord on this point? Let them search the books of Moses and there find the great abomination this practice was to Jehovah.

[Can no one suggest a more simple and obvious reason?—
ED.]

So, to-day, it would be well with us if we knew more of the standing in awe of His words spoken of in the 119th

Psalm. We would then give more heed to His statutes, His precepts, His judgments, and His testimonies.

What craftiness is here displayed by Satan in, through Demetrius, persecuting the disciples. Demetrius unites his brother craftsmen and workmen, (capital and labour) into one by smooth words and a sound business protection policy. He then blinds the eyes of the simple Ephesians, the greater part of whom knew not wherefore they had come together.

Demetrius unwittingly bears Paul the good testimony that "ye see and hear that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying they be no gods which are made by hands."

As at Antioch, at Lystra, and Iconium so here in Ephesus, the Lord delivered the Apostle from persecution.

How well he experienced the truth of the blessed fact that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them."

From BARROW. For the space of three months the Apostle boldly speaks in the synagogue at Ephesus, both reasoning and persuading the things concerning the Kingdom of God. Owing to evil-speaking, he separates the disciples but continues his good work in the school of Tyrannus; thus two years pass during which time all they that dwell in Asia hear the word of the Lord (10. 26) which mightily grew and prevailed (ver. 20).

Paul then purposes to go to Jerusalem by way of Macedonia and Achaia, but abides still in Asia for a while, after having sent Timothy and Erastus on their way to Macedonia; Timothy was exhorted to call at Corinth and refresh them by his visit.

Information reaches the Apostle of the state of affairs in the Corinthian church (1 Cor. 1. 11) which causes him to write his first epistle unto them, in which he states that he would "tarry at Ephesus till Pentecost" (1 Cor. 16. 18);

“for this cause have I sent unto you Timothy” (1 Cor. 4. 17); “Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord as I also do” (1 Cor. 16. 10). The first letter to the church in Corinth was probably borne by Titus unto that place, and he was commanded to bring an account of how it was accepted by them. The epistle and the bearer were both well received by the church there, and subsequently he returns from thence and meets Paul in Macedonia (2 Cor. 7. 7, 13).

But while the Apostle was waiting the arrival of Timothy from Corinth and Ephesus, there arose no small stir concerning the Way.

About this time Timothy returns from Macedonia and Achaia and remains in Ephesus even after the departure of Paul unto Macedonia, to charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine, etc. (1 Tim. 1. 3-7; 18-20); thus the Ephesian church is left under Timothy’s care.

[We look for careful consideration of the order of events here set forth.—ED.]

PAUL AT ATHENS.

FROM BARROW. In reply to question from London, S.W., appearing on page 42, February, might we suggest that Silas and Timothy joined Paul in both Athens (1 Thess. 3. 1) and Corinth (Acts 18. 5). Upon receiving commandment to come to the Apostle with all speed, they would doubtless make haste on their journey (Acts 17. 15). From 1 Thess. 3. 1 we would infer that Timothy, or perhaps both, had arrived at Athens with a report concerning the affliction of the Thessalonian saints, but Paul and his co-worker thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone and thereupon sent Timothy to establish and comfort. In Acts 18. 1 we have the Apostle arriving in Corinth and the return of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia unto him (ver. 5).

[This and the following are inserted for consideration and comment.—ED.]

From DARWEN. According to Acts 17. 13, 14, when the Apostle Paul went to Athens, Silas and Timothy remained in Berea, and in the sixteenth verse we read "Paul waited for them at Athens."

Subsequently Timothy was sent to Thessalonica, evidently from Athens, where he seems to have joined Paul. Writing to Thessalonica, from Corinth, Paul states in his first letter, "Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone; and sent Timothy . . . to establish you" (chapter 3. 1, 2). "We" perhaps does allow the thought that Silas joined Paul at Athens, but how far the word "alone" will bear this out is questionable, rather is it against it. Further, from Acts 18. 1 Paul was alone when he made the journey to Corinth from Athens. In Corinth Silas joins Paul first, as see 1 Thess. 3. 6: and Timothy afterwards. They are the brethren mentioned by Paul when he writes his second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 11. 9, and with this Acts 18. 5 is agreeable. Silas would come from Berea, and Timothy from Thessalonica, both Macedonian towns about a hundred miles apart.

PAUL AND VOWS.

From GLASGOW. We must not condemn the Apostle for his seeming inconsistency in regard to circumcision, vows and offerings, we must remember that he stood midway, as it were, between the Jewish and Gentile Christians.

He was the Apostle of the Gentiles and yet at heart a zealous godly Jew, and because of much of the law that had not as yet been abrogated, much that in principle was carried on into the present dispensation, and because of his desire to conciliate his Jewish brethren as much as possible, consistent with the truth God had at that time been pleased to reveal, we judge it would be wrong to

lay the charge of inconsistency at the door of the Apostle Paul.

THE EPISTLES TO THESSALONICA.

From GLASGOW. It is important to a proper understanding of the epistles written by the Apostle Paul to note, if possible, when and why they were written, also the circumstances that called them into existence. It is thus with the epistles before us, therefore let us note a few facts concerning the planting of this assembly. For three Sabbath days the Apostle preached in the synagogue that Jesus was the Christ. The Jews failing in controversy resort to violence, and by stirring up vile fellows of the baser sort they assault the house of Jason where the Apostle was staying.

He was forced to leave Thessalonica, but not before he had planted a strong and vigorous assembly, so much so, that in his first epistle he says of them "From you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord." And again "Throughout Macedonia and Achaia your faith to God-ward has gone forth."

Driven, we say, from Thessalonica the Apostle made his way to Berea and from thence he is conducted to Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy behind in Berea.

It seems probable from 1 Thess. 3. 1 that Timothy had joined Paul in Athens and been sent by him to Thessalonica to comfort and establish the disciples in the midst of the fires of persecution through which they were passing. Awaiting his return, Paul moves to Corinth, where he is joined by Silas and Timothy (see 1 Thess. 3. 6 and Acts 18. 5). And so the first epistle was written at this juncture, according to some chronologists in A.D. 51.

AFTER THE SAME MANNER ALSO.

“ACCORDING to all that I show thee, the pattern of the Tabernacle, and the pattern of all the furniture thereof,

EVEN SO SHALL YE MAKE IT.”

Such was the Divine injunction given to Moses (Exodus 25. 9). Again in verse 40 of this chapter we are informed of the special care that Moses had to take that all were made after their pattern which had been shown him in the Mount. Note that it was to be “according to all that I show thee,” not according to some of the pattern; not some things to be in God’s way, and others as Moses thought right himself. Moses’ great privilege in being in the Mount and hearing God’s voice brought with it an equally great responsibility to carry out what he was bidden. Disobedience would have robbed God of His pleasure and Moses would have been disapproved. But Moses was faithful in all God’s House, and thus we read: “According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did all the work. And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; as the Lord had commanded,

EVEN SO THEY HAD DONE IT,

and Moses blessed them” (Exodus 39. 42, 43).

It is worthy of notice that all had been done according as Jehovah commanded. Thus it was that Moses blessed them, and Jehovah Himself showed His approval by filling the tabernacle with His glory (Exodus 40. 34). From this we learn that if we desire to have God’s approval it is essential that we do the things He bids us in the way He has told us to do them, and not in a way of our own devising. How readily did the children of Israel confess “All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do and be obedient,” yet He testified of them that they were a stiff-necked people. Is it not to be feared that too often in both respects God’s people to-day are very much like them?

It is a dangerous action to in any way alter the word that has proceeded out of the mouth of God. "Go and utterly destroy Amalek," was His plain command to Saul; but although Saul said, "I have obeyed the voice of the Lord and have gone the way which the Lord sent me," the Lord's estimate of his conduct was very different—"Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord and the Lord hath rejected thee" (1 Sam. 15.). It made no difference that Saul professed to have spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen to offer them in sacrifice unto the Lord, for "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams; rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim." These truths should surely save us from regarding any part of the will of God as revealed in His word to be unimportant, or non-essential.

The writer spoke recently to a young Christian concerning baptism, which, he said, was a very small thing, and yet we made it the door into the Fellowship. He sought to show him from the Scriptures the importance and the place of baptism as a commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ to be obeyed by all who would own His claims as Lord; to which, indeed, obedience must be rendered ere one may be added to those together of God. Alas! that there should be a growing tendency even among God's children to belittle His wishes! In Malachi's day the people said, "Wherein have we robbed Thee?" The earth was the Lord's and the fulness thereof. The cattle on a thousand hills were His, and yet He sought tithes and offerings from His people—and sought, alas! in vain. May it be ours to see to it that like them we do not rob God in what appears a little thing, but upon which He sets great value.

In Luke 22. 19 we read, "And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave to them saying, 'This is My Body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me.'"

Observe carefully

“THIS DO,”

which reminds us of the commandment to Moses in connexion with the Tabernacle,

“SO SHALL YE MAKE IT.”

Who is there so worthy to be remembered? What high honour has been conferred upon us? “Worthy the Son of God, we cry, to be remembered thus.”

True, we may have Him in our remembrance at all times, but this is something entirely different. This is something to be done in the way that He has commanded in order that He may be brought to remembrance. This results in the blessedness of Hebrews 10. 19, 20 being realized and leads to the fulfilment of Hebrews 13. 15. What the Lord Jesus took into His hands on the night of His betrayal was an unbroken loaf, a whole thing. What He gave to His disciples when He said, “This is My body, which is given for you,” was not an unbroken loaf, for not only did He take the bread, He also broke the bread. In this breaking of the bread there is surely vividly set forth the giving of His body, with which we may connect the Scripture, “The bread which I shall give is My flesh, for the life of the World.” (See also Hebrews 7. 24, “Offered up Himself,” and 9. 14 and 26.)

As it was in connexion with the loaf so was it in connexion with the cup. “In like manner, the cup.” Thus what He took was not just what He gave. He took what we might call an unpoured cup, but what He gave was an outpoured cup. In giving the outpoured cup He said, “This cup is the New Covenant in My Blood, even that which is poured out for you,” and surely, if we have vividly set before us in the breaking of the bread the giving of His body, we have with equal vividness set before us in the pouring out of the cup the shedding of His precious blood. Be it noted that in 1 Corinthians 11. 25, Revised Version,

there are no words "He took," as in the Authorized Version. This is important. The "like manner" is not limited to the taking. Thus it is written :

"IN LIKE MANNER, THE CUP."

And as thus we do, we shall surely be reminded that, and, it may be, led to express in praise,

"Richer blood hath flowed from nobler veins,
To purge the soul from guilt, and cleanse the reddest stains."

As an assembly we are privileged to break the bread and pour out the cup. Thus He is brought to remembrance according to His word and wish. Individually we eat the bread and drink the cup, and thus show forth His death, that death in which we thus express our identification with Himself.

In 1 Corinthians 11. Paul is putting in order things that were out of order. He repeats the order of the feast, as he had previously delivered it unto them, and this he declares he received from the Lord. Note the words "This do" in verse 24.

Can any answer be given to the question, "Do what" ? but "Do what He did" ? Well then, what did He do ? He took bread—He gave thanks—He brake. Thus and thus and thus are we to do in order that He may be brought to remembrance. But what of the cup ? Is anything to be done in connexion with it for kindred purpose ? Undoubtedly ! for verse 25 says, "This do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." Again the question may be asked, "Do what ?" And shall any say that God has left us without clear light on this important matter ? Is it so that the Lord Jesus Christ desired to be brought to remembrance by His gathered people and yet has left them partly in the dark in what manner this is to be accomplished ? Surely to state such questions is to answer them. God has given clear light. The Lord Jesus Christ has not left us in the dark. It is so, admittedly by most, in connexion

with the bread. And it is equally so in connexion with the cup, for whatever the manner of doing is in regard to the bread, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ, such is to be the manner of doing in regard to the cup for the same purpose. Had we been expected simply to take the cup and give thanks for it, would there have been any necessity to use the words, "In like manner also the cup" ? By such words surely the Holy Spirit's design is that we may be preserved from getting out of order ; that the series of acts by which in connexion with the bread the Lord Jesus Christ should be brought to remembrance, should in connexion with the cup be repeated—

He took Bread—He gave thanks—He Brake.

He took the cup—He gave thanks—He poured it out.

"This do, as oft as ye drink it," shows clearly, moreover, that something other than the drinking is to be done to bring Him to remembrance, and this, as we have sought to show, is to be done in a certain manner. He has told us what to do. He has told us how to do it. May it be ours to prove that we love Him by keeping His commandments, even as He said, "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (John 14. 21). He did not simply say, "Remember Me." He said, "This do in remembrance of Me."

WILLIAM MCKAY.

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 ?

ANSWER.

As to this question, it seems to me there can be no question that the shedding of the blood at the copper altar foreshadowed the sacrifice of the Cross, and the Lord's Supper carries back to this blood shedding.

If the bread or loaf has to be broken to set forth the Lord's body as given for us, is there not the need also for the wine to be poured out in like manner for the same reason ?

J. A. B.

A GAZING-STOCK.

“ BUT call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions ; partly, whilst ye were made a gazing-stock both by reproaches and afflictions, and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used ” (Heb. 10. 32).

What need for God's call to remembrance there was ! How little need for Him to speak as now He is found doing, in the former days, when their hearts were full of His love, and their lives and lips confessed Him as Lord ! The language of Jer. 2. is seen here, for if for their sakes He did remember them, and the kindness of their youth, and the love of their espousals, surely it was but to cause them to look back also to that time of whole-heartedness for Him, and touch their hearts as His was touched, in the remembrance thereof.

Those Hebrew saints had started well, albeit there was much to hinder, for they were brought up under the law, cradled in it, living in the very atmosphere of that, which, while it became their schoolmaster to bring them to Christ (Gal. 3. 24), also became a source of danger and attraction to lead them from the truth as found in Him. . Nothing short of the power of God could free them therefrom, and we do not get a people in the Epistle to the Hebrews who have not been delivered from the law, but rather a people, who, having been delivered, are now in danger of going back (Heb. 10. 38) to the place and the people, against which in the grace and mercy of God they had sought to witness. The temple with all its ritual is there, but it lacks the presence of that Holy One Who said,

“Your house is left unto you desolate,” for, from that time till now, He is not found therein, and over against it is God’s witness that He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, for we read, “But Christ as a Son over God’s House, Whose House are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end” (Heb. 3. 6).

Over the literal House in Jerusalem Christ as a Son cannot be, for they have rejected His counsel, they have despised His claims. Over the spiritual House, He can and will be, for they have accepted His counsel, they have bowed to His claims and acknowledged Him as Lord; and thus as believing, baptized and added ones, “they continued stedfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine, in the Fellowship, in the Breaking of the bread, and in the Prayers,” witnessing for God and His truth on the one hand, and testifying against that untoward generation, from which they had saved themselves, on the other.

What power was in their testimony in those days, the days of their first love, what confidence they had in God, what assurance was theirs, as thus and thus they did, they were pleasing in His sight! There was the ring of certainty about what they had done and were doing; it was like the language of the man of John 9. that was heard amongst those gathered-out-ones, “We know that this is of God, for He has made known to us His mind and backed it up with His power,” so that doubts and misgivings had no place where God’s certainties were thus made known; and so definite was their disconnexion from the Nation, so clearly did they grasp the will of God for them at this time, that “they sold their possessions,” “and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods,” having ascertained that for themselves they had “a better substance and abiding” (Heb. 10. 34).

Like Moses of old, they esteemed reproach with Christ to be far greater treasure than all that would have been theirs by staying behind. No wonder they became a gazing-stock, a spectacle for all to look upon; and possibly

there may be in the use of the word, an allusion to the Roman theatrical spectacles, where criminals, for their evil deeds, had to contend for their lives with the wild beasts that were placed along with them, while the people gazed upon them, as they were thus devoted to death. So devoted were those saints, at one time, for God and His Truth, that they were in imminent danger of their lives, and were a spectacle for all to gaze upon (see also 1 Cor. 4. 9), for the world judged them unworthy to live.

But years have passed and gone, and the people who were so full of confidence in their God and His Truth are beginning to waver, the doubts that were absent in former days have come, and they are beginning to question whether all is as they thought it was in those days. "Perhaps our brethren who are going on with the old thing have the best of it, for they have never changed, and undoubtedly there are developments amongst us now which did not obtain in the former days when we took our stand for God and His Truth." They reasoned thus, we doubt not, for they are being tried in a marked manner, and the signs and wonders and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to the will of God, have gone, as we would gather from Heb. 2. 4, and they are left without miraculous acts on God's part to confirm and strengthen them as they once had; God and the Word of His Grace is their one and only stay. Call to remembrance the former days, for God is ever the same, and His word abideth true, and if His voice was heard and heeded then, let it be heard and heeded now, for out from them at His bidding you came, back to them you cannot go, and still maintain that the Word of God leads you; nay more, "If any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."

These were solemn words of truth to them, for like the remnant in the book of Malachi, they are tired of God's Way for them, for the words of Heb. 12. 12 come to combatants who bear all the marks of men who have had enough of it,

hence the exhortation to "make straight the arms that hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for the feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but rather let it be healed." Where is the activity and the vigour that characterized you, why look so exhausted and tired of the fight, make straight paths for your feet (lame-ness is unknown in His footsteps), for that little halt may eventually lead you out of the way; what you need is endurance, for that which was of God in time past is still of Him to-day, and as worthy of your conflict and whole-hearted devotedness, as it was in a bygone day.

In all this, is there not a voice for us from God? Like them we too have had our former days, days in which God in wondrous grace made known His Will for us in these last days. Many of us have been born and brought up in associations of men, for which the Word of God contains no legislation, but when we came to Him with the desire of one of old filling our hearts, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do," we were led by Him back to the footsteps of the Flock, back to what was taught and practised by the apostles and the disciples in early days.

With what power and assurance from God came those simple truths of Acts 2. where believing ones were baptized and added to that which was of God in the city of Jerusalem! What certainty was in our hearts, that these truths of God were for our learning and our practice in these dark days of apostasy from the truth! They became to us a very bulwark to rest upon, and a landmark to be guided by. No wonder that with the dawning of the truth of God in our hearts we found it impossible to remain in sects and systems of men, where His person and His name were so slighted and dishonoured. Who among us would have questioned our separation therefrom, when at God's bidding we left, never again to hear His voice say return, to give effect to that which God had taught us? No one we trow.

But vain had been our separation therefrom, futile our

attempt to be where the truth of God could be carried out, if the doctrines of "Open Brethren" were to be condoned and countenanced. For it soon became manifest, in the light of overwhelming evidence, that we were associated with companies of persons who linked us on as completely with sectarianism as if we had never avowedly left it at the bidding of God. Since God showed us what an assembly of His was and should be, we never could conceive how it was possible for saints professedly gathered into the Name of the Lord, to break bread on Lord's day morning, the act of an assembly, and then support by their presence, for the rest of the day, that which they ought to have been a witness against.

Nor could it be allowed, for Scripture nowhere allows it, though their doctrines permit it, that saints who had never joined themselves to the assembly be permitted to break bread occasionally, and yet disclaim any responsibility that was attached to being one of the number. Hence, on the very same principle, and for the very same reason, that we left the sects around us, we left about fifteen years ago, "Open Brethrenism" with all its confusion, because there was no room to give effect to those simple truths which God had taught us. We left them, not to start some new thing, as has been often said, but that we might abide in the things which we had learned and had been assured of, knowing that from God we had learned them, and yet seeking with readiness of mind to be further guided into such truth as He would be pleased to show us, and in this we have much cause for thanksgiving.

That God's call to remembrance of the former days is not out of place, is evident from the fact, that many have forgotten them and the power that accompanied the revival of God's truth at that time, when God in a marked manner showed His pleasure and approval. The tendency is to let go the very things which we held to be so sacred and so dear at the beginning.

A Divine order obtained in the Apostolic days, a Divine order it was felt ought to be aimed at in these days (for even in the matter of reception into an assembly of God it was noticed that there was an order, for only baptized ones were added, and only baptized and added ones are found breaking the bread). What need to ponder the paths of our feet, when we are told that

“there is no Scripture for reception, that the Word of God has neither given us example nor precept to guide, save in one solitary instance, as found in 1 Cor. 5. where the man who had sinned as spoken of in Chapter 5 of the first Epistle and who had been put away from the assembly, is received back in, and then this doesn't look at one being newly received, it is therefore surprising how very little is found in the Word of God for that we have so long and so strongly contended for.”

Thus we are told. And it is indeed surprising to find, not how very little He has given us anent this most important matter, but how very much He in His wisdom has disclosed to us.

Have such forgotten God's examples that they so speak? For one would think that 3,000 examples in one day would be quite enough to convince the most sceptical in regard to this matter; or will we require to be reminded of the increased multitudes of Acts 5?

“But these were added by the Lord,” says some one, “we do not read of them being received by the assembly.” Will any one so explain, because of the word received being absent, that while they were added by the Lord to the 120 of Acts 1. that they were not received by them? One can scarcely conceive of such an interpretation, and yet it would seem that the criticism of some carries them this length, and they forget the fact that the work of God was so manifest in the case of the 3,000, that they extended with joy the right hand of fellowship to those disciples who had been wrought upon by the Spirit and the Truth of God.

In very truth it was the Lord Who added, and the evidence

of it was seen in men and women "joining themselves" to the assembly, for if Acts 5. 13 tells us that "of the rest durst no man join himself unto them," it clearly implies also that others whom God was working with, could, and did join themselves (ver. 14).

That the assembly received or could refuse to receive, is fully borne out by the fact, that when Saul essayed to join himself to the disciples in Jerusalem (Acts 9. 26), he was refused until due satisfaction was given unto them. But we shall be told,—“All this is beside the mark, for the teaching in the Acts of the Apostles cannot possibly be taken for our guidance to-day, seeing it applied only to the Jewish remnant found therein.” When men even go the length of telling us that this book contains no further revelation than that which Old Testament Scriptures foretold, we will not be surprised to hear of them going the full length that others have gone, and dispensing entirely with baptism for believers, or the breaking of the bread on the first day of the week, seeing that these formed part of the teaching and the practice of the early disciples.

We wish to place on record that we have failed to find this remnant which seems to be so clearly seen by certain who now speak evil of the Way, but in our search of the Word of God, have discovered that through the teaching of those scattered abroad in Acts 8. (that teaching, which, when submitted to, had brought them together in the city of Jerusalem ¹) the churches of Judea were brought into being, which churches were in Christ (Gal. 1. 22) and are elsewhere spoken of as the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus, and of which the saints in Thessalonica became imitators, for they also suffered the same things from their own countrymen, as they did from the Jews (1 Thess. 2. 14).

Hence it remains, that before the fuller revelation concerning the Church the Body was given, churches of God were in

¹Which church of God Saul wasted (see Gal. 1. 13), bearing in mind that his persecutions were confined to Jerusalem (Acts 8. 1).

existence and the saints thereof, as to their eternal standing, "were in Christ," and surely the irresistible conclusion is arrived at by the simple reader of the Word of God, that such was true of them apart from any teaching which had been received through him whom Scripture speaks of as the Apostle of the Gentiles; for the words "were in Christ" (Gal. 1. 22) carry us back to a very early day in their existence; and besides, he but "preached the faith which he had once destroyed" (Gal. 1. 23). Therefore, what he had to say to them, when for the first time he saw them face to face, was but confirmatory, though doubtless in a fuller manner, of what all along had been their standing, and "they glorified God in him" (Gal. 1. 24).

To speak of Paul having a double ministry, each containing different fundamental truths, for two distinct testimonies, is but to lead the mind into a labyrinth of doubt and perplexity, which ultimately will lead into a questioning of the inspiration of the Word of God.

