

NEEDED TRUTH

A journal for the teaching of the Word of God. Issued by the Churches of God in the Fellowship of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1. 9).

VOLUME LXVI.

January to December, 1959.

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, 32).

NEEDED TRUTH PUBLISHING OFFICE,
ROBOT BUILDINGS, LEEDS ROAD.
BRADFORD.

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JOTTINGS

Last month we made some brief observations on Job and his sorrows and sufferings. This time we shall refer to those of Joseph at the hands of his brethren and in the land of Egypt. Job's was a test case as to whether he would renounce God in consequence of the accusations of Satan, who was allowed to strip him of all his substance and family, and then to smite him and leave him broken in health. In addition to these calamities his friends were allowed to subject him to bitter criticism and condemnation. We are permitted to see the end of the LORD, that is, the end of the LORD's dealings with him, when the storms of trial had passed and the sunshine of divine blessing shone upon Job again.

Joseph's story is different. He is one of the beautiful types of the Lord in his sufferings at the hand of his brethren and the Gentile Egyptians, and in his glories which followed as saviour and ruler of his brethren and of the Egyptians: and his provision and fame spread to lands far away, whose men came to Joseph to buy corn.

The integrity of Joseph was manifest at an early age. To him as a lad, keeping his father's flock with his brethren, their evil conduct was an offence, and he told his father concerning their conduct. Jacob loved Joseph more than all his sons and he appointed him to be the firstborn (1 Chronicles 5. 1), and in token of this honour he made him a coat of many colours. Reuben, who was the natural firstborn of Jacob, proved unworthy of this high honour; he was an unstable character, so the birthright passed to Joseph and his sons.

In addition to these things which made him separate (that is, "prince among") from his brethren (Genesis 49. 26, Deuteronomy 33. 16), Joseph dreamed dreams in which God revealed to him his coming days of greatness when he would be lord over his brethren. Such increased the fire of hatred and jealousy which was already burning in the breasts of his brethren. He was the envy of his brethren.

At length they got him in their power. They had been sent by Jacob their father from Hebron to feed the flock in Shechem. Joseph was kept at home. But as the days went by, Jacob became more and more anxious about his sons and the flock, and so he called Joseph and sent him to see as to their well-being and to bring his father word again. Little did Jacob or Joseph know the years of sorrow which lay between then and the time they would meet again. Joseph was willing and ready to go to his brethren, though he well knew their characters and their attitude to him.

When he reached Shechem they were nowhere to be seen. A man found him wandering in the field and asked him what he sought. He said that he sought his brethren and asked the man if he could tell him where they were feeding the flock. The man said that he had heard them say that they were going to Dothan. Dothan is to the north of Shechem, so that Jacob's sons were moving farther away from their father. Such was the drift of the sons of Israel and such is the drift of mankind, farther and farther from God. But Joseph went after his brethren, as did the Lord at a later day.

Dothan is twice mentioned in the Scriptures, here and in 2 Kings 6. 13. In both cases men thought that they had God's chosen man in their hands completely and they could do with him as they would, but the blinded Syrians were led captive by Elisha into the midst of Samaria, where, instead of being slain, they were treated with kindness. Joseph's brethren, too, blinded by their hatred, were at last in Joseph's hands and there they were treated with the utmost kindness.

When Joseph's brethren saw him afar off they conspired to kill him. They called him, "this dreamer." First they thought to slay him and cast him into a pit; they would tell their father that a beast had devoured him. Reuben intervened to save him and got them to cast him alive into a pit, for he thought to deliver him and bring him back to his father. They stripped Joseph of his coat of many colours and cast him into the pit in which was no water. They espied travelling Ishmaelites carrying spices to Egypt, and Judah, out for making profit, suggested that Joseph should be sold to the Ishmaelite merchants, so they drew Joseph out of the pit and sold him for twenty pieces of silver, and in turn he was resold to Potiphar when they reached Egypt. Jacob's sons brought back his coat of many colours, rent and torn and stained with the blood of the kid to their father.

The parallel between this dark deed and what happened to the Lord is close and clear. Both sought their brethren, both were hated and both were sold by a Judas (Judas is the Greek form of the Hebrew Judah). J.M.

JOTTINGS

Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob, suffered much at the hands of his brethren, and was finally sold by them to become a slave in Egypt. Stephen says, "The patriarchs, moved with jealousy against Joseph, sold him into Egypt: and God was with him" (Acts 7. 9). Their action was one of great cruelty and hardness of heart, and exemplifies the words of Solomon :

"Jealousy is cruel as the grave" (Song of Songs 8. 6).

From the story in Genesis we gather that the spiritual state of Jacob's family left much to be desired. Reuben had been guilty of serious immoral conduct. Simeon and Levi committed a number of murders to wipe out the stain and shame of their sister Dinah. Judah too had been guilty of immoral conduct and other disorders. The order of events in Psalm 105. 16, 17 sounds the opposite of that of Genesis :

"*He called for a famine upon the land ;
He brake the whole staff of bread.
He sent a man before them ;
Joseph was sold for a servant (slave) "*

By the decision of the LORD the famine was called for before the sending of Joseph, though it did not come for some years after Joseph had been in Egypt. The famine was to have a voice for men in general and for the people of Egypt, but it was the means that God took to bring home to Jacob's sons their wickedness, and to correct their attitude both to their father and to Joseph, and, we would hope, toward God also.

The early days of Joseph in Egypt were fair and prosperous for him. Moses tells us that "the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man" (Genesis 39. 2). But the devil did not leave him alone for long. Potiphar gave him full control of the running of his house and of his affairs. He found in him a capable, faithful and honest steward. Potiphar's wife was the tool that the devil used to seek to destroy this precious life. Joseph refused all her overtures. One day she thought she had him trapped but he fled from her, and she, with Joseph's garment in her hands, told the lie which landed Joseph in prison to suffer for the shame of her sin. Thus it came to pass that Joseph came to suffer at the hands of his brethren and at the hands of the Egyptians. So was it with the Lord. He suffered at the hands of His Jewish brethren and at the hands of the Gentiles.

"*For of a truth in this city against Thy holy Servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel foreordained to come to pass "* (Acts 4. 27, 28).

But the reason for the Lord's bitter sufferings went deeper than simply the hatred of the Gentile and the Jew; the real cause of His deep distress was the sin of a woman in which her husband joined. That sin was Eve's, and Adam, her husband, joined with her in her sin. This was the root cause of the Saviour's suffering, His suffering for sin. Even so it was with Joseph, Potiphar's wife was the cause of his imprisonment for Potiphar cast him into prison. Thus we read—

"*His feet they hurt with fetters ;
He was laid in chains of iron "* (Psalm 105. 18).

In prison among the king's prisoners the LORD was with him and showed kindness unto him and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. Joseph was infinitely better to be in the prison with honour than free and in dishonour. Here, as in Potiphar's house, the jailer committed the control of the prisoners to Joseph, for so trustworthy was he that he had not to check what was his own responsibility.

Then one day there arrived two high placed royal officials who had been committed to prison, Pharaoh's butler and baker. These had got into trouble with their royal master. One night in the course of their imprisonment they both dreamed a dream. Joseph interpreted their dreams and of this interpretation the butler later told Pharaoh, "me he restored unto mine office, and him (the baker) he hanged." But sad to say that though Joseph asked the butler to have him in remembrance, yet for two full years he forgot all about Joseph, his benefactor. As Joseph's sufferings were great so was his glory, each was the measure of the other. So also with the Lord, and so with us.

J.M.

EDITORIAL

We send to all readers "Greetings": and in no better terms can we express these greetings than in the words of the beloved apostle Paul, used in his letters to the early churches of God, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

To Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Thessalonians, and also to individual men, Timothy, Titus and Philemon, was this greeting, in the various epistles, sent.

In this greeting are joined two words of great significance, "grace" and "peace." *Grace* (Gk. *charis*) was the usual Greek salutation, by which nearly every letter was prefaced; "peace" (Gk. *eirēnē*) was the Hebrew form of salutation by which Jews greeted their fellow-countrymen, and which is still used by Arabic-speaking people today.

Herein is contained a joining of *WEST* and *EAST*, of *JEW* and *GENTILE*, even that which is alone accomplished in our Lord Jesus Christ. "For He is our peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, . . . that He might create in Himself of the twain one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them in one body unto God through the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby." (Ephesians 2. 13-17).

"GRACE" was originally the word used for that "quality" in anything that gives "joy" or "pleasure," such as "beauty" in a landscape. Then both "joy" and "beauty" became combined in the word. Then it came to be applied to that which caused the joy; thence we get the thought of "unmerited, unearned, and undeserved favour." How much more enhanced is the sweetness, attractiveness and charm (the nearest word in English to give its meaning) in this salutation, when the "grace" is from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"PEACE" (*eirēnē*) is a lovely word, probably derived from a word meaning "to join, or weave together." It contains more in it than freedom from strife. It stands for harmony, for reconciliation, for the best that can come to man. So then, in this salutation, the apostle prays that the recipients of his epistles may have the joy and sweetness of knowing God as Father, and be filled with the peace of God in being reconciled unto Him. This "grace" and "peace" can be known through our Lord Jesus Christ alone. This is our greeting, too, to all readers.

January receives its name from a mythological source, because in this month one can look backwards and forwards. From the year 1888, almost uninterruptedly, this magazine has sought to give its readers "needed truth." This policy the editors hope to continue throughout 1959 (D.V.). Regular features will be a series of articles on the "Growth of the Fellowship" by Mr. John Miller, and a continuation of the articles on "The Tabernacle" by Mr. G. Prasher, sr.

May we also encourage a greater use of the section devoted to "Questions and Answers"?

Let us rejoice "in the whole counsel of God," and to this end, we "commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified."

JAS. MARTIN.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

WAITING FOR THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (I)

In this series of articles we propose to discuss with our readers the growth of that Fellowship in which the disciples of the Lord continued steadfastly (Acts 2. 42), and which in time grew and found expression in the churches of the Gentiles, as in Corinth, whereof we read, "God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1. 9). The Greek word *koinōnia*, which is derived from *koinos* which means common, belonging equally to several, may signify in its various uses in the New Testament Scriptures a community of people or society of people who hold or share things in common, as in the scriptures quoted above. It is also used to describe the experience of sharing in common, as in 1 John 1, where the sharing is in spiritual things by those who were privileged to company with the Lord during His earthly ministry, and this experience was to continue amongst such as had known His grace through the inspired records which those men left behind. Again the word is used in connexion with the sharing in things material which meet bodily needs, as in Romans 15. 26, and here the word is rendered "contribution."

Our present article will not discuss the different uses of the word as to its use in describing communion or participating and so forth, but as to its application to that community of people who were united together in receiving collectively the Word of God proper to this dispensation of grace and carrying out what the Word of God enjoined upon them. This community took definite shape in Jerusalem and was identified as the church of God in that city (Acts 8. 1; 1 Corinthians 15. 9; Galatians 1. 13).

It is quite clear to the ordinary reader of the Scriptures that a new, divine movement was on foot with the appearance of John the Baptist. For some four hundred years from the time of Malachi the voice of the prophet was not heard in Israel. God had closed His door as to sending men to warn His people in their backsliding from Him. He also wished that the doors of His house, built by the remnant which had returned from Babylon amidst many difficulties, would be closed. He said, "Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on Mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I

accept an offering at your hand ” (Malachi 1. 10). Though such was the state of things in Malachi’s days, God did not leave His house, as He did before the coming of Nebuchadnezzar, as is described in Ezekiel 10. He bore with the evil manners of His people, looking forward to the time when He would have unbounded pleasure in His Son, who was at the end of those days to come to that house, the zeal of which should eat Him up (John 2. 17).

At length, when the darkness of apostasy had settled down upon the Jewish people, when forms had taken the place of faith, and lust had driven out love, far out in the wilderness a voice was heard which in due time reverberated through the land, “ Repent ye ; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand ” (Matthew 3. 1, 2). It was the voice of John the Baptist, that man who was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. He had been spoken of by both Isaiah and Malachi. He was a prophet truly, but much more than a prophet, for of those who were born of women there had not arisen a greater than he.

His was a fiery message. Three times in Matthew 3 he speaks of the fire of divine punishment. (1) He speaks of God as the Divine Woodman cutting down the trees which brought not forth good fruit (verse 10). This has been God’s normal way of dealing with men. The end of such was that they were cast into the fire. (2) Then he deals with that which is proper to this dispensation in which the gospel of God’s grace is preached. He says, “ I indeed baptize you with (in) water unto repentance : but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear : He shall baptize you with (or, in) the Holy Spirit and with (or, in) fire ” (verse 11). The preaching of the gospel has one of two results, either the person who hears it believes and is baptized by the Lord in the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (Acts 1. 5 ; 1 Corinthians 12. 13), or rejects the divine message and is baptized in fire, which is the fire of hell, which will at last give up the dead that are therein, as Revelation 20. 11-15 shows. (3) Then when the Lord as the Son of Man returns to earth in judgement, He comes to winnow the righteous from the wicked, when the wicked who are compared to chaff will be burnt up with unquenchable fire (verse 12). The Lord spoke of this dire day for the wicked in many parts of the Gospel according to Matthew. It was no wonder that the multitudes fled from such impending judgement to John at the river Jordan to be baptized by Him with the baptism of repentance. Thither they came confessing their sins.

Amongst them came the Lord, but He had no sins to confess. John would have hindered Him, but that word from the Lord settled John’s mind, “ Suffer it now : for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him ” (verse 15). The Spirit of God descended upon Him as a dove and abode upon Him, and the Father in unbounded love and delight said, “ This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” In contrast to this delightful scene was that of the coming of the Pharisees and Sadducees. These John

would not baptize, and he said to them, "Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (verse 7). The cleavage between John and the Jewish leaders could not have been wider. Though John was the son of a priest in one of the highest offices of the priesthood of Aaron, yet he did not follow his father in the temple service. His ministry was outside; and if men would follow in the way of the Lord (Luke 3. 4; Acts 18. 25, 26), then they must go out to him, and not in to him into the temple. Thus it says, "Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judæa, and all the region round about Jordan" (Matthew 3. 5).

What was the purpose in the coming of John the Baptist? It is explained by the angel of the Lord to his father Zacharias, that he would "go before His face in the Spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him" (Luke 1. 17). Thus, through the ministry and baptism of John, we have a new people in view, a people not finding the centre of their religious life in the priests of the house of Aaron and their place of service in the temple, but a people who followed the teaching of John. Such a people would have been sectarian, and John would have been guilty of causing a schism in the Jewish people, which was already split in factions and sects, had it not been, as we see clearly now, that he was God's messenger who faithfully delivered His message.

In pictorial language in John 10 the Lord tells how He came to the porter, John the Baptist, and entered the fold by baptism, as the sheep had done. The obligation which John's baptism placed on the sheep, as Paul shows in Acts 19. 4, was, to use Paul's own words, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus." The difference between this and Christian baptism was in the fact that repentance and faith were separated; those who were baptized repented and confessed their sins, but they had yet to believe in the Christ whom John was to identify as the Lamb of God, and the Son of God. Paul's gospel message combined both, repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20. 21), for by Paul's time the Lord had been manifested. The Lord tells us that when He, the Good Shepherd, the Shepherd of the sheep, entered the fold of which John was the porter He called His own sheep who were therein by name and led them out, and when He had put forth all His own He went before them and the sheep followed Him, for they knew His voice; also, that a stranger they would not follow, but would flee from him, for they knew not the voice of strangers. The working out of this is seen in the case of Andrew and John the apostle, that when John the Baptist said twice on the same day, "Behold the Lamb of God," they left John and followed Jesus. Thus it was that John the Baptist's work developed into that

little band of faithful men and women who not only were believers that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God, but were His disciples, His followers, who obeyed what He taught and practised true Christ-like living.