God's truths are being assailed on every hand, and it behoves us to quit ourselves like men, and not be turned aside by the seeming spirituality of those who speak much about being "taken up with the Lord" and yet deny His Word. Why put asunder that which God has joined; for "he that loveth Me will keep My commandments," and be it ever so little of the doctrine of the Lord that they who are occupied with Him have learned, it will be held as dear by them, because of being His.

The great men of our day, the men who pose as religious leaders of the people, speak well concerning the Lord Jesus as a man, and yet at the same time, deny the authenticity of Old Testament Scriptures which foretell His coming. They make much of Him, but they make little or nothing of His Word, for the reverence in which the sacred writings were held by the leaders of the people in the days when the Lord Jesus was manifest in flesh, and who denied the Holy One and Just, is professedly given to His person, but His Word

and Will are ignored; it is an utter impossibility to do the one without the other and be found well pleasing to God. Let the Scriptures guide, they will ever lead to the Person, and that Person is ever found where the Scriptures lead.

So marked were "the footsteps of the Flock" that when the fairest among woman wanted to know where He, Whom her soul loved, could be found, she was bidden to go by those steps and there she would find Him. These footprints are as marked and as clear now as then, and though the rallying cry of "the ground of the One Body" may have about it the sound of antiquity, and the more modern cry of "Discerning the Body" may tickle the ears and catch the fancy of some (the last-mentioned being based upon one portion of the Word of God which does not bear the meaning which they give to it, but which, we are told, with all due solemnity and impressiveness, indicates God's one and only highway for His people to-day), we would, seeking grace from God, refuse the one and reject the other. The one is not old enough; the other is too new; back to the Word of God we must go, and having learned His will for the early disciples, seek in answering grace to be where that will can be done now.

"And where and with whom can such worthy conduct be found to-day?" We answer unhesitatingly, yet in meekness, only with those who in response to the call of God find themselves in "the Fellowship which is of His Son," seeking through the assemblies therein to give effect to that which God has taught, and is teaching them from His truth. And because of being where we are, and seeking to do what we are doing, it is not surprising to hear the old cry, "you take too much upon you," and that too from men who while denying to us the right to come together as overseers in a wider circle than in an assembly, and who belittle what they are pleased to term "district oversight," do not think it out of place to be party to the leading men from amongst themselves coming together to confer on matters which

concern the whole ; as witness the representative meeting of leading men from among Exclusive and Open Brethren (so called) held in London, when the principles and practices which obtain among them were discussed, with a view to arriving at oneness of mind anent their being all together. But the abiding fact remains, in spite of all that has been said or done, that not one of them has ever come forward with an open Bible and shown us therefrom that overseers in their care and exercise for the Flock should not come together, and thus, getting counsel one from the other through the Word of God, be the better able to tend the charges allotted unto them, "for in the multitude of counselors there is wisdom."

For men to reason thus, that while God permits the overseers of a local assembly to come together, He refuses to countenance the comings-together of the overseers of a county or counties, is as weak as is the argument that when the sinning one of 1 Cor. 5. was put out and away from, the saints in Corinth, we are not to suppose that he was outside the church of God in Corinth. To those who refuse to be turned aside unto fables, but are content to abide by the Word of God, such sayings will have no weight, except the weight of warning which they give, showing us to what lengths we can go when we let go the plain direct teaching of God, and turn aside seeking for something else.

When will saints of God take their Bibles in their hands, and learn therefrom that which God has so clearly shown, that saints gathered into the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and only such are known and spoken of as church and churches of God ?

That the foregoing is admitted in word, if denied in deed, by the many who stand aloof from us to-day, is evident. For we refuse to grant the oft-repeated assertion, that Open Brethren make no claim to being the church of God in any given place, to the exclusion of other believers, and that be-

cause of this, that over the entrance of their meeting-places appear such words as the following, "Saints, gathered into the Name of the Lord Jesus, meet here," and their letters of commendation are invariably addressed to, and purport to come from, saints gathered into the Name. Hence, by this designation of themselves they exclude all others as not so gathered, and claim for themselves His presence and His authority, and thus what is done is done professedly in His name.

An assembly of God claims no more, an assembly has no more, and thank God for the assemblies who realize it to be enough, as in very deed it is. The pretentiousness of claims lies not in the claims being made, but in the inability of those who claim to offer proof that such is true of them. When one reviews the principles of Open Brethren and looks at the outcome of them as seen in their erroneous practices, he ceases almost to wonder any longer at Rome attaching the name of God to what she says and does. When intelligent men and women, who claim the Word of God as their one and only guide, meekly acquiesce in, and consent to, such things as thus slight His Person and belittle His authority no wonder that godly men and women amongst them are being exercised before God as to what they should do, as they feel how helpless it is to go on any longer seeking to remedy the lawlessness which prevails among them, and they are being-forced, though slowly, to acknowledge that nothing but the Divine remedy of 2 Tim. 2. 21 can meet the demands of the case.

Are there among us to-day those who are tired of the way, who like those Hebrew saints, have had enough of it, then make straight the arms which hang down, and the feeble knees, for that which was of God in time past is of Him still to-day and worthy of our whole-hearted devotedness, as in former days, and encamped as we are with a rejected Lord, with the host of the Philistines over against us and the religious house of Saul seeking to bring us to

nought, may we hear and heed afresh the desire of His heart as breathed through the inspired words of John 17. 21, "that they all may be one," and with loyalty in our hearts to His Person, seek at whatever cost to ourselves (for we speak to those who have counted the cost), to give Him the wish and desire of His heart. One visible unity brought about by subjection to the claims of Him Who walks in the midst of the assemblies, and Who walks not elsewhere than where He can rule, and though the failures of men in the past are cited as a proof that such cannot now be, because of the wreck and ruin around us, let it be enough for us, that such was, and that it is the mind of God that such should be, here and now. That we have not been free from failures we fully grant, nor do we anticipate being free from them in the future, but we must ever discriminate between Divine principles on the one hand, and men's failures in carrying them out on the other.

His standard cannot be lowered because of this, and vain and futile will be the attempts of men to bring about unity at the expense of God's truth. He is coming, brethren, "for yet a little while and He that shall come, will come, and shall not tarry" (Heb. 10. 37), and in the light of that coming, and in the remembrance of the former days, with all that God has been pleased to teach us, let us heed the exhortation of verses 35-36, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward, for ye have need of endurance, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

The abounding grace of God in the past causes us to raise our Ebenezer, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," and to say and sing—

"We'll praise Him for all that is past,
And trust Him for all that's to come."

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GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

(Continued from page 111.)

THE RETURN TO THE LAND OF JUDAH.

WE noticed in our last paper that Elimelech and his two sons perished in an enemy's country, leaving Naomi, Ruth and Orpah widows; we will now look at the return to the land of Judah (vers. 6-8). A more joyful note can now be struck, for there is hope now of the bereaved and distressed returning to God. The severe discipline has not yet been quite effectual, though Naomi is getting in the right path. How easy it is for us to take the downward path of backsliding, but how hard it seems to take the upward path of restoration because of Satan's insinuations as to God's dealings with us. Five times in this chapter she complains that the Lord's hand has been against her, and she no longer desires to be called Naomi (pleasant), but Mara (bitter). How little she understood of the kindness of God, Who was acting towards her in mercy, and Who over-ruled even this failure for the working out of His own eternal purpose, bringing glory to His own great Name. When God in His love disciplines us we are apt to get occupied with the consequences of our backslidings instead of our sin against Him. It is only when with true contrition of heart we take a low place before God saying—

“Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned,
And done this evil in Thy sight,”

that restoration will begin. It is a good state for the soul to be in, to condemn itself and justify God in His actions towards us, as the Psalmist says—

“That Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest
And clear when Thou judgest” (Psalm 51).

Naomi in the land of Moab hears the good news that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread, and she arises with her two daughters-in-law to return to the land of Judah. The faithful God of Israel had long waited for

the sighs and cries of contrition to arise from His people, and at last He hears them and responds quickly by opening the windows of heaven and giving plenteous rain and fruitful seasons. How like the character of God this is, for He waits to be gracious and yearns to bless His people.

When David said, "I have sinned," Nathan at once answers, "The Lord hath put away thy sin." When Isaiah acknowledges his own condition and the condition of God's people, we read, "Then flew one of the Seraphim, having a live coal from off the altar, and he laid it upon his mouth and said, 'Lo this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged.'" And how often in Israel's history, when they had sinned and made confession of their sin, the Lord showed to them wherein His glory lay by forgiving them their transgressions and sins (Exod. 34. 5-7).

We write with reverence, that God will be in a hurry to meet the contrite soul that returns to Him saying, "I have sinned." A beautiful illustration of this is found in Luke 15. On the younger son's return the father ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. Truly we can say—

"Who is a pardoning God like Thee,
Or who has grace so rich and free?"

Yes, we repeat God is waiting to be gracious and delights to bless us. His desire is to visit His people by giving them bread; but there must be the right condition of soul before He will do this. There must be no fleshly boastings of what God in His grace has revealed to us, nor reliance on any externals, but a collective humbling of ourselves before Him; then He will be true to His character and word, and we shall know a reviving again. He will raise up true shepherds who will feed His people, backsliders like Naomi will be restored, and hearts will be stirred up to spread the joyful news of the Gospel, with the result that sinners, like Ruth, will be converted.

In concluding the first chapter of Ruth, we may also learn that out of the path of fellowship with God we can only act detrimentally to others, for Naomi advises Ruth and Orpah to return to their mothers' house, and Orpah returned to her people and her idols. But the sovereign electing grace of God shines out in the case of Ruth and gives to her a true choice and purpose of heart, and she utters the memorable words: "Entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

There is no thanks due to Naomi that Ruth ever found herself associated with God's people. When they return to Bethlehem (House of Bread) all the city is moved, and they arrived at the beginning of barley-harvest.

It is far better for us to have the commotions that be-token life and spiritual stir, than sometimes an order and stillness which only tell of decay and death.

Let us also note with joy that whether as saints coming back to Him for restoration, or sinners drawn unto Him, we only get the beginnings now: they are only a foretaste of untold joys, pleasures for evermore, never-ending delights which shall be our eternal portion with Him.

(To be continued.)

J. DORRICOTT.

For Youngest Believers.

GOOD WORKS

"Thou art good and doest good."

THE Psalmist has here before him the goodness of God and as he looks back and sees the good hand of God upon him, he exclaims out of a grateful heart, "Teach me Thy statutes."

God is the Giver of every good gift, and as we look back to the time when we were like others, children of wrath, even then we see the goodness of God manifest. For "He did good in that He gave us from Heaven rain and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

In the light of the goodness of God thus displayed, it is not surprising that believers should seek to walk in the footsteps of Him Who went about doing good. Nor is it any wonder that reference should be made so often in the Scriptures to good works.

In the letter to Titus, we have the Lord Jesus brought before us as the One "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works."

In the letter to Ephesians we read, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." And with this, we would not be forgetful of the fact, that the Scriptures have been given, "that the man of God may be . . . furnished completely unto every good work."

In Mark 14. the Lord Jesus bears witness of one, that she had wrought a good work, which witness is worth having.

How easy it is to sing with the lips—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small."

But when it becomes a question of giving it practical expression, how difficult it seems!

Here is one, however, who might' truthfully have used those words, as her action proved that she really loved the Lord.

But let us look at the facts. The Lord Jesus is sitting at meat in the house of Simon the Leper, and there enters a woman, having a cruse of ointment, very costly. There before her is the One to Whom she owes her all, and breaking the cruse she poured it on His head. At this there arose

a murmuring amongst those that were present concerning the waste as it appeared to them, for they were occupied with what might have been done, not with what had been done.

But the Lord Jesus is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart, and, judging aright her motive, He could say, "Why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on Me. . . . She hath done what she could." He alone is able to put a right and proper estimate on all we do.

She loved much because she had been forgiven much, and our appreciation of what has been done for us is shown out in what we are doing for Him. Then may it be ours to labour so that we may have the "Well done."

In Hebrews 10. we are exhorted to "consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together." Are we at the assembly meetings when the opportunity presents itself? And are they the better for our presence? Are we studious so that we may provoke unto love?

Could our good works have a better expression than in the assembling of ourselves together?

When we come to examine ourselves, is it not a fact, that our presence is often an indication that we are occupied with the gift and not with the Giver?

"My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons" is still on record. Did not God once cause an ass to speak? Did He not in the cleansing of Naaman use a little maid? Is not the same God rich unto all that call upon Him?

Fellow-saints, if you and I would have His appreciation we must be careful to maintain good works.

S. NIVEN.

Young Men's Corner.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Psalm 27.

FROM BARROW. As we look around, there is much which may tend to dismay and discourage our souls causing us anxiety and care, but it is with joy that we realize that we have the privilege to look up with a perfect conviction to the Strength of our lives (ver. 1). He is able to grant abundantly above all we can ask or think, with thankful hearts we also should praise and extol His name. How amazing is the lovingkindness of the Eternal in that He deigns to give ear to even the feeblest cry of His saints, and always satisfies their every want if it be for their good.

In his confidence in his God the Psalmist could declare, "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear." But this trust was the outcome of a knowledge of Jehovah in times of need beforehand; his adversaries and foes had come up with the sole object of giving vent to their hatred and bitter animosity by taking his life, yet their evil intentions were frustrated by One mightier than themselves, and David can still rejoice in the God of his salvation.

The desire of the psalmist was that he "might dwell in the House of Jehovah." No thought of being exalted, or of personal advancement, but that he might "behold the beauty of the Lord and inquire in His temple." In his eagerness to obtain the entreaty which he had asked, he exclaims "that will I seek after!" If the desire is not worth the seeking, the prayer is not worth the answering; surely, if our hearts are truly desirous of aught our energies will be employed to the utmost that we may attain.

In His pavilion there is a hiding-place, in the secret of His tabernacle there is an abiding-place, nought can enter to disquiet or disturb, calm in His Presence we can rest our weary souls. Beneath His shadow we have a safe and eternal refuge, thus because of the comfort in verse 5 we

have the sacrifices of joy and the praises in the 6th verse.

But a Greater than David could have truly said, "Jehovah is My life, My salvation . . . the strength of My life!" His confidence in His Father remained unshaken, His was a firm trust alone centred in the Living God. The hatred and envy of His many adversaries did not cause His faith to fail or His heart to fear. Ofttimes they made deliberate attempts to take His life, but He that was with Him was stronger than their combined might. He passed through their midst unharmed. The Most High was His habitation, securely He dwelt in His Presence; vain was the efforts of His enemies to take His life until the time He should suffer on their behalf. His prayers and praises were ever heard for His godly fear, but the season came when the Face of His God was hidden; when alone He was bearing our sin's heavy load, cast off and forsaken by all. He had been delivered over unto the will of His adversaries, false witnesses had risen up against Him (ver. 12); but for the joy that was set before Him He endured (ver. 13). He bore the wrath and judgment, the shame and suffering, yet it was for our sake, and now He is in the Presence of our God for us also.

The injunction of verse 14 has cheered the hearts of many of God's people in the past, and if given heed to it will cause ours to rejoice also, knowing, as we do, that He worketh for His people while they wait for Him.

Question and Answer.

Is there any difference between the heavenly kingdom of the Lord (2 Tim. 4. 18) and the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1. 11) ?

2 Tim. 4. 18 seems to point to the place from which the kingdom has its origin, while 2 Pet. 1. 11 speaks of its duration. Although in the end the Son delivers up the kingdom to the Father, yet it is the same kingdom that still goes on.—J. A. B.

TIMOTHY.

THERE is a prominence given to Timothy in the New Testament, and a fulness of detail both as to his person and his service which invite special attention.

We propose to give consideration to the subject, particularly noting certain prominent features, such as—

His early life and training,

His conversion,

His life as a young disciple,

His calling and work as a deacon,

His larger responsibility as a man of God.

We see in Timothy's case the inestimable blessing of a godly training. His grandmother and mother were both women of unfeigned faith, and as from an infant he had been taught the sacred writings, it is evident they were his instructors, the lively affectionate manner of the younger woman being supplemented by the mature experience of the elder. Incidentally we may learn from the reference to these women what a valuable service may be rendered by Christian women in the godly instruction of the young. There is a stage—that of childhood—when the mind is far more influenced by the gentle affectionate manner of the woman, than by the man. He can come in effectively at a later stage. This seems to be suggested in the words of the Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians 2. 7 and 11, where he uses the illustration of a nursing mother gently cherishing the babe, and then of a father, exhorting, encouraging and testifying in connexion with those of older years. We conclude that a woman is very much in her place in such a service, not necessarily in connexion with her own children only, but also in regard to the children of others, as, for instance, in the Sunday School.

In such instruction a wise discrimination needs to be exercised as to those portions of the Word which are suited to the years and ability of the child. All Scripture is profitable, and as a whole adapted to every age and attainment,

but some parts especially for those in an elementary stage. A rule to read the Word through consecutively from Genesis onwards is by no means advisable for those of tender years ; experienced counsellors should guide as to the parts most suitable. The principle here suggested finds its illustration in the feeding of the body, which must be directed in accordance with its requirements and powers of assimilation.

What a large field for exploration do the Old Testament writings afford, and what valuable instructions in righteousness may be gathered therefrom ! We may be sure that Timothy's knowledge of the contents of the Old Testament, whether historical, biographical, or prophetic, would put to shame many children of Christian parents in these days.

All this was taken in by him, not at first because of Divine enlightenment, but because of his respect to his instructors ; he knew the kind of people from whom he had learned, but at some time and under some certain circumstances " unfeigned faith " was found in him, as it was already in his progenitors. How it came about we do not know, for the fact of Paul calling him " his genuine child " by no means implies that he was used to his original enlightenment. What we do know, however, is that it was through the Word that he already knew, according to the testimony of 2 Timothy 3. 15, " the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

Very speedily thereafter was seen the value of his early training, for he found himself equipped in the knowledge of the Word of God and readily able to take some part in service.

The vision of the valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37. is a helpful illustration of such a case. There, before the in-breathing of the spirit of life, the bones are brought bone to bone, then the muscles and skin come up, and perfect

forms are seen. Then the breath is given, and the result is they stand up a great army. Or, to use a very homely illustration, the housewife in preparation for future needs furnishes the fireplace with fuel, laying in proper order the paper, wood and coal. Then, when the proper moment has arrived, the light is applied, and speedily the whole mass is ablaze and giving out the desired warmth. So with Timothy and many another child of godly parents who had been trained in faith with a view to his future Christian course.

At this point Acts 16. takes up the story. We see him as a young disciple, and further as being well reported of by the brethren. Scripture never flatters, and is never redundant in describing any. Each word should be carefully considered if we would gain a true understanding of the subject. First he was a disciple, a follower, a learner, a young man who was swift to hear, ever seeking to know God's will and ever putting his knowledge into practice. Then competent men (not merely his fond mother or grandmother) gave him an exemplary character. They had marked his course, and it had been such that amongst other young men he had made his mark as being distinctly superior, and had thus claimed the special notice of his seniors. That he was known in a somewhat larger sphere than his own town is indicated by the fact that those commending him were of Lystra and Iconium.

We may further judge of his character by the fact that Paul was content to take him along with him. Evidently the Apostle felt the need of a young man to stand to him somewhat in the position of a son. On a previous occasion John Mark had been taken, and now the Apostle takes Timothy, and this seems to suggest a custom which is of the utmost value in the training of young men for the work. Young men need to be brought on to take up the work as the older ones are taken away. The ideal training for such seems to be that of accompanying a mature servant

of the Lord, both learning from him and having an opportunity of exercising one's gift little by little under his eye. This is a combination of theory and practice which is of the highest value. It may encourage approved brethren to take suitable younger men with them in their ministrations.

Now we observe that, although Paul was an Apostle, yet he sought the fellowship of the elders in taking Timothy. Firstly, he sought their testimony as to his character, and secondly, when Timothy, in view of his service, had a gift imparted to him by the laying on of the Apostle's hands, as in 2 Timothy 1. 6, the elderhood were associated with the Apostle as a matter of fellowship, though it was not by their hands that the gift was imparted (1 Timothy 4. 14).

Fellowship was a very precious thing to the Apostle, as seen in this case, and we note the same continually in his letters, in which, while the substance was all his own, as under God's hand, yet he almost invariably associated another with him in the opening salutation, and that other was sometimes only a brother.

The care shown by the Apostle in selecting Timothy was not an isolated instance, for when (in 1 Timothy 3.) he is giving instructions as to the qualifications and service of the deacon, he not only shows the kind of man required, but adds "let these also first be proved." Such proving is not less necessary in the present day.

The gift which Timothy possessed was evidently for preaching, ministering the Word, the work of the Evangelist. At first, however, we judge he acted in a distinctly subordinate character, ever glad to wait upon the Apostle and relieve him of unnecessary labour. It may be that on this account he was not involved in the imprisonment at Philippi, or it may be that God purposely spared the young man so severe a test thus early in his course of service. That he very speedily manifested his gift for ministry of the Word is evident, as several scriptures show.

It is profitable and refreshing to one's spirit to note some of the leading references to Timothy by the Apostle in his letters; thus, when writing to the Philippians (chap. 2. 19) and alluding to an early stage in his service, we read: "I have no man like-minded who will care truly for your state," and "ye know the proof of him, that as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the Gospel." What a delightful commentary on his early service!

Then, referring to a little later time (in 1 Thess. 3. 2) the Apostle alludes to his sending Timothy to the Thessalonians, to establish and comfort them concerning their faith, and in doing so describes him as being at that time "our brother and God's minister in the Gospel of Christ."

And again, in writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle views him as a fellow-labourer, and commends him to the love and respect of men who apparently were not conspicuous for their regard for their best friends, in the words (1 Cor. 16. 10): "See that he be with you without fear, for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do; let no man therefore despise him."

These references cast a very helpful light on his course, and enable us to better appreciate the great beauty and excellence of character he displayed. We may be sure that as a young man he was often called upon to engage in a service in connexion with older men, which required on his part much tact, and not only tact, but true humility, or otherwise his service would have been spoiled. Doubtless the advice which the Apostle gives in his letters to him, "let no man despise thy youth" was given at an earlier time also, when in his company. We note that it rested with Timothy so to behave as not to give occasion for any to despise his youth, and this reminds us of an Old Testament illustration, even of David, who having overcome Goliath, though but a stripling, was set over

the men of war. What a position for a lad, and one calculated not only to puff him up, but to arouse the envy of others!

How many (including Saul) there were who doubtless watched his conduct, ready to mark any mistake, any foolishness, and so to despise his youth. But David gave no occasion to such: "he behaved himself wisely" (1 Samuel 18. 5), "behaved himself wisely in all his ways" (v. 14); "he behaved himself very wisely" (v. 15), and the result was manifest in the respect and love which he received from all classes. It is certain that unless young men or old men have the respect of the saints generally, their service will not be accepted. The securing of such respect will depend on their own comely manner of behaviour. Many a young man has suffered a serious setback in his usefulness by exhibiting a self-consciousness and pride which has repelled others.

At last a time arrived when Timothy's service was to be enlarged and his responsibilities increased; when his earlier training under the Apostle was to be put to the test with the Apostle removed. This is the natural order of progression, for "to him that hath shall be given." Ephesus is to be the scene of his later labours, that city which suggests to the mind so much of interest in the New Testament writings.

The Apostle was leaving that city with its flourishing work of God, but he had already detected some very dangerous tendencies and elements in the leaders. He had done his utmost while with them to declare the whole counsel of God and had withheld nothing that was profitable. Nevertheless, he foresaw that an evil time would come, and that from amongst the elders perverse and sectarian teachers would arise, as well as that wolves from without would enter in.

Therefore did he take Timothy aside and although desiring most earnestly to still retain him in his company, he exhorted him to abide in Ephesus, to exercise a special

oversight, and particularly to jealously guard the doctrine of the Lord.

We will freely acknowledge that Timothy occupied a special place as bridging the transitional period from the Apostle to the sole government of the elders, a position which may be compared with that held by Joshua, upon whom Moses laid his hands, and who in like manner bridged the gap between Moses and the rule of elders. Joshua had no successor upon whom he set his hands, and neither had Timothy. After their times the government of God's people settled down to its normal order.

But this consideration does not deprive us of the helpful teaching which the record of his service gives, and well would it be if there were more like-minded men with Timothy who exercised a jealous care over the things of the Lord.

It is, of course, clear that whatever his age when left in charge at Ephesus, he was far from a novice. He was a man possessing much of the energy of youth, combined with the stability which should come of experience. It is well to see that even the word Elder is not a positive but a comparative word, and does not necessarily mean an old man, and it is also well to remember that comparatively young men have been used again and again by God to take the position of leaders of men older than themselves.

How comprehensive and diversified was this service! He had a care for doctrine, government and conduct. He exercised an oversight of all classes, young and old, men and women.

There is an expression applied to him which we judge gives the key to his character and service at the time now under consideration. That word is given in 1 Tim. 6. 11, and again in 2 Tim. 3. 17, namely "man of God." A consideration of the way in which this title is employed in the Old Testament will show that it describes no particular class, such as Priests, Levites, Elders, though any of these might be a man of God, but a man of God is

simply a man of God, neither more nor less, one whom God fits for His service and who is entirely at His commandment. Prophets are so described, men called and sent forth to do whatever needed to be done at the time. It has been said of the "handy man" of the British Navy, that he can go anywhere and do anything. This exactly describes the "man of God."

But it is evident that such a man needs equipment, and that of an all-round character, for his service will not run in a particular groove, but he will need to deal with many things. Such was the case with Timothy and his equipment, and that which is necessary to all such men is set out in 2 Tim. 3. 16: "every scripture is inspired of God and 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."

Now while a knowledge of the Word is desirable in all, it is imperative that the man of God should have a complete all-round education in it. He must not be a man with a bias in his character, far less one who is a chooser, who exalts certain lines of truth and ignores other parts. That Word which found living expression in the perfect man Christ Jesus, and which in Him was honoured in all its parts, should be the source from which the man of God should obtain all his equipment.

Occasion will arise for teaching to be imparted, for reproof to be administered, for correction to be given, for instruction which is in righteousness to be enforced, and it will only be as the whole provision of the Word in the Old and New Testaments is to hand that the man of God will be ready for every good work. He will then be like unto the householder bringing out of his treasure things new and old.

Such a consideration as this should be a powerful incentive to young men of a Timothy character to give themselves with purpose of heart to an acquiring of a knowledge

of the Word for themselves. It is in early life that the main opportunity is given for filling the storehouse of the mind. Later on that which has been taken in and become mature in the understanding of the man of God is then brought out for the edification and blessing of others. If the early life opportunities are neglected the later service will unquestionably suffer.

The fact of Timothy's all-round fitness, produced by the furnishing of the Holy Scriptures, explains in large measure how he was able to fill so many parts. He was more than an evangelist, or a teacher, or a pastor. Some who gave themselves to any of these services might in their own department be more proficient, but Timothy fulfilled a many-sided service, which was called for in his time, and we think it may be safely said is urgently needed now.

We might enlarge on the condition of things revealed in the Second Epistle to Timothy and note the line of conduct marked out for him, but we refrain, only commending these two letters to the careful and earnest consideration of brethren, and of young men in particular. They will find that the times of Timothy have a singular counterpart in the present day, and they will be able to appreciate the instruction and exhortation given by the Apostle. It may be that some will be moved to a godly desire to be something for God at such a time and in such a scene, and may find the needful help to that end in a consideration of Timothy's history.

S. J. HILL.

THE LEVITES' PORTION.

“At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi to bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto Him, and to bless in His name unto this day. Wherefore Levi hath no portion or inheritance with his brethren, the Lord is his inheritance, according as the Lord thy God spake unto him” (Deut. 10. 8, 9). “And unto the children of Levi, behold I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance in return for their service, which they served, even the service of the tent of meeting” (Num. 18. 21). “Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the land.” “And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no portion nor inheritance with you” (Deut. 12. 19; 14. 27).

From certain feelings of delicacy and consideration of impropriety on the part of some, this line of ministry has been to some extent neglected, although at the same time it has been, and is needed in no ordinary degree. Such neglect is apt to produce a state of things on the one hand dishonouring to the Lord, as well as a reproach to the Fellowship; and on the other hand to hamper and hinder the progress of His work, and bring needless suffering and discouragement to His servants.

It is possible, indeed, that many in the Fellowship have never given much consideration to such words, quoted from the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy, relative to the service of the House of God, as viewed in the light of the Scriptural teaching of the New Covenant writings and epistles on this subject, and thus have failed to learn their privileges and responsibilities relative thereto. Where it is so (and God knows whether this is general or not) weakness and barrenness and lack of power and blessing may be looked for.

If the association of these things be questioned or doubted, let the following supply the answer from God: “More-

over he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the Priests and Levites, that they might give themselves to the law of the Lord. And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the elders of Israel gave in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine and oil and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and of the tithes of all things brought they in abundantly. And the children of Israel and Judah that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithes of dedicated things, which were consecrated unto the Lord their God and laid them by heaps. . . . Then Hezekiah questioned with the Priests and Levites concerning the heaps, and Azariah, the chief Priest of the house of Zadok answered and said: 'Since the people began to bring in the oblation into the House of the Lord, we have eaten and had enough, and have left plenty; for the Lord hath blessed His people, and that which is left is this great store' " (2 Chron. 31. 4-10). Surely this is as it were a fulfilment of the later words of Jehovah through Malachi: "Bring Me the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine House, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3. 10), an answer to which is found in the words of Nehemiah 13. 10, "And I perceived that the portion of the Levites had not been given them, so that the Levites and the Singers that did the work were fled every one to his field. Then contended I with the rulers and said 'Why is the House of God forsaken?' and I gathered them together and set them in their place. Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the wine and oil into the treasuries."

From these words we may learn that in the purpose and appointment of Jehovah certain ones were set apart to the service of His House; for such Jehovah was their portion and inheritance, and to Him they should look,

and on Him should they depend for their portion and their maintenance; and certainly He never would fail them nor forsake them; but Jehovah wrought through human instrumentality, and on His people He was pleased to confer the honoured privilege of ministering to His servants.

At a later date the honour of this privilege was enhanced to a superlative degree, in respect to God's beloved Son, in the days of His flesh, when there were those of whom it is recorded "they ministered unto Him of their substance." From loving devoted hearts and generous hands the needs of such were to be met, and this does not at all militate against the fact that He and they lived by faith and walked by faith; which it is a mistake to suppose, as many do, means that So-and-so is the Lord's servant, and the Lord will look after him, forgetful of the fact and neglectful of the responsibility and privilege conferred upon them of being the channel and means through which the Lord does so.

Jehovah was truly the portion and inheritance of the Levite, yet Jehovah said, "Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite."

The New Covenant answer to all this is made very definite and explicit in the words of 1 Corinthians 9., "What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Do I speak these things after the manner of men? or saith not the law also the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.' Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith He it altogether for our sake? Yea, for our sake was it written; because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking. If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? . . .

Know ye not that they which minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they which wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar? Even so did the Lord ordain that they which proclaim the Gospel should live of the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9. 7-14), and it is in regard to responsibilities and privileges in relation thereto that we would seek to exhort saints, and stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance. Many may plead as an excuse for not giving, or for giving little, that the times are hard and their circumstances straitened, but is this always the real cause? Is there not indifference and a lack of exercise on the part of saints to this matter, that result in neglect in the fulfilment of their obligations and responsibilities to the same? Such neglect speaks badly for the grace of God in its operation in and through them. How different it was in the experience of the churches of Macedonia, concerning which we read, "Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God which hath been given in the churches of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord . . . First they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8. 1-5). We have also on record the widow's mite, and the Lord's approval and appreciation of the same, and the further expression of the Lord's appreciation in His testimony to another, "She hath done what she could." Let us examine ourselves as in the presence of Him Who sitteth over against the treasury and sees and knows all things. Would He say of us individually or collectively, that we have done what we could? Of some, both individually and collectively we trust it can be truly spoken to their honour and praise, "Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal,

who bare evidence of thy love before the church ; whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God ; because that for the sake of the Name they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. We therefore ought to welcome such, that we may be fellow-workers with the truth" (3 John 8). Would God it were more generally true that thus we do. Let us remember the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that though He was rich, yet He became poor, so poor that He could say, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the heavens have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." that we through His poverty might become rich ; may we become imbued with His spirit and thus know, in a manner and measure hitherto unknown, how blessedly true are His own words which through the Apostle Paul we are specially called upon to remember—

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20. 35).

EPHPHATHA.

"IS NOT HE RIGHTLY NAMED JACOB ?"

ANY one reading the life of Jacob will, we feel persuaded, be forced to agree with the words of Esau quoted above, the man who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright, and who, although afterward he desired to inherit the blessing, was rejected ; tears of repentance being of no avail to recover what he had despised.

In many respects Jacob suffers by comparison even with his brother Esau. Judging by the outward appearance one would have readily thought, therefore, that Esau would have been the chosen of the Lord. But how often it is that God's thoughts are not as man's, and thus while Jacob the aged may rightly sum up his history in those words to Pharaoh—

"Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life" yet the sovereign grace of God is declared in—

"Jacob have I loved,
But Esau I hated."

In the history of the Patriarch it is God who shines, not the Patriarch.

"Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help" (Ps. 146. 5).

Yes, indeed!

"Why should I ever careful be,
Since such a God is mine,"

may well be the utterance of both reader and writer, for perhaps in no other life does God's love and mercy, His pity and compassion, His readiness to help on and to foster any little desire after Himself, loom out with such a lustre as in the life of this supplanter. From the time when, as a boy, he played with his brother, until in ripened years he made an end of charging his sons, God seems to have been unwearied in His care of him.

His experiences were many and wonderful. When he left home, in obedience to the voice of his mother, and went out from Beer-sheba towards Haran, the words of Isaiah 41. 14 seem both precious and appropriate: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob . . . I will help thee, saith the Lord." In fact, those words cover his entire lifetime. From our point of view there is not much beauty in a worm at any time—an ugly, crawling, wriggling creature, and truly an apt description of Jacob. Yet, in speaking of the worm, oh, wondrous contrast! let us not forget Him Who at one moment in a life of supreme loveliness could say:—

"Our fathers trusted in Thee:
They trusted, and Thou didst deliver them. . . .
But I am a worm, and no man."

Verily; He humbled Himself.

Returning to Jacob, we view him at the time when he left home, and amid the discomfort of having but a stone for a pillow, at the time, too, when he must have felt his extreme loneliness; and yet it was just at such a time that

God gave to him that wondrous dream. If human companionship was lacking, the Lord was nigh, inviting him, as it were, to scale that mystic ladder, not alone, but attended by those ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation. When he arrived at the place, he was, evidently, alas, as we so often are ourselves, absorbed with everything save the Lord, hence the need for those eyes to be closed for a little to the things around. His words, on waking from his sleep, indicate his surprise, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." From our side it is only "the worm" and "the anointed stone." Yet we have here the blessing, and the vow, and the tithe. It is none other but the House of God, and the gate of Heaven. Well might God say, years after, "Arise, go up to Beth-El and dwell there." For even to be a doorkeeper in the House of God is more to be desired than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Desiring to be brief, we will pass over at least twenty years of the life of the patriarch, which include those seven years of service for Rachel, which seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her, and bring us to the time when he stole away from Laban. During his sojourn in Paddam-Aram he had, no doubt, many a heartbreak, and his home life cannot have been the most peaceful. For Leah was hated and Rachel envied, and the trouble that Jacob experienced in after life with his family was no doubt due in measure to the example which the children saw at home during this very period. Yet with it all he could say, "The God of my father hath been with me," and therefore he was blessed and had "increased exceedingly, and had large flocks, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses."

It is just at this time, when the trouble with Laban had ended, and now Esau was to be encountered, that "the angels of God met him" (Gen. 32.). How unceasing is God's care! We read, "If God is for us, who is against

us?" and yet how slow we are to take it in. How apt we are to be like Jacob in our ways, ever planning some scheme of our own, rather than casting our anxiety upon God. How precious those words are, "The angels of God met him." "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee." How real to Jacob at the moment was God's host! But, alas, he soon forgot, and Esau's band of 400 men filled him with fear.

And are we strangers to such fears? We have need to remember Elisha's prayer, "Lord . . . open his eyes, that he may see" (2 Kings 6.). His fears, however, though they did not hinder him from devising a means of escape for at least one of his companies, had the good effect of bringing him down before God, and he prayed—never so earnestly, I have no doubt, for many a long day. At such times words have a habit of failing us, and we can only confess our unworthiness and cry for deliverance. Jacob is no exception. In his distress he thought of God, and that caused him to think of the past—his own miserable little life; and God's infinite and unfailling goodness. But he had a promise, and that was as a rock beneath his feet, "Thou saidst." Let us not neglect to remind even God of His "precious and exceeding great promises," for He will never deny what He hath promised.

After lodging that night in the company, and when he had sent his possessions over the ford of Jabbok, we read that "Jacob was left alone." Perhaps it is the greatest night of his life. If the distress is deep, there is often the desire to be alone. Even the Son of Man was no exception, for in Gethsemane "He was parted from them about a stone's cast." "Jacob was left alone." There in the silence of night, under that eastern sky, and beside the rippling stream, a Man appears, and there began one of the strangest encounters ever recorded. We are told nothing as to preliminaries, only that "there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day." But Jacob

will not be easily set aside. We think it is not, as has commonly been interpreted, an incident selected to show out Jacob's earnestness, wrestling in prayer that God would bless him. It is, in fact, the very opposite, we think, for it shows us, if anything, God's desire and earnestness to bless us; but, like Jacob, we would seek with all the strength and energy we possess to frustrate His purposes. Thus did Jacob. The strength, which, years before, had enabled him to roll the stone from the well's mouth when he assisted Rachel to water her father's flock, was still vigorous, and so he wrestled until the Man saw that He prevailed not against him. So at last He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and it was strained. Not till then did the Israel nature shew itself. Not till then did Israel prevail. It was with Jacob that the Man wrestled, but now He is heard to say, "Let Me go." Jacob was overcome and lamed, and now it is Israel clinging—not resisting (for the Israel nature will never resist God), but clinging. "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." "What is thy name?" "Jacob." Yes, truly Jacob, and how much it speaks to us! But, thank God, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel (that is, a prince with God): for thou hast striven with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32. 22-28).

Such was Peniel to Jacob; the turning-point of his life, when "the Israel" which lay cramped and neglected within was, as it were, liberated, and the Jacob nature was set aside. There God blessed him, and as he passed over Peniel "the sun rose upon him"—faint type, indeed, of that coming glorious day when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings upon the Israel people, who shall fear His name.

Alas, that there is in each of us so much of the Jacob and so little of the Israel manifested; but God dealeth with us even as with sons, and that for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. It is surely cause for

daily wonderment what God can do by His grace, even with such as reader and writer. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the needy from the dung-hill; that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of His people." As with Jacob, so with us. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Amen.

NORMAN D. W. MILLER.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

(Continued from page 164.)

RUTH IN THE FIELD OF BOAZ (ch. 2).

OUR chapter opens with an introduction to Boaz (of the family of Elimelech) who was a mighty man of wealth, and whose name means "in him is strength." A person well fitted to bestow grace and kindness upon Ruth the stranger, who had so much need of it. When true need and grace meet it makes grace shine out more brightly. It was so in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ and ourselves. He the Mighty Man of wealth, Who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, emptying Himself of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, in order to be our Kinsman-Redeemer and meet us in all our need, we who were the strangers and subjects for grace only.

In verses 2-3 Ruth says, "Let me now go to the field and glean among the ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace." And her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging unto Boaz.

It is one of the evidences of the new birth for the soul to desire to glean in the field of Scripture, for the spiritual life imparted must be nourished, to grow thereby unto salvation.

If there is no desire to feed on the Sacred Writings, one

may well question whether the new birth has taken place.

This chapter is chiefly occupied with Ruth gleaning, telling us where, with whom, and what she gleaned; and also the display of the grace and kindness of Boaz to her. We find her gleaning close by the reapers in the field of Boaz. From morning until even she laboured on, and whilst so labouring, Boaz met her and said, "Go not to glean in another field," and spoke words of kindness and cheer to her heart, making provision for her whilst so gleaning.

This produced gratitude and homage in Ruth, for she fell on her face and bowed herself to the ground and said unto him, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" Sweeter than honey or the honeycomb were the words that fell from the lips of Boaz to her. How readily she took him at his word and treasured up his sayings in her heart. She was beginning to find in him her all-satisfying portion, for the counsels and purposes of his heart are to act in grace towards her, and this she is learning out through gleaning in his field and being with him. This took away every desire to go elsewhere to glean.

This should continually be our attitude towards Him, the Beloved of our souls, finding our chief joy and delight in communion with Him, listening to His voice and being attentive to His words. Gleaning habitually in the field of our true Kinsman-Redeemer we shall learn out the things concerning Himself, for all God's purposes are centred in Him, and He is the Alpha and the Omega of the Sacred Writings. And truth gleaned in fellowship with Him will have a sanctifying effect upon every department of our lives, and the heart will burn with love and adoration as we grow in the knowledge of Him, and God's purposes concerning Him, and the wondrous grace shown to ourselves. This will surely lead us to say like Ruth,

us, so that there will be no desire left to glean in these doubtful fields that only yield stubble.

Ruth at the end of her day's labour knew how much she had gleaned, for she beat it out and it was an ephah of barley. She is sufficed herself and also gives to her mother-in-law.

Our gleaning in the field of Scripture will be of little benefit apart from beating it out in prayer and meditation. Concerning this the Lord spoke to Joshua and said, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mightest observe to do according to all that is written therein" (Joshua 1. 8).

It also stands written of the Blessed Man of Psalm 1. that His delight is in the law of the Lord: and in His law doth He meditate day and night.

In these days of restlessness and hurry, how much of the low spiritual condition might be traced to the lack of the holy habit of spiritual meditation! For it is not much reading that does us good, it is what we meditate upon, that becomes food to us. We shall then have that which suffices us, and something to give to others. On the other hand, apart from meditation we shall be like the slothful man who roasteth not that which he took in hunting (Proverbs 12. 27). He took the trouble to get it, but it was too much labour to turn it into food for himself.

Our knowledge of God and of the Lord Jesus will be very superficial, and our spiritual growth will be stunted, if there is not the beating out of what we glean, and this can only be done in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, Whose delight it is to take of Divine realities and reveal them unto us. It is thus we learn to confess to what we are, and what He is in all His matchless worth. Gleaning in this field is only preparatory to our future abiding with Him.

J. DORRICOTT.

(To be continued.)

For Youngest Believers.

THE SLUGGARD.

- “Go to the ant, thou sluggard ;
Consider her ways, and be wise :
Which having no chief,
Overseer or ruler,
Provideth her meat in the summer ;
And gathereth her food in the harvest.
How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard ?
When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep ?
Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep :
So shall thy poverty come as a robber
And thy want as an armed man.” Prov. 6. 6-11.
- “He that gathereth in summer is a wise son
But he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.”
Prov. 10. 5.
- “As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,
So is the sluggard to them that send him.” Prov. 10. 26.
- “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing :
But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” Prov. 13. 4.
- “The way of the sluggard is as an hedge of thorns :
But the path of the upright is made an high way.”
Prov. 15. 19.
- “The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.”
Prov. 19. 24.
- “The slothful ¹ will not plow by reason of the winter
Therefore he shall beg in harvest and have nothing.”
Prov. 20. 4.
- “The desire of the slothful ¹ killeth him ;
For his hands refuse to labour.” Prov. 21. 25.
- “The sluggard saith, ‘There is a lion without :
I shall be murdered in the streets.’” Prov. 22. 13.

¹ Same word in the original.

“I went by the field of the slothful,¹
 And by the vineyard of the man void of understanding ;
 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns,
 The face thereof was covered with nettles,
 And the stone wall thereof was broken down.
 Then I beheld and considered well :
 I saw, and received instruction.
 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
 A little folding of the hands to sleep :
 So shall thy poverty come as a robber ;
 And thy want as an armed man.” Prov. 24. 30-34.

“The sluggard saith, ‘There is a lion in the way ;
 A lion is in the streets.’
 As the door turneth upon its hinges,
 So doth the sluggard upon his bed.
 The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish ;
 It wearieth him to bring it again to his mouth.
 The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit
 Than seven men that can render a reason.” Prov. 26. 13-16.

“Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep
 And the idle soul shall suffer hunger.” Prov. 19. 15.

“By slothfulness the roof sinketh in, and through idleness
 of the hands the house leaketh.”—Eccl. 10. 18.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God
 to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable
 to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not
 fashioned according to this world, but be ye transformed
 by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is
 the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. . . . In
 diligence not slothful ; fervent in spirit ; serving the
 Lord.”—Rom. 12. 1, 2, 11.

¹ Same word in the original.

“THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.”

FROM that upper room in Jerusalem comes down sweetly to us these words, which are removed far from the strife of tongues, and are like the still small voice that bows the heart. “This do”—whatever else we may be in doubt about doing, here is something about which we need have no doubt; one precious outstanding thing, with a deep meaning, and yet a meaning which all can grasp, however young or inexperienced—“in remembrance of Me.” If we fail in remembering Him, we fail in the one and only thing for which we take the bread and cup.

To neglect the wish of any loved one would distress us, more especially if that loved one were absent; how much more, then, should we be distressed by the possibility of failing to carry out the desire of our Lord and Master, so unmistakably expressed in these words.

In the good and perfect and acceptable will of God there is a time to remember each and all who have a claim upon us, and we should be exercised that we fail not to discharge the complex responsibilities in this respect, that gather around us increasingly from youth to age; but one responsibility rests upon all saints (excepting such as have lawful cause for absence) which must not be neglected—that is, the remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ in the divinely-appointed manner.

We must be exercised also, not only to do so, but to do it in a very distinct way, in a form and spirit which will leave no room for doubt as to what we are engaged in, it must be done worthily in the fullest meaning of that term; it must not be confused with other things, however good in themselves; it must stand out boldly as being unique,

as being something for that One Who is the Chiefest amongst ten thousand, yea, ten thousand of the best.

To be occupied at that time with any other person, or any other thing, good and proper though they may be in their own time and place, is akin to high treason.

Let the inspired word "worthily" be our watchword, and let each heart respond according to its appreciation of Him to Whom the words came from "The excellent Glory" (the Glory far above those heavens which are not clean in His sight), "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased."

We might be helped to grasp the thoughts of God concerning this service by considering Leviticus 17.1-5. Here it is made clear that animals killed for the purpose of sacrifice must be brought "unto the door of the tent of meeting." A breach of this command was punished by death, blood being imputed to that man.

The death of the Lord being typified by these sacrifices, the teaching clearly is that what proclaims His death should not be mixed up with anything else.

His death stands alone; there never was one like unto it and there never can be another, for as those animals were brought to the door of the tent of meeting, to "the place where God had chosen to put His name," so the great Sacrifice was offered up in the place appointed, even as it is written,— "And when they were come to the place which is called Golgotha, there they crucified Him" (Luke 23. 33).

His death was not only at the God-appointed time and in the God-appointed manner, but also at the right place. He shunned death in any other place, even as He sent a message to Herod that "I must go on My way to-day and to-morrow and the day following; for it cannot be that

a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Luke 13. 33). And the great Prophet must perish there, even as the great Sacrifice must be offered there.