Though Israel nationally could not believe in Christ or receive Him as King Messiah, we are told, "Nevertheless even of the rulers many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God" (John 12. 37-43). Thus we have amongst the Jewish people a class who secretly believed in the Lord, yet because of present fame and fleeting gain they were not found amongst the Lord's disciples. This we believe is true of a large number of believers in our day, and also no doubt true throughout all time since the Lord was here. It was for those scattered believers that the Lord died, not that they might be saved eternally, but that they might be gathered into one (thing). The prophecy of Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest, should be quoted here regarding purposes in the Lord's death which are by many overlooked. "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 (of Israel); and not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad. So from that day forth they took counsel that they might put Him to death" (John 11. 49-53). It is evident that the understanding of Caiaphas was quite different from the mind of the Spirit who spoke by him. Caiaphas thought it was necessary to kill the Lord and so stop Him from teaching the people as He had been doing and causing another sect, "the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24. 5), for His teaching was one of showing the true meaning of the law—love, mercy and faith—which found no place in the formal and ritual teaching of the Jewish leaders. The Lord's teaching was one of non-resistance of aggressors, but of striving against sin, and suffering in consequence. Thus it was that during the Lord's earthly ministry a large number of believers walked in the way of the world, and a few walked with the Lord, and were in consequence hated by the world as the world hated Him. These are facts that the children of God in our time do well to take to heart, if they would seek to win the Lord's well-done in the day to come. One thing is certain: we cannot walk both with the Lord and the world. The path of rejection with the rejected Lord is clearly taught in the Scriptures. Believers need to learn the truth of divine separation, which is indicated in Hebrews 13. 12, 13, in being "without the camp" with Him who suffered "without the gate." Even in the Lord's time on earth there were a without and a within (Mark 4. 10, 11), which does not mean that "within" included all believers and "without" all unbelievers. See the following scriptures which make the matter quite clear, that

“within” refers to those who were divinely gathered together and “without” refers to such as were not so gathered (1 Corinthians 5. 12, 13; Colossians 4. 5; 1 Thessalonians 4. 12; 1 Timothy 3. 7).

It was to the apostles, the faithful band of men who were destined to be the leaders of that Fellowship, that Community, which was of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, that the Lord spoke so much in John chapters 14, 15 and 16 of the coming of the Holy Spirit, the other Comforter, and a few evenings after, when He had been crucified and raised again from the dead, He appeared to His disciples as they were gathered together with the doors shut for fear of the Jews. He showed them His hands and feet and side wherein were the marks of His passion. His message to them was one of Peace. “The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.” He breathed on them and said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.” Then He said, “Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John 20. 19-23). It is quite evident that the Lord's words do not mean that the future happiness of men is placed in a church or any body of men of a priestly class. The forgiveness of sins in the New Testament is clearly taught in three senses (1) the forgiveness of the lost sinner, (2) the forgiveness of the children of God, and (3) the forgiveness of the servants of God. In (1) forgiveness is the portion of every sinner who believes in Christ who offered Himself as an atoning sacrifice for sins on Calvary's cross, as Peter said to Cornelius and his household, “To Him (Christ) bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins” (Acts 10. 43). This is the testimony of the gospel everywhere in the New Testament. Faith and faith alone in Christ saves the sinner without the mediation of any priest or minister. As to (2), the child of God has to confess known sin which he has committed to his Father in heaven, and God is faithful and righteous to forgive him the sin which he has committed, and the blood of Jesus His Son will cleanse him from all sin (1 John 1. 5-10). This also is effected without priest or minister. Then as to (3), this brings us to the meaning of John 20. 23. It is clear that it is the will of God that children of God should be gathered together as the Lord's disciples in churches of God to carry out the Lord's will. In their collective service, in which the behaviour of each has its effect on the testimony of all, it is the responsibility of the church wherein disciples are gathered to deal with sin committed by any one of the disciples. Sins are mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5. 9-13 (and the list is added to in chapter 6. 9, 10) which it was the responsibility of the church of God to deal with in any of their number. And thus it happened that they had to excommunicate one of their number for fornication. So long as he remained unrepentant his sin was retained, but when he repented, the church was called upon by Paul to forgive him and to restore him to fellowship again (2 Corinthians 2. 5-11). Putting away by the church of a brother because of unrepented sin against a brother is taught in Matthew 18. 15-18, and for heresy, in

Titus 3. 10, 11. Such then is the meaning of John 20. 23. Behaviour and testimony are ever joined together, and in this paragraph He was sending forth His disciples as His Father had sent Him.

In the sending of them forth as His witnesses, "He charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, said He, ye have heard from Me: for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence" (Acts 1. 4, 5). These words were spoken some days after His appearance to the disciples in the evening of the resurrection. Quite evidently they had been to the mountain in Galilee, where they received the great commission (Matthew 28. 7, 10, 16-20), for they were now told not to depart from Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit had come. No power but that of the Holy Spirit could carry on the work of the Lord against the combined forces of the devil, demons and men. His disciples were anxious to know if it was their Lord's will to restore at that time the kingdom to Israel, for in them there was a strong vein of nationalism. They were told, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. 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" (Acts 1. 7, 8). This was His parting message to them, for it says, "When He had said these things, as they were looking, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (verse 9). They returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were found there engaged in prayer as they waited for the coming of the Holy Spirit of promise. The coming of the Blessed Spirit took place on the day of Pentecost, as is recorded in Acts 2.

J. MILLER.

THE TABERNACLE

A COVERING OF RAMS' SKINS DYED RED

The tent which was over the tabernacle had a covering of rams' skins dyed red, which was placed beneath the outer covering of badgers' skins. Thus the tent had two coverings. See Exodus 26. 14; and 36. 19.

Thoughts of the Lord's suffering and rejection by men were before us as we considered the outer covering, how "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." The exterior showed nothing that attracted the natural man; as we read, "When we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

The rams' skins, however, point to another aspect of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, a life that was unseen by the unregenerate man. The rams' skins were hidden from the view by the badgers'

skins, and thus we are caused to consider that inner life of Christ on which the eyes of God His Father ever rested with ineffable delight. In keeping with this we find the words: "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My Chosen, in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles" (Isaiah 42. 1).

As we come to know the Lord Jesus we may appreciate in measure the depth of His devotion to the will of His God and Father; but as this is "Deep that knows no sounding" we can never know it to the full. The life of the Son of God while on earth was one of

ABSOLUTE CONSECRATION

While the contrary winds of unbelief were howling, and the dark shadows of Golgotha were gathering, He could say to His adversaries: "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. 28, 29). He sought not and did not His own will, but did the will of Him that sent Him; when weary, hungry and thirsty He said: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4. 34; 5. 30; 6. 38). He stands out in marked contrast to the king spoken of in Daniel 11. 36, "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god." The Lord Jesus humbled Himself, made Himself of no reputation, and set Himself to do the will of His Father.

It is thus that the blessed Holy Spirit delights to present Christ in all the Scriptures. Satan, demons and men, by strategy and by bold-faced opposition, endeavoured to hinder Him, and turn God's perfect Servant away from the way of God; but He allowed neither persons nor things, neither friends nor foes, to come between Him and the doing of the will of God. There was no intermission in His consecration.

*" Faithful amidst unfaithfulness,
Midst darkness only light,
Thou didst Thy Father's name confess,
And in His will delight.
Thy foes might hate, despise, revile,
Thy friends unfaithful prove;
Unwearied in forgiveness still,
Thy heart could only love."*

SKINS DYED RED

The dyeing of the rams' skins red was not, as we may have gleaned, for the sight of the natural man, but was that in which the eyes of God found delight. The word 'adam, translated red, means, a man, and we think of the Man Christ Jesus, whose birth was foretold by Isaiah, "A virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel (God with us)." The form of the word, however, as

used in connexion with the rams' skins, indicates "to show blood," as when one is flushed by a flow of blood to the face. This recalls the words of the woman in the Song of Songs 5. 10,

*"My beloved is white and ruddy,
The chiefest among ten thousand."*

It is thus that all lovers of the Lord Jesus view Him.

There appears a shadow of this in the story concerning David. When all of Jesse's sons had been rejected as being unworthy of the anointing oil, David was sent for, and brought in. "Now he was *ruddy*, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon."

Any reference to the blood of Christ suggests the ordeal of Calvary, and raises in our hearts the question, Does the Holy Spirit in having the rams' skins dyed red point to that high-water-mark of the obedience of Christ when He became "obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross"? It seems so to us, and should cause our hearts to be bowed before Him in lowly adoration.

*"When we see Him as the Victim
Bound upon Golgotha's cross,
For our guilt and folly stricken,
Bearing judgement due to us,
Lord, we own, with hearts adoring,
He has loved us unto blood,
Glory, glory everlasting
Be unto the Lamb of God!"*

AARON AND HIS SONS AS TYPES

The priestly family in their being prepared for the divine services, as recorded in Exodus 29, afford some precious lessons which illustrate devotion and consecration. Many things were necessary for the priests which speak of these things, but He needed not any such sacrifice. Before they were allowed to take up the priestly work they were brought to the door of the tent of meeting, where they were washed and clothed, a type or outward expression of the inherent purity and beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. A sin offering was slain for them, but never one for Him who needed none, because,

*"They first their own sin offering brought
To purge themselves from sin,
His life was pure without a spot,
And all His nature clean."*

Thereafter a ram for a burnt offering was slain, that they might be accepted before the LORD (Leviticus 1. 3). Sin was put away in the sin offering; the persons of the priests were accepted in the burnt offering; then the priestly family lay their hands upon the head of another ram: "it is a ram of consecration" (Exodus 29. 22).

BLOOD-STAINED EAR, HAND AND FOOT

"Then shalt thou kill the ram, and take of its blood, and put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the

great toe of their right foot." The Hebrew word *mala*, translated consecration, means "to fill." Thus we are given the thought in the mind of the Holy Spirit of God, namely, that the ears of God's servants should be filled with the voice of God, their hands with the work of God, and their feet should be running in the way of the LORD's commandments. This, we judge, is what is set forth in the blood-stained ear, hand and foot.

None of this was needed by the Lord. He gave His ear to God's voice day by day. His hands were full day by day in doing the work of His Father. His feet were swift and beautiful as they ran in the way of the LORD's commandments.

It was well for Israel when the priests gave their ear to the voice of God. Prosperity and blessing were the portion of the people. Alas that it was not always so! "Like people, like priest," was God's lament through Hosea (4. 9). "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" was no doubt the result of the lack of the consecrated ear on the part of the priests. If the priests' lips were to keep knowledge, the priests' ears would require to be *filled*, not with the current news of earth, but with the word of the living God, as contained in the Book of the law. Priests who would seek to serve God today in the holy priesthood should exercise care to give God the ear, because if we succeed in this the hands and the feet will follow. "Thus shalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his sons, according to all that I have commanded thee: seven days shalt thou consecrate them" (Exodus 29. 35). A seven-day consecration is worthy of our ambition.

*"Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord,
By the power of grace divine;
Let my soul look up with a stedfast hope,
And my will be lost in Thine."*

PROPHETIC UNFOLDINGS

In Isaiah 50. verses 4-6, there is a foretelling of the Lord's devoted life before God. We hear Himself speaking through the words of Isaiah, as it were His own testimony, just as in chapter 42 we find the Spirit's testimony concerning Him. He says, "The Lord GOD hath given Me the tongue of them that are taught, that I should know how to sustain with words him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as they that are taught." Here we discern the consecrated ear. Then follow the words: "The Lord GOD hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backward. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting."

On the eve of the cross the Lord Jesus said, "The prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in Me; but that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." He was going hence to meet

those who would treat Him as Isaiah had prophesied. Before another sunset He was scourged and tormented and crucified and slain. Surely that day He was making it manifest that He was not rebellious. His ear had been wakened as a disciple and He turned not backward. With the Father's commandment ringing in His ears He goes forward to Gethsemane, to the judgement hall, and to the cross. Wonderful Saviour, doing all God's will below ! How true that " Christ pleased not Himself," but He was the One to whom His Father testified, " Thou art My beloved Son ; in Thee I am well pleased " (Luke 3. 22) !

THE THINGS OF THE FATHER

The story recorded in Luke 2. 41-51 reveals how early the Lord Jesus had His hands filled with His Father's things. He was only twelve years old, yet when Mary His mother asked, " Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us ? behold, Thy father and I sought Thee sorrowing," He said unto them, " How is it that ye sought Me ? wist ye not that I must be in the things of My Father ? " (R.V.M.). For three days they had sought Him, and doubtless had been to places which they thought would attract a boy, and apparently the last place they came to was the temple, where they found Him sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions : and all that heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.

We do well to bear in mind that there are only the things of the Father, and the things of the world. " All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof : but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever " (1 John 2. 16, 17).

The Lord when tempted in the desert used the Scriptures against the devil, and resisted what was presented by him—something for the flesh in the way of bread ; something for His eyes, the sight of all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ; an act of pride, casting Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, and looking to God for deliverance from death ; all these were spurned by the consecrated Servant of Jehovah, and He manifested Himself as the Young Man who was strong, because the word of God was abiding in Him, and so He overcame the evil one. See I John 2. 14.

What are we going in for day by day ? If we are to succeed we too will need to imitate the writer of the 119th Psalm, who says,

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

Eve, our first parent, failed to do this, and so she became a victim of the serpent's craftiness. Something for food ; then something for the eyes ; then something that pandered to her pride—these were the enticements which captivated her, and led her to sin against the

LORD, with all the dreadful consequences to the human family. Oh, to be so taken up with the Lord that we shall be able to say in truth,

*“ Blest Saviour we would own Thee
Amid the world’s proud scorn,
The world that mocked, and crowned Thee
With diadem of thorn.
The world that now rejects Thee,
Makes nothing of Thy love,
Counts not the grace and pity
That brought Thee from above ” !*

G. PRASHER.

WHY WE MUST PRAY

*“ Therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious unto you,
and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you : for
the LORD is a God of judgement ; blessed are all they that wait for Him ”*
(Isaiah 30. 18).

Of course we know that we must pray. But do we pray as we ought ? Do we really strive in prayer ? Do we wait in expectation upon God ? Have we given ourselves in the past to this vital spiritual exercise as we ought to have done ? To these questions, most of us will answer, “ No ! ” We will also confess, that we have not known the mighty power of the Spirit of God as we might have known it, nor have we been as fruitful as we might have been. If we knew with certainty, that the Lord Jesus would return within a few months or years, our prayers would be vastly different ; no doubt we realize that. It is true to say that our service for the Lord depends to a great extent upon our private prayers and for that reason it is vital to us to pray.

Isaiah 30. 18, has been a help to the writer in regard to prayer, and he wishes to pass on a few thoughts on it to others. Firstly, we notice that the LORD is waiting to be gracious to us. We must not imagine that by our prayers we make God willing to help us, or that we can tell Him anything of our need that He does now know. The truth is that He is more willing to give than we are to ask. The hindrance has always been with us. The LORD is waiting to be gracious. The Lord Jesus plainly stated this in Matthew 7. 7. “ Ask, and it shall be given you.” But we have a feeling in our hearts that much of what we ask never seems to be given, or it is so long delayed that we cease to ask and to expect. The truth about this is, that we do not wait sufficiently upon God, so that we may ask aright. We ask what is according to our own thoughts, without waiting upon God to know what His thoughts are. We need to learn the secret of Psalm 62. 5 (R.V.M.) : “ My soul be thou silent unto God ; for my expectation is from Him.” Prayer is more than speaking, it is an attitude of heart. “ Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God ” (Ecclesiastes 5. 2).

Let us realize that God is waiting for us. Oh the marvel of it, that He should be earnestly waiting for us to draw near to Him! And oh the shame of it that we draw near so seldom, and so unexpectedly! When we do come before Him, it is so often our own plans and purposes that we lay before Him, for His approval and blessing. We put the cart before the horse. We ought to come with our hearts bowed before Him to learn His will, so that we may ask according to His all-wise and perfect purpose. No wonder that we so often toil all night and catch nothing.

We need to start over again, and wait for Him. Begin everything by quiet waiting upon God. Let humiliation and confession be the first part of all our work for Him. Then prayer will be different. Then we shall know what to ask in prayer, and we shall see again the mighty acts of the Lord. God is waiting to be gracious to us, for He is the God of all grace, and if we come yielding our hearts to Him, then we shall prove again the abundance of His grace.

If we fail to humble ourselves and to exalt God, then He will exalt His own Name; this may be in chastening us, or in using others instead of us. He will not suffer His great Name to be dishonoured, or His purposes to be frustrated because of our failure. He will be exalted, so may He have mercy upon us. He is a God of judgement; He will try our hearts. Even though we may have failed in the past, He waits to have mercy upon us. Happy indeed are we, if we wait for Him.