The confusion into which the eating and drinking had fallen at Corinth assembly caused the distinctness of the proclamation of the Lord's death to be lost, bringing forth the solemn warning of chapter 11. verse 27, "Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

To eat and drink without recognizing the place in which it was to be done, or as it is put in verse 22, "Despise ye the church of God," seems akin to killing a sacrifice away from the door of the tent of meeting.

The church of God is a collective thing, where alone the bread can be broken; it must not be broken by a few saints here or there who may be together by chance, and the elements (so-called) must not be carried to the bedside of the dying.

Churches of God were localized in the early times and should be so to-day, and there alone should the bread be broken, and broken worthily, before God, and the bread and cup should be taken distinctly as our Lord did and thanks given, followed by eating and drinking in such a manner as to make clear to all that the Lord is being remembered and His death being proclaimed by persons who know and love Him.

The Passover, which was first kept in Egypt on that anxious night, was afterwards kept "at the place which Jehovah thy God shall choose to cause His name to dwell in" (Deut. 21. 5, 6). And so with that which superseded it. The bread was broken in the upper room in a simple

manner, but afterwards by disciples who were baptized and added together, so forming the spiritual place of this dispensation, which place is spoken of in 1 Peter 2. 4, "Unto Whom coming a Living Stone, rejected indeed of man, but with God elect, precious; ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house," and so forth.

To this place saints must come by coming to Christ as the "Living Stone" (not to Christ as Saviour; for to Him as such all true believers have already come) and there know the blessedness of remembering Him and proclaiming His death until He come.

Individuals can think of the Lord and proclaim His death in every place, but the remembrance of Him and the proclamation of His death here spoken of is a great collective act, and must only be done in the place where He has chosen to put His name, the place where obedient ones have been gathered together unto that worthy name which is above every name. May many more of the saints know the reality of this.

W. J. LENNOX.

JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE.

"WE KNOW."

JOHN'S First Epistle is, we might say, the complement of his Gospel. Among the concluding words of his Gospel he writes: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the sight of His disciples . . . but these things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name" (John 20. 30, 31). While among the concluding words of his epistle we read, "These things have I written unto you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on

the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5. 13); and this is the contrast between the Gospel by John and his First Epistle—the one is written that "ye may believe," the other that "ye may know, even you who believe"; knowledge in this case goes beyond, or is more than, faith, albeit it is by faith we know or understand (Heb. 11. 2). Pursuing this train of thought, let us consider the epistle briefly. Suppose we consider the first chapter introductory, here is that sure foundation upon which all the future perfect knowledge of the epistle is based: "that which we have heard . . . seen . . . beheld . . . our hands handled, concerning the Word of life; for the Life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and declare unto you; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ." "That ye might have fellowship with us" (1 John 1. 3) spans the centuries and reaches down to us, enabling us also to say not only that we believe, but that we *know* Him Whom we have *believed*" (2 Tim. 1. 12).

There are, in this epistle, some twenty-eight occurrences of the words "we know," "ye know," "ye have known," every point of which knowledge is possible of attainment, yea, is vital to us to-day, that we might have fellowship with them whose fellowship was with the Father and with the Son; . . . and this goal may be reached by that same faith which "gives substance—or assurance . . . for the proving of things not seen" (Heb. 11. 1). So shall it be true of us also . . . "ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2. 20).

Let us then consider the various occurrences of these words. Chapter 2. verses 2, 3, 4, 5: "And He is the propitiation for our sins; . . . and hereby know we that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, 'I know Him,' and keepeth not His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,"—which verse would silence all argument.

It is not here primarily a question of doctrine, it is not what we believe, nay, it is more emphatic: "Hereby know we . . . he that saith and keepeth not . . . is a liar, but whoso keepeth His word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk even as He walked." Then verses 13-14, same chapter: "I write unto you fathers because ye know Him that is from the beginning. . . . I write unto you little children because ye know the Father. . . . I have written unto you fathers because ye know Him that is from the beginning." Then verse 18: "Little children, it is the last time, and as ye have heard that Anti-Christ cometh, even now are there many Anti-Christes, whereby we know it is the last time."

As we read and ponder this sure sign of last moments, tenfold more manifest now than then, we would trace the origin whence they came. "They went out from us," and carrying with them much of the outward forms that pertained to the Faith, they gave birth to that which culminated in the dark ages with all the formalism attached to a false religion from which a guilty Christendom has but scarce recovered. "But ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things." "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth" (chap. 2. ver. 2). "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He shall appear we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him" (chap. 2. ver. 29). Having been made partakers of the Divine Nature, the Divine attributes should have their reflection in us, for, "Behold, now are we children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (chap. 3. ver. 2), which has, and should have the succeeding effect upon us: "Every man having

this hope set on Him purifieth himself even as He is pure. Whoso committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law, and ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin" (3. 5). Then follow words of definite instruction necessary for our guidance: "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not," for the characteristics that follow should be found in us. "And in this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil" (ver. 10); and this must and will bring hatred, even as it brought to the Lord Jesus Himself, Who said: "The world hateth Me because I testify of it that its deeds are evil" (John's Gospel, chap. 7. ver. 7); and the disciple is not above his Master. But, "Marvel not if the world hate you; we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. . . . Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. . . . My little children, let us not love in word, but in deed and in truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him" (1 John 3. 14, 15, 19). For love which is of God-like character ever finds expression in seeking the highest or ultimate welfare of the object of the affection, and oftentimes the faithful wounds of a friend are rather to be desired than the kisses of an enemy (*see* Prov. 27. 6). And then "if our heart condemn us not, we have confidence toward God, and whatsoever we ask of Him we receive because we keep His commandments; . . . and he that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him and He in him; and hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us" (3. 24). But here we require guidance, that we may be instructed, to be able to continue to say we know. "Wherefore believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God; . . . hereby know ye the Spirit of God" (chap. 4. 2). Then follows sure guidance, safe instruction, which if taken will enable us to know and distinguish between the "Spirit of

truth" and the "Spirit of error," a thing not so easily done as many seem to think, "for even Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. It is no wonder then if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11. 14-18). But 1 John 4. 5 is unmistakable: "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world and the world heareth them." "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth us not. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit of error" (chap. 4. 6). Then follow words which speak to us of the manifestation, answering to which our love one to another should be shown. We read, "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit, . . . and we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love" (chap. 4. 13-16), and "we love Him because He first loved us" (ver 19). But here again we are faced with a definite issue: "If a man say, 'I love God' and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen." "And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also" (vers. 20, 21). But love, we have said, that is of God, is not expressed in the spurious manner in which love one to another is too often expressed to-day, but, as we have said, seeks the highest wellbeing of those it is set upon. In this we have unmistakable guidance: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5. 2). In loving God and keeping His commandments we set before others, even perhaps weaker saints, a safe example for them to follow; and thus seeking their wellbeing in the light of the Judgment Seat of Christ, we may in measure be able to say with the Apostle Paul, "Be ye imitators of

me even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11. 1), for the Lord Jesus Christ leadeth in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake (Ps. 23.), "and My sheep hear My voice . . . and they follow Me" (John's Gospel, chap. 10. 27).

What more fitting conclusion could we have than the reiterated "we know" of chapter five? "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (chap. 5. 13). And this is the "Confidence which we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will He heareth us: and if we know that He heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (chap. 5. 14, 15). Herein lies our strength, here is the secret of our power, by which we overcome that threefold power arrayed against us, "The world, the flesh, the Devil." "For we know that whatsoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true, even His Son, Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children keep yourselves from idols. Amen" (1 John 5. 18-21).

What solidity there is in all this, in a day when convictions have given way to opinions, and doubt the progeny of unbelief is so rampant! What moral courage it gives us to be able in the language of Luke 1. 4 to "know the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed;" and this is our God-given heritage. May we value it aright.

D. PATERSON.

RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.

THE ability to do this is one of the great needs of Christians to-day; and to the lack of this ability is attributable, to no inconsiderable degree, the existence and numerical strength (?) of many of the sects.

The power to rightly divide the word of Truth¹ ought to be known by each believer;² but alas! in this matter the Adversary too often triumphs, and the child of God, because unwilling to do the will of God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures, never enters into the light and liberty He desires to lead them to, and consequently, whatever may be their own thoughts in the matter, never possess the ability to hold a straight course in the word of Truth.

No man may glory of this ability.³ Where ministry in the Holy Spirit obtains it will ever be recognized and acknowledged as of the ability that God supplieth.⁴ And such is the frailty of the human instrument, that apart from the preserving grace of God⁵ he who once did indeed rightly divide the word of Truth may not only cease to do so, but seek in later ministry to overthrow the work of former years,⁶ the light then within him having in his failure to go on with God turned to darkness.⁷

How sad would be the list of such as have thus departed from, and made shipwreck concerning, the Faith! But we forget not the Song of the Bow,⁸

“Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.”

And thus we forbear.

But remember 1 Corinthians 10. 12. This teaches us humility as verse 13 inspires with confidence and courage.

¹ 2 Tim. 2. 15.

⁴ 1 Peter 4. 11.

⁷ Luke 11. 35.

² John 7. 17.

⁵ Acts 26. 22.

⁸ 1 Sam. 1. 20.

³ 1 Cor. 4. 7.

⁶ 2 Tim. 2. 17-18.

A CHOSEN BAND.

BEHOLD them o'er the desert waste,
 With waving banners homeward haste,
 A chosen band and conqu'rors all,
 Are marching forth at God's glad call.

They leave behind them broken chains,
 No trace of guilt with them remains,
 The cruel bondage once they bore,
 Is left by them for evermore.

Bright helmet, sword and shield they bear
 And wreaths of victory proudly wear ;
 Oh, grand their prospects on before
 With Him, the Lord whom they adore.

A glorious band of warriors brave,
 By Him the mighty now to save,
 Are led along the shining way,
 Nor death nor hell their course can stay.

Theirs are the hopes no cloud can dim,
 Since they are centred all in Him,
 Who once the storm, the wrath did brave,
 To them the mighty victory gave.

To yonder world of love and light,
 Where fadeless honours feast the sight
 Shall all be brought God's rest to know,
 And reign where endless' glories glow.

ROBERT SMART.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

(Continued from page 190.)

THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER.

IN the third chapter we find Ruth, after she is anointed and clothed, going to Boaz, laying herself at his feet, and in becoming words, reminding him that he is a near kinsman. Whilst at his feet, covered by his skirt (see Ezek. 16. 8), she learns of a nearer kinsman, though if he would not perform the part of a kinsman, then Boaz promised to do so. He undertook her cause completely. (In Lev. 25. 25-29, 48, 49, we learn what was the kinsman's part.) At his feet she stayed at his request until the morning, and from his presence she went, heavily laden with a precious burden of six measures of barley. This was an unwrought-for blessing, out of his fulness and through his grace. There needs a right spiritual condition ere we are ready to take our place in humility at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, to learn from Him Who is meek and lowly in heart. He amply repays us, for we find rest unto our souls.

In one sense this should be our continual abiding-place during this night of sorrow, until the morning without a cloud shall dawn.

Mary at the feet of the Lord, which He speaks of as "that good part," learns of His death and burial (which none of the others rightly understood, though they had heard it), and she comes forward in John 12. with her alabaster box of precious ointment, with which to anoint Him.

There will be nothing too costly to give to Him, if we learn His worth at His feet.

For—

He sometimes wants our ear, our rapt attention,
That He some secret may impart;
'Tis often in the time of deepest silence,
That heart finds fellowship with heart.

The measure of our praise and worship to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is measured by our appre-

ciation of Him and what we learn at His feet.' There can be no good work of giving of that which is costly, unless we know the good part of getting.

In the fourth chapter Boaz, true to his word, goes up to the gate and meets the nearer kinsman and lays Ruth's case before him. He says that he cannot do the part of a kinsman lest he mar his own inheritance. Boaz then in the presence of ten elders bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's. Moreover, he also purchased Ruth the Moabitess to be his wife. She bore him a son, who was named Obed, who was the father of Jesse, the father of David. From this royal line our Lord Jesus Christ came, as we see from [Matthew 1, where He is spoken of as "Son of David," and thus shines out God's sovereign grace in bringing Ruth the Moabitess to the people of God, and overruling for her to become the wife of Boaz. How beautifully this story of grace reminds us of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and the relationship to which we have been brought through that redemption. This precious heart-reaching truth should be enjoyed by all who have known Him as Redeemer. Alas, that it is spoken of so little, when it will be our eternal theme!

Let us look at some of the simple truths connected with it. The meaning of the word is "to purchase back again." And we see from Psalm 49. 7 our inability to redeem ourselves. "For none can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him, for the redemption of the soul is costly." The necessity for our redemption is told out in such words as "sold under sin" (Rom. 7. 14), "bondservants of sin and Satan" (Rom. 6. 16, 22).

The incarnation of the blessed Son of God was necessary to accomplish our redemption. And He Who was the Eternal God and the Father of Eternity became flesh and tabernacled amongst men (John 1.). It also stands written, "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same" (Heb. 2,

14). This was as He told His disciples, that He, the "Son of Man had come . . . to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20. 28). Paul bears testimony to this when he says, "Christ Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Tim. 2. 5, 6). What a costly price to pay for our redemption! Peter by the Spirit reminds us, "we are redeemed not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, . . . but with precious blood . . . even the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19). Again, we read, "Christ . . . by His own blood, entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9. 11, 12). Here is our resting-place, knowing that all the types and shadows of redemption under the law have their fulfilment in His own blessed Person and work, and this redemption is now accomplished.

We through God's grace have been brought into the sphere of this, though the purchase of the Church, the Bride, is only part of that great redemption work. Just as Boaz purchased Ruth to be his wife, for this was only part of his purchase, because he bought also all that was Elimelech's, so our Lord not only has purchased us, and we come in for the blessings of the redemption, but He also has "bought the field" (the world) for the sake of the treasure that is in it. Let us pause and ask ourselves if we are living in the enjoyment of these glorious truths? Can we truthfully sing

We are by Christ redeemed:
 The cost His precious blood;
 Be nothing in our souls esteemed
 Like this great good;
 Were the vast world our own,
 With all its varied store,
 And Thou, Lord Jesus, were unknown,
 We still were poor?

It may help young believers if we briefly look back at some types of redemption as seen in the Old Testament.

THE PASCHAL LAMB.

Israel in Egypt were in bondage under Pharaoh, and

over them were placed cruel task-masters who made their lives bitter. Groaning under this cruel bondage, they cried unto the Lord, and He heard them and said, "I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm and with great judgments" (Ex. 6. 6). Again He said, "I will put a division [margin, redemption] between My people and thy people" (8. 23). This was fulfilled in chapter 12., in the appointed Paschal Lamb. It was the sprinkled blood that God saw, and could righteously pass over every house that was so sprinkled. The great Anti-type of this is seen in 1 Pet. 1. 19, and 1 Cor. 5. : "Christ our Passover hath been sacrificed for us." Divine judgment fell upon Him, and His precious blood met all God's righteous claims, and we now have His own word giving peace and assurance, "when I see the blood I will pass over you"; and we are freed. How true the words—

I hear the words of love,
Faith rests upon the blood;
I see the mighty Sacrifice,
And I have peace with God.

Israel, like ourselves, were redeemed to do Jehovah's will and pleasure, to worship and serve Him in the place where He chose to set His Name and to be a dwelling-place for Himself. As we read—

Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed,

Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation

(Ex. 15. 13). And from Deut. 7. 6-8, we also learn why God chose and redeemed this people. He whose name is "Jealous" has the same desires and purposes for His redeemed to-day; who are redeemed to worship and serve in the place where He has chosen for His Name to dwell. It is our privilege to be brought under the authority of the Lord Christ. Being submissive to Him, and rendering obedience to God's Word we shall be built up "a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2. 5).

THE SILVER ATONEMENT MONEY.

Then in Ex. 30. 11-17 we read of those who were numbered bringing the half-shekel as a ransom for their souls. This silver-atonement money was appointed for the service of the tabernacle, as a memorial unto the sons of Israel before Jehovah, to make an atonement for their souls. This silver was used for the sockets of the sanctuary and the sockets of the vail (Ex. 38. 25-27).

From this we would learn that our standing before God for acceptable worship and praise is on redemption ground. Let us be diligent to see that we are maintaining communion with God so that we may render the worship that He seeks. For there may be the right form of words in our approach unto Him as a holy priesthood, but if the soul is not in the enjoyment of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus there can be no true worship of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We should rightly deserve the rebuke: "This people draweth near to Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."

THE TRUMPET OF THE JUBILEE.

Also in Lev. 25. 8-12, we see that the silver trumpets of the Jubilee, which were also made out of the atonement money, sounded on the tenth day of the seventh month in the day of atonement, proclaiming with a loud joyful noise "the year of grace," which brought deliverance to the captive, forgiveness to the debtor, and a time of rest and joy to every one who believed the trumpet's joyful sound. But the blessings and freedom of the Jubilee could only be proclaimed in the day of atonement, showing that it was only upon accomplished redemption that this proclamation could be made. So our blessed Lord came, and through His atoning death, "the acceptable year of the Lord," "the Jubilee of grace," the silver trumpet of redemption with its joyful sound can tell out the Gospel to the poor,

bringing healing to the broken-hearted, deliverance to the captive, recovering of sight to the blind. This should be the mission of every one who has entered into rest and peace through believing, according to our ability and in our sphere; some publicly, others privately. What a privilege to be able to tell of such a Jubilee! Speaking to individuals will bear its own blessed fruit. For it is not only in the orthodox Gospel meeting of the assembly where redemption's story can be made known, as this is sometimes a Gospel meeting only in name and not in reality. What a pity that many of us have fallen into the rut of waiting for the people to come to us, before we will tell them of "the year of grace," when it should be our business to go to them! Do we announce the Jubilee in a meeting-room when there are no "captives" or "debtors" present, simply because it is our custom! Such a custom will not satisfy hearts that are burning to make this good news known, when there are plenty of Satan's captives outside in the open air or in houses to whom the Gospel might be made known.

But some may say this is not the present work of the Community, as our service lies chiefly in spreading the Truth to those who are saved. Such a contention can only come from those upon whose hearts the glorious Gospel has lost its charm and power¹ and we fear loss and rebuke will be theirs at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Can we not even now hear the Master's voice saying: "This ye ought to have done and not to have left the other undone." Paul writing to Timothy says: "God our Saviour . . . willeth that all men should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2. 3, 4). An equal balance is His delight. It is the legs of the lame that are not equal. Who taught saints the will of God with more zeal than the Apostle Paul? Who founded and built up the churches more than he? And yet

¹ Nay more, those who say so, if any such there be, must be profoundly ignorant of the Truth, and perfectly incapable of making it known to the regenerate.—ED.

he constantly told out to Jew and Gentile the great redemption story, and many were begotten of God through his gospel. So heavy did he feel this precious burden that he says: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." So enraptured was he with it that he speaks of it as "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God" (1 Tim. 1. 11).

Woe be to the one indeed who looks upon the telling out of the Jubilee of the gospel as inferior work. It should be a cause of exercise also that more are not saved through our ministry even in what little we do. Are we not like fishermen who catch very few fish? Sowers who see little fruit? Labourers who get little reward for their toil? If the heavens are shut up there must be a cause; may we have grace to ask, "Lord, is it I?"

(To be continued.)

J. DORRICOTT.

Question and Answer.

QUESTION. *If one comes to the meeting on the Lordly day for the breaking of the bread, after the bread has been broken, but before thanks have been given for the cup, what should be done?*

ANSWER. "When the hour was come He sat down" and so should we. Whether it is misfortune or fault that makes one late for the thanksgiving or for the breaking and eating of the loaf he ought to pay the full penalty of non-participation that day in any part of the ordinance. The taking of the loaf, giving thanks for it, breaking and eating; the taking of the cup, giving thanks for it, pouring and drinking are inseparably connected so as to constitute in an unbroken series of acts the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ and the shewing forth of His death. Being deprived of participation through late coming would, doubtless, lead to special care being taken that this did not happen again.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 29 (*Acts 18. 18—19. 7*).

EPHESUS I.

(*Continued from page 67.*)

From LONDON, S.W. After a stay of about eighteen months in Corinth, Paul, desiring to be present at the feast which was soon to take place in Jerusalem, took his leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria; but just previous to this a ceremony was performed which has caused no little discussion. Before departing from Cenchreæ, the eastern port of Corinth, Paul, who had a vow which necessitated allowing the hair to grow long, shaved his head, for the vow was now completed. It has been said by some who understand Greek that the words "having shaved his head in Cenchreæ" may refer to Aquila; if this is so the difficulty of course disappears; but even should the words refer to Paul, it is hardly possible to criticize his action, considering nothing is known of the circumstances under which the vow was taken.

On the way to Syria the ship called at Ephesus, and Paul, availing himself of the opportunity of proclaiming the gospel there, entered into the Synagogue and reasoned with the Jews; and after promising to come back to them he proceeded on his journey.

All that we are told of his visit to Jerusalem is contained in one short sentence: "he went up and saluted the church"; we are not even told whether he arrived in time for the feast or not.

Leaving Jerusalem he proceeded to Antioch, thus ending his second missionary journey, which had occupied some three or four years.

Meanwhile Aquila and Priscilla, whom he had left behind at Ephesus, met with an Alexandrian Jew, Apollos, who

had come to that city. He was a powerful speaker and mighty in the Scriptures, and though he only knew the baptism of John he spoke boldly, though carefully, in so far as he had been instructed, thus in some measure preparing the way for the work of Paul, as John, of whom Apollos was a disciple, had prepared the way for the Lord Jesus. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him to their home and instructed him more fully in the will of God. Shortly after this Apollos desired to go to Corinth to continue the good work which Paul had begun there, and as he was encouraged in this, he went; and as we are told in 1 Cor. 3. 6, Apollos watered what Paul had planted and God gave the increase.

Paul, after staying some time at Antioch, commenced his third missionary journey; systematically visiting the various assemblies in Galatia and Phrygia, confirming the disciples and giving instructions for the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem (1 Cor. 16. 1-2). He then returned to Ephesus, where he found some twelve disciples of John the Baptist, without doubt the fruit of the labours of Apollos. They had only been baptized unto John's baptism, so after Paul had instructed them in the truth of Christian baptism, they were baptized "into the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

Section 30 (Acts 19. 8-41).

EPHESUS II.

(Continued from page 142.)

From LONDON, S.W. Ephesus was at this time the capital of Asia, and owing to its central position and being accessible from almost all parts of the Roman Empire, was very cosmopolitan in character. For centuries after, it continued to be a place of great importance.

Paul is now granted what he had so long desired—to preach the word in this flourishing Gentile city, for when he first assayed to go into Asia he was forbidden by the Holy Spirit. Paul stayed in this city for about three years (Acts 20. 31). During the first three months of this time he made the Synagogue the centre of operations, “reasoning and persuading as to things concerning the kingdom of God.” After this Paul separated the disciples from the Synagogue, for there were some who were hardened and disobedient and spoke evil of the Way. They now met daily in the school of Tyrannus, where they continued for the space of two years, during which time the word of the Lord was heard by all who dwelt in Asia. (It should be remembered that the province of Asia was only a small portion of what is now known as Asia Minor. It is clear from Acts 16. 6 and 7 that at this time neither Phrygia nor Mysia were part of this province as they were later on.) God also wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul. The result of this, together with the utter failure of the Jewish exorcists when they attempted to imitate these miracles, was that a great many believed and many that practised “curious arts,” brought their books, the value of which would be about £2,000 of our money, and burnt them in the sight of all.

Paul's ministry at the school of Tyrannus about this time came to a close, and it seems probable from 1 Cor. 16. 19 that they now met at the house of Aquila and Priscilla.

Towards the end of his stay in Ephesus Paul purposed to go to Macedonia and Achaia, but first sent Timothy and Erastus, he himself remaining for a short time. Just previous to this he wrote THE FIRST EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS; (compare carefully Acts 19. 21–22 with 1 Cor. 16.).

In 1 Cor. 16. 8 we read that Paul intended to stay at Ephesus until Pentecost, which was about the same time as the month of Artemis, and no doubt the craftsmen expected to do a good trade in portable shrines of Artemis (Diana) at this time, but Paul's teaching seriously interfered

with this, and the consequence was the uproar recorded in Acts 19. 23-41, which was the immediate cause of Paul leaving Ephesus. It would appear from 1 Tim. 1. 3 that Timothy had already returned from Macedonia and Achaia.

Question.—What is the meaning of “godliness” in 1 Timothy 3. 16, and what is the force of the expression “seen of angels” in the same place?

From BRIGHTON. However commonplace the meeting of Paul with Aquila and Priscilla might seem, their subsequent usefulness at Ephesus in expounding to Apollos the “way of God more carefully,” would indicate the fruitful effect of the influence and teaching under which they were brought through that meeting, for in the reason given for Paul’s lodging with them there is no apparent suggestion that they were disciples when he met them.

It is noteworthy that Apollos had not only intellectual knowledge of the Scriptures, but was also “fervent in spirit,” and further, that which he knew, though limited, he taught carefully. That he entered into the spirit of John the Baptist’s ministry is evident from the readiness of mind with which further revelation is received, not only by Apollos himself, but also by those disciples found by Paul at Ephesus, who may, we suggest, be ascribed to the ministry of Apollos.

From DARWEN. The Apostle Paul is in the Synagogue for three months reasoning and persuading his hearers as to the things which concern the kingdom of God. Luke makes but a brief reference to these three months, and yet it may be imagined that it would be a time of much anxiety, heartburning, and bitter opposition for Paul, when he would be most zealous with godly determination to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It would be anything but an easy time. In our enjoyable liberty ours cannot be much more than a faint conception of the Apostle’s experience. There were those who spoke

evil of the Way, who with hardened and disobedient hearts refused to accept what is placed before them. Further, opposition is so strong that in order to save some the Apostle separates the disciples and meets in the school of Tyrannus. Apparently the opportunity was greater there for meeting with the brethren than was possible in the Synagogue, for Paul reasoned daily, and this goes on for two years with much Divine blessing, the word of the Lord spreading throughout Asia.

It is recorded by the Holy Spirit in the next chapter that during three years spent in Ephesus Paul served His Master with all lowliness of mind, and it is very clear that he was faithful to the stewardship committed to him. He even visited the people in their houses.

The word "both" in the sixteenth chapter we understand to simply mean that "two" of Sceva's sons practised exorcism and made reference to the names of Jesus and Paul.

The burning of the books is evidence of the sincerity of these believers. They were prepared for great personal sacrifice. Having turned to God there is now no need for the books which heretofore engaged their attention in no small way, and they burn them. May God teach us to take stock of the literature read by us from time to time.

Paul is now exercised as to visiting Jerusalem after passing through Macedonia and Achaia, but in the meantime sends Timothy and Erastus to Macedonia. After their departure things take a very pronounced form in Ephesus. The sale of shrines of Artemis the goddess, so much adored in idolatrous Ephesus, is falling off, and business becomes a matter of more than undue concern. It is said that Artemis is not being made enough of, and complaint is made that the Apostle is responsible for this. Business men confer, and they are filled with wrath. The cry,

"GREAT IS ARTEMIS OF THE EPHESIANS"

is made. Confusion fills the city and Gaius and Aristarchus,

companions of Paul, are seized. One Alexander attempts to make a defence, but on account of his being a Jew the cry is again made, and for two hours the Ephesians laud their god. The Town Clerk intervenes and quietens the multitude. He explains a course for them to pursue, points out the danger of being accused as riotous citizens, and dismisses the assembly.

THE EPISTLES TO THESSALONICA.

(Continued from page 144.)

From GLASGOW. The saints in Thessalonica were passing through a time of persecution, so much so that some of them had been put to death, or had died, or as the Apostle puts it, they had been put to sleep through Jesus, and the rest were alarmed and perplexed, supposing that those who had died would not participate in the Lord's coming.

The Apostle endeavours to comfort them, that they sorrow not even as those who have no hope, and thereby unfolds to them the glorious triumph of the resurrection. This was the primary reason why the first epistle was written.

The second epistle was also written from Corinth, during Paul's stay of eighteen months in that town; it probably followed the first very quickly, but of this we have no exact data.

The object of this epistle was twofold. To correct a serious error that a certain faction in the assembly were making, namely, teaching that the Day of the Lord was come and seeking to establish their theory by the production of a spurious epistle which they said the Apostle had written.

The result of such teaching was that certain of them refused to work, so filled were they with the thought of the Lord's soon return.

The Apostle seeks to put these things right by re-establishing them and restating the mind of the Lord.

'CONSCIENCE.

THE subject of conscience is a very important one for the child of God to consider.

The Apostle Paul says of himself, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all His long-suffering, for an

ENSAMPLE OF THEM WHICH SHOULD HEREAFTER BELIEVE."¹

And it has often been effectively pressed home upon the ungodly, "The chief of sinners has been saved, why not you?" Thus the ensample has fulfilled and still is fulfilling the Divine purpose in its initial use. But God not only willeth that

ALL MEN SHOULD BE SAVED,²

but also that the saved should come to the full knowledge of the truth, and herein again are we caused to think of the Apostle as being himself what he exhorted Timothy to be:

"AN ENSAMPLE TO THEM THAT BELIEVE"³;

for in 1 Corinths 11. 1, he can say: "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Yet again do we think of him as an ensample, but not this time towards the sinner, nor yet towards the saints in general, but for the overseers. His words on this occasion are like an echo of the saying of the Lord Jesus Christ to His disciples: "I have given you an example that ye also should do as I have done to you,"⁴ the Apostle's words being: "In all things

I GAVE YOU AN EXAMPLE

how that, so labouring, ye ought to help the weak."⁵

In this God-given pattern for all it is important to note the references made to the conscience. For not alone or chiefly

¹ 1 Tim. 1. 16.

² 1 Tim. 2. 4.

³ 1 Tim. 4. 12.

⁴ John 13. 15.

⁵ Acts 20. 35.

does God seek from us, whether sheep or shepherd, outward conformity to the Divine pattern, this certainly, but this as the outcome of inward working. The Apostle's testimony helps to make plain God's desire concerning us, as the same was realized in his own experience. "Herein do I exercise myself," he says, "to have a

CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE

toward God and men always."¹

The outward manifestation hereof was betimes open to misunderstanding, and if the inward exercise and motives could have been understood by those concerned there would not have been such displays of antagonism to the Apostle as, alas! too often obtained. No mean or selfish ends controlled the Apostle's actions. He lived not for himself; he lived in undoubted evidence of his belief in the realities of eternity. "Not seeking mine own profit but the profit of the many, that they may be saved,"² and because of this desire for and effort towards the salvation of the many he endeavoured to

"PLEASE ALL MEN IN ALL THINGS."

Yet the Divine order of his exercise must not be overlooked. It is God first, man next. This reminds us of the testimony borne to Samuel³: "Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with Jehovah and also with men," and also to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself:⁴ "Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men."

Where the pleasing of men was consistent with the pleasing of God then the Apostle diligently exercised himself therein, but if the pleasing of men were to be at the expense of pleasing God then men's pleasure was set aside, for in such cases, if he yet pleased men he would not have shown himself to be the bond-servant of Christ.⁵ He recognized that

THEY SERVE MEN BEST WHO BEST SERVE GOD.

¹ Acts 24. 16.

² 1 Cor. 10. 33.

³ 1 Sam. 2. 26.

⁴ Luke 2. 52.

⁵ Gal. 1. 10.

Himself an exhorter to others to let their yieldingness be known (undoubtedly herein, as in else he taught, he practised what he preached), but when occasion arose that his apprehension that the Lord's will required resistance and not compliance, he resisted and yielded not. "To whom I gave place by way of subjection, no, not for an hour, that the truth might remain with you." Trying to the flesh such conflict doubtless was, but according to his day so was his strength.

Of certain who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ we are told that they did not confess Him lest they should be put out of the synagogue, for they loved the

PRAISE OF MEN MORE THAN THE PRAISE OF GOD.

Not so the Apostle.

In the epistle especially written to teach right behaviour in the House of God, responsibility towards all men is acknowledged in the light of the desire of God concerning all. A calm and tranquil life in all godliness—How lovely! How desirable! But as in the experience of the Psalmist there were those of whom he could say—"I am for

PEACE

but they are for

WAR,"

so may it be in our day. This too the Apostle owns when he says—"If it be possible, as much as in you lieth,

LIVE PEACEABLY

with all men." Yea, more, he assures us that—"All who desire to live godly shall

SUFFER PERSECUTION."

But comforting is the thought that if we suffer we shall also reign with Him, if we confess Him before men then will He confess us before His Father and before the holy angels.

Returning to the Apostle's testimony concerning the

conscience we hear him again protesting that — “I have lived in all

- GOOD CONSCIENCE

before God unto this day.”¹

In telling of the great sorrow and unceasing pain of heart that were his concerning his brethren after the flesh he can appeal to his conscience for confirmation of the accuracy of his words.² Well would it be for us if at all times we could similarly act. Alas, that we should ever lose that consciousness of which John speaks—“If our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.”

God would have us with a conscience void of offence; a good conscience,³ a pure conscience,⁴ but alas, our conscience may be defiled, it may be weak, it may be evil, it may be seared with a hot iron.

Not only had the Apostle the approbation of his own conscience (2 Cor. 1. 12), but he could confidently appeal to others, knowing that if their consciences were heard nothing but good could be spoken of him (2 Cor. 4. 2).

“What is truth?” was Herod’s question to the Lord Jesus. What is grace? do we ask. Then hear an answer at the mouth of Peter⁵—“This is grace, if for

CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD

a man endureth griefs, suffering wrongfully.”

A good conscience toward God must be maintained though suffering at the hand of men should follow. As previously mentioned, the order is

GOD FIRST, MAN NEXT.

Let not 1 Corinthians 7. 23 be forgotten, nor 1 Corinthians 6. 20 be unheeded.

JOHN P. A. TAYLOR.

¹ Acts 23. ² Rom. 9. 1. ³ 1 Tim. 1. 5, 19; 1 Peter 3. 16.

⁴ 1 Tim. 3. 9; 2 Tim. 1. 3. ⁵ 1 Peter 2. 19.

“WILL YE ALSO GO AWAY?”

JOHN 6. 66-67.

THESE forcible, far-reaching words of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ have often been brought before our mind at intervals during the past few years, and especially so, when we have come to know that many of those with whom, in years past, we have had sweet fellowship in the work and ways of the Lord, have turned aside, and walk no more with Him.

The salient point in connexion with the crisis brought before our notice in this portion of God's Word is, that it was the spoken word of the Christ concerning Himself that led up to the murmur amongst the disciples, and also to the interrogation: “Doth this cause you to stumble? What, then, if ye should behold the Son of Man ascending where He was before? It is the Spirit that giveth life, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are Spirit, and are Life. But there are some of you that believe not.”

How important! How needful it is for us, even now, as it was for the disciples then, to be taken up with Himself in all His precious aspects, in order that we may be saved from the condition evidently set forth in the expression: “This is a hard saying; who can hear it?” The true meat (His flesh), the true drink (His blood), were not understood sufficiently to cause some, at least, of His disciples to appreciate Himself and His word, so that under such circumstances they could but turn back, and follow Him no longer. Testing times have come in the past, are here at present, and will come in the future, perhaps more trying than those which are past, or present.

There is, however, that through which we may be enabled to surmount every apparent difficulty, and overcome every obstacle that crosses our path. Let us see! Was it not love that led our God, through Christ Jesus,

our Lord, to seek and save the lost, and that at such a tremendous sacrifice? Yes—

“Love was the spring of all,
Love triumphed o'er our fall,
The Love of God.”

And so with the believer, for where true love abounds there need be no fear of results. “If a man love Me, he will keep My word. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My words” (John 14. 23–24). These scriptures are very emphatic, hence the necessity of our becoming more acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ. To know Him more is to love Him more. “I love my master, I love my wife, I love my children,” was the spontaneous expression of the Hebrew seryant, who further said:—“I will not go out free,” and thus he was content to be his master's servant for ever. Then again, we find in the Song of Solomon (chap. 5. 10–16) the affectionate expressions of one who had made a heart study of her beloved; so much so, that each part of his person is adoringly set forth, with wonderful accuracy. In the case of the Hebrew servant, who would thus express his love for his master, his wife, his children, it is at once made evident that he sought not to please himself, but him, under whose bountiful hand he had been blessed, and prospered. His master's house and rule were dear to his heart, the wife given him by his master was precious unto his soul, and so were his children, and due consideration of these realities caused him to make a wise choice.

We fear that it is the lack of godly consideration on the part of many in these last days that leads up to their following the Lord no longer. “My people will not consider,” was Jehovah's lamentation through Isaiah the prophet. “The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, My people will not consider” (Isaiah 1. 3).

Under the Lord's rule in connexion with the House

of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth, some who have now turned back, were once blest, and graciously owned by the Lord; spiritual children were begotten through the Gospel; such have been fed, and nourished by them through the words of sober truth; the unadulterated milk of the Word. But alas! alas! the Lord by them is forsaken, the habitation of God's House, the place where His glory dwelleth, loses its attraction, and many of the Lord's little ones are pained and grieved. These now require to be fed, and cared for by those whose love still abides, whose reverence for the principles of Divine truth remains unaltered, whose loyalty has not been shaken. Be comforted, beloved young children of God; honour, obey, be subject to them who are over you in the Lord. Give yourselves to a heart study of the person, and Divine attributes of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and thus be saved from the truly awful sin of ingratitude, of turning away from the Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world according to the will of God, and our Father, unto Whom be the glory for ever and ever, Amen. Until the triumphant shout and meeting in the air may we still, with the spirit and with the understanding, sing:—

"Alone with Thee, oh Master, where
The light of Earthly Glory dies.
Misunderstood by all, I dare
To do what Thine own heart will prize.
Such be my path through life down here—
One long, close, lovely walk with Thee,
Until past every doubt, and fear,
Thy face, in light above, I see."

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

Trinidad, Colorado, U.S.A.

FLESHLY LUSTS.

It was once said of a Christian that he made another Christian blush, because, in audible prayer, he thanked God for salvation from outward inconsistency. Consistency is a rare virtue, and it is something for which to be truly thankful wherever it obtains; but if it is only outward consistency, and not that which is the result of the working of God inwardly, then—alas! what is it but the shell without the kernel; the form of godliness without the power? Sooner or later its emptiness and uselessness will be manifested—

“As the man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

The Psalmist knew well the possibility of preserving an outward appearance of chastity, whilst in secret the heart was going after sinful indulgence. In the light of his own experience it is important to note his prayer in Psalm 19. It was not—

“Keep Thou me from great transgressions.”

(This, of course, but not firstly, nor chiefly.) It was—

“Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.”

And, being thus cleansed, he could confidently add—

“So shall I be clear from the great transgression.”

After his lamentable fall in connexion with Bath-sheba, his testimony was—

“Thou desirest truth in the inward parts.”

Beloved, may it be ours to remember this more and more. “He that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be manifest that they are wrought in God.” “Men love the darkness rather than the light because their deeds are evil.” “All things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.”

We sometimes seek to derive comfort and encouragement from the knowledge that—

“He Who keeps Israel slumbers not nor sleeps,”

but that truth has a solemn, sobering side, too. How sad to think of the possibility of children of God imitating the folly of Achan! Be sure your sin will find you out!

Fleshly Lusts is a most comprehensive expression, and covers far more than the secret indulgence to which we have alluded. The ground of the exhortation suggests some help as to its significance. We are entreated as sojourners and pilgrims. Fleshly lusts, then, are incompatible with the character of those who are simply passing through this land on their homeward journey. They are not in keeping with what becomes one who is a settler here, far less do they become him who confesses (as we have often done) that—

“I'm a pilgrim and a stranger,
Rough and thorny is the road: '
Often in the midst of danger,
But it leads to God.”

The word “fleshly” means “pertaining to the flesh,” whilst “lusts” does not of itself signify that which is evil, and requires to be regarded in the light of the context. Its proper significance is “to set the heart upon,” “to long for.”

An appreciation of its twofold use, as applying to that which is good and right, and to that which is evil and wrong, may be gained from consideration of the following passages of Holy Scripture:—

First, applied to the good: Matthew 13. 17; 1 Timothy 3. 1; Hebrews 6. 11; 1 Peter 1. 12. In these scriptures it is translated “desire.”

Second, applied to the evil: Romans 7. 7; 13. 9 (translated “covet”); Matthew 5. 28 (translated “lust after”); 1 Corinthians 10. 6 (translated “lusted”); and Galatians 5. 17 (translated “lusteth”).

How we may be saved from these fleshly lusts is explained in Gal. 5. 16. “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

The peculiar evil of their operation is described in 1

Peter 2. 11, as "warring against the soul." This word "warring" carries with it the thought of engagement in a military campaign. It is not simply a fight and then the battle is over; it is a prolonged state of war. Here the lusts war against the soul. In James 4. the pleasures war in our members.

We have already directed attention to God's way of saving us from fulfilling the lust of the flesh. To the word already named we might add Psalm 119. 9—

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."

Who knoweth this better than the Devil? Hence we read that when the good seed of the Word is sown, "Straightway cometh Satan and taketh away the word." And though in this he fail, yet is he not finally rebuffed; he is not at an end of his resources. For surely we see him behind the scene presenting "the lust of other things" to those who have heard the Word, by which means the Word is choked and becometh unfruitful. •

"Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul."

The word rendered "abstain" means, literally, "to hold oneself off." Other examples of its use which help to an understanding of its significance will be found in Acts 15. 20 and 29, and 1 Thessalonians 4. 3; 5. 22.

A true safeguard against this evil will be found in keeping ourselves in the love of God. How important it is, then, that the words of the Lord Jesus Christ should sink deep down in our hearts, that exercise unto the pleasing of God, the fulfilment of the purpose of our redemption and separation, may be found therein, and in the fostering love of God yield results whereby, in some little measure, the Lord Jesus may see off the travail of His soul.

"Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit and so shall ye be My disciples. Even as the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you: abide ye in My love.

"If ye keep My commandments ye shall abide in My

love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled" (John 15. 8-11).

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13. 14).

THE BIBLE IN KOREA.

(*Extracted.*)

"THE native Korean Christian is said to be zealous to study his Bible. Bibles are not given away in Korea, nor sold for a small fraction of their cost, but the native is willing to pay as much as a shilling for his New Testament, although the average daily wage is only about sevenpence halfpenny. So great is the demand that, last year, when the Bible Committee had ordered a new edition of 20,000 copies of the New Testament, the whole edition was sold before a word had been printed. Koreans will endure great privations, and travel for days to attend a Bible-class, and these classes, varying according to locality from 200 to 1,300 enrolled members, will continue from ten to fourteen days."

* * * *

"And Thy words were unto me a joy and the rejoicing of mine heart" (Jer. 15. 16). "For the people had a mind to work" (Neh. 4. 6). "Work for I am with you, saith the Lord" (Hag. 2. 4).

Where is the zeal that ought to characterize us as saints? May what is here written move us to shame.

"Hark! 'tis the watchman's cry,
 Wake, brethren, wake!
 Jesus our Lord, is nigh;
 Wake, brethren wake!
 Sleep is for sons of night,
 Ye are children of the light,
 Yours is the glory bright;
 Wake, brethren, wake!"

“HOW CAN THESE THINGS BE ?”

SUCH were the words of a great teacher in Israel concerning one of the first foundation principles of the Faith, namely, the new birth, a truth so well known amongst us, and so fully believed, that the very youngest believer is heard to speak freely about it.

The great majority of English people are educated from their infancy in the teaching expressed in the catechism, wherein the child is taught that, at its baptism, he is made “a member of Christ, the child of God, and inheritor of the kingdom of heaven,” and is in a state of being saved, unless by a profligate life he cuts himself off therefrom.

The dire results of such teaching are self-evident in that which we see around us, wherein there is much religion but very little spiritual life.

Now, let us examine the scriptures upon this subject and seek to know what they teach concerning man’s state by nature, and concerning the new birth.

In John 3. we read—“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit ; marvel not that I said unto thee, ‘Ye must be born anew.’”

Thus the word of God marks the difference, clear and distinct, between these two ; that which is “of the flesh,” and that which is “of the Spirit,” and Romans 8. still further sets them in contrast one to the other :—

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For the mind of the flesh is death, but the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be : and they that are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Here, then, is set before us the fact, that as we are born into this world we are

“OF THE FLESH,”

and further, that the flesh (or the old Adam nature) is

corrupt and incurably bad, is impressed upon us over and over again.

(*First.*) “The flesh is flesh”—this implies that it is its very nature, and must ever remain so. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin? or the leopard his spots?” No education, no scientific culture, no improvement in social or moral surroundings, no ceremonies, no creeds, can ever change the nature or character of that in and with which we were born. It may be polished and refined, the unclean spots may be covered or disguised; the outward sins and follies of youth may give place to the deeper and more hidden, yet withal none the less fleshly, propensities of maturer years; still that which is born of the flesh is flesh.

(*Second.*) “They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh.” Their thoughts, affections, hopes and aspirations, are all bound up in their present pleasure or profit. “The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vain glory of life,” yea—all that is in the world, is the sum-total of their hearts’ desires.

(*Third.*) “The mind of the flesh is death.”

The mole cares not for the sunlight; it burrows under the surface; it has no thought for the beauties revealed in the light of the sun; it would be out of its element there.

Just so is it with the mind of the flesh, it is occupied with its own dark thoughts, leading to darker deeds, for men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Afar off, without hope, without God, dead indeed to all the glories found in the sunlight of God’s presence, “Dead through your trespasses and sins.”

(*Fourth.*) “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.”

There can be no reconciliation; the flesh is diametrically opposed to all that is of God; selfwill is its chief characteristic, albeit it is very religious, having a religion of

its own in which lawlessness is the chief point, every man doing that which is right in his own eyes, but it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be.

(*Fifth.*) "They that are in the flesh cannot please God."

This is the summing up of the whole matter—God cannot look with approval upon anything that emanates from the heart of unregenerate man.

"CANNOT PLEASE GOD."

For the thought of the imagination of the heart is evil and that continually, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

WHAT THEN CAN BE DONE ?

WHAT HOPE IS THERE FOR MAN ?

None whatever in himself, for God has Himself declared :—
"There is none righteous, no, not one—none that seeketh after God—all turned aside—there is no distinction, for all have sinned." God hath concluded all under sin, children of wrath even as others.

"YE MUST BE BORN ANEW."

These statements from God's Holy Word make it clear that at our natural birth we are not born into the kingdom, but are in the outside place, afar off.

"No reformation will suffice,
'Tis life poor sinners need."

Nicodemus was a ruler of the Jews, and the teacher of Israel. He came to Jesus as a teacher, willing perhaps to learn, if he found there was anything which he did not already know, but the Lord showed him it was not more learning that he required, it was a

NEW NATURE.

He was a past master in all the learning of his day, but he knew not the things of which the Lord Jesus spake to him. The schools of men did not (neither do they) teach them, and he had not learned in the school of God.

Human nature is seen at its best in Nicodemus, yet

does the Lord say to him, "Ye must be born anew." "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

As we have before noticed, the offspring partakes of the nature of that by which it is begotten. The flesh is flesh, and the Spirit is spirit, and these are contrary the one to the other.

In John 1. 11, 12, we read, "He came unto His own 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 not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

There are no natural elements in the new birth. "Not of blood." It is not by natural descent—Christian parents do not beget Christian children, they must be born anew even as others.

"Nor of the will of the flesh"—for all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass, it is corruptible and passes away, but that which is born of God abideth for ever.