So then, let us seek God in earnest supplication, waiting for Him, that He may visit us. Our poverty may be the result of our prayerlessness or our defective prayer, for the Lord is waiting to be gracious to us. If we do set our hearts to seek Him, and if we study His ways so that we can ask according to His will, then prayer will become a time of sweet communion. But it will become more than that. It will become a time of spiritual conflict when we enter the arena against the powers of darkness. It may also become a most humbling experience to us as we strive with tears according to the will of God.

One thing should impress us, and that is the perfection of the will of God. What can we do but yield with joy to a perfect will? The perfect ways of God are so unlike all that we see around us. Everywhere we seem to see blunders, imperfections, failures and useless strivings. But when we enter the realm of the will of God we are entering that which is perfect. And not only so, it is a perfect will, behind which is unfathomed love and boundless power. Let us hasten then to the secret place, so that our thoughts and words and ways may be attuned to the perfect will of God. The imperfect joined to the perfect, like Jacob and the Man at Peniel. Even though we come "limping" from it, we shall be changed men, because we have seen the face of God.

G. JARVIE.

INTO THE NEW YEAR

O Lord, I am embarked upon another year ;
I know not what it may unfold, nor do I fear,
So long as faith remains in Thee unshaken, real,
And underneath the Everlasting Arms I feel.

All things I shall surmount if I but lean on Thee—
Mountains will turn to plains, and floods but streamlets be,
Then take my hand—I shall be more secure each day,
Than lit by myriad lamps along a gilded way.

J. BELTON.

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD (Genesis 5. 24)

A few sentences only are used to record the life of one who is a witness to the possibility of man's attainment here on earth of a wonderful experience.

It is a divine truth that "Two cannot walk together except they be agreed." To walk with God involves daily surrender to His known will. We must submit to His guidance, and brace ourselves to the glad task of keeping in step with Him.

"Saviour, let me walk with Thee" is a prayer which demands from those who make it a deep and constantly renewed purpose of heart to "cleave unto the Lord."

The way may often be rugged, and beset with difficulties and dangers, but these will not deter the one who is conscious of His presence, and the life so lived will be a foretaste of the promise which the Lord made to some: "They shall walk with Me in white" (Revelation 3. 4).

May each one of us endeavour, more and more, in our present experience, to live in purity of life and nearness to Him, so that in confidence we may say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me" (Psalm 23. 3).

A. G. JARVIS.

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Box 240, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

Isaiah 56. 1-8 is a paragraph of exhortation to such as do right and one of encouragement to strangers and eunuchs. It has the day of millennial glory in view, for the LORD says, in the light of men keeping judgement and righteousness, "My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed." It is God's will for us too, in this dispensation of grace, to keep judgement and to do righteousness, in the light of the Lord's coming again, for that day of Christ is fast approaching, when each man's work shall be tried by fire and revealed as to what sort it is. Alas, if, through failing to keep judgement and to do righteousness, the fiery trial of that day should consume all with the eternal loss that will mean to whomsoever it may be. The solemnity of the judgement seat of Christ, one fears, does not bear as heavily on the conscience of each of us as it ought. The Lord's coming and His judgement seat should have a corrective effect on all our lives.

In this matter of doing right two things are particularly mentioned, (1) the keeping of the sabbath, and (2) keeping one's hand from doing any evil. The Lord often breached the Pharisees' conception of the sabbath day. Theirs was a rigid, sanctimonious observance of the day, without any holiness of heart befitting a day set apart to the LORD. The Lord showed by His actions that it was proper to do good on the sabbath, and this He often did in healing in synagogues and in the streets where He found the diseased and afflicted people. Evil-doing is against all laws, the law of conscience, of Moses and of Christ.

Certain strangers were strictly banned under the law from entering into the assembly of the LORD, the Ammonite and the Moabite, for instance (Deuteronomy 23. 3, 4). God said, "Even to the tenth generation shall none belonging to them enter into the assembly of the LORD for ever". The reason for this ban is given, and that was because they met not the children of Israel on their journey from Egypt to Canaan with bread and water, and hired Balaam to curse them. Ammon and Moab were the children of Lot's daughters, born as the result of these daughters' incestuous agreement. For a period of limited duration, for more than two hundred years, they were to be kept outside Israel and the service of God.

Then the eunuch, too, under the law (Deuteronomy 23. 1), could not enter into the assembly of the LORD. The eunuch was not to say, "Behold, I am a dry tree," because it was impossible for him to bear fruit in the procreation of the human species. He could not comply with that command of God, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Genesis 1. 28; 9. 1, 7). The eunuch could only look forward in hopelessness that his name would one day perish from his people and from the gate of his place (Deuteronomy 25. 5, 6; Ruth 4. 10). But this will not befall the godly eunuch in the future, when that order which was according to the flesh shall perish and that which is according to the Spirit shall remain. The eunuch's name will not perish.

"For thus saith the LORD of the eunuchs that keep My sabbaths, and choose the things that please Me, and hold fast by My covenant: unto them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off (Isaiah 56. 4, 5)."

This is something very much better than having sons and daughters to perpetuate the name of a man in Israel and in the gate of his place. Within God's house and walls the godly eunuch will have a memorial and a name in days of millennial glory, yea, he will have an everlasting name which will not be cut off. Here is the spiritual order which will succeed the natural, and the eternal which will succeed the temporal.

Was Daniel one of the eunuchs in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon? With his companions he was under the care of Ashpenaz the master and prince of the eunuchs (Daniel 1. 3, 7, 8). The sons of Hezekiah were to become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon (2 Kings 20. 18). If Daniel was a eunuch, was this the reason that we do not read of his return to Jerusalem with the Remnant? or was it because of age he did not return? He will nevertheless enjoy to the full the blessedness of Isaiah 56. 4, 5.

Besides eunuchs that are made by men, "there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matthew 19. 12).—J.M.

JOTTINGS

Having been concerned with the encouragement and promises given to strangers and eunuchs, in Isaiah 56. 1-8, especially paying attention to what is said about eunuchs, I wish now to say a little about strangers joining themselves to the LORD.

“Neither let the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, the LORD will surely separate me from His people” (verse 3).

What does it mean, this strangers joining themselves to the LORD? The Hebrew word for “join” is *Lavah*, which means to adhere, to be joined closely, to entwine, unite, cleave. It is used first of all by Leah when she gave birth to her third son, “Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have borne him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi”. Levi is derived from *Lavah* and is of similar meaning.

The words of Jacob on his deathbed, concerning the action of Simeon and Levi in slaying the men of Shechem, were, “Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel” (Genesis 49. 7). Thus the tribe of Levi was scattered in all the tribes of Israel, dwelling in the cities with their suburbs assigned to them; when the land was divided among the tribes they were given no land. Yet it is pleasant to think that the Levites, and the priests of the house of Aaron, who were also of the tribe of Levi, were joined together.

“The LORD said unto Aaron . . . thy brethren also, the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou near with thee, that they may be joined (Lavah) unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall be before the tent of the testimony . . . and they shall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tent of meeting, for all the service of the Tent: and a stranger shall not come nigh unto you. And ye shall keep the charge of the sanctuary, and the charge of the altar” (Numbers 18. 1-5).

Thus we see this scattered tribe beautifully joined in divine service, the priests, the sons of Aaron, having the service of the Sanctuary allotted to them, the vessels, and the altar, whilst the Levites attended to the Tent and all external matters which pertained to God’s dwelling place. The Levites were scattered yet joined.

Similar to this is the fact of the scattering of mankind into tribes and nations (Genesis 11. 1-9). The causes of the scattering of the nations and of Levi were different, but the results were similar, they each were scattered in their families and dwelt far from each other. But whilst this was so, yet it was God’s ultimate will that they should be joined together in divine service.

Certain restrictions were placed upon the Ammonites and the Moabites from entering the assembly of the LORD, even to the tenth generation none belonging to them could enter the assembly of the LORD. But in the case of Ruth the Moabitess the truth of redemption triumphed, and she, a Moabite stranger, found redemption’s rest in Israel, and there she became the great grandmother of David, but it is doubtful whether she lived to see her fair great grandchild who was to become so illustrious a servant of the Lord.

The Edomite and the Egyptian could enter the assembly of the LORD in the third generation (Deuteronomy 23. 3-8).

As far as I am aware, there were no other restrictions upon strangers of the nations joining themselves to the LORD and to His people. Should strangers join themselves to the LORD to be part of Israel, then all the males must be circumcised. Then the same law applied to them as to the Israelite.

“One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you” (Exodus 12. 49).

It is a delightful subject, the stranger joining himself to the LORD and His people, but because of lack of space we can only make quotations.

“For the LORD will have compassion on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the stranger shall join (Lavah) himself with them, and shall cleave to the house of Jacob” (Isaiah 14. 1).

“And many nations shall join (Lavah) themselves to the LORD in that day, and shall be My people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee” (Zechariah 2. 11).

Thus the words of Isaiah 56. 6-8 will be fully fulfilled.—J.M.

EDITORIAL

BY WHAT AUTHORITY ?

It is reported in the secular press that the chancellor of the Norwich Consistory Court has delivered an 8,000-word judgement on what has become known as "the purgatory case." Legal argument in Norwich and London occupied several days. The point at issue was whether the exhortation, "Pray for the soul of Elizabeth Smith," which it was proposed to inscribe on a stained-glass window in the parish church, conflicted with Church of England law in regard to the Romanist doctrine of purgatory. "I am quite satisfied," said the Chancellor, "those seven words do not necessarily denote that her soul is suffering the torments of purgatory." Accordingly he granted the faculty asked for.

We are prompted to enquire: What place was given in the 8,000-word judgement of the Chancellor to the teaching of the Holy Scriptures? If "Church of England law" has any authority at all in such matters, that authority must be based on the Word of God. "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith" (Article VI of the Church of England). Most certainly, the Romanist doctrine of purgatory finds no place in the Holy Scriptures. Of all the heresies adopted by Rome this is, perhaps, the most pernicious and fraudulent. But what shall be said of "Church of England law" which condemns the doctrine of purgatory and yet permits prayer for the dead? The one, no less than the other, is devoid of Scriptural sanction. Indeed, *both* are Romanist doctrines.

We ask: By what authority? Holy Scripture constitutes the final court of appeal in regard to Christian doctrine. It gives no indication whatever that the condition of departed souls should be the subject of prayer to God. No amount of legal argument can give authority for intercession for the dead. The Chancellor's 8,000-word judgement is worthless! The crucial issue is, What saith the Scripture?

No doubt the Chancellor's judgement will give encouragement to those who are plotting to undermine the work of the Reformers. We consider it our duty to raise our voice in protest and to warn all those who rest on the authority of the Word of God against the flagrant departure from the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ in the judgement to which we have directed attention.

T. M. HYLAND.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

JERUSALEM (II)

Jerusalem and not Rome saw the planting of the first church of God in this dispensation. That planting was on the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the Lord's resurrection. There were the twelve apostles, Matthias having been divinely chosen by lot to fill the place of Judas, so that there might be a collective witness of twelve to all the things which they had heard and seen from the beginning of the Lord's ministry, and especially to the Lord's resurrection. There can be no doubt whatever that the eleven apostles were in the mind of God in their action in the choice of Matthias, for the inspired words of Psalm 109. 8, "Let another take his office," which Peter quoted, show that they were carrying out the Lord's command. Peter and the rest of the apostles were men whom the Lord sent forth to preach the word which He gave them.

The Lord at His appearances to His apostles during the forty days told them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1. 4, 5). The promise of the Father was the gift of the Holy Spirit. He referred to John the Baptist, and no doubt to John's prophecy in Matthew 3. 11 regarding baptism in the Holy Spirit, and said, "Ye shall be baptized with (Greek *En*, in) the Holy Spirit not many days hence." Further, He said to them, "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" (Acts 1. 8). This was the Lord's reply regarding their work when they asked if He was going to restore the kingdom at that time to Israel. They knew that it was the Lord's will to restore the kingdom to Israel at some time, for the Scriptures of the Old Testament clearly taught this. But was this the time of such restoration? It certainly was not, and neither had it been in the days of the Lord and John the Baptist. Israel nationally could not believe on Christ, though many of the rulers did believe (John 12. 36-43). Consequently they could not receive Him as King Messiah. But the day will come when they will receive Him, when they look on Him whom they pierced (Zechariah 12. 10-14), when "there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11. 26). Not till then will there be a national repentance and turning to the Lord whom they rejected and still do. The mystery of Israel's hardening of heart is clearly explained by Paul in Romans 11. The Church which is Christ's Body had to be built to fill its unique place in God's purpose, a purpose which is eternal, and did not come in by the way as an alternative purpose of God in view of Israel's condition of heart and consequent rejection of the Lord.

It was this eternal purpose of God that was in view in the sending of the apostles from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth. Though we have in the Acts of the Apostles the Lord's work connected

with the apostles Peter and Paul, we must not assume that the other apostles were not fully engaged in other work of and for the Lord. To have told us all that went on in those great days during the time of the history of the Acts would no doubt have confused our minds somewhat, so the Holy Spirit was pleased to follow the acts of Peter so far, and then to turn to the story of Paul.

At Pentecost when the Lord began to build the Church which is His Body, God's eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus, (Ephesians 3. 11), a Fellowship was also brought into being by the Lord, which found its expression in Jerusalem, first of all, in the church of God in that city; and this Fellowship was later to extend in the planting of Gentile churches, in which all held the word of the Lord as a sacred and common trust. It may seem that we are using words, sacred and common, in a loose way, for in a sense what is sacred is not common. The use we make of "common" is in the sense in which "common" is used by Jude, who writes of "our common salvation" (verse 3). "Common" here is used in the sense of being possessed by all saints, not in the sense of ordinary or of little value. The word of Christ is holy as the Old Testament Scriptures are holy. Indeed, in the Lord's teaching we have laid open things which were but dimly understood in Old Testament times, and much was not revealed to saints of old at all. They lived in dim light, but we now live in the daylight of divine revelation. Fellowship means a community who have or hold in common. The word has various applications. It is derived from the Greek word *Koinos*, meaning "common." We must be careful in our interpretation of the words, "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need" (Acts 2. 44, 45). We must not conclude that those words teach that the Lord's will was that there should always be a community of goods for a community of people. The Scriptures, neither in the Old Testament nor in the New, teach that there should be such a thing as a common purse into which the whole profits and earnings should be cast and from which the whole community of those together would have their needs supplied. The need was such in Jerusalem that this was how those early disciples acted to meet the need of those who, because of their acceptance of Christ through the teaching of the apostles, were cast out by their Jewish friends. First those who had goods sold them, that is, their things moveable. Then later, as the need still continued, those who had possessions of lands and houses, things heritable, sold them, "and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need" (Acts 4. 34, 35). The Fellowship into which the disciples were called, which first of all implied the holding in common the word of the Lord and carrying out what it enjoined upon them, involved that those therein should, according to their ability, meet the need of those who from various reasons might be in want. But, as recorded in the Old Testament, there was private owner-

ship of the land of Israel, and of the profit derived therefrom the people had to give a tenth of their increase. Besides, there were sundry other offerings, those of the firstfruits, freewill offerings, etc. In the millennium it will be like as it was in the time of Solomon, of which we read, "And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree" (1 Kings 4. 25), for of the latter days we read in Micah 4. 1-4 of the state of peace which will then exist, when "they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree." Note the force of "his" vine and "his" fig tree.

1 Corinthians 16. 1, 2, gives clear instructions as to giving, that each one is to lay by the Lord's portion "as he may prosper." This matter of giving is further dealt with by the apostle in 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. Thus we see clearly that giving was not a matter of giving all one's wages and profits to a central fund to be distributed as administrators of the fund thought fit. At the same time there were those who were appointed to see that an equal distribution of what was given was justly and faithfully shared out of the available givings of the saints, as is seen in the appointment of the seven brethren in Acts 6. 1-6.

Coming now to the spiritual side of the Fellowship and to the events immediately preceding Acts 2 and the happenings of that great day of Pentecost, we find in Acts 1. 15 a numbered company of about 120 names. It should be carefully noted regarding the statement about the number of the names together that these words are in brackets, and that they do not form part of the narrative about the choosing of Matthias as an apostle. This 120 included women as well as men, whereas those whom Peter addressed were all men. The A.V. is correct here when it gives the word "men" as well as "brethren." "And" is in italics which shows that it is not in the Greek. We have an unfortunate omission of "men" in the R.V. Man here is the word *Aner* which means a "male of fullgrowth." Those who were together were the eleven apostles met to carry out the scripture in the psalm relative to another taking the office of Judas Iscariot.

Again the A.V. is better than the R.V. relative to the 120. The latter gives "and there was a multitude of persons gathered together," but the former gives "the number of names together were," etc. It seems a strange alteration that the Revisers should put "persons" in the text and say in their margin, "Greek, names." Further, they add the word "gathered" and show, by putting it in italics, that there is no word in the Greek for "gathered." These names were together (*Epi to Auto*), which means "upon the same thing." What was that thing upon which they were together? It was the word of the Lord. These 120 took their stand on the word of the Lord as truly as Israel did at Sinai when all the people answered together (Hebrew, *Yachad*, as one, unitedly), and said, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do" (Exodus 19. 8). David, as he thought of Israel united as one on the basis of God's word, said,

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133. 1).

“ Together in unity ” is the word *Yachad*, which means “ as one.” Obedience to the word of the LORD, as professed by Israel at Sinai, David saw as something both good and pleasant for his brethren of the children of Israel. It was to this end that “ he fed them according to the integrity of his heart ; and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands ” (Psalm 78. 72).

In the LXX the word *Yachad* is rendered in the Greek by the words “ *Epi to Auto*,” which shows that the Greek words have the same thought of oneness, of unity. The thought of being together in one place is secondary to the meaning of being united according to the will of God as revealed in His word. This is seen in the divine command in Deuteronomy 22. 10,

“ *Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together* ”
(Hebrew, *Yachad*. Greek, *Epi to Auto*).

The idea of place does not enter into this matter of plowing ; it is a matter of the yoke. They must not be yoked together, thus being one in the same yoke.

Thus it was that the 120 were yoked together, as the Lord indicated in Matthew 11. 29, “ Take My yoke upon you, and learn of (*Apo* from) Me.” They formed a divine unity and all their names were together as in one thing. They were those who formed the church of God in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit came upon them. We are told that when the day of Pentecost was now or fully come they were all together in one place. Our opinion as to the words *Epi to Auto* is, that “ in one place ” is a secondary idea to that of the oneness or unity that existed in the Lord’s disciples who were together that day. No doubt they were gathered in one place, for we are told that the sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind filled the whole house where they were sitting.

The coming of the Holy Spirit marked the beginning of the dispensation of grace (Ephesians 3. 1-6). Besides the sound of the rushing mighty wind, there appeared tongues parting asunder like as of fire, and it sat upon each one of them. Then we are told that “ they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Much has been written and said about this gift of tongues. Some have thought that the Holy Spirit gave those who spoke, said to be Galilæans (Acts 2. 7), the ability to speak in a variety of languages, languages of the countries from which those assembled Jews and proselytes hailed, but the Spirit did not give them the power to know what they were saying. Is such a thought contained in Acts 2 ? We say it is not. When God gave to Adam in the beginning the power of speech, did He not give him the power to know what he said ? Surely the answer must be “ Yes,” to such a question. Then again, when God miraculously gave to men different languages at the time of their building Babel and its tower, did He not give men power to know what they meant when they

spoke, or were they like demented men going about uttering sounds the meaning of which they did not understand? Surely the answer must be that God gave to the builders of Babel the power both to speak and to know what they said in their new languages. The difficulty was that they could not make each other understand the meaning of what they said, and so their new languages were the means of scattering them and keeping them apart, even as the language barrier continues to do to this day. The gift of tongues is mentioned in two other places in the Acts, in chapters 10. 46, and 19. 6. In Acts 2. 11 they spoke in the languages of different lands "the mighty works of God." In Acts 10. 46 they "magnified God," and in Acts 19. 6 they "prophesied." Paul sheds much light when he deals with the gift of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14. In verses 2 to 4 he deals with speaking in a tongue, which is unknown to the church, and prophesying. In the first case he speaks not to men but to God, for no man understands him, but in the spirit he speaks mysteries. In contrast, he that prophesies speaks to men a message from God to the edification, comfort and consolation of the hearers, and in this way he edifies the church, but he that speaks in a tongue unknown to the church edifies himself. How can he edify himself if he does not know what he is saying? Could a man edify himself, if we could imagine that he could speak French, yet did not understand what he said? Certainly not! We cannot think without words. Such as speak English think and speak in English and also edify themselves in English. So that those who spoke in tongues must have known what they themselves said in order to edify themselves. This same thought is further strengthened by what we read in verse 28, "But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God." God knows all tongues of men as well as of angels, but how can a man speak to himself if he does not know what he is saying? It is the height of folly to think such a thing. Speaking, or attempting to speak, in a tongue that is unknown to the speaker, the speaker would be a barbarian to himself. But this is just what some interpreters of Scripture put over to us for our consumption, and it finds a home among the various sections of what are called "the tongues people." Perhaps we should further add that there is no instance of women speaking with tongues in the New Testament. The Spirit of God through Paul says, "Let the women keep silence in the churches" (1 Corinthians 14. 34), but in this day women are much in error in this matter.

At Babel the gift of tongues was in order to scatter men on the face of the earth; at Pentecost the gift of tongues was to bring men together. God did not do away with languages at Pentecost, but gave men power to proclaim to men the mighty works of God in their own tongues. Let us state definitely that a tongue is a language, that is, a language spoken by some people, not a tongue that has never been heard on earth before.

Following the disciples speaking with tongues, the multitude were perplexed, and were asking one another, "What meaneth this?" But others said mockingly that those who spoke with tongues were filled with new wine. When Peter stood up and addressed the multitude, first of all he corrected the mockers, that this speaking was not the result of alcoholic spirit, but the result of the outpouring of the Spirit of God according to the prophetic words of Joel (Joel 2. 28-32; Acts 2. 16-21). There will be a further outpouring of the Spirit before the day of the Lord, when all that was spoken by Joel will be fulfilled. Peter wound up his remarkable address, in which he outlined the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord, with an accusation of the Jewish people that they had crucified the Messiah. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (verse 36). "They were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, (Men) brethren, what shall we do?" Peter's answer was, "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" (verse 38). Peter's statement here relative to the remission of sins has often been compared with his statement in Acts 10. 43, "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." Why is baptism *before* remission in Acts 2, and the command for those to be baptized *after* they had received remission of sins through faith in Acts 10? Was Peter carrying out the commission which the Lord gave to the disciples in Matthew 28. 18-20 in both cases? Surely the answer must be, "Yes." Then why the difference?

In Paul's clear definition of the meaning of John's baptism we see that repentance and faith were separated. He said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus" (Acts 19. 4). The substance of Paul's gospel message was "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20. 21), for by the time of Paul the Lord had been manifested. In John's time He had not. In a few cases we have both repentance and faith mentioned, such as in Mark 1. 15, "Repent ye, and believe in the gospel," but generally when repentance is mentioned we have no reference to faith, and contrariwise, when faith is mentioned there is no reference to repentance. Generally speaking, throughout John's Gospel, it is the word believe that is used. Indeed I think that it is correct to say that John does not once use the words "repent" or "repentance" in the whole of his Gospel. Thus we properly conclude that where the word "believe (or faith)" is used, the word "repent" is implied, and where the word "repent" is used the word "faith (or believe)" is implied, for now that Christ has come no one can repent without believing, and no one can believe without repenting. From Acts 3. 19 we learn that repentance is the basis on which God blots out

or forgives sin. "Repent ye therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out."

But why did God require both in John the Baptist's time, and in Acts 2 that those who repented should be baptized? The answer must be found in the state of the Jewish people. They were a people long steeped in hypocrisy. The Lord said to His disciples, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12. 1). It was thus that the Lord coupled together baptism, the outward evidence of an inward change, with repentance (which literally means a change of mind). Baptism, the literal being dipped in water, was nothing in itself, if it was not the outward sign of an inward fundamental change in the individual who was baptized. We shall see later the different treatment by the Lord of the Jewish believers in Acts 2, the Samaritans in Acts 8 and the Gentiles in Acts 10.

Those who gladly

- (1) *Received His Word* were
- (2) *Baptized*: and there were
- (3) *Added* unto them in that day about three thousand souls.

And they continued stedfastly in

- (4) *The Apostles' teaching*, and in
- (5) *The Fellowship*, and in
- (6) *The breaking of the bread*, and in
- (7) *The prayers* (Acts 2. 41, 42).

In Proverbs we read of the seven Pillars of Wisdom.

*"Wisdom hath builded her house,
She hath heavn out her seven pillars"* (Proverbs 9. 1).

As you approach any community, and these seven things, mentioned above, which may be compared to pillars, are not in evidence, that is no place for the God-fearing and obedient saint to enter. There was no open table, no open communion at the beginning of the dispensation. All saints then received Peter's word relative to salvation and separation, all were baptized, all were added together (*Epi to Auto*, see Acts 2. 47, R.V. marg.), all continued stedfastly in the apostle's teaching (the commandment of the Lord—Acts 1. 2—which governed the acting of those together), all were in the Fellowship, in which all were fellows or partners, all continued stedfastly in the breaking of the bread in the remembrance of the Lord, and all similarly continued in the prayers, that is, the prayers of the church, in which only those who were in the church shared. Here are the fundamental features of that divine Fellowship, called "the Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Corinthians 1. 9).

J. MILLER.

THE TABERNACLE

THE TENT OF GOATS' HAIR

The tent of goats' hair which was over the tabernacle must be distinguished from the tent of meeting referred to in Exodus **33. 7-11**. That is said to have been pitched by Moses without the camp; and he called it *the tent of meeting*. Readers will observe that at the time when this tent of meeting was used outside the camp the tabernacle with its tent over it had not yet been made.

The story of that tent, however, provides some important lessons which are worthy of attention. Firstly let us note that "the pillar of cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent." Here we find the place which the LORD had—*standing at the door*. This was because He had as yet no dwelling place among His redeemed people. True, there was communion between the LORD and His servant Moses, "And the LORD spake unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend." Individual communion with the LORD is one thing, but having a place for the LORD to dwell in is another. Many, we fear, are content with the former, and have no concern in regard to the latter. May the LORD graciously exercise increasingly the hearts of His redeemed ones in our day in respect to building Him a Sanctuary! Men in apostolic days had this honour. See 1 Corinthians **3. 10, 16**; Ephesians **2. 21, 22**. Though, alas, all believers are not together in these last days, yet a remnant of godly ones who fear His name may build His spiritual house as did a remnant in the days of Zerubbabel, His material house; see Ezra **6. 15**.

WISE HEARTED WOMEN SPUN

As with the tabernacle curtains so it was with the making of the curtains of the tent, the women had an important work to do. "All the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom spun the goats' hair" (Exodus **35. 26**). That men and women must work together in divine movements is fitly set forth in the Scriptures. "Neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord." Priscilla and Aquila rise before our minds as a delightful example of a wife and husband co-operating in the things of God. Apollos was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures. His knowledge, however, was limited, he having advanced only as far as the baptism of John. "But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully" (Acts **18. 26**). That the Holy Spirit places the name of this godly woman first in this instance may indicate that she had a knowledge and discernment even excelling that of her husband. Romans **16. 3-5** reveals how they worked together; "My fellow-workers in Christ Jesus, who for my life laid down their own necks; unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles; and salute the church that is in their house." The example of Lydia in Acts **16**, of Euodia and Syntyche in Philippians **4**, and others, may well be viewed as instances of wise hearted women who wrought in furthering God's work in their day and time.

WISE HEARTED MEN WOVE

“And every wise hearted man among them that wrought the work . . . made curtains of goats’ hair for a tent over the tabernacle : eleven curtains he made them ” (Exodus 36. 8, 14). These shadows of Exodus we can trace to Acts 1. 2, 3, where we see the Lord Jesus, who Himself is Wisdom, speaking to the apostles whom He had chosen, giving them commandment through the Holy Spirit, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God. Here are wisehearted men drinking at the source and fountain-head of wisdom. They are to receive power when the Holy Spirit is come upon them, and they are to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The wise Master Builder had already brought together much precious material, and ere He went back to the glory those who were together and subject to Him numbered about one hundred and twenty. The names of these were together (Acts 1. 15). It has frequently been asked, Where were the three hundred and eighty of the five hundred brethren mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15. 6? It is evident they were not *together* as the Lord desired they should be, and to fail to obey the Lord’s word, as these seem to have done, must be attended with spiritual loss.

COPPER CLASPS OF JUDGEMENT

The coupling of the tent was after the fashion of the tabernacle, except that in one group of the tent we find there are six curtains : “And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves ” (Exodus 36. 16). The clasps were of copper, instead of gold as in the case of the tabernacle, and the extra cubits in the length of each curtain provided covering at the sides, and there was the width of a half curtain, that is two cubits, to hang below the tabernacle curtain in the rear. The copper clasps uniting the whole are suggestive of judgement, without which the Fellowship of God’s Son could not be maintained. Unless such persons as are described in 1 Corinthians 5. 11, 12 are dealt with it would be impossible to secure divine unity. “Do not ye judge them that are within, whereas them that are without God judgeth?” (verses 12, 13).

We have earlier shown that copper seems to point to judgement, and as we view it these clasps would remind us of judgement in respect of the house and courts of the LORD. In Zechariah 3. 7 we read, “Thus saith the LORD of hosts : If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, then thou also shalt judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee a place of access among these that stand by.” Joshua the high priest was thus linked with certain of his fellows in this great responsibility of seeing that judgement was carried out in the house of God, and keeping the courts of the LORD’s house.

That was not merely a local matter which engaged the brethren in Antioch in Syria. Circumcision after the custom of Moses for salvation would affect the whole Community, and so the brethren must think universally; and, after much discussion and questioning with the schismatics, Paul and Barnabas with certain others were sent to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question. There a judgement was given which condemned the Judaizers, and gave guidance to God's together people—the Community, the house of God (see Acts 15). “The care of all the churches” pressed upon the apostle Paul daily (2 Corinthians 11. 28): he also had faithful men carrying out instructions given by him. Timothy is outstanding among these, and we find that when he was left in Ephesus he was charged on more than one occasion to stem the flood of apostasy in Asia. (See 1 Timothy 1. 3, 4). That there was real necessity for so doing may be gleaned from 2 Timothy 1. 15, where we read, “This thou knowest, that all that are in Asia turned away from me.”

NAOS AND HIERON

The dual thought of *sanctuary* and *meeting place* may also be seen in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus found in the *temple* those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting. These He gave the outside place, saying to them that sold the doves, “Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise” (John 2. 14-16). The word translated temple in this instance is *hieron*, or outer temple, where the people congregated. In Luke 1. 9 we read of Zacharias that “according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to enter into the *temple* of the Lord and burn incense.” Here the word is *naos*, that inner temple or sanctuary. Of the people it is added that they “were praying without at the hour of incense” (verse 10). In general *naos* signified the dwelling place, and *hieron* the meeting place, though at times the Jews referred to the whole under the term *naos*.

HE PITCHED HIS TENT AMONG US

Precious teaching bearing upon the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is also contained in the curtains of the tent. Their being made of goats' hair recalls the important place the goat has in the sin offerings under the law, as see Leviticus 16 where for the people two goats were required in the matter of sending away and making atonement for their sins. Also Numbers 28 and 29 should be noted. In the light of these scriptures we judge that in the goats' hair of the tent the Holy Spirit directs our hearts to the body which our Lord Jesus took with the view to becoming an offering for sin. We should bow our hearts in holy reverence as we consider the prophetic words through Isaiah: “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when His soul shall make an offering for sin (or guilt offering), He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand” (Isaiah 53. 10, R.V.M.).

Let us look more closely into the holy mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God. In John 1. 1 we see His Deity, His being with God, and His Eternity. In verse 3 His Creatorship is tersely stated, and verse 4 declares, "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." Incomprehensible is He in majesty and in glory, yet we read the amazing words:

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the Only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1. 14).