"Nor of the will of man"—here man has no power or wisdom. With all his boasted knowledge and skill he cannot produce the new birth, nor even comprehend it. Nicodemus the great teacher could only ask, "How can these things be?" "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned."

But where man has failed to know or do, God has come in. So we learn that

"OF HIS OWN WILL

He brought us forth by the word of truth." Yea, it is His will, His way, His work, from first to last, while

man's will, man's way, and man's work, are of no avail.

We were all children of wrath, even as the rest, but God being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, quickened us together with Christ, for "by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them," Ephesians 2. 3-10.

The new birth, then, is by the "Will of God." It is from above, and is brought about by the Holy Spirit operating through the word of truth. "Born of water and of the Spirit," the water here is used figuratively, as in John 7. 38, and in Ephesians—"The washing of water through the word." Thus James puts it, "He brought us forth, by the word of truth;" and Peter, "Having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth," and Paul to Titus also, "According to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." It is a spiritual birth, in contrast to the natural birth.

"That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual," and as the natural bears the image of the earthy, so the spiritual bears the image of the heavenly.

This new birth, then, is wholly and solely the work of God. His Holy Spirit, operating through His Holy Word, upon the heart and mind of men and women, begets within them a new nature; wherefrom spring new thoughts, new desires, new motives, new hopes and aspirations. Indeed, those who are thus wrought in by the Holy Spirit

are become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away; behold they are become new, and all things are of God Who reconciled us to Himself through Christ.

But as the field must be prepared for the reception of the seed, if it is to spring up into life and become fruitful, so, the heart of man must be in a fit state and condition to receive this new birth.

And this also is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Word. As in Genesis 1., the Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, ere God spake this earth of ours into form and life; so now God has given His Holy Spirit to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and thus, to plough up the fallow ground, to convince men of their barren death-like state by nature, and their need as sinners. For as the earth left to itself bears thorns and weeds, so with the natural man, he is a sinner as the outcome of his very nature, and it is only as a man becomes convicted of his state and condition, that there becomes a suitable condition of heart for the further reception of the Word of God, which begets the new man; and produces that in him, in which God Himself can take delight, for it is begotten in the image and likeness of His Son.

Men are ever seeking to find the secret of life, and to banish death from their midst, but here they again fail, for though the activities of life are seen by all, its secret spring is discovered by none. Man can destroy, but cannot give life. Christ came not to destroy, but to give eternal life, which, apart from Him, none can ever know. And this life is not a reward received at the close of a religious life on earth for services rendered to God. It is not a condition we may attain, or possession we may acquire, by any works of our own. No. In spiritual as in natural things we must have the life to start with, therefore we do not labour to obtain life, but as having life we work. And the life is begotten in the man by the

Holy Spirit operating through the Word. This life must be nourished and controlled, and educated, in the things of God, that it may be of service in its proper sphere. But again we would say, it cannot be purchased or obtained by any good works or efforts on the part of any man.

How, then, do we become possessed of this life, and enabled to enter into the enjoyment thereof?

We find the answer in John 1.—“As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name.” An open receptive heart for the Christ of God, for “he that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life.”

This is the witness, “God gave unto us eternal life and this life is in His Son,” and the reception of this is by faith, “even to them that believe on His name.” “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God.”

This faith in Christ is the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts.

It is not merely believing about the Lord Jesus, nor the belief of certain creeds, ordinances, or dogmas (thousands believe thus without being born anew). There is no spiritual life accompanying such faith. But faith in Christ means the acceptance of Him as the Son of God, Who by His death paid the full penalty of sin, and in His resurrection opened up a new life to every one who puts his trust in Him.

And this faith becomes manifest in our obedience to the truth. Those who are exercised thereby will turn away from those things which they once gloried in, even as the Apostle Paul said, “Howbeit what things were gain to me these have I counted loss for Christ; yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.”

“So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh; for if ye live after the flesh ye must

die ; but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." An evidence of the new birth is in this, that those who are born anew, are led by the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit only leads by the Word of truth. The pathway of obedience for children of God is only marked out there, and those who are led therein by the Holy Spirit, have the witness within themselves. It is therefore abundantly evident that "it is not the children of the flesh that are children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned for a seed." ¹

"Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Howbeit, what saith the scripture? 'Cast out the handmaid and her son, for the son of the handmaid shall not inherit with the son of the freewoman.' Wherefore, brethren, we are not children of a handmaid, but of the freewoman."

"With freedom did Christ set us free. Stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage." ² May it be the portion of those who have become "sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus," to rejoice in, and live in the power of the new life opened up to them thereby.

G. T. REEVE.

¹ Romans 9. 8.

² Galatians 4. 28-5.

HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM.

CAN a single instance be given from the Word of God where a household was baptized on the ground of the faith of the parent or parents, the household itself yet remaining in unbelief ?

To answer this question it will be well that we examine every account of baptism that we find in the Acts.

The word baptize, in relation to water baptism, meets us in the first chapter, verse 5. John baptized in water. What he did is told here, not with whom he did this.

Then chapter 2., verse 38 : "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins ; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him." This passage claims special attention, for here we read of children associated with a promise. We note, however, that the call to repent precedes the call to be baptized. This at once calls for a halt on the part of any who affirm that unrepentant children ought to be baptized, for if children ought to be baptized on the strength of this scripture then children should be first called upon to repent. But when we read the entire account of what took place here we find that the thought of children being baptized on the strength of the repentance of the parents is inadmissible, because in verse 41 we have the subjects of baptism distinctly specified, as, "They that received his word," in all about three thousand souls. These baptized ones continued steadfastly in the Apostles' Doctrine and the Fellowship, in the Breaking of the Bread and in the Prayers. There was not an unrepentant person amongst them. All were capable for themselves of responding or refusing to respond to Peter's call—

REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED.

Those who did this had their sins remitted and became recipients of the Holy Spirit.

It is no more required of us to believe that unrepentant children were baptized on this occasion than that those afar off (repentant or unrepentant) were baptized. God being heard we may only affirm that the men addressed by Peter, and such children as could judge for themselves, who

REPENTED,

as in verse 38, or

RECEIVED THE WORD,

as in verse 41, alone

WERE BAPTIZED.

Agreeable with this is the record of Peter's address in Acts 3., where he charges the men of Israel to repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out, and is further confirmed in the closing words thereof, "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities"—a personal, individual matter.

Reading on through the Acts we think that Chapter 5, verse 32, next calls for special mention, where we have additional corroboration of the point we have advanced in regard to Acts 2. 38—namely, that only such as repented were baptized; and, again, that these, and these alone, received the Holy Spirit. Here in verse 32 we read that the Holy Spirit had been given to them that obey.

We next find baptism associated with the men and women of Samaria, who had believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Then the case of the eunuch follows: an individual who heard of the Lord Jesus, believed on the Lord Jesus as the Son of God, and in consequence thereof was baptized (Acts 8.).

The case of Saul in Acts 9. and of Cornelius in Acts 10. require no special comment, beyond citation of the following scriptures:—

Acts 11. 14. "Thou shalt be saved and all thy house . . ."

15, "The Holy Spirit fell on them even as on us at the beginning"; 16, "I remembered the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto us, who was I, that I could withstand God?"

Acts 13. 24. "The baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel," may also be passed without remark.

The next occurrence of baptize is in chapter 16., and this is of especial interest as constituting one of the passages generally tendered as proof that Household Baptism is of God.

Let us consider carefully the salient points of the chapter, Verse 13. "We went forth without the gate (of Philippi) by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spake unto the women which were come together. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there," There is no ground for the contention that Lydia's household was baptized on the ground of her faith; God has been careful to guard against such inaccurate inference, and so we read that when Paul and Silas came out of the prison they entered into "the house of Lydia and when they had

SEEN THE BRETHREN

they exhorted them and departed."

It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the household of Lydia consisted of male servants who could hear and believe for themselves, and on the ground of their own faith they were baptized with their mistress.

Equally unsatisfactory to upholders of this strange doc-

trine is the account in the same chapter of the baptism of the jailor and his household.

It is sufficient to point out that verse 31 definitely refers to salvation, and a salvation to be known through faith in the Lord Jesus, a salvation that is the portion of all believers, and of which believers only are in possession. Each one for himself and for herself requires to believe, and on his or her believing enters into the eternally blessed portion of being a child of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, heir of God and joint-heir with Christ.

That all in this household had come to years of understanding is proved beyond all question by verse 32, "They spake the word of the Lord unto him (the jailor) with all that were in his house." All who heard became believers, and in consequence were baptized. This is conclusively established by verse 34, "He rejoiced, with all his house, having believed in God."

Acts 18. 8. "Crispus believed," but we do not here read of his baptism, and some might cavil and say that he was not baptized, or it would have said so here. Reference to 1 Corinthians 1. makes such a contention inadmissible.

Then we have it further established that faith must precede baptism, as well as that baptism follows faith, in verse 8, for we read that "Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized." Hear—Believe—Be Baptized. This is the Divine order maintained by Paul, as it was enjoined by the Lord Jesus Christ, "Make disciples, baptizing them"; and as we have already seen it established in practice by Peter in Acts 2. "They that received his word were baptized."

Then, as now, only such may be baptized, not they and their household, saving in the case of households like the jailor's or Lydia's or Cornelius', where all are believers.

Acts 19. shows again the Divine order of faith preceding. In Acts 22. Paul recounts his own conversion.

Question and Answer.

QUESTION. *What is the difference between the headship of Christ in Colossians 1. 15 and Colossians 1. 18 ?*

ANSWER. -In verse 15 it is the headship of the entire creation as described in verses 16, 17. Please note the connective character of the word "For" which begins verse 16.

In verse 18 it is the headship of the Body, the Church in particular. Please note the word "And" which begins this verse, it has the force of "Also." H. E.

QUESTION. *Is it possible to give effect to Titus 3. 10, and the heretical man still remain inside a church of God ?*

ANSWER. Titus 3. 10, gives instruction for dealing with a man who in course of becoming heretical has received the admonition enjoined in the letter to Thessalonians without profiting thereby. (See in this connexion an article "Labourers and their work," in this magazine for January last.) As a heretical person he has no place in an assembly of God and is to be rejected.

If a man becomes heretical without having been duly admonished in the course of that process, it will be found, we believe, in every case, that the working of the evil will be such that Titus 3. 10 is not of itself sufficient to meet the case and prescribe the remedy.

C. M. L.

THE SCREEN AND THE VEIL.

A CORRESPONDENT has drawn attention to the fact that in his article on the above H. W. W. overlooks the Pillar of Fire when he says (p. 98): "All we see is one peculiar light," referring to the light from the golden lamp-stand.

H. W. W. desires to acknowledge the mistake which he has made and to take this opportunity of correcting it. The editors likewise regret that they did not observe the error.

LAWFUL, BUT NOT EXPEDIENT.

It is safe to say that life was formerly much more simple than it is now. It is largely, however, a waste of time to talk about getting back to that simple life, although we should do what we may to cut off the unnecessary luxuries and demands of so-called higher civilization. But do what we will we cannot possibly transport ourselves to times and circumstances now long past, neither can we greatly alter our present environment unless we elect to make a clean break with the whole thing and shut ourselves up in religious houses like monks and nuns, or dwell in a tub like Diogenes.

The success of either of these practices is not likely to lead spiritually sane men and women to follow the examples thus set, more especially as our great Example earned for Himself the unique commendation "Jesus of Nazareth . . . Who went about doing good" (Acts 10. 38). Seeing that He "went about," we must not shut ourselves up. And, furthermore, we have the divine instruction in 1 Cor 5. 9, 10, that we must not contemplate complete separation in everyday life, otherwise "we must needs go out of the world."

It is the fashion with some well-meaning Christians to repeat a weary round of pious expressions, the regular repetition of which seems to be their highest sense of duty; but any observing person can easily see that even their own lives do not reasonably correspond with what they say. The fact is, these expressions are largely borrowed from other days and do not fit in to the practical present.

This type of person never tires talking about the good days that were, heedless of the inspired warning, "Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this" (Ecc. 7. 10.).

Of course the former days may have been better, but

it is very often not so, and if wise inquiry were made, and the peculiar circumstances of the present days taken into account, the great persons and things of the past would find their true level. "Forgetting the things that are behind" should ever be our motto; and with us to-day should be the best day that we have yet seen. We should be able in truth to say, "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118. 24.), whether it be a dark day or a bright one.

What we seem to require is to grasp the fact that the present is alive, that the past, for all practical purposes, is dead, and that our wisdom is to follow the Lord and leave the dead to bury their dead.

Those who can only talk with relish of the past have evidently no present, and they should be left amongst the tombs. This does not, however, preclude us from a proper study of the past with a view to profiting by it.

Together with the fact that the present is alive, we should grasp the equally precious fact that the Word of God is living, and that it not only suited each successive age of the past, but that it suits the living, pulsing, active present.

When Paul was saying farewell to the Ephesian elders he commended them to "God and the Word of His grace" (Acts 20. 32.). No mere pious platitude this. For as time rolls on and changes come God and His Word are sufficient for the ever increasing needs of men of God.

Human writings, however true to their times, and helpful, begin to die before their authors have themselves passed away, but the Word of God liveth, it speaks true to the present, it contains the last word on all spiritual questions of to-day.

Many have been led into impracticable habits by poring over the writings of men and the lives of saints who are half dead or largely antiquated. How different would the result have been if more time had been given to a reverent study of the Word of truth.

It is delightful to the soul to find the truth brought up to date in the Scriptures, to find the present friends and enemies of God and His ways described true to life, to find implements of labour and weapons of warfare of the latest patterns ready to hand; to find those implements used in bringing forth ripened results, and the weapons getting home to the enemy at close quarters. All this can only be possible to us as we get into the Scriptures, and experiencing their suitability for the present actualities, are guided by them into the practical paths of wisdom.

As the desire seizes us to accomplish some little work for God in our day and time, we shall waste less energy trying to find out what is lawful, and shall give ourselves more earnestly to the doing of that which is expedient.

We shall not quarrel so much with our environments, applying to them worn-out epithets of the far past, but shall address ourselves to the practical task of discovering whether this or that is expedient, instructed by the divine words, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are expedient" (1 Cor. 6. 12; 10. 23). The "all" here cannot be taken in its fullest sense, for there are things unlawful, but as indicating that all those things about which questionings are proper are lawful in themselves, as a general rule, but may not be expedient; firstly, as in chapter 6. 12, because of my weak self, "I will not be brought under the power of any," and secondly, as in chapter 10. 23, because of my weak brother, "but all things edify not."

It will be found on careful examination that the things which are unlawful in themselves are fewer than is commonly supposed. The practical and wise thing is therefore to ask ourselves whether this or that is expedient, rather than whether it is lawful. The principle of a God-fearing expediency will be found to be far more searching, for we all know how expert some people are at arguing things to be lawful, beginning with something less difficult, and then, step by step, if this is right, then that must be right,

and the other cannot logically be wrong, and so on; while all the time godly persons are convinced that the things in question are distinctly injurious, and, as it is put in 1 Peter 2. 11, they war against the soul.

However lawful a thing may be in itself, it cannot be expedient for me if it brings me under its power and hinders my usefulness for God; neither can anything be expedient that does not edify my brother. But here it is necessary to guard against a difficulty that sometimes arises through the unspiritual and unreasonable attitude taken up by some, who may be described as strong in stupidity rather than weak in faith. They cannot be allowed to block the path of godly liberty and to reduce the whole movement after God to incompetency. We should have spiritual hospitals for the weak and injured and asylums for the poor and blind, where all may be nursed and tended according to the rich grace of our God, but the whole cannot be turned into hospitals and asylums, there must be those who are "strong to labour" though not strong to trample upon the weak, as also those who can "go forth to war" though the very last to shed the blood of war in the time of peace.

There cannot result any good from arguing as to whether this or that is lawful, for it is more than likely, that it will be found to be lawful in itself, but if it is calculated to dwarf divine life and hinder aggressiveness in spiritual work, either in myself or my brother, then I should seek grace to have done with it. It is not expedient for me.

Law, as commonly understood, is such a dangerous thing to handle, for it is so easily disobeyed, in its intent, on the one hand, or obeyed in the letter, on the other hand, to our own hurt and the hurt of others; but, expediency, as here presented, is so safe and leaves no way of escape either to the right hand or to the left.

If a certain practice or habit hinders divine growth and fruit-bearing, either in myself or in my brother, expediency cries aloud that it must cease, or the result will be serious

in the extreme, though law, ingeniously applied, may appear to approve.

Expediency has a suitable companion in what is termed "the law of liberty" in James 1. 25, into which we may look, and in which we may continue, by which also we are to be judged, chapter 2. 12. This law of liberty is intended for those who have been set free by Christ, according to His words, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," John 8. 36, and great is the honour thus conferred.

The problem of ruling men is ever present in the world, because men cannot trust one another with full liberty, the experience being that liberty degenerates into licence. How sad, how very sad that this should ever be true of those who have been counted worthy of the freedom with which Christ makes His people free.

What confusion of face will be ours, if being judged by the perfect law of liberty we are found to have violated it and to have proved ourselves unworthy of the confidence placed in us. The transgression of specific laws is bad, but how much worse to contravene the law of liberty, or to do violence to the beautiful arrangement of divine expediency thus revealed to us.

This law of liberty opens up wonderful possibilities, it clears away the barriers which righteous-over-much persons have placed in the way, it gives liberty to "do good on the Sabbath day" (Mark 3. 4), and that is no small emancipation, and it also allows us to "do good to all men" (Gal. 6. 10).

It opens up before us a wide range of good things which we may do, whilst its beautiful companion gently but firmly draws the line at what we may not do, and indicates how far we may wisely go even in the doing of that which is good. For we must not allow liberty to degenerate into licence, either in doing things which, though lawful in themselves, result in injury to ourselves or to others, or

things which, though good in themselves, work evil to ourselves or to others.

We conclude, therefore, that however complex and difficult life is, or may become, there is ever present help for us in God and the Word of His grace if we are willing to receive it.

We need never be ultimately in doubt as to whether this or that is right or wrong for us if our one and only aim be to be well pleasing to Him, for the very nature and conditions of our spiritual life and growth will admonish us, even as we are admonished in our bodies when the conditions of healthy food and environment are neglected.

Losing power with God and with men is a sure evidence that something inexpedient is having power over us, "For God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and discipline" (2 Tim. 1. 7). We should therefore be exercised seriously before God as to our habits and practices both open and secret, and bring them to the test not of lawfulness merely but of expediency. The question should be "Does this or that hinder or help ourselves and others in spiritual power and progress?" "Is it expedient to spend time, money, thought and energy on this or that habit or practice?"

If right with God we shall ever be on war footing, as the good old expression "The Church militant" so forcibly puts it, and anything which tends to weaken this attitude is not expedient.

It should not be necessary to say that nothing in these remarks is intended to give liberty to introduce the principle of expediency in connexion with those things about which God has given commandments or clearly indicated His will.

If God has spoken it is ours to obey promptly, and without questioning the expediency of anything that results from implicit obedience. It is ours to obey; God will vindicate the wisdom and expediency of all that He has commanded,

because the foolishness of God is wiser than men (1 Cor. 1. 25).

May each of us endeavour through grace to reduce to practice and actual experience what the Lord thus brings before us to His glory. Amen.

W. J. LENNOX.

Fragment.

It is easy and to the taste of some to rail themselves off from all around, but to live as the great Example lived, in the midst of men and yet not of the world, is another thing, and needs divine power in our lives. "The exceeding greatness of His power" seems to be little known.

"BE OF GOOD CHEER."

Let come what may!

Let go what would!

I only know that God is good,
And that to me He now would say,
"Dread not, My child, what may befall,
Fear not, take courage, look this way,
For I, thy God, am all in all."

Then doubt begone!

And sorrow too!

I have no time to spend with you;
For though the heavenly path may be
All dark, and steep, and rugged too,
It leads to Home and Liberty,
And God, my God, will bring me through.

H. W. W.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

(Continued from page 210.)

THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER.

IN our last paper we mentioned the purchase of Ruth and all that was Elimelech's, suggesting to us the redemption that is in Christ Jesus with its far-reaching effects, and we looked at some Old Testament types of the same. We will continue this theme by considering

THE THRĒSHING-FLOOR OF ORNAN.

In 1 Chron. 21. we read how David had sinned in numbering the children of Israel and how God visited that sin with judgment. Then we read of the deep contrition of David and the command of the Angel of Jehovah to Gad, to say to David, that he should go and set up an altar unto Jehovah, in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Ornan would have given him the threshing-floor and oxen for the burnt offerings, but David said, "Nay; but I will verily buy it of thee at a price," and for them he paid fifty shekels of silver (2 Sam. 24. 24). There he offered his sacrifice which was accepted, and it was here that the destroying angel sheathed his sword. Redemption ground was the basis, for it was on the threshing-floor of Ornan that the sacrifice must be offered, and it was on this spot that the temple of Solomon was afterwards built (1 Chron. 22. 1; 2 Chron. 3. 1). It was here, too, that Abraham had offered up his only son Isaac (Gen. 22. 2, 14), and it could not have been far from here that the Lord Jesus Christ was crucified. (See map of Jerusalem.) How precious is the thought that this hallowed spot was ever before the eye of God!

If Satan provokes David to number Israel and he falls a prey to the tempter, the triumph of God shines out in anticipation of the grand redemption and atonement that are foreshadowed in the sacrifice that was offered on the threshing-floor of Ornan. And in the case of our Lord

Jesus Christ, many times would His enemies have taken His life, but there was the appointed hour and appointed place for our Great Kinsman-Redeemer to lay down the purchase price. He was offered up in that sacred place the very picture of weakness, and on the surface it looked as though God was defeated (we know such a thing is impossible), and as if it were a great victory for the enemy, yet, in the purposes of God, in that very place shall be displayed before Satan, principalities and powers, and witnessed by the kings and nations of this earth the great triumph of God based on redemption ground, even the reigning of our Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, and all that shall accompany it.

¶ This scarlet-line of redemption runs through the sacred Old Testament Scriptures. And in these last days when many seats of learning are turning out men under the name of Christian, who deny the Atonement and are taught not to say much about "the blood doctrine," let us see that it has a central place with us, for upon this everything hangs.

We will now leave Old Testament figures, and look briefly at some New Testament teaching on this theme. Turning to John 1. 29 we read "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." A godly Israelite may have pondered over these wonderful words and thought also of Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb?" and Abraham's answer, "God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering," and the pathetic words of Isaiah, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter," and now before them stands the One of Whom these and other scriptures spake, God's appointed sacrificial Lamb, the Incarnate Son of God, Who presently at the appointed place, Golgotha, laid down His life and offered Himself as a Burnt-offering to God. He was crucified in weakness as the Lamb of God, paying in His own Person the redemption price on the tree. Contemplating this, surely our heart can say—

When we see Thee as the Victim,
 Bound to the accursed tree,
 For our guilt and folly stricken,
 All our judgment borne by Thee,
 Lord, we own with hearts adoring
 - Thou hast loved us unto blood ;
 Glory, glory everlasting
 Be to Thee, Thou Lamb of God.

Through this we can now read with joy in Ephesians 1. 7, "In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." And if we are justified freely by His grace it is through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Rom. 3. 24). Here is displayed the righteous love of God, bringing to us forgiveness of sins, and justification, having redemption as its grand basis.

REDEEMED FROM LAWLESSNESS.

In Titus 2. 13-14, we read . . . "Our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity (lawlessness) and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works." This, indeed, is a very practical side of this important subject. Little do we know or understand the lawlessness that exists in our hearts until it is tested by the law of God—the written Word—claiming obedience from us. How often there is resentment when God's precepts and teachings are made known to us, and yet He gave Himself that we might be redeemed from this. Look around at the awful state of lawlessness that there is on every hand. In the religious world it is seen from Romanism down to the smallest sect, and in another sphere we see the great rise of Democracy, and especially in present-day Socialism, as well as in the disregard of servants for their masters and mistresses, and the disobedience of children to their parents. All this tells of the growing lawlessness of these last days. Let us be separaté from all these things and be zealous of good works, thus showing

in a positive way one of the objects for which Christ gave Himself.