The word translated dwelt is *eskēnōsen*, from *skēnoō*, to pitch one's tent. The literal meaning then is that the Lord Jesus when He took that body which His Father prepared for Him, *pitched His tent among us.*

THE GLORY OF GOD

The Shechinah Glory which dwelt above the mercy-seat filled the divine sanctuary. In the understanding of the writer, had there been no tent with its coverings over the tabernacle this Glory would have shone through, and its presence would have become manifest to all. The tent with its coverings, however, shut this glory in. Here is presented to us a most precious consideration, for as that tent in the wilderness veiled the Glory of Jehovah from the outside observer, so the body of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ veiled the Glory of His Deity; since "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2. 9).

*"True image of the Infinite
Whose essence is concealed:
Brightness of uncreated light,
The heart of God revealed.
Worthy the name of Jesus now
That every knee therein should bow."*

Wonderful was the condescension of the Lord Jesus that found Him "dwelling below, full of truth and of grace."

HIS GLORY MANIFESTED

Did any see the glory of the Lord Jesus while He was down here? Yes, John the beloved disciple saw it, and He links others with him in having enjoyed this great privilege. He says, "We beheld His glory." The first sign performed by the Lord, His making water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, was a manifestation thereof, as we read, "This beginning of His signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed on Him." The great Creator was at work, and, as usually is the case, munificence was displayed. The supply of wine was abundant, and would doubtless last for many days. Seven signs are selected by the Holy Spirit in John's Gospel prior to the cross, and it is of interest that the first is suggestive of creation's work, whereas the last presents the Lord calling one dead from the tomb. He who created all things in the beginning will at the end cause "all that are in the tombs" to "hear His voice,

and” they “shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgement.” Herein is displayed glory as of the only begotten from the Father. That there are glories beyond these outshinings no one who loves the Lord Jesus will doubt.

Peter, John and James were specially privileged when He was transfigured before them, and as Matthew says, “His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light.” Peter writing many years later says, “We were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” Yes, what these men saw on such occasions must have been His glory in a veiled form, since we know His Person and majesty are so transcendent that man could not behold such glory and live. We thank God, however, for the testimony of those who saw somewhat of His glory while He was here in the TENT.

THE LAMB OF GOD

It was at a very early point in His public life that men were caused to hear the message from the lips of John the Baptist, the message that indicated the great purpose of His incarnation, “Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!” (John 1. 29). Happy are all who by faith in Him know the bliss of sins forgiven.

*“Sin-atonng Sacrifice,
Oh! how precious in our eyes:
He alone our rest shall be,
Now and through eternity.”*

G. PRASHER

“ESAU DESPISED HIS BIRTHRIGHT”

Genesis 25. 34

The bargain seems a matter of small concern, but it was the test by which the bent of Esau’s mind was truly revealed. The precious spiritual privileges appertaining to the birthright had no attractions for him. He had come to regard his birthright as of little real worth, therefore he was ready to sacrifice it for a mere temporary advantage.

Thus (as carnal men always do) he fell in that direction towards which he had always inclined.

The warning of this incident is most solemn. One of the great and ever-present dangers of life is the forfeiting of spiritual privilege, for the sake of present material gain. The growth of a secular spirit, in its effect, is like dry-rot, for when the sudden stress comes, unrealized weakness is made manifest; and upon the decision of a sudden test hangs the possibility of eternal gain or loss. When such a moment comes, the decision reveals the hidden tendency of the heart’s affection. Hence the exhortation, “Seek the things that are above, where Christ is.”

A. G. JARVIS

An Extract from CHARITY

All truth is precious, if not all divine,
 And what dilates the powers must needs refine.

.

But reason still, unless divinely taught,
 Whate'er she learns, learns nothing as she ought ;
 The lamp of revelation only, shows,
 What human wisdom cannot but oppose,
 That man in nature's richest mantle clad,
 And graced with all philosophy can add,
 Though fair without, and luminous within,
 Is still the progeny and heir of sin.
 Thus taught, down falls the plumage of his pride,
 He feels his need of an unerring guide,
 And knows that falling he shall rise no more,
 Unless the power that bade him stand, restore.
 This is indeed philosophy ; this known,
 Makes wisdom, worthy of the name, his own ;
 And without this, whatever he discuss,
 Whether the space between the stars and us,
 Whether he measure earth, compute the sea,
 Weigh sunbeams, carve a fly, or spit a flea,
 The solemn trifler with his boasted skill
 Toils much, and is a solemn trifler still ;
 Blind was he born, and his misguided eyes
 Grown dim in trifling studies, blind he dies.
 Self-knowledge truly learn'd, of course implies
 The rich possession of a nobler prize,
 For self to self, and God to man revealed,
 (Two themes to nature's eyes forever sealed,)
 Are taught by rays that fly with equal pace
 From the same centre of enlightening grace.

W. COWPER.

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England
 and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Box 240, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

We wrote briefly recently on the matter of strangers (Isaiah 56. 3, 6, 7), and of nations (Zechariah 2. 11) being joined to the LORD in days of millennial glory. The strangers who join themselves to the LORD are said to be those whose purpose it is (1) to minister unto Him, (2) to love the name of the LORD, (3) to be His servants, (4) to keep the sabbath from profaning it, and (5) to hold fast by God's covenant, five excellent resolves. What is the reward of those godly strangers? It is this:—

“Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar: for Mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all peoples. The LORD GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to Him, beside His own that are gathered” (Isaiah 56. 7, 8).

It may be doubtful whether “Him,” in “Yet will I gather others to Him,” is the LORD or Israel; it seems so in our versions. In the light of the fact that being joined to the LORD (verses 3, 6) means being joined to Israel His people (Isaiah 14. 1), the difficulty is intensified. It seems to me, nevertheless, that “to Him” is to the LORD. See Psalm 50. 5, which says, “Gather My saints together unto Me,” the LORD being the Speaker.

Great will be those days when the Great Shepherd shall gather scattered Israel together, who have been scattered upon the mountains in the dark and cloudy day, and will seek out His scattered sheep (Ezekiel 34).

It is this “joining to the LORD” that is so precious. Broken cords, long rent asunder, will be joined at last. Men, whose forefathers have been kept apart, by jealousy and covetousness, and by many a sanguinary encounter, will be joined together in unending felicity. They will bow together in prayer and will see their burnt offerings and sacrifices arise as incense from the altar of God.

Some have questioned whether there will be animal sacrifices offered during the Millennium. There can be no doubt whatever that there will be animal sacrifices. A material house will require a material altar, and a material altar will call for material sacrifices. This passage states this, “Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon Mine altar” (verse 7). “All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee: they shall come up with acceptance on Mine altar, and I will glorify the house of My glory” (Isaiah 60. 7). See, too, Ezekiel, chapters 45, 46. There “the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok . . . shall come near to Me to minister unto Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer unto Me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord GOD” (Ezekiel 44. 15; see also verses 10, 11). There are other scriptures which show the same fact, that animal sacrifices will be offered during the Millennium.

We have an illustration of this matter of people joining themselves to the people of Israel in the book of Esther. In this unique book, in which the name of God or Jehovah does not appear, we see His preserving care of the Jews through the boldness and faithfulness of Mordecai. As the result of God working for the Jewish people, it is anticipated that Gentiles would join themselves to them. Thus it reads:

“Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur. Therefore because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and that which had come unto them, the Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to the writing thereof, and according to the appointed time thereof, every year” (Esther 9. 26, 27).

It says, “Many from among the peoples of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews was fallen upon them” (Esther 8. 17). God will raise up His ancient people yet, and Zechariah 8. 23 will have fulfilment. J.M.

JOTTINGS

Paul returned to Damascus from Arabia (Galatians 1. 17), whence he had gone soon after his conversion on the Damascus road (Acts 9. 1-22). No reference is made in Acts 9 to his going into Arabia. Our sole source of information of this event is that in Galatians. The words of Acts 9. 23 quite evidently cover this period, "And when many days were fulfilled," and so forth. His stay in Damascus, both before he went into Arabia and after his return, had been fruitful, for whilst we clearly see that there were disciples of the Lord before he went to Damascus, against whom he had gone on his persecuting mission (Acts 9. 14, 19), he had himself by his ministry made other disciples there, for it was *his* disciples that let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket (Acts 9. 25), and thus he escaped the Jewish plot (verses 23, 24), and from the governor under King Aretas (2 Corinthians 11. 32).

He tells us, in Galatians 1. 18, that after three years, which I judge covers the time from his conversion which he spent in Damascus and in Arabia, he went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas (Peter) and he tarried with him only fifteen days. When he arrived "he assayed to join himself to the disciples," but they were afraid of him because of his notoriety as a persecutor of the Lord's disciples, and they did not believe that he was a disciple. It was not until Barnabas had brought him to the apostles, and declared the facts of his conversion and preaching, that he was with them going in and out at Jerusalem.

This word "join" in Paul's intention of joining the disciples in Jerusalem is interesting, in the light of the subject of men and nations joining themselves to the Lord in the Millennium (see Isaiah 56. 6 and Zechariah 2. 11). The word for "join" in the Greek is *Kollaō*, which means "to glue." *Proskollaō* is used, in Matthew 19. 6, of the uniting of a man and woman in marriage. It is a quotation from Genesis 2. 24. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to (*Proskollaō*; this is the verb *Kallaō* with the preposition *Pros* in front of it, and means "to be glued to") his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh." It may be translated "be joined to." The Greek word is similar in meaning to the Hebrew in Genesis 2. 24. In God's will a man and woman so joined together in wedlock are not to be sundered, as the Lord said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19. 6). Paul's words are clear for all saints in this matter, in 1 Corinthians 7. 10, 11. Divorce was allowed to Israelites in the past; they could write a bill of divorcement and put away their wives, but that was only allowed by God because of the hardness of heart of His people. No such provision is allowed to Christian people in this dispensation. There can be no divorce and remarriage for believers according to the teaching of the Faith in this day of grace.

Such was the permanence with which Paul viewed his association with the disciples in Jerusalem, it was to be as permanent, even for a lifetime, as the abiding character of marriage. Alas, many believers who have not learned the truth of one Fellowship, one House of God, "one thing" for God upon the earth, are found moving in and out of the sects of Christendom and living as promiscuous a spiritual life, as many people in these days of loose morals live in sexual matters. Is it not high time for the children of God to look into the Scriptures and see, that as God had a people together in a past dispensation, whether the whole nation of Israel or only a remnant of that people, so is it His will to have one people together now of and for Himself? Surely this is a most elementary truth of the word of God! Sects are a blot on the history of Christianity. Sectarianism began early in this dispensation, as we learn from Paul's prophetic words in Acts 20. 28-30, and we see the beginning of that apostasy in the epistles to Timothy, and of Peter, John and Jude, which eventually resulted in what has been called "the dark ages," when there was but a flickering light here and there which did little to dispel the gloom.

When Barnabas came down from Jerusalem to Antioch and saw the grace of God in the disciples, "he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave (*Prosmenō*, to abide with) unto the Lord" (Acts 11. 23). Here *Prosmenō* has the thought of permanence. This shows the opposite to what is contained in the Lord's question, "Would ye also go away?" (John 6. 66-67).

—J.M.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

JUDÆA AND SAMARIA

Having in our former article called attention to the rendering of the Greek words *Epi to auto* in Acts 1. 15 ("together" in A.V. and "gathered together" in the R.V., "gathered" being in italics), and in Acts 2. 1 ("in one place"), we now consider two other uses of the word, in Acts 2. 44, "And all that believed were together" (*Epi to auto*), and in verse 47, "And the Lord added to them." See the R.V. margin where "to them" is said to be "Greek, together." The Greek words are *Epi to auto*. In the A.V. the words *Epi to auto* are joined to chapter 3. 1, where it is said that "Peter and John went up together (*Epi to auto*) into the temple." There seems little doubt that the correct reading of Acts 2. 47 should be, "And the Lord added together" (*Epi to auto*), as in the R.V. marg., and in 3. 1 it should read, as in the R.V., "Now Peter and John were going up into the temple," the word "together" being joined to 2. 47. These uses of *Epi to auto*, four in number, in Acts 1 and 2, show that the root idea in the words is "together in unity." These disciples formed that divine unity for which the Lord died: "Jesus should die . . . that He might also gather together into one the children of God that are scattered abroad" (John 11. 51, 52), and for which He also prayed, "that they may all be one" (John 17. 20-22).

The Lord's work in this dispensation, which began in Jerusalem, spread out to Judæa and Samaria. This came about mainly by the persecution which arose on the day of the murder of Stephen, at least this was a contributory cause of the spread of the Lord's work. Thus we read, "And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles. . . . They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ" (Acts 8. 1, 4, 5). It was a day of great persecution, and of great enthusiasm on the part of the Lord's disciples. They formed a divine unity with a tremendous striking force on the consciences of men. They were indwelt by the Spirit of God and had in their hearts and mouths that gospel which Paul says is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Romans 1. 16). Let us not be ashamed of it, for there is nothing of which to be ashamed in it. In due time every soul will have to do with it and its Divine Subject, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let all who know its power and its preciousness lift their heads and voices and send forth the message of life to all, and not only the message of salvation, but of the truth relative to the obedience of believers after they have been saved by grace. May we catch the spirit of these early disciples, as, like a bed of sweet-smelling herbs, the more that they were trampled upon the more they exuded the sweet fragrance of Christ.

It may be that the words of Paul to the Hebrews (Hebrews **10. 32**) reminded them of the early chapters of the Acts: "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings." Paul himself was a chief cause in such sufferings, for it is said, "Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts **8. 3**). The disciples' experience was like unto that of the children of Israel in Egypt during the days of oppression, "The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied" (Exodus **1. 12**). Is not the blood of martyrs the seed-plot of the gospel? Paul could never lay waste the Church which is Christ's Body. That will be presented by the Lord to Himself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing (Ephesians **5. 27**). It will be presented, on the day of the Lord's coming, in all the perfection of His own work, not that of the saints, though she, as the Bride of Christ, shall be arrayed in linen, bright and pure, which is the righteous acts of the saints (Revelation **19. 7, 8**). The church, which was laid waste and made havoc of, was that which was local to Jerusalem, namely the church of God (Galatians **1. 13**; 1 Corinthians **15. 9**). The church of God is ever local to a place, but the Church which is Christ's Body is dispensational and universal, and never local. We never read of the Church which is Christ's Body being in such and such a place as we do of the church of God in Jerusalem and in Corinth, and though we read of churches of God many times, we never read of the Churches which are the Bodies of Christ. There is ever but one Body.

In the scattering which took place through the persecution of Saul and others, we are told that Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed unto them Christ. We are also told that multitudes gave heed to the things which Philip spoke when they heard and saw the signs which he did; the palsied and lame were healed and the unclean spirits came out, crying with a loud voice. There was in consequence much joy in Samaria. Philip not only proclaimed Christ to the Samaritans, he preached the good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and they were baptized, both men and women. Here we have a sharp distinction drawn by the Spirit between the preaching of Christ and the preaching of the good tidings of the kingdom of God. The preaching of the latter followed closely upon the heels of the former, but though this was the case we must not confuse the one with the other. They are two distinct lines of truth.

The work of Simon the sorcerer was brought to an end by the work of Philip in Samaria. Though in times past he had been called Great, he now became a subject of the grace of God, for it is said, "Simon also himself believed." But he did not stop at believing, he went on, and it says, "And being baptized, he continued with Philip; and beholding signs and great miracles wrought, he was amazed" (Acts **8. 13**).

“When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John” (verses 14, 15). We have here a difference made in the case of the Samaritans from that of the Jews in Jerusalem, in Acts 2. The Jews were told to repent and be baptized and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Here the Samaritans had believed and had been baptized, but they had not received the Holy Spirit. In Acts 10, in the case of Cornelius and his household, the Holy Spirit was given when they believed. It was not till they saw the effect of their faith in them speaking with tongues that Peter commanded that they should be baptized. Samaria had received the word of God but had not received the Spirit of God. Why was this? It seems to me that in the growth of the Fellowship the Spirit of God was careful that divine unity should be maintained, having regard to the rift which had existed between the Jews and the Samaritans, of which we read in John 4. 9: “For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.” This antagonism of the Jews was reciprocated by the Samaritans, as we read in Luke 9. 52, 53, that the Lord “sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He were going to Jerusalem.” Religiously the Jews and the Samaritans were wide apart. Unless Samaria was linked with Jerusalem there might be Jewish churches and Samaritan churches between which there was no fellowship, and the unity for which the Lord died and prayed would have been marred at the very beginning. Thus it was that the Holy Spirit had not come upon the Samaritans until Peter and John had come from Jerusalem, and had prayed and laid their hands upon them. Thus were the disciples in Samaria linked with those in Jerusalem.