REDEEMED FROM A VAIN MANNER OF LIVING.

Peter, by the Spirit, reminds us of another thing from which the precious blood has redeemed us, namely, a vain manner of living (1 Pet. 1. 18, 19). We therefore get the exhortation, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of living." Conformity to Christ is what should characterize us as strangers who are not at home down here, and as pilgrims who are travelling homewards. Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress* reminds us that his pilgrims had to pass through Vanity Fair on their way to the Celestial City. And what caused the hubbub in the Fair was the dress and the speech of these pilgrims, for they were unlike other men, they had on the garb of pilgrims and strangers and spoke the language of the Celestial City. They were despised for this reason and Faithful was put to death.

The prayer of the Lord Jesus for us to the Father was, "I have given them Thy Word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17.). Let us ask ourselves if this prayer is manifestly answered in our lives and speech, as those who have been separated from the world and crucified to it by the Cross of Christ. The outward and visible sign of spiritual grace within is seen by living out the resurrection life, confessing we are citizens of a better country, that is an heavenly.

We do well to remember that discipleship does not only consist in following the Lord by being baptized and obeying His Word by being added to an assembly, but also in a daily life of self-denial and following in His steps. By so doing we show that the precious blood has redeemed us from a vain manner of living.

REDEMPTION OF THE BODY.

We also learn from Ephesians 1. 13-14, that upon believing we were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the pledge of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of His glory. We further see from Romans 8. that we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body. For we are not our own but we are bought with a price, as 1 Cor. 6. 19-20 reminds us. Therefore spirit, soul and body have been redeemed to God by our Lord Jesus Christ. Our bodies have been humiliated by sin, weakness and disease following in its train, and in them we groan, being burdened, but we are only waiting in this tabernacle to be clothed upon with our House which is from heaven. The Holy Spirit has been given as the pledge of this, and we look not for death, but for the coming of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall transform these bodies of humiliation and fashion them like unto His glorious body (Phil. 3. 20-21). This mortal shall then put on immortality and we shall know perpetual youth. What a triumph for our Lord this will be, when the effects of redemption will be seen by His claiming at His coming His purchased possession, the bodies of His saints, both the living and the dead. There was a time when Satan had the right to dispute with Michael over the dead body of Moses, but upon the ground of accomplished redemption our Lord has the keys of Hades and Death. When He returns for His Church He will assert His right and then will come to pass the saying that is written "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is thy sting? O Death, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

What comfort this is to the sick and suffering, to the weary and the worn. Let us look forward with joy to His coming, when we shall be made like Him. He will then

present to Himself a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. This will be the first-fruits of His purchase, like as Boaz purchased Ruth to be his wife.

“Watching and ready may we be,
As those who long their Lord to see.”

J. DORRICOIT.

(To be concluded.)

CONFERENCE NOTES.

ARMAGH, 1908.

Mr. J. A. BOSWELL: “I think it might be helpful to younger ones in the study of the Word of God to notice how God repeatedly allows Himself to be apparently defeated in His purposes, and, after that, He works out His purpose on entirely different lines. I will give an illustration. God’s original purpose with Israel, as I understand, was that they should be a nation of priests, a priestly nation, and in that capacity as a nation they would have stood between God and the nations of the earth, and this will yet be in the coming age in the times of restitution. In consequence of their failure as a nation there was selected a family, the sons of Aaron, to be priests, and so God’s purpose was defeated for a time and He brought in another line of things. Take other examples, first Saul, who began with God but ended with the witch of Endor. He began to speak and prophecy for God, and the Spirit of God came upon him. That has passed, and we find him at the witch’s feet, forsaken of God and man, the very picture of desolation. He lies there upon his face, stunned with the divine message that has reached him.

Now I want you to think of Jeroboam, into whose hand God placed authority as He did into the hands of Saul. Jeroboam has the ten tribes of Israel. What a nice man, perfect in his kindness and care of the people. “Why trouble to go up to Jerusalem to worship? I will make it easier for you?” Thus he defeated God’s purpose,

by keeping the people from Jerusalem, from the temple there that had been built for the glory of God, and God allows His purpose apparently to be defeated. The temple comes to an end and there is no Christ, no Messiah. Do you think God intended the great gap from Solomon down to the time when that Babe was born in Bethlehem's manger? No. I think God permitted His purpose to be frustrated again, and instead of coming to the temple in its glory, as King of Jerusalem, God lets it all be defeated and He comes as an outcast and unknown. The One that should have been born in the palace was born in the manger.

A young lady in Lucerne was left in one of the educational places in that city, and when it was time to return home again she received a long letter from her father: "My dear child, the train leaves at such a time, arriving in Paris at such an hour, and you cross to such and such a station and there take boat train to Calais, and you arrive in London at such an hour and I will meet you on the platform." She reads, "My dear child"—nice to have such a loving father—"hoping soon to see you." Yes, very delightful, and she folds up the letter and starts off on her journey, and to her surprise finds, when the train stops, she is wandering away somewhere in Germany, and after no end of trouble and retracing and difficulties she arrives at last in London, and there is no father? Of course he is waiting. "Where have you been, my child? Did you ever get my letter?" "Oh yes, father, and I was very pleased to read it, I enjoyed it so much." "But did you not read the route you were to take?" No, she just put it in her pocket.

Just as one once said to me, "Never mind teaching young converts about baptism, they will all warsele through somehow," and it is a "warsle" through with many of God's children. They learn of God's love, and the prospect of meeting Him soon, and with a "warsle through somehow" they get home at last. God does not intend that. He has given us a whole Bible and wants

us to understand every page. Remember this, "the Spirit searcheth the deep things," and what God requires of you and me is to be living in touch with Him, walking in the Spirit with Him and He will lead us into the depth and height and breadth of those things which He has written for our learning.

Mr. J. C. RADCLIFFE, Hebrews 10. 35. The Bible which we have in these days has been handed down fairly accurate to us, so that God expresses to us His mind by words, and it is of the greatest importance for us to understand what these words mean, and if we lose the right idea we go wrong. Words mean something, and very often it is the small words in Scripture which are of the greatest importance. To illustrate this:—a firm in America had transactions with a certain person and they wrote to another firm regarding him, and the telegram in reply was worded, "Not good for any amount;" but the telegraphic clerk made a mistake, and instead of putting the word "not" he put "note." "Note good for any amount." That little letter "e" made all the difference and the firm took legal proceedings against the postal authorities and were compensated. Now, beloved, do not let us think that letters and words are of no importance.

We hear to-day of thirty or forty souls being saved, that is a wrong expression, the right one would be sinners being saved, or else sinners being born again; for my soul is not saved, it is being saved. In Matthew 16. the Lord Jesus said to Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan." Peter was not Satan, but he was out of touch with God and was being used by Satan. Many Christians to-day rise to prominent places in this world, but the life will be lost up yonder; the principle holds good, "He that loseth his life shall save it." A great man has said that our life has been given to us of God only to get knowledge of God, and the only one worth living for is God; the only thing worth living for is the truth of God, and if we are not living to get knowledge of God and for

the truth of God we are wasting our time. Now Hebrews 10. 39, I want to tell you that this word perdition is waste, "We are not of them that shrink back to waste," Matthew 26. 6. "To what purpose is this waste?" This is the same word in the original as the word "perdition" of Hebrews.

1 Timothy 4. 16, a well-known scripture. When I was a young Christian there were very few teaching meetings like these, in fact the general idea was to get young Christians plenty of work to do to keep them from thinking of doctrine; but do not run away with the idea that I do not go in for work and gospel meetings. If you came to the Midlands you would see us go out to the villages twice each week. A man who is working requires food, but if we get a lot of food and no work we shall suffer from indigestion, and so we can get spiritual indigestion. If we are actively engaging in work for God we must get food and sustenance from God. Perhaps there is a person here who has heart disease. "Keep thy heart above all keeping, for out of it are the issues of life." If the heart is right you can work for God and feed upon the bread of life, upon the truth of God. In 1 Timothy it is "Take heed unto thyself and to thy teaching." In this verse we have that progressive salvation of the life, "Thou shalt save thyself." This can only be brought about by abiding in the teaching and doctrine. I am sometimes asked by friends who do not take long cycle runs, "How do you manage to get along?" Well, I have my maps, and, like the railway trains, I try to be at a certain place at a certain hour. I know one who took a long journey without a map, went from east to west of England, and in the middle of the night found himself up on the Peak of Derbyshire. So if we do not go by the Book we may get lost and be rambling upon the mountains away from God. I am convinced of the fact that too many Christians read their Bibles to get nice little comforting texts. I do not say there is no comfort or joy to be found; there is, but the

real comfort and joy and peace, come, I believe, through carrying out the will of God, and it is only by continuing in the teaching we can be saved.

This is a very religious day, but there is also very little knowledge of God, and it is for us to keep to the Scriptures. Do not let us think we know much, or that we have found out all the mind and will of God; we are only just bordering on the fringe. Let us go on and not stand still. There is one thing troubles me, it is this, and we know it by bitter experience, that the grey-headed men have refused to go on in the things of God; they totally collapse after a certain age, there seems to be something in men that they refuse to go on with the things of God. Thank God for the elder brethren, but do you know I dread seeing grey hairs; they are coming, and I will be soon, if I live down here, greyheaded, and I dread it for fear that I may be found refusing to go on with God and His truth.

May God give us willing minds to know His will. May we continue in the teaching, so that we shall both save our lives, be saved from our own ideas and the things of men, saved from ourselves, and saved from Satan, the religious Satan, for he hath transformed himself into an Angel of Light. May God grant we may be saved from that religious thing that is an abomination to God.

(To be continued.)

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 30. Paul's Journey from Ephesus to Macedonia — and his two Letters to Corinth.

From G. H. W., BRADFORD. I would like to make a few suggestions on the relation of Acts 20. 1 to 1 Tim. 1. 3.

Does not the second scripture imply that Timothy had stayed at Ephesus from the time the apostle left him there until he wrote his epistle to him? If that is so, then it could not have been at the time of Acts 20. 1, for the following reasons:—

(1) Timothy was with Paul when he wrote the second letter to the Corinthians (ver. 1); evidently sent from Macedonia.

(2) He was also with the apostle when he wrote to the Romans (chaps. 16. 21); sent from Achaia.

(3) He returns with Paul from Macedonia to Asia (Acts. 20. 4).

(4) The apostle's address to the elders of Ephesus was later than the above, and the evil teachers were then a thing of the future. Comp. Acts 20. 29 and 30, and 1 Tim. 1. 3.

If these four points meet the case, we must then look for another visit of the apostle to Ephesus, when Timothy was left behind. Scripture does not seem to be silent on this point.

We will first notice that Timothy is with Paul at Rome when he writes to the Philippians (ver. 1); to the Colossians (ver. 1); and to Philemon (ver. 1). In this last he says, "But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you."

Further, 1 Tim. 1. 20 may imply that the apostle was present for this act of discipline. Contrast 1 Cor. 5. 3 to 5.

Again, 2 Tim. 4. 20 tends to show that the apostle visited

Asia after Acts 20., for Trophimus was left at Miletus sick ; whereas in the earlier case he went forward with the apostle to Jerusalem (Acts 21. 29).

Finally, Heb. 13. 23 and 24 show :—

(1) That Timothy was a prisoner for some little time, whilst the apostle was at Rome, and released about the time the epistle was written.

(2) That the apostle expected him soon ; when together they would visit the saints to whom he wrote.

(3) That those saints resided outside of Italy.

I suggest that it was during this visit they went to Ephesus, and Timothy was left there, whilst the apostle went to Macedonia, and ultimately back to Rome.

It is also probable that it was during this visit the apostle went to Crete, and left Titus there, and a little later wrote him with the express wish that Titus should join him at Nicopolis, for there he had determined to winter (Titus 3. 12).

[Whether G. H. W. is right or not the subject is worthy of attentive consideration. We might quote some strong arguments against the view above set forth, but would prefer that these should emanate from others.—ED.]

Section 35 (Acts 21. 1 to 16). The Journey to Jerusalem.

From DERBY.—The “we” of verse 1 we understand would refer to those mentioned in the previous chapter (ver. 4), with the exception of Trophimus who was left at Miletus sick (see 2 Tim. 4. 20), and seems to have followed shortly afterwards (comp. verses 28 and 29). And being parted from them (the elders of Ephesus gathered at Miletus, see previous chapter) they come with a straight course unto Cos, a small island of the Mediterranean, a short distance from the south-west point of Asia Minor. And the next day unto Rhodes, a city and port on the island so called. And from thence unto Patara, a city of Lycia in Asia Minor over against Rhodes, finding a ship crossing over unto

Phoenicia or Phenice, a Syrian province, Tyre, Sidon, and Ptolemais, being its chief cities, they go aboard and set sail, passing Cyprus, a large island of the Mediterranean on the left, sailing unto Syria and landing at Tyre (see above). Here we have mention made for the first time of disciples at Tyre, whom they found, and tarrying there seven days, the disciples at Tyre said to Paul through the Spirit that he should not set foot in Jerusalem; and as this was the apostle's desire (see previous chapter, ver, 16), in what sense are we to understand the words, "These said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Jerusalem?" Would it be in the sense of warning him what he would have to encounter if he did go to Jerusalem? (Comp. verses 13, 14).

Having accomplished the seven days they depart, the brethren with their wives and children accompanying them to the beach, where they kneel down and pray and bid each other farewell (see also chap. 20. 36). Boarding the ship, they set sail from Tyre and arrive at Ptolemais (originally Acco, see Judges 1. 31; also comp. maps). They salute the brethren and abide with them one day, and departing on the morrow they come to Caesarea; it was here Cornelius lived (see chap. 10). When at Caesarea they enter and abide in the house of Philip the evangelist (see chap. 8. 40 and Ephesians 4. 11 and 2 Timothy 4. 5). This man (Philip) had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy (see chap. 2. 17). As they tarry many days, a certain prophet named Agabus (see 11. 28) came down from Jerusalem, and taking Paul's girdle binds his own feet and hands, saying, "Thus saith the Holy Spirit, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (see ver. 33). When they hear these things, both those accompanying him and those of Caesarea beseech him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered "What do ye weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also

to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus." And when he would not be persuaded, they ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done" (see Matt. 6. 10 and 26: 42). And after these days (see ver. 10) they take up their baggage and go up to Jerusalem, certain of the disciples from Caesarea accompanying them, special mention being made of one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple with whom they were to lodge.

THE BREATHINGS OF GOD'S PEOPLE.

Psalm 28.

From DERBY.—From verse 1 to verse 5 we have the prayer of the Psalmist, verses 6 to 8 his praise, verse 9 prayer. In verse 2 the Psalmist says, "Hear when I cry unto Thee," and in verse 7, "With my song will I praise Him." His prayer is directed unto the Lord, "Unto Thee, O Lord, will I call." The One in Whom his heart trusted (ver. 7). The One Whom he can speak of as "My Rock" (ver. 1). My Strength, my Shield (ver. 7). The Psalmist says, "Be not Thou deaf unto me" (ver. 1). "Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry unto Thee (ver. 2), when I lift up my hands toward Thy holy oracle" (see 1 Kings 8. 22 and Psalm 141. 2). In verse 7 we read, "Blessed be the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications." In verse 3 we have the wicked brought before us; with their lips they speak peace with their neighbours but mischief is in their hearts (see 2 Sam. 3. 27). The Psalmist asks that he might not be drawn away with the wicked, and for the Lord to give them according to their work, and according to the wickedness of their doings. "Give them after the operation of their hands" (ver. 4). In verse 5 we have the works of the Lord and the operation of His hands. The prayer of the Psalmist was a prayer of faith, his supplications were unto the Lord, and the result is, "I am helped." He knew the Lord as the strength of his life, and as the shield of protection from the wicked.

The One in Whom his heart trusted, and the result is, my heart greatly rejoiceth, and the outcome is, "With my song will I praise Him." The Psalmist closes with prayer, not on his own behalf as an individual, but for the Lord's people, His inheritance. He asks the Lord to "save," "bless," "feed," and bear them up for ever.

"SEEN OF ANGELS" (1 Tim. 3. 16).

From BRIGHTON. Is it not more *what* they saw than the mere fact of seeing that is implied?

Those of the heavenly host (Luke 2. 8, &c.) who heralded His advent knew perfectly His origin and character. So did those who ministered to Him in the wilderness (Matt. 4. 11), and in the garden (Luke 22. 43), as well as those who announced His resurrection to the disciples who were early at the tomb (Luke 24. 4).

While they might not have known God's grand ultimate purpose in the Incarnation, yet there they saw the Eternal Word clothed with flesh—and God in Christ—accomplishing a wondrous work. Compare Hebrews 1. 6.

Question and Answer.

Referring to the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, please explain how He became or was constituted a Son? Does it not seem as if He had a beginning, as a son comes after a father. In what sense was He Son through the eternal past?

UPON the first page of the Fourth Gospel the Holy Spirit has given to us an appellation of the Lord Jesus Christ which discloses His inscrutable relation to the Father. In the title "The Only Begotten" the majesty of the incarnate Word shines forth, and utterly forbids that we should speak of His "becoming" or being "constituted" a Son, for the word Son, when thus applied to the Lord Jesus Christ does not express a title, or mode of existence, nor

any office which He sustains, but a divine and infinite relation involving paternity and filiation. Of the verity and reality of this relation words could not be found more concise or cogent than those used by the accusing Jews: "He called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God," coupled with the Lord's own asseveration, "I and the Father are one," to which may be added the Holy Spirit's testimony, "He that spared not His own Son." Lest any should think that the word "as"¹ before "Only Begotten" may indicate similitude or comparison, it may be remarked that the original word carries the force of the Hebrew Caph, and indicates the certainty and truth of a thing, hence we may read "The glory certainly of (or worthy of) the Only Begotten."

To the second part of the question it may be remarked that if we reason, that as a father necessarily precedes his son there could be no Eternal Son, we must likewise say, that as the mind precedes its utterance, there can be no Eternal Word, and further, as procession implies beginning there can be no Eternal Spirit,² for He proceedeth from the Father and the Son; such reasoning leads to manifestly false conclusions and is moreover utterly opposed to the Holy Scriptures. In the words of Matt. 28. 19 we read "Baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." To the question, what is the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, there can be but one answer, namely God, the Eternal God; and further, the word "Name" here expresses the Unity of the Divine Being as truly as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit assert a Trinity. This is as truly and exclusively divine as the Unity expressed by the word Name. Hence Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the three-fold Name of God; and more, the relations which are herein involved are eternal relations, namely, paternity, filiation and pro-

¹ John 1. 14.² Hebrews 9. 14.

cession. Also the distinctions herein stated, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are eternal distinctions. Hence it is in perfect accord with the revelation God has given of Himself to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Eternal Son of God, however such a term may be opposed to the conceptions and reasonings of such finite beings as we are.

It may further be noted that the Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus is sometimes rejected, because it is supposed to detract from His real divinity; His self-existence and independence being supposed to be endangered and Himself robbed of some of His glory. On the same reasoning must the Holy Spirit's glory be diminished for He proceedeth from the Father and the Son. But the Scriptures never assert the self-existence and independence of the Lord Jesus apart from His Oneness with the Father. If the Scriptures reveal their absolute independent subsistences, such as the Father, Who is of Himself, neither created nor begotten, then surely there must be three Gods, and Trithemism is the only alternative of the denial of the Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus.

To the third portion it may be replied that Father and Son are correlative terms and the relation expressed by the one cannot exist apart from that expressed by the other; in whatever sense we employ the term Son, exactly in the same sense is the term Father used; if there be not an Eternal Son there is no Eternal Father. The nature of His relation is expressed by the term Only Begotten, which appellation, possessed by none other in the whole universe of God, bespeaks the infinite dignity of Him Who received it, as well as the infinite knowledge of the Holy Spirit, Who so speaks of Him, and in this sense is the word Son used, when applied to Him by the Spirit of Truth.

J. HAWKINS.

“ A RIGHTEOUSNESS OF MINE OWN.”

IN the third chapter of his Epistle to the Philippians Paul lays open to us his aspirations in a very frank manner. He there goes back to his early life when as a young man his innermost being was moved with a consuming desire to realize the fullest life that was possible to one possessed, as he was, of exceptional ability, combined with energy and zeal, marking him out at once as destined to accomplish something worthy in his day and time. Moreover, he enjoyed opportunity, having been sent to the feet of Gamaliel at Jerusalem, after having had, we doubt not, the fullest furnishing that was possible in his native city.

A Hebrew of Hebrew parents, and also a Pharisee of the strictest sect, he succeeded very early in gaining a reputation as a pattern young man who could be relied on to guard the religion of his ancestors from attack, and not only so, but to put himself, with his untiring energy, on the offensive against those whom he regarded as its enemies, until his zeal had become widely known by his persecution of the disciples of the Lord Jesus, and his righteousness was found to be blameless.

What position he would have reached had he been allowed to follow this course we know not, but it seems safe to assume that he probably would have filled the highest in the gift of his people, and also have greatly increased the dignity and influence of that position.

The Lord, however, willed it far otherwise, and we know how that mighty, living, rushing torrent was cut off, not far from its source, and turned into another and a wider channel by the memorable event on the road to Damascus, and how it rushed into that new channel with increased force, strengthened by the power that wrought in him mightily.

That righteousness of his which was found to be blameless, according to the standards of the highest authorities

of the Jews' religion, he saw to be only his own and therefore filthy rags, for as God had spoken through Isaiah long before, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64. 6), and seeing himself thus clothed, he allowed the truth to strip him in the presence of that Just One in order that he might be clothed with a righteousness that would be pronounced blameless by a thrice holy God, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, which is unto all them that believe (Rom. 3. 22).

Having thus secured the righteousness of God through faith, and escaped the condemnation that awaits those who stand before God in their own righteousness, he set his heart and hand to the new life work that opened out before him, but as he went on, his untiring zeal craving for work, he found that doing had its difficulty, not the difficulty of effort, but the difficulty of maintaining a pure motive, for with every effort the flesh is ready to intrude its activities, and Satan, through the flesh, ever tries to spoil that which he cannot hinder, as one has wisely said: "If Satan cannot upset the coach he will get up on the driver's seat."

Hence we have Paul, many years after he had abandoned his own righteousness as the ground of justification, deeply exercised lest he should yet be found to have a righteousness of his own in connexion with his service, which would merit disapproval at the judgment seat of Christ, a righteousness of his own, that of law and not of the faith of Christ. He feared that his activities might be regulated by mere law, doing things in the letter only, and that thus he might fall from the high and holy service which he longed fully to realize as an "able minister of the New Covenant, not of the letter but of the spirit," for such God had made him, and he greatly desired to fulfil that ministry in every act of his laborious life.

The only way to accomplish this is found in verses 9 and 10 of our chapter, "That I may know Him," "that I

may be found in Him." There is no reference here to knowing Him as Saviour or being found in Him for justification; the earnest desire is to know Him as the Perfect Servant, the faultless Revelation of God, the Living God, and to be found in Him, realizing that severed from Him nothing can be done well pleasing to God.

Knowing mere law and being found in it could never bring about the desired result, however accurate that knowledge and perfect that obedience.

To know Him and to be found in Him open up wonderful possibilities, for we have not only His example, but we have His power, and that, "the power of an endless life."

Example, however stimulating, is not sufficient, we need power to bear us along. "I have been crucified with Christ, yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2. 20).

The same principle of living faith which operated in us as awakened sinners should now operate in us as saints, for our own righteousnesses as saints are as filthy before God as were our own righteousnesses as sinners.