Simon the sorcerer so long a pervert of sorcery, and as yet little instructed in divine things, besought the apostles, offering them money, that he might be given the power to give the Holy Spirit to whomsoever he might lay his hands upon, and was told by Peter, “Thy silver perish with thee, because thou hast thought to obtain the gift of God with money” (verse 20). Herein is a principle in the ways of God, that money cannot buy divine gifts. Many are trying to commercialize the gift of God’s salvation by selling the forgiveness of sins, and others crowd around to buy it. Others seek other forms of divine gifts with money, Alas! Alas! It will be for them also, “Thy silver perish with thee.” Some also seek to impart some spiritual gift by ceremoniously laying on their hands, but, as with the Baal worshippers of old, there is none that regard their imposition of hands. Peter spoke other strong words to Simon; whereupon Simon said, “Pray ye for me to the Lord, that none of the things which ye have spoken come upon me.” Peter and John, after they had spoken the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans on their way thither.

We have three remarkable conversions in chapters 8, 9 and 10, those of the Ethiopian Eunuch, of Saul of Tarsus, and of Cornelius. Of the first and last nothing more is heard in the Scriptures, but of Saul or Paul, his history and epistles fill considerably more than a third of the New Testament.

Following Saul's conversion, his going from Damascus into Arabia, his return to Damascus, escape from the city, and coming to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter, and following the trouble in Jerusalem through his bold preaching and his being brought to Cæsarea and sent forth to Tarsus, we are told, "So the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied" (Acts 9. 31). The A.V. gives, "Then had the churches rest." It would seem that the weight of evidence is on the side of "church" and not "churches." "Throughout all" (*Kath holēs*) are the words from which the word "Catholic" is derived. It means throughout the whole. Now the question arises, "Does the word church mean that what is in view here is the scattered church of God in Jerusalem and that no other churches of God had been planted in the parts named by this time?" We should, I think, remember that Paul's visit to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter, mentioned in Acts 9 and Galatians 1. 17, 18, was three years after his conversion. In those days of tremendous activity it would be stretching interpretation of the word church to apply it to a single church of God. I am of the opinion that when Peter and John were at Samaria, where multitudes of people had been saved and baptized, those believers were brought together as the church of God in the city of Samaria. Similarly it seems to me that as the saints were scattered from Jerusalem and took up residence in the cities of Judæa and Galilee, churches of God were brought into being. This thought seems to be strengthened by what is said about Peter going throughout all parts, and in his pastoral-preaching circuit, "He came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda." Here was a mighty movement through the healing of Æneas, and it is said that "all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord" (verse 35). From thence, on the entreaty of the disciples at Joppa, he went to Joppa and the result was the raising of Dorcas from the dead, and there, too, there was a rich ingathering of souls. It seems to me that "the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria" emphasizes the divine unity which existed in the churches of God throughout the areas mentioned.

If further proof is needed that the church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria comprised the churches of God in these areas, this will be found in Galatians 1. 21, 22, where Paul says, "Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judæa which were in Christ." Paul came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia when the brethren

in Jerusalem, knowing that the Grecian Jews went about to kill him, brought him down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus (Acts 9. 30). So that by this time churches of God had been planted in Judæa, and this likewise was the case in Samaria and Galilee.

There is one point worthy of note and that is the fact that when Paul came from Damascus to Jerusalem, "He assayed to join himself to the disciples." The word "join" (*Kollaō*) means "to glue together", and is the same word as is used in connexion with marriage rendered "cleave," in Mathew 19. 5. The Hebrew word in Genesis 2. 24 is of similar meaning. This shows that Paul was not one who believed in the practice of the "open table" or "occasional fellowship." He was glued to the disciples, as the word means, and consequently "he was with them going in and going out at Jerusalem." He was one of them. It should also be noted that the saints in the church in Jerusalem had to be satisfied about Paul, and Barnabas who had certain knowledge of Paul was able to satisfy the apostles as to the fact that he was a true disciple of the Lord.

J. MILLER

THE TABERNACLE

The Curtains

The instructions for making the tabernacle curtains are given in Exodus 26, and the carrying out of these instructions is recorded in chapter 36. The curtains were made "of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubim the work of the cunning workman," and were joined together in two groups to form the tabernacle.

The word translated "tabernacle" here means, *dwelling place*. This should be noted, because the use of *mishkan* (dwelling place), and that of *ohel* (tent), afford much light to the student of Scripture. Later we may dwell more upon this important matter, but here we just mention that the curtains bring us directly to the subject of the divine *dwelling place* upon the earth; whereas the thought suggested by the tent is that of a *meeting place*. In connexion with this we might note the words: "When they shall blow with them (the trumpets), all the congregation shall gather themselves unto thee at the door of the tent of meeting" (Numbers 10. 3). The tent, therefore, is connected with the *meeting place*, or place of congregation; the tabernacle is the *dwelling place*. Both are together, however, in the divine arrangement, for the tent covered the tabernacle. Surely the teaching of the Spirit of God, so implicit in these shadows, is that saints that are scattered abroad today should be gathered with those already together of God, and in whose midst He dwells.

WILLING AND WISE-HEARTED

If God were to have a dwelling place two classes of people were necessary, namely, *willing-hearted* ones and *wise-hearted* ones. "The children of Israel brought a freewill offering unto the LORD; every man and woman, whose heart made them willing to bring" (Exodus 35. 29). "Every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, . . . brought the LORD's offering" (verse 21). Apart from this willingness on the part of both men and women the work could not have been accomplished. Verse 5 of chapter 36 shows how *willing* God's people were at that time; but *wisdom* was also needed, and so we read, "All the women that were wise hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, the blue, and the purple, the scarlet, and the fine linen" (35. 25). God makes honourable mention of the work of the women in the making of His dwelling, and we are assured that the day of Christ will bring rewards to faithful women whose wisdom led them to work in accord with God's word in the furtherance of His present-day testimony. May every encouragement be given to such women now! Those in apostolic days who were well reported of for good works, having brought up children, having used hospitality to strangers, having washed the saints' feet, having relieved the afflicted, having diligently followed every good work, are given special commendation (1 Timothy 5. 10). A lesson may be gleaned, however, from the fact that the spinning of the material by the wise hearted women of Israel would be done in their own tents, and this suggests very different behaviour from that of many modern women today who engage in public teaching and preaching, which is forbidden by the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 14. 34, 35; 1 Timothy 2. 11-13).

The actual making of the curtains was the work of wise hearted men, at the head of whom were Bezalel, of the tribe of Judah, and Oholiab, of the tribe of Dan. The wisdom, both of spinners and weavers, should speak loudly to workers for God in this dispensation. Their wisdom was manifested in their ability to work, and in their doing the work exactly as the word of the LORD required it to be done. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1. 7). "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (9. 10). Such fear operating in the heart will ensure adherence to divine instruction. "Through wisdom is an house builded; and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge are the chambers filled with all precious and pleasant riches" (Proverbs 24. 3, 4).

CHRIST IN YOU

The curtains are described as being made firstly of fine twined linen. If readers will compare the description of the veil, the door, and the gate, a difference will be observed that the blue comes first. We judge that this is because these speak of Christ alone. The tabernacle curtains, while they portray Christ—the blue His coming

from heaven, the purple His kingly aspect, the scarlet His lowly yet dignified character, the linen His elevated righteousness—show forth also those who are so wrought upon by the Spirit of God that they form a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2. 22).

In respect to the believer in Christ the fine twined linen suggests that righteousness which he has in Christ; but not only that, though it must be the basis, he must also be a follower after righteousness, as Timothy was exhorted in 2 Timothy 2. 22. He should be like his Master of whom it is written, "Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity" (Hebrews 1. 9); and the Lord's command in Matthew 6. 33 should ever be before him, "But seek ye first His kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The blue, the purple, and the scarlet which so beautifully set forth Christ should not be lacking in the true disciple of the Lord. What happened when he was baptized into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28. 19)? To this Galatians 3. 27 gives an interesting answer: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." How important! and this at the beginning of the disciple pathway. Here is seen the blue, the purple, and the scarlet, and the fine twined linen. But this is not all, seeing this act of baptism in water is an act that needs to be done once only, there should also be a daily putting on of Christ.

Christ was seen in the apostles who were spoken of as "unlearned and ignorant men," but the leaders of the Jews " marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus " (Acts 4. 13). Men saw Christ in these disciples of the Lord. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13. 14); "Put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Ephesians 4. 24), are exhortations to the end that the beauties of Christ may be seen in us, who should walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. May we be helped increasingly so to do! In Colossians 3. 10 we are told that the new man "is being renewed unto knowledge after the image of Him that created Him."

MEASUREMENT, MATERIAL AND DESIGN

Each of the tabernacle curtains is suggestive of an assembly of God, which is a compound unit, and is part of a larger whole, the whole being the divine dwelling place. The curtains were the same in measurement, material and design, the Holy Spirit thus indicating what should and did obtain within the Fellowship, which constituted the house of God. That which characterized one church of God was seen in all the churches; thus the same principles of truth which directed the ways of the saints in the churches of God in Judæa, operated also in Thessalonica, and so those saints in Thessalonica were commended in that they "became imitators of the churches of God . . . in Judæa" (1 Thessalonians 2. 14). Other passages

which illustrate this same truth are 1 Corinthians 4. 17, "Even as I teach everywhere in every church"; and chapter 7. 17, "And so ordain I in all the churches."

The teaching of the apostles, as given in the epistles, will, in the measure it is received and expressed, make the lives of the saints beautiful, and it ought to be the earnest desire of all to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2. 10). The Lord Jesus, according to Isaiah 42. 21, made the teaching great and glorious; and in wondrous grace He "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 every-day things of life this beauty of character should be exhibited, as, for example, in the case of bondservants, who are exhorted "to be in subjection to their own masters, and to be well pleasing to them in all things; not gainsaying; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity" (Titus 2. 9, 10). In these days of unions of masters and unions of workmen there are still great opportunities for servants to manifest those characteristics which will *adorn the doctrine*.

THE COUPLINGS OF THE TABERNACLE

As one curtain did not make the tabernacle, so one church of God does not make the dwelling, although at the beginning of the dispensation, and for a brief period, the church in Jerusalem undoubtedly did so. In the expansion of the work of God, however, and the planting of churches of God in other places the Scriptures show that to form the house of God "each several building" must be "fitly framed together" (Ephesians 2. 21), and here the tabernacle curtains furnish important lessons. Firstly, "five curtains shall be coupled together one to another; and the other five curtains shall be coupled one to another." Two groups were thus made. Still an individual group did not make the tabernacle. We might liken this to a group of assemblies such as was found in the five provinces of Asia (1 Peter 1. 1), which did not form the house apart from others who were in the same community. (See 1 Thessalonians 2. 14.)

To complete the coupling and make the tabernacle ONE, fifty clasps of gold were placed in the same number of loops of blue on the outer edge of each group of curtains. The blue of the loops speaks of that which is heavenly, while the gold of the clasps reminds us of the divine. The *oneness* of the dwelling place is thus seen to be of heaven, and of God. A thing must either be from heaven or from men as is shown by the Lord's answer to the question from the chief priests and elders concerning His authority, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" It is a joy to consider that by God-given principles from His word, and by the operating of the Holy Spirit the churches of God in the British Isles are joined with other churches of God beyond the seas, and so form ONE dwelling place for God in the Spirit. A lovely expression of this *oneness* is seen when representatives from overseas attend the

conferences for overseers from the British Isles and Overseas, where matters relative to the whole Community can be discussed together, and unity maintained.

A WOMAN TO HER SISTER

In joining the individual curtains *one to another*, and in coupling the groups *one to another*, the Spirit of God uses a striking expression. The literal translation of the words "one to another" is *a woman to her sister*. (See Newberry's margin.) The LORD uses it six times—twice for the curtains, once for the boards (Exodus 26. 17), and thrice in connexion with the living creatures (Ezekiel 1. 9, 23; 3. 13). What can be meant by this seemingly strange expression? Surely the closeness of the union is indicated. How are a woman and her sister joined? Undoubtedly by the tie of relationship, out of which should flow love and mutual service. Lack of these manifestations robs the relationship of its intended purpose and may lead to severance. How beautifully the Spirit of God thus indicates the fact that the churches of God are joined together into one whole, and also that love and mutual service should prevail between sister assemblies. "She (the church, or the sister) that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Mark my son. Salute one another with a kiss of love" (1 Peter 5. 13, 14) is surely an example of this union and this love, while the principle of mutual service is seen in 2 Corinthians 8. 13, 14, and exemplified in Romans 15. 26, 27.

THE CHERUBIM

Besides being adorned with blue, purple and scarlet, the curtains of the dwelling had cherubim, the work of the cunning workman. Cherubim are usually found in close association with the throne of God and would appear to have a connexion with the carrying out of divine judgement. (See Genesis 3. 24; Ezekiel 9 and 10.) Their being seen in the curtains of the tabernacle would remind us that the house of God is a place where divine judgement must be carried out. Peter tells us, "For the time is come for judgement to begin at the house of God" (1 Peter 4. 17). Jacob's words, "How dreadful is this place!" (Genesis 28. 17) are in keeping with the character of the house. It is God's *resting place*, and *the place of His throne* (Psalm 132. 14; Ezekiel 43. 7). Where His throne is, there is divine rule and government. So far as the house on earth is concerned this rule must be exercised through elders or overseers. The Hebrew saints were called on to "remember them that had the rule over you"; and to "obey them that have the rule over you" (Hebrews 13. 7, 17). Some time ago, while in conversation with a brother in Christ the writer heard him make the candid confession, "We have not got rule: we are wrong in government." He was referring to a company of Brethren. It is very important that in assemblies of God His rule be carried out. Thus the kingdom of God can find expression in and through the little flock.

G. PRASIER

PSALM 90

This Psalm is "A prayer of Moses the man of God," who wrote it probably towards the end of his long and eventful life. During the 120 years he lived he saw many changes, but one thing at least remained immutable, even the faithfulness of Him, who is God from everlasting to everlasting.

The infant Moses was born at a most inopportune time according to human reasoning, but in answer to the prayers of his godly parents, and their wise action, his life was divinely preserved from destruction, whilst his people were passing through the furnace of affliction in Egypt. These parents had trustfully committed their child into the hands of God. No hands are so tender, safe and strong; thus all was well! Let the faithfulness of Almighty God to them encourage parents today to do likewise with their children. One danger was miraculously averted but many others lay in the pathway of this little boy. His godly parents were alive to those more subtle dangers that would face their growing lad as he walked the court of Pharaoh. With what diligence and care did his mother, providentially given to be his nurse, saturate the developing mind of her son with the knowledge of the only true and living God! His mind must of necessity also imbibe all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he became mighty in his words and works. Yet the knowledge of God that he had learned at his mother's knee had taken such root in his young mind, that when the vital day of decision arrived, he chose aright. He chose "rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward" (Hebrews 11. 25, 26). Once again let parents take note and be encouraged in their duty of carefully instructing their children in the knowledge of the God of the Bible. If our children have been well grounded in early years, they will be fortified when they must need, like Moses, receive instruction in the wisdom and knowledge of other things, under the educational system of our own day.

We hope that all our readers have made the same wise choice that Moses did. It was made after careful accounting. In the same way the Lord Jesus urges us to count carefully the cost of renouncing all that we have, to become His disciples. Moses accounted wisely when he decided to yield his life into the hands of God. A wonderful life resulted. For the remainder of his life he walked in fellowship with God. How highly God speaks of him! "My servant Moses . . . is faithful in all Mine house: with him I will speak mouth to mouth, . . . and not in dark speeches; and the form of the LORD shall he behold" (Numbers 12. 7, 8). Moses has already seen something of the majesty and glory of Christ, whose reproach he shared (see Luke 9. 29-31), and he will fill an honoured place in His coming glorious kingdom.

This is the Moses who has written Psalm 90. We shall do well therefore to heed carefully what he has written under divine inspiration.

In the opening words he reminds his fellow-travellers in the wilderness that they, like their fathers, were to find a dwelling place in God. In God they were secure. For God is a refuge safer than any fortress. He shelters, comforts, protects, preserves and cherishes all His own. Foxes have holes, but the saints dwell in their God. Kings' palaces have crumbled into ruins and the occupants themselves have returned to dust, but Jehovah is the everlasting dwelling place of His people. We are safe there.

"Abide in Me," said the Lord Jesus, and John 15 tells us something of the resulting peace, joy and fruitfulness. The beloved apostle knew this experimentally and wrote further, "He that keepeth His commandments abideth in Him, and He in him" (1 John 3. 24).

Long before the mountains existed the great Creator God was there, and after they have been dissolved, the everlasting God will remain, the dwelling place of all who have put their trust in Him.

What a contrast to the everlasting God is poor puny man! How frail and transient he is! His body returns to dust. God created him from the dust and at the word of his Creator back to dust he goes.

A thousand years are a long stretch to us. How much may be crowded into it—the rise and fall of many empires, the beginning and end of many elaborate systems of men! But to the everlasting God a millennium is "but as yesterday when it is past."

As a torrent rushes down the river bed, carrying all before it, so does death bear away each succeeding generation of men at the rate of more than 100,000 every day! Man is like grass. In the morning of youth he flourishes, but in the evening he is cut down.

Why must this be? It is not accidental. Sin has come and has provoked the LORD to anger. What a painful sight for Moses to see the whole nation perishing in the wilderness because of sin! Seventy or eighty years is the normal limit of life for man, and their pride is but labour and sorrow. This is still true in things natural today, but in contrast our Lord Jesus has "abolished death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel." Death is changed in its aspect to those in Christ, and is no more a judicial execution. Love and mercy now conduct us to glory. The risen Christ has the keys of death and Hades, and soon the cry of triumph from the countless host of redeemed ones will be heard:—

"O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15. 55, 57).

Moses goes on to say, "Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance." But today we can rejoice, we who by God's abounding grace find a place under the New Covenant, as we hear God saying, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

The aged christian is mellowed by hallowed experience and by a certain hope. The sunset for him is calm, for earth's little day leads not into a dreary night, but into eternal day.

Moses says further, "Who knoweth the power of Thine anger?"

Praise God again for the Man, Christ Jesus, who died, crying from the cross, as it were in the language of Jeremiah,

"Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow, which is done unto Me, wherewith the LORD hath afflicted Me in the day of His fierce anger" (Lamentations 1. 12); or in the Psalmists' words,

"All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me" (Psalm 42. 7).

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27. 46).

*"Jehovah's righteous anger dire,
Fell on His only Son;
He bare the brunt of all God's ire,
And thus our peace was won."*

But woe to those who reject this Saviour! One day they will tremble before the wrath of Almighty God.

In view of the brevity of life, Moses, the man of God, prays, "So teach us to number our days." May we set store by time and use diligently what is left to us to the glory of God! One honoured servant of God said, "We have not enough time at our disposal to waste a single quarter of an hour."

"Return, O LORD!" cries that noble intercessor, pleading again as he did at Sinai. Thank God for the Greater than Moses, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, His failing people.

"O satisfy us in the morning with Thy mercy." What a mercy indeed it is to be saved when we are young! that throughout the rest of our brief life we may be glad and rejoice in God our Saviour. He only is able to gladden our days in this dry and weary land, blighted by sin and sorrow.

"Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants,"—pleads Moses as though anticipating the words of Paul to the Philippians, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for His good pleasure"—"and Thy glory upon their children." Moses had known the hallowed experience of coming out from the presence of God, His face shining with the glory of God. "But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3. 18). "Let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us." With all the subsequent revelation of God given since Moses' day, we can breathe no more lofty prayer. So may it be. So can it be, as we spend more time in the presence of our Beloved, beholding His lovely character, as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and allow the gracious Holy Spirit to reproduce Him in our heart and life. Only thus will our witness be effective and our work established.

*"So grant, I pray Thee, Lord, that by Thy grace
The fragrance of Thy life may dwell in me;
That as I move about from place to place
Men's thoughts may turn to Thee."*

G. H. MUTIMER.

“ I WILL BLESS THEE, AND BE THOU A BLESSING ”

“I will bless thee, . . . and be thou a blessing” (Genesis 12. 2). These words are an illustration of God’s ways in His dealing with men. His blessing is not intended for the exclusive benefit of the recipient, but that the one so blessed may himself become the channel of blessing to others.

If our hearts are illuminated it is that we may become lights. Far too often we overlook this aspect of God’s ways, even when most desirous of knowing His blessing. We forget that the object of all blessing is that this may be diffused in ever-widening circles, as with Abram. First himself, then his family, and ultimately to a nation, and the entire world.

Thus we have the immeasurable influence of a God-blessed life. In the language of the New Testament, “ Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water ” (John 7. 38).

“ Be thou a blessing.”

A. G. JARVIS

FRAGMENTS

Live today as though you would be in heaven tomorrow.

Live in such a manner that you would wish all to be like you.

Live so that you may rejoice when the record of your life is revealed.

Live to the glory of God, and to the blessing of men.

Live so that the Lord may say, “ Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Why should we act unworthily toward the Lord when some fellow-believer does not act properly toward us? Is the Lord to blame for the improper conduct of His own?

The members of the human body do not act falsely toward each other; why should the members of Christ so act? (Ephesians 4. 25).

“ Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all transgressions ” (Proverbs 10. 12).

“ The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver . . . the lips of the righteous feed many ” (Proverbs 10. 20, 21).

The wells of this world are poisoned; “ Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation ” (Isaiah 12. 3).

“ Where no wise guidance is, the people falleth ” (Proverbs 11. 14).

“ There be six things which the LORD hateth;

Yea, seven which are an abomination unto Him:

- (1) Haughty eyes, (2) a lying tongue, (3) and hands that shed innocent blood; (4) an heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, (5) feet that be swift in running to mischief; (6) a false witness that uttereth lies, (7) and he that soweth discord among brethren ” (Proverbs 6. 16-19).

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.”

“The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.”

(Proverbs 15. 8, 9)

“Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD.”

(Proverbs 16. 5)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question : Were those in Hebrews 6, who were once enlightened, really born-again persons ?

Answer : A person who has been enlightened is surely one who is born again, for unregenerate persons are totally in darkness, indeed they are not only in darkness, but are darkness : “For ye once were darkness, but are now light in the Lord : walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5. 8). But note what is also said about those who were enlightened, they tasted of the heavenly Gift, which is another way of saying, “Ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Peter 2. 3). They were made partakers of the Holy Spirit. Are any but saved persons partakers of the Holy Spirit ? I judge not. They tasted the good word of God. Who but a believer tastes of God’s word ? They also tasted of the powers of the age to come. Does a sinner on his way to destruction taste of that age of Messiah to come ? Surely not. They fell away from what and from whom ? They fell away from the living God (Hebrews 3. 12), the God of the house of God (1 Timothy 3. 15), and from the house and people of God. No one can fall away from Christ and be lost eternally.—*J.M.*

Question : Is the Sabbath rest for the people of God, in Hebrews 4. 9, present or future ?

Answer : The word for sabbath rest is *Sabbatismos*, a sabbatism. Note that this sabbatism is like God’s rest on the seventh day, when God rested from His works of the previous six days. This rest is God’s rest. Then we are told in verse 11, “Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest (God’s rest), that no man fall after the same example of disobedience.” If this sabbatism is in heaven, or in the new earth of Revelation 21, is it possible that a saved person can fall through disobedience and fail to enter that rest ? The sabbath rest is a present rest, and this rest is for the people of God, for a collective people, and we have to give diligence to enter this rest. The rest of God today is in His house, it is a place of rest like that of Acts 7. 49. The rest of Hebrews 3 is identical with that of Hebrew 4.—*J.M.*

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

The book of Joshua is a book of victory, save in the defeat sustained at the city of Ai. This defeat was brought about by the disobedience of Achan the troubler, whose covetousness led him to take the Babylonish garment, the two hundred shekels of silver and the wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, from the accursed city of Jericho. The LORD's message to Joshua was, "Israel hath sinned" (Joshua 7. 11). We see in this a solemn truth, how that the sin of one man may bring sin upon all the people with whom he is associated, and the responsibility of that people is to deal with the man and his sin, if they are to continue to be a people pleasing to the Lord. Such was the case of the sinning brother in 1 Corinthians 5. The church in Corinth had to put the man away from among themselves. In Achan's case, he and his family with all that he had were stoned and burnt with fire in the valley of Achor, and over him they raised a great heap of stones as a memorial to the visitation of the LORD's wrath upon a man who disobeyed the word of the LORD in the vital matter of the destruction of Jericho, wherein all was accursed of God.

In the time of the coming of the Son of Man in judgement, when He shall gather out of His kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire (Matthew 13. 41, 42), then shall the valley of Achor be a door of hope. Of that good day for the redeemed of Israel it is said,

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall make answer there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call Me Ishi (my Husband); and shalt call Me no more Baali (my Master)" (Hosea 2. 14-16).

This alluring of the elect remnant of Israel into the wilderness is seen in Isaiah 35. 3-10, Matthew 24. 15-22 and Revelation 12. 6, 13-17, when the obedient will flee from the idolatry of the worship of the beast and his image and from the fearful tribulation which he and the serpent, the devil, shall bring upon all who refuse to bow to this infernal system and worship.

Why is the book of Joshua a record of victory? The answer is contained in the LORD's command to Joshua when he took over the leadership of Israel at the death of Moses:

"This book of the law (known to us as the five books of Moses) shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not success. affrighted, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1. 8, 9).

Herein was the source of Joshua's strength and success as the leader of Israel, in his close adherence to the law of God. Leaders of God's people in any age will find this ever the sure road to real and abiding success. They may have but few followers, even as the Lord Himself had at the end of His days on earth, and as Pual had; for he wrote to Timothy in his last epistle, "This thou knowest, that all that are in Asia turned away from me" (2 Timothy 1. 15). Later on he exhorted Timothy to preach the word, "for," said he, "the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will hearken to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth" (4. 2-4). It was not that the time may come, but "the time will come." The apostasy came and swept over the work of God which He had wrought, in particular, through Paul, and by the end of the first century little was left that bore any resemblance to the truth taught by Paul in every church, when the churches of God were united in doctrine and practice. Little by little the devil filched from God's saints the truth to which they should have held fast, for it was more precious to them and those that followed after than life itself. The wise words of the proverb were, alas, forgotten, "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23. 23).—J.M.

JOTTINGS

*“ Whoso despiseth the word bringeth destruction on himself :
But he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded ”*
(Proverbs 13. 13).

Such is one of the wise sayings of Solomon. How often these words have been fulfilled in the experiences of men ! We have them exemplified in the last chapter of 1 Chronicles and in the last chapter of 2 Chronicles. In 1 Chronicles 29 we have David handing over to his son Solomon the vast treasure, with his own personal fortune, which he had accumulated with all his might to build for God, the King of Israel, a palace in which He might dwell in the midst of His people. Few men have set their affection to the house of God as David did. His longing to be found dwelling in God's house was with him in youth (Psalm 27. 4), and was unabated in his old age. His words, as he praised God in the joy of his heart as he saw his people joined with himself in offering willingly for the building of God's house, are some of the most beautiful to be found in the Scriptures (1 Chronicles 29. 9-20). Here was the end of the reign of David, whose obedience to the LORD was ever to be a measuring rod by which the kings of his house who followed after him would be measured in their adherence or otherwise to God's word. His sun went down as gloriously as it shone upon him in the dawn of his kingship, when as Israel's anointed king in the place of Saul he descended into the vale of Elah to enter into deadly combat with the Philistine champion. Then he was dealing with the enemy without, to the glory of the God of Israel, but at the end of his reign, with enemies without, crushed and gone, he is found in quietness and peace resting from his labours, and giving to God what he regarded as His due, “ for,” said he, “ all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee ” (1 Chronicles 29. 14). So David “ died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour ” (verse 28).

It was far otherwise in the last chapter of 2 Chronicles. What David laboured to gather, his sons who came after him laboured to scatter. There were a few good kings in Judah, such as Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah, but they were not without grievous faults, especially the first three. Between Hezekiah and Josiah came Manasseh and Amon, two of the very worst, and, alas, Josiah's son Jehoiakim and his sons, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah (the last of Judah's kings), were all men who did evil in the sight of the LORD. In Zedekiah's reign of eleven years it says that “ he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD, the God of Israel.” The sad state of the people in general is depicted in the following words :

“ Moreover all the chiefs of the priests, and the people, trespassed very greatly after all the abominations of the heathen ; and they polluted the house of the LORD which He had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the LORD, the God of their fathers, sent to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending ; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place : but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man or ancient : He gave them all into his hand ” (2 Chronicles 36. 14-17).

The Chaldeans burnt God's house and broke down the wall of Jerusalem. They carried away the most of the people who lived through those terrible days to Babylon with the vessels of God's house. All this devastation was caused by the disobedience of God's people to His word. Truly the word of the proverb was abundantly fulfilled : “ Whoso despiseth the word bringeth destruction on himself,” and as true also was the other part fulfilled in David's case, “ But he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.”

Zedekiah the king on whose shoulders rested much of the responsibility for the fearful state of things in Judah was to taste the bitter fruit of his evil doing. The Chaldean army pursued after Zedekiah and his army and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and the sad story is found in 2 Kings 25. 6, 7.

The last sight that Zedekiah saw on earth was the slaughter of his sons. Such was the recompense of sin on earth, but that does not end the tale of evil. Let us hear and fear !—J.M.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

CÆSAREA : THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THE GENTILES (IV)

We have seen how the gospel wrought marvellously among the Jews in Jerusalem, resulting in the bringing together of the disciples as the church of God in that city. Then we have followed the work of Philip among the Samaritans in Samaria, how that first Christ was preached there, and that was followed by the preaching of the good tidings of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ and those who believed were baptized, both men and women. Then we have the case of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch, who was probably a proselyte, for it is said that he had been to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home. Following that we have the conversion of Paul, possibly the most outstanding Jew of his time or, we might say, of any time.

Now we come to the conversion of the Gentiles, of Cornelius and his household. This is a major event in the development of the work of the Lord, the beginning of the gospel being preached to the Gentiles in which the apostle Paul was to be greatly used of God. Cornelius was a devout man. Indeed all three men whose conversions are recorded were what we may call devout men according to their religious views, the eunuch, Saul and Cornelius.

The conversion of Cornelius bears a slight resemblance to that of Saul in that there was divine intervention in the case of each. Cornelius was a praying man and encouraged others to do likewise. It says that he was "a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10. 2). He was probably a representative of a large number of people who are indicated in the beginning of the words of Peter, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him" (verse 34). This class of person is viewed in those of whom Paul writes in Romans 2. 6, 7, "Who (God) will render to every man according to his works : to them that by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life." Such are those who are envisaged in the words of Revelation 20. 12, 15 whose names will be found in the book of life at the judgement of the great white throne. "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne ; and books were opened : and another book was opened, which is the book of life : and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works . . . And if any was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire." These words clearly contemplate that there will be those at the great white throne judgement who will not be cast into the fearsomeness of the lake of fire. The repentant men of Nineveh will be there, who repented at the preaching of Jonah and will condemn all who did not repent at the preaching of Christ, the Greater than Jonah. There will also be the queen of Sheba there,

who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and who will condemn others who did not accept the wisdom of the Greater than Solomon.

God sent to Cornelius an angel who made the remarkable announcement to him, "Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God" (verse 4). He was told to send for Peter who was in Joppa, lodging in the house of Simon a tanner, whose house was by the seaside. Peter, in his defence before them who were of the circumcision amongst the disciples in Jerusalem, repeated what the messengers said when they came from Cæsarea to bring him to Cornelius, "Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house" (Acts 11. 13, 14).

Not only had Cornelius a vision of an angel, but Peter also had the vision of the sheet which was let down from heaven wherein were all manner of beasts, creeping things, and fowls of the heaven. He was told to arise, kill and eat. He remonstrated with the Lord, that he had never eaten anything that was common and unclean. Whereupon he was told, "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." This refers back to what is said in Mark 7. 15-20, where we read, "There is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man . . . Because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draught. This He said, making all meats clean." Here the Lord changed the matter of the eating of meats for His disciples. It was a hard lesson for those who had been brought up under the Levitical law, wherein in the past dispensation God divided between things clean and unclean. Paul who was a Jew clearly understood the dispensational change that had taken place. He says, "I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus (this means, I judge, by the Lord's teaching), that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Romans 14. 14).