The professed servant of God who is not "found in Him," but who is found in "his own righteousness" according to law, however externally correct, cannot be pleasing to God, because faith is lacking, faith, that living acting principle, which is ever grappling with "things hoped for," "things not seen" (Heb. 11. 1).

It cannot exist where everything is clearly seen and carefully ordered according to the letter of the law. It is ever on the move, ever stretching out and forward, after the example of "the father of all them that believe," about whom it is witnessed that "he went out, not knowing whither he went," and such as "follow after righteousness" are exhorted to look to him.

Where this following after righteousness is not experienced there is legality, and one settles down in a place where disturbance by fresh light and leading is discouraged, and an attitude is taken up which, however good at one time, is now described by the words "a righteousness of mine own."

This righteousness in the sphere of royal priesthood service is akin to dead works in the sphere of holy priesthood service. It is perfectly lifeless and valueless before the Living God. To such the following words in verse 13 of our chapter have no meaning, "Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The things to be forgotten cannot be bad things, for such must be confessed and forsaken, but good things, good in their day and time; for what was good in the past year, good yesterday, may not be good to-day, for even the bread from God, the manna, which was good one day, bred worms and stank the next.

The Bread of God, of which that manna spoke, was ever fresh. He knew no deadness, no legality, as He said, "I am the Living Bread;" and again, "The words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." Each word and act brought Him into collision with deadness and legality, and brought life and liberty to those who had ears to hear and hearts to obey. He was the Truth of which He said, "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free." That is, not only free from the confining fossilizing influence of those in whom living faith was not operating, but also free from themselves of the past, even of yesterday. For although the same words may be spoken and the same things done to-day as yesterday, there will require to be freshness, for to-day is not yesterday, another sun has arisen, other adjustments have taken place, we and those to whom we speak or act have

moved on; so that what fitted in to yesterday's conditions will not perfectly suit those of to-day.

There is no such fixity in actual affairs as is found in legal persons. Such are out of harmony with God and His perfect arrangements, and every day finds them further out of touch.

If the somewhat crude illustration may be pardoned, they are like those imitations of men, commonly called scarecrows, which lose their influence rapidly, for the crows, which are close observers of the movements of living men, soon begin to show their liberty by getting closer and closer until at last they make bold to sit right on the lifeless things which at first deceived them.

It must be clearly understood, however, that we are not advocating novelties like the Athenians of old, who came together "only to hear or to tell some new thing," for if we are to keep in touch with the things of God, we must also keep in touch with the beginnings, the "first principles of the oracles of God" with which we began as little children in the spiritual life, and also in touch with every such little child, and thus be imitators of the Lord Jesus. Peter was instructed to feed the lambs, and Paul spoke of himself as a nursing mother, and John wrote to the little children about their sins being forgiven.

We must ever remember the words of our great Teacher as recorded in Matthew 13. 52, "Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasures things new and old." The new things must stand connected with the old, they must not be fanciful but must partake of the nature of the good things of the past and the things which put us firmly on our feet at first.

Those who will not have the "things new," being quite satisfied with the "things old," find the path of faith uncongenial, preferring to sit down in comfort with their con-

fession of faith, written or unwritten (however little faith they may have to confess). With such, the words "follow after righteousness" have no weight, for they have already all the righteousness they desire, the weary round of the performance of their own righteousness goes on with the regularity of a funeral march, and this is possible to each of us, as it was possible to the Apostle Paul.

May we be exercised to know something of what Paul meant when he said, "I laboured more abundantly than they all, and yet not I but the grace of God which was with me;" "most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me." To be able to use the "I" without myself being under it, requires training in the kingdom of God, and those so trained, and those only, may hope at the end of their journey to be able with some little reality and truth to say "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the Faith" (2 Tim. 4. 7).

The righteousness in which we as believers shall stand justified before God is that which Christ wrought out for us, and that only; and the righteousness in which we as servants shall stand acceptable is that which Christ has wrought through us by His Spirit, and that only.

In connexion with the former the "I" has no place, but in connexion with the latter it has a place; hence the danger of being found in "a righteousness of mine own," and the need for continual exercise on the part of those who seek to serve in spiritual things, so that the prayer of Psalm 90 may be fulfilled,

"And establish Thou the work of our hands upon us:
Yea, the works of our hands establish Thou it,"

and that, coming to the light at that day, we may have the joy of seeing our works made manifest, "that they have been wrought in God" (John 3. 21).

CONFERENCE NOTES.

ARMAGH, 1908. .

(Continued from page 257.)

Mr. G. R. GEDDES, Hebrews 12. God desired the first-born for Himself. There was a ministry in God's house and the firstborn sons were to have a place in connexion with this ministry. God desired the best for this service, from thirty years of age they shall begin. What a burden on poor families of whom that firstborn son is their mainstay, their breadwinner; yet what an honour conferred upon the family that they should send him. That rich family, it is no burden to send their firstborn son, how unequal is the burden. Therefore God took a tribe and all of the tribes had to support this one tribe, and thus the burden is distributed equally over the whole people. When the tribe of Levi was numbered there were only 22,000, but instead of sending the 273 sons, redemption money, five shekels each, was given to Aaron and his sons, and thus Levi is equal in number to the whole number of the firstborn in Israel.

God expects much from us to-day as firstborn ones, that we may bring honour and dignity to the house, 1 Chronicles 5. Esau despised his birthright and sold it for a mess of pottage. Reuben lost his birthright and it was given to another, and how splendidly Joseph filled his place, how well he carried out all the dignity and honour proper to a firstborn one.

The Lord Jesus Himself learned obedience at His mother's knee; that is where the learning must begin, and men and women carry through life the impress of their early days. Psalm 109 speaks of Judas, "The sin of his mother shall never be blotted out." He was what his mother made him. Oh, mothers, would you like to see your firstborn in the house of the firstborn, in the place of dignity God would have them occupy? how much that depends upon you.

There is a day coming when the Lord Jesus shall take His place as Firstborn of creation, and heaven and earth shall

be brought together, He having reconciled all things, which will come about on the basis of redemption; He is the First-born from among the dead.

Mr. NORMAN MILLER, Proverbs 23. 26. "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes delight in my ways." In the first chapter of this book we have the words,

"The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, King of Israel:
To know wisdom and instruction;
To discern the words of understanding,
To receive instruction in wise dealing."

He spoke 3,000 proverbs and his songs were 1,005. We have not all of them, but perhaps the Lord has given us the best. I have been impressed perhaps more than anything else with the number of young people who come to conferences. Oh! beloved young child of God, I would ask you to hear God's voice. Here is something God desires from you and me, "My son, give Me thine heart." What is it that gives us most trouble day by day? It is the heart. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and yet out of it are the issues of life. Think of the Lord Jesus in connexion with this 26th verse. Truly in Him we see these words perfected, the One who yielded all to God, the One who had the law of God within His heart.

In Philippians we read, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure." The Lord Jesus, looking back over His life, could say, "I have glorified Thee upon the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Abraham was captivated with the God of glory who appeared unto him; he followed Him. Then again we have Saul of Tarsus. He was captivated by the Lord of glory, Jesus of Nazareth, who met him on the way to Damascus. As Abraham followed God we find God appeared again and again and dealt with him in mercy and grace. He led him step by step until the moment when God said to him, "Abraham, take thy son"; the one

whom God had given him, the one in whom all the hopes of Abraham were centred; "Take thine only son, whom thou lovest." God went the whole way; He knew the place that Isaac occupied in the heart of Abraham; "Offer him up to Me for a burnt offering." And Abraham gave him upon the altar and God said, "Because thou hast done this (God could no longer refrain Himself) because thou hast done this, in blessing I will bless thee, in multiplying I will multiply thee." "My son, give Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways."

Again we think of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom it was said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God." They had seen Him walking in and out and living among them a life that redounded to the glory of God.

How many to-day are seeking to deny the divinity of Christ! How many will speak of Him as a good man! It is one of the highest tributes to His humanity that they say He was a man. You cannot say where the humanity ceases and where the divinity begins; His garment was without seam. He was the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. "My Son, give Me thine heart." How beautifully it was told out in connexion with the Lord Jesus! In speaking of His garment, you remember when Elijah was to be translated into heaven, Elisha desired that a double portion of his spirit might be upon him. Think of Romans 13. verse 14, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh." Are not these wonderful words, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." We are told thus to clothe ourselves as with a garment and to make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. These two scriptures we desire to leave with you. God has asked for this, "Give Me thine heart and let thine eyes observe My ways." And again, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

“**MARANATHA !**”

“**THE Lord cometh !**” (1 Cor. 16. 22) conveys a message, suited and seasonable for present times and circumstances, in the experience of saints and of assemblies of God. We acknowledge the truth of the Lord’s coming, and we profess to hold its preciousness dear to our hearts, yet alas ! its power seems in a great measure to be lost upon us, as a purifying hope (1 John 3. 3). It seems much to-day as it was with Moses in relation to Israel, when they said, “As for this Moses . . . we know not what is become of him” (Exod. 32. 1) ; and the vacant place of the absent deliverer and ruler is filled by a molten calf, concerning which it was said, “These be thy gods, O Israel.” So is it with the person and place of Him, who is greater than Moses, “the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, even Jesus” (Heb. 3. 1), whom God raised from among the dead, and exalted, and made both Lord and Christ ; and who is Son over God’s House (Heb. 3. 6).

This may seem a matter of small importance to some, but it is vital, for, to allow any one or anything to usurp in the heart’s appreciation the person, place and honour of the Lord Jesus Christ is idolatry, and idolatry of which, alas ! children of God may be guilty, as the warning exhortation (1 John 5. 21) clearly shows, “My little children guard yourselves from idols.”

God the Father ever is jealous of the person and place and honour of His Son, and He ever will guard such ; and the loyal and devoted disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ will do so likewise. “Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them, as it is written, ‘The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.’” “Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? are we stronger than He ?” “Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say” (1 Cor. 10. 7, 14, 15, 22).

Of the Thessalonians it is recorded, “Ye turned to God,

from idols” (1 Thess. 1. 9). How they did so was by hearing and believing the gospel of God concerning His Son. They heard Him; they observed Him, what had they any more to do with idols? The peerless, adorable Son of God is the object and attraction of their hearts. He fills, satisfies and ravishes their being, and all others fade before Him; all else sinks in comparison with Him to nothing. He has (as God designs and desires He should) “in all things the pre-eminence” (Col. 1. 18).

Such a condition possibly, in a more or less degree, was true in the experience of most of us at one time, but what is it with each to-day? What think we of the Christ, at the present time? What is He to us each now? Then, we turned to the Lord; have we since turned from Him? Then we were joined to the Lord; are we now joined to our idols? Solemn is the word of the Lord concerning Ephraim of old, “He is joined to his idols, let him alone.”

Idolatry in the heart is the first stage of departure from God, and is the sure precursor of idolatry in the midst. “If any one loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema.” He who fills the throne, and who walketh in the midst of the churches, is jealous of His place in the hearts and midst of His own, and saith of some, “I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love,” calling upon such to remember from whence they are fallen, and to repent, and do the first works. “Didst leave thy first love,” yet perhaps nobody knew or suspected it; but He knew it. This is the secret cause of the giving up of the first works, which in contrast to the latter, were “works of *faith*, labour of *love*, patience of *hope*.” These seems to lack the motive power. What an-unveiling of their real condition in these words, as seen and known only to Him!

What of ourselves, as we search our hearts and ways in the light of the word of God? For the word is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of both joints and

marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the hearts (Heb. 4. 12, 13).

Does our heart condemn us? "If so, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." "If our heart condemn us not, we have boldness towards God." And, "herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment."

"THE LORD COMETH!"

Loyalty and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ are characteristics for the display of which there is abundant opportunity in these last closing and darkening days, and His message is, "Hold fast till I come." "Occupy till I come." "Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise. For yet a very little while, He that cometh shall come and shall not tarry" (Heb. 10. 35-37).

DAVID SMITH.

GLEANINGS FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH.

(Concluded from page 253.)

THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER. THE FIELD, PURCHASED.

WE have mentioned before, that at the same time that Boaz purchased Ruth to be his wife, he bought the field that was Elimelech's, and made his name famous in Israel. In this we see a picture of our Kinsman-Redeemer, who said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field which, when a man hath found, he hideth and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath and buyeth that field" (Matt. 13.). And our Lord also explains in the same chapter that "the field is the world."

To apprehend in some measure what this great purchase meant, we must look back to the time prior to the second verse of Genesis 1., when the earth came first from the

hand of God, made beautiful, and made to be inhabited, and not a waste and scene of chaos as this second verse portrays. (Isa. 45. 18; Eccles. 3. 11; 1 Cor. 14. 33.) We would suggest that it was inhabited by created beings over whom God placed Satan as chief, who was created by God, a being of great wisdom and beauty. The splendour of his person and abode in Eden, the garden of God (not the garden in Eden of Gen. 2.), are depicted under the guise of the King of Tyre in Ezekiel. He rebelled against God's will in this place of delegated power, and being lifted up with pride he fell, and in this revolt it appears he led with him others who were under him. The judgment of God fell upon this beautiful scene, desolation and chaos were the result. (Ezek. 28. 11-19; Gen. 1. 2; 1 Tim. 3. 6; Luke 4. 5-6.)

God also in His purpose has fixed a time when final judgment shall fall upon Satan and his followers, who shall be cast into the abyss, and from the abyss into the lake of fire to be tormented for ever and ever (Matt. 8. 29; Luke 8. 30, 31; Rev. 20. 1-3, 7-10). They know of their impending doom, and this increases the hatred Satan and his demons have against the Triune God and all His works.

God purposed that this earth, the scene of Satan's revolt against His will, should be the place where His Christ should reign triumphantly, and where His will should be done even as it is done in heaven. So He again worked and renovated this earth from its state of chaos and desolation and re-creates the things as mentioned in Genesis 1. 2-31, making man in His own image as the crowning piece of all, and pronounces the work of His hands as very good. Over all created things Adam was placed as lord, and he had dominion over the works of God's hands (Ps. 8.). We know that this blissful scene did not last, for did not Satan now see one occupying the place which he once occupied and enjoying blessed intercourse with his Creator? Filled

with enmity against God, and jealousy against the one whom God had made lord, he plans his ruin and downfall. The sad story of how man was brought to revolt against the word and will of God, and the curse, the sorrow and the marring again of this beautiful scene are told out in the third chapter of Genesis. But even at this time in that blighted scene God foretells His triumph in promising a Deliverer of the woman's seed which should bruise the Serpent's head. Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, all spoke of this One who should restore to God that which He took not away.

Ages pass away, and when Herod was on the throne at Jerusalem, wise men from the East came to enquire where "the King of the Jews" was born. Guided by a star and directed by the Word they find Him at Bethlehem, cradled in a manger. Here is the promised Deliverer, the Kinsman-Redeemer, in whom God's will can be perfectly done, and God's purposes brought to fruition. Concerning Him the Father said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." As in the garden in Eden there was a lurking enemy watching his opportunity, so here, directly after the Father had borne this testimony to Him, we see Him in the wilderness being tempted of the Devil. And during that trial the Devil leads Him up into an exceeding high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And he offers Him all this authority and the glory of them, for he says, "It hath been delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Matt. 4., Luke 4.). To receive the kingdoms and the glory from the hands of Satan would have turned Him away from the Cross and the redemption work there, by which He was going to purchase the field (the world) for the sake of the treasure in it. Nothing could turn Him aside from fulfilling God's will, and He laid down His own life as the great purchase price for this field. He did not forthwith receive the kingdoms and the glory,

but was received up into heaven and was set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, there awaiting the fulfilment of God's purpose in regard to the Church and the times of the Gentiles. When these have run their course He will receive the kingdoms and the glory from the hands of His Father on the ground of accomplished redemption. And paradise regained on this ground shall bring greater glory to God than the paradise lost. Then will come His glorious appearing to lay claim to His purchase, and set up His reign. As we see from Revelation 5. it is as the Lamb that has been newly slain that He takes the title deeds of the kingdom from the hands of Him that sits on the Throne. And from the glorified company ascends the song of triumph, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof. For Thou wast slain and didst purchase unto God, with Thy blood, men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests, and they shall reign upon the earth."

As God's Anointed King He will reign on Zion's hill. The time of asking will then have arrived, and He will have "the nations for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." The kingdoms of this world will then have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

His own times will have come when He will show that He is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.

"In His days shall the righteous flourish :
 And abundance of peace till the moon be no more.
 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
 And from the River unto the ends of the earth.
 They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him :
 And His enemies shall lick the dust.
 The kings of Tarshish and the isles shall bring presents :
 The kings of Sheba, Seba shall offer gifts ;
 Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him :
 All nations shall serve Him.

Then manifestly "the earth will be the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. The world and they that dwell therein." And social problems such as are to-day puzzling rulers and governments will have no existence in His righteous reign.

For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth ;
 And the poor, that hath no helper.
 He shall have pity on the poor and needy,
 And the souls of the needy He shall save.

A blessed, glorious time this will be when as Head of creation He will receive praise from adoring hearts who shall say :

O Lord, our Lord,
 How excellent is Thy Name in all the earth.

And in the name of the once-despised Jesus, every knee shall bow in heaven, on earth, and in the world below, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2.).

"And every created thing which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them heard I saying, 'Unto Him that sitteth on the throne and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion for ever and ever'" (Rev. 5.).

And in what may be the eternal state (Rev. 21. and 22.) where the Church, Israel, and the saved nations are seen, the Lamb is still prominent, as if ever to remind us that the basis of it all is "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." And throughout eternity we shall go on to learn the wonders of His redeeming love, and praise our God for Him who purchased the field for the sake of the treasure in it.

J. DORRICOTT.

Young Men's Corner.

THE HISTORY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

Section 22.

FROM BATHGATE. In reply to G. H. W.'s Article (page 258) we think that 1 Timothy 1. 3 does not imply that Timothy stayed at Ephesus all the time from Paul's leaving him, till his reception of the first epistle.

A first and a second imprisonment are very evident. During the first he had hopes of liberty (see Phil. 2. 24; Philemon 22.). That he realized this liberty is evidenced by such scriptures as Hebrews 13. 23; Titus 3. 12. The determination of Titus 3. could hardly come from the man of Philemon 22, not knowing how things would go with him. These hopes were not associated with the second imprisonment; rather, "The time of my departure is come."

Now to follow G. H. W.'s suggestions the first letter to Timothy must be pushed back in time approximating the second imprisonment. Were this so, how could we understand 1 Timothy 3. 14, 15; 4. 13?

Returning to Acts 20. we would like to suggest a little as to the time allowable for Timothy's joining Paul in Macedonia. Paul left Ephesus at Pentecost (1 Cor. 10. 8). He sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread (Acts 20. 6). This gives us fully ten months. Three were spent in Greece or Achaia, and if we allow two months for travelling, etc., we have five months remaining for his stay in Macedonia. This would give Timothy abundance of time.

The period of three years would afford plenty of time for some genealogical pedants to have their questions ripe, and thus be ready for the unprofitable and vain fightings about the law; while the awful destructive work of Acts 20. 29, 30 was still future.

Section 31 (*Acts* 20. 1-2); also 2 *Cor.* 2. 12-13; 7. 5-16;
8. 1-24; and *Rom.* 15. 19-27.

PAUL'S JOURNEY FROM EPHESUS TO MACEDONIA, AND HIS SECOND LETTER TO CORINTH.

FROM LONDON, S.W. We are told very little in the Acts of the Apostles of the work of Paul and his fellow-labourers during the few months following his lengthy stay at Ephesus, which the uproar forced him to leave a little sooner than he had intended, but what is lacking in the historical narrative is fully made up by the Epistles.

On his departure from Ephesus he proceeded to Troas, where he expected to meet Titus, who was to bring him news of the reception of his first letter to the church at Corinth, but though he waited for some time, Titus did not arrive. Meanwhile, in spite of his deep anxiety for the Corinthian church, he continued to labour in the gospel; but as the arrival of Titus was still delayed, he crossed over to Macedonia, for it was necessary that he should know as soon as possible of the state of things at Corinth (2 *Cor.* 2. 12-13).

As on a previous occasion (*Acts* 16. 12), there is little doubt that Philippi was the first place in Macedonia that he visited. It will be remembered that when Paul left Philippi on his last visit, some five or six years previously, Luke was left behind, and it is possible that he was here at this time; he was certainly here when Paul again came to Philippi some months later. Timothy also was in these parts, if not at the time the Apostle Paul arrived, at any rate shortly afterwards. (See inscription to the second letter to Corinth.)

The Apostle now had the fellowship and loving care of the saints of this city, whose regard for him is shown by the fact that they alone of all the churches had contributed to his need, "once and again" at Thessalonica (*Phil.* 4. 16); and also at Corinth (cp. 2 *Cor.* 11. 9 with *Phil.* 4. 16); not that they were rich, rather the opposite (2 *Cor.* 8. 2). In the letter of the Apostle Paul to them not one word of blame is

found, which can be said of no other church to which he wrote. How much of this was due to the teaching and tender care of Luke, the beloved physician, over the flock of God at this place ?

Still Paul's anxiety continued, and from 2 Cor. 7. 5, it would appear had increased : but at last the long-expected Titus arrived with tidings which at once set his mind at rest ; for he brought news of the triumph of right over wrong ; news that the object of his letter was accomplished ; that the Corinthian saints had been " made sorry after a godly sort," " made sorry unto repentance " (2 Cor. 7. 5-16).

On the receipt of this comforting intelligence Paul decided to write another letter to them—THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS—which was addressed not only to Corinth, but to all the saints in Achaia, who no doubt had been more or less affected by the state of things at Corinth. Its object was to express his thankfulness to God for their repentance ; to warn them against false teachers, and to exhort them in the matter of the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, to which subject almost the whole of the eighth and ninth chapters are devoted.

No mention is made here that the collection, which was going on in both Macedonia and Achaia, was intended for the poor saints at Jerusalem, but this is evident from Rom. 15. 25-26, and Acts 24. 17 shows that it was chiefly on account of this collection that Paul intended to go to Jerusalem after he had been through Macedonia and Achaia. (See also 1 Cor. 16. 4.)

Titus was again the willing messenger, and he, together with two brethren, departed for Corinth with the Epistle, but Paul preached the gospel throughout Macedonia, even unto Illyricum (Acts 20. 2 ; Rom. 15. 19). Illyricum is mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans as being the greatest distance in their direction from Jerusalem that he had been.

Question and Answer.

QUESTION.—*With reference to the question answered in September NEEDED TRUTH, p. 210 of this volume, are there no exceptions to the rule laid down in the answer? Cannot exceptional circumstances be taken into account, so that if one through no fault of his own come into the meeting after the bread has been broken but before thanks have been given for the cup, may not the late comer participate in the divine ordinance?*

ANSWER.—We observe that our friend does not suggest that late comers indiscriminately should participate, but only those who arrive late through no fault of their own. No doubt our friend perceives that to act indiscriminately would be calculated to palliate indolence, open the door to disorder, and come dangerously near a violation of divine principle, as in Romans 13. 14; 1 Corinthians 14. 40, etc. But then on the other hand, as to “exceptional circumstances,” “no fault of one’s own,” and similar phrases, who is to decide as to these? With all due respect we may say the late comer can scarcely become a law unto himself in such a matter—we are all prone to self-justification; while as to the overseers, or the brother who is leading the assembly in the thanksgiving, it is manifestly out of the question for these to consider the exceptional circumstances while the assembly is in the midst of the appointed exercises. So that even from our friend’s own standpoint, his suggestion is evidently untenable.

But, apart from all this, seeing that the ordinance in its several parts is one and indivisible, and that it is essentially and exclusively collective, the individual act of the late comer would be out of order, and a breach of the unity of the divine ordinance.