The change of the law of Christ relative to meats is definitely connected with the bringing in of the Gentiles to share in the same blessings as the Jews, as we read in Ephesians 3. 6, 7, "that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, whereof I was made a minister." Here we have the Gentiles being eternally blessed of God without any conformity to the ceremonial side of the law of God applicable to Israel in the Old Testament. This is clearly shown in the words of Peter which flowed from his enlightened understanding, "Unto me hath God shewed that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10. 28).

Thus it was that while Peter was perplexed about the vision of the sheet which he had seen, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men seek thee. But arise, and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them" (verses 19, 20).

On the morrow they set out for Cæsarea, and six of the disciples accompanied them, and when they came to Cæsarea they found Cornelius waiting for them. When Cornelius met Peter he fell at his feet and worshipped him, but Peter said to him, "Stand up; I myself also am a man." He found that many were gathered together in the house, and Peter explained the situation to them, and Cornelius also told his experience of how he was keeping the ninth hour of prayer in his house and he saw a man in white apparel who told him to send to Joppa for Simon, who was surnamed Peter. Following this Peter preached the gospel to Cornelius and the assembled company, winding up with the words, "To Him bear all the prophets witness, that through His name every one that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins" (verse 43). Here were the words by which Cornelius was saved. He was not saved until he had believed on Christ, though had he died before he heard and believed the gospel he would have been found among those at the great white throne whose names are in the book of life. Salvation is by faith in Christ in the case of those to whom the gospel comes.

It should be noted that here remission of sins is by believing in Christ, not by confession, as in 1 John 1. 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Confession of sins would be impossible for the sinner. His sins are too many to think of confessing them before God. Confession is the responsibility of the children of God that they may live in fellowship with God. All that the sinner is called upon to do is to believe in Christ and remission of sins is his; he is saved from hell; he is justified by faith; he is indwelt by the Holy Spirit; etc. Faith and faith alone puts him beyond the doom of sin. Rome claims, falsely, that Peter was the first pope. But the Romanist will not listen to Peter as to how sins are forgiven, and Rome has instituted the fearful evil of the confessional, teaching that men should confess their sins to a mere man, a sinner like any other, and from him receive remission. Alas, that so many are caught in this snare of the devil, and sail on to eternity on Rome's false promises, only to find that Rome's forgiveness is not acknowledged in heaven.

While Peter yet spoke his closing words about believing in Christ, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. The Jewish believers who accompanied Peter were amazed, because that on the Gentiles was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. The evidence of this gift was seen in that those who were gathered together to hear Peter spoke with tongues and magnified God, like as those had done on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. Here was the commencement of the fulfilment of the word of Peter in Jerusalem, "To you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him" (Acts 2. 39). Christ by the Spirit (1 Peter 1. 12) was preaching peace to them that were far off as well as to those that were nigh (Ephesians 2. 17).

Following the baptism of the believing Gentiles in one Spirit into the one Body by the Lord, Peter asked, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" There was no opposition raised by the Jewish brethren, so Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Peter remained with them for certain days at their request, and no doubt during that time he taught them many things proper to the disciple pathway, according to his commission given by the Lord in Matthew 28. 19, 20: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (age)." Believers should not be left after their conversion to find their own way as best they can, but should be taught the way of the Lord carefully (Acts 18. 26). Here perchance was the beginning of the church of God in Cæsarea, and here Philip the evangelist resided. There Paul tarried many days on his journey to Jerusalem (Acts 21. 8, 15, 16).

We have now seen that to the Jews in Jerusalem the word was, that they should repent and be baptized and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2. 38). In the case of the Samaritans, they received Christ and were afterwards baptized, but they did not receive the Holy Spirit until Peter and John had laid their hands upon them (Acts 8. 14-17), and here in the case of the Gentiles the Holy Spirit was given at the moment of their believing and before baptism in water and without the laying on of hands. The principle on which the Holy Spirit was to be given, and is given, is that of faith in Christ: "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive" (John 7. 39). Paul asked the Galatians, "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Galatians 3. 2). The answer to this question is obvious, it was by the hearing of faith. See also Ephesians 1. 13.

We who are Gentiles cannot be too thankful for what is contained in Acts 10, in which we see how the Lord dealt with those who were Gentiles in the flesh.

J. MILLER.

THE TABERNACLE

Sockets of Silver

The sockets which formed the foundation of the LORD's house were made of silver obtained from the atonement money. When the children of Israel were numbered every one that passed over unto them that were numbered gave half a shekel of silver after the shekel of the sanctuary. From every man twenty years old and upward this was required. The rich were not to give more, and the poor were not to give less than the half shekel. This atonement money from the children of Israel was appointed for the service of the tent of meeting, and became a memorial for the people before the LORD, to make atonement for their souls. Compare Exodus 26. 19-25; 36. 20-34.

Many imperfect teachings have been associated with the interpretation of the silver sockets, and before we proceed to deal with the interpretation, according to our understanding, we must make some preliminary remarks as to the teaching of silver in other connexions. We wish to emphasize later that what these silver sockets set forth has to do with the service of a redeemed people, but confusion exists when the redemption from sin is not differentiated from redemption to service. Therefore we would first desire to make some remarks concerning redemption in its elementary aspect.

The Lord Jesus died to redeem us from the pit, as we read in Job **33. 24**, "Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a Ransom (kopher)." This is He "who gave Himself a Ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times" (1 Timothy **2. 6**). The word for Ransom here is *antilutron*, and means a corresponding price for all. Of men, both high and low, rich and poor together, it is written, "They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom (kopher) for him; (for the redemption of their soul is costly, and must be let alone for ever)" (Psalm **49. 6-8**). Of Christ, however, we read that He gave the price required for redemption, and it is thus that He is now the Saviour of men, and, blessed be God, He is both able and willing to save.

We linger over the costliness of this great redemption. It has been expressed like this: take all the wealth of all the millionaires, their millions could not buy redemption; take all the wealth of all the world, even this must fail to make the purchase; but there is One whose riches are unsearchable (Ephesians **3. 8**), lo, He has come. Surely His riches will suffice to pay the ransom in demand! Ah, no, even His unsearchable riches could not meet the need, and, wonderful to relate, "Christ Jesus . . . gave *Himself* a Ransom for all." His precious blood had to flow.

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

If we could estimate the worth of Christ then we might place an estimate on His work, but this can never be done. His worth no heart can conceive, no tongue can tell.

We now proceed to deal with the special significance of the silver sockets. What we have said above applies to all the redeemed in Christ, but we must clearly realize that not all the redeemed have reached the same spiritual condition of exercise in service. Those who gave the half shekel were already in possession of the freedom associated with redemption from Egypt, but now they have the matter brought before them in relation to the house of God. We cannot emphasize too much the fact that the silver sockets have to do with the house of God.

The Hebrew word *Kopher*, with its Greek equivalent *lutron*, means a covering, to pay quittance, a ransom. Without this silver half shekel a plague from the LORD would have come upon them, but by its payment they were loosed from divine judgement. It was the ransom price. There is no mention of the ransom price having been paid when David numbered the people, and we judge in consequence the plague from the LORD was upon the land (2 Samuel 24). Our redemption, however, was not accomplished by such corruptible things as silver or gold, but with precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1. 18, 19).

We should note that those to whom Peter wrote were persons who were in and of God's house, and their redemption is referred to as from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers. It was unto that holy living which was in keeping with the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, unto which they had been elected. See 1 Peter 1. 2, 14, 15.

Here we might note the three aspects of redemption. The first is that we have already dealt with, namely, redemption from the pit. The second is, "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for His own possession, zealous of good works" (Titus 2. 14); with Galatians 1. 3-5, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world (or age) according to the will of our God and Father: to whom be the glory for ever and ever." Then the third aspect of redemption is referred to in Ephesians 1. 14, where we are told that the sealing of the Holy Spirit of promise "is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of His glory." Thus when the Lord descends "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" and the dead and the living in Christ are caught up to meet Him in the air, our redemption will be consummated.

Meanwhile, let us bear in mind that the work of Christ upon the cross is intended to loose us from our former mode of living, and to bring us under the authority of the Lord, to find our guide in the word of God, as enlightened by the blessed Holy Spirit.

The Lordship of Christ is of prime importance, and we judge the Holy Spirit draws our attention to it in the sockets of silver. The Hebrew word *eden*, translated socket, is from the same root as *adon*, which means lord, master, owner. How true that we, the redeemed, are His by mighty purchase, and we should sanctify Christ as Lord in our hearts! He to whom we belong expects this from us. It is His due. Thus in this word for sockets we seem to hear the Spirit's voice, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made Him both *Lord* and *Christ*, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2. 36). "Ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Corinthians 6. 19, 20). Subjection to His authority is foundational in connexion with the

house of God, and we should be found enjoying a daily salvation in obedience to the word of truth. As those Israelites laid hold of the silver coin and presented it before the LORD, so let us lay hold upon the work of Christ, the great Redeemer, and present Him before God in our lives.

A VALUABLE FOUNDATION

We now draw attention to the value of the silver which was in the foundation of the LORD's dwelling. We read, "And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation was an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary: . . . And the hundred talents of silver were for casting the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the veil; an hundred sockets for the hundred talents, a talent for a socket" (Exodus 38. 25-27). The talent of silver was long ago estimated to be worth £342, and the hundred talents would represent nearly £34,220; today its value would greatly exceed this sum.

This was a high value to be in the foundation, and surely the Holy Spirit directs our hearts to muse upon the costly foundational work of Christ at the cross. The shadow takes us part way, but only God can appreciate fully what it cost to have a people together forming His house on earth, a people redeemed from all iniquity, and purified unto Himself—a people for His own possession, zealous of good works. Has not this side of truth been largely, if not entirely, lost sight of in Christendom today? Is it not so that redemption from the pit is the chief concern of the many, while Christ's death to the end "that He might also gather together into one (one thing) the children of God that are scattered abroad" is forgotten or unknown? Oh that the costliness of the redemptive work of Christ in its second aspect would impress us more! Our prayer may well be,

*"Light and repentance give
Those who are unaware,
Dark error binds their feet
In Satan's subtle snare;
Unfold Thy way of unity,
Show them the one Community."*

A WEIGHTY FOUNDATION

The total weight of silver used in the hundred sockets was a little over five tons, thus it was a weighty foundation in which the tenons of the boards found firmness and solidity. Had the sockets of silver been lacking the boards would have had the sands of the desert for their foundation, but God will not have His work reared on anything so unstable. Paul in 1 Corinthians 3. 10, 11 makes reference to this foundation for the house. He refers to the assembly in Corinth as a temple of God, the part being of the character of the whole. "As a wise master-builder I laid a foundation." What was this foundation? He adds, "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Christ is the foundation, and the Chief

Corner Stone (Ephesians **2. 20**), and "each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." Thus we have the house of God and its foundation. Here are solidity and strength. Men therein may go wrong, apostasy may sweep many away, "Howbeit the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness" (2 Timothy **2. 19**).

Doubtless at the time of the writing of 2nd Timothy the faith of many had been overthrown, but the firm foundation of God stood, and those who named the name of the Lord departed from unrighteousness, which involved leaving children of God who were holding wrong doctrine, and clung to the firm foundation of God. Was not this seen also in the days of the Remnant? Those who heard and heeded the call of God came up to Jerusalem, got down to the old foundations, and builded the house of God. If children of God will heed the call of God today and depart from unrighteousness they can find the firm foundation of God whereon to build. In both Corinth and Ephesus the foundation that was laid was Jesus Christ—that wonderful Person, and His wonderful work. The foundation was mighty and it was firm.

As the silver was appointed to its place in the sockets for the boards, and in the fillets and hooks and chapters of the court there was a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD. Here was something to preserve in the memory of the LORD the relation to Himself of a redeemed people. But He had other memorials indicating their standing. Thus on the shoulders of the high priest were stones of memorial for the children of Israel, engraven on which were the names of the twelve tribes according to their birth (Exodus **28. 9, 12**). The LORD delights to have His people in remembrance before Him. As He looks upon His Son, who is alive in the power of an endless life, He sees His redeemed today, and He remembers us; for He has made Christ Jesus to be wisdom unto us, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption (1 Corinthians **1. 30**), so we may well glory in the Lord.

Let us also remember that He who makes a memorial for us in heaven has commanded us to make a memorial for Him on earth, that is, in the breaking of the bread. Precious indeed is the privilege of so doing on the first day of the week, which was the custom of the early disciples, as see Acts **20. 7**. We are assured that the Lord is delighted to observe His people attending to this ordinance. There are other memorials of service. In Ezra **6. 1** it is said that "search was made in the house of the archives (records)." This is the same word that is translated memorial in connexion with the silver of the atonement money, and the stones of memorial. Let us consider afresh the solemn truth that our records will be examined one day, and let us ask, What will the examination reveal at the Judgement-seat?

There is that which Christ is unto us, which is perfect ; but there is also that which we do in service, and it is most important that this be done as unto the Lord, and not unto men : knowing that from the Lord we shall receive the recompense of the inheritance ; we serve the Lord Christ.

G. PRASHER.

“ IN THE LORD ”

“ Ye call Me, Master, and Lord : and ye say well ; for so I am ” (John 13. 13). Thus spake the Lord Jesus in the night of His betrayal as He was alone with the twelve. Soon afterwards that same One passed through death and rose again from the dead, victorious and triumphant, having received from God the Father

ALL AUTHORITY

in heaven and on earth (Matthew 28. 18).

“ God hath made Him both Lord and Christ ” (Acts 2. 36). God hath highly exalted Him that every tongue shall be made to confess, while every knee is bowed, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2. 9-11).

The Lordship of Christ is not an empty title, devoid of significance. Many kings of earth have borne titles that in reality carried little or no authority. But He who is Lord of lords has all authority in heaven and on earth ; and those who have been redeemed by His precious blood should be the first unreservedly to acknowledge that authority. When we think of Him as Lord we must think of the authority this implies. Truly, to call Him “ Lord ” is to say well. “ Why call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ? ” (Luke 6. 46). Being Lord, He has authority ; having authority He requires obedience. He may be honoured with our lips, but where is our subjection to His authority ? Where is the doing that answers to our profession ? And where is the place in which the words that head this article find their application ?

Every born-again person is “ in Christ. ” This is the work of divine grace. “ If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature ” (2 Corinthians 5. 17). Such a place is not conditional, and continues even after death, for it is written “ the dead in Christ shall rise first ” (1 Thessalonians 4. 16).

“ In the Lord ” is something different. It means our subjection to His authority, by obedience to the Faith contained in the Scriptures. It is not a position reached once for all the moment we are saved. It has to do with walk, life, obedience, indeed, the sanctifying of Christ as Lord in our hearts.

The Scriptures use the name “ Lord ” in particular settings that are very instructive. Very early in the Acts it becomes apparent that God’s will for believers was that they should be baptized and added to the church of God which was in Jerusalem. Therefore, it is written,

“*The Lord* added to them (or ‘together’) day by day those that were being saved” (Acts 2. 47 ; see also verses 41, 42). Here the mind of *the Lord* is clear—He would add those who are saved to churches of God after baptism. And not only did the Lord add, but in being added the believers were added to the Lord. “Believers were the more added to *the Lord*” (Acts 5. 14).

In 1 Peter 2. 3-5 the apostle taught those who had not only been redeemed (1. 18, 19), but were “elect . . . unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1. 1, 2), concerning a present coming to the Lord, not for salvation, but to be built up a spiritual house, God’s house. “If ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious : unto whom coming . . . ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house.” Here, as in other portions of Holy Scripture, the person of the Lord is inseparably linked with the house and the churches of God.

The apostle Paul, writing to the church of God in Corinth (1 Corinthians 1. 2), reminded them of those early days when he had planted the Assembly. “I planted,” “I laid a foundation” (3. 6, 10). And to those who were thus planted and gathered together as the church of God in Corinth he wrote, “Are not ye my work in the Lord ? . . . The seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 9. 1, 2). The church of God in Corinth was God’s building (1 Corinthians 3. 9). And “each several building (wherever churches of God are found), fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord” (Ephesians 2. 21).

The foregoing scriptures reveal a use of the Lord’s name that has no wider application than the house of God, which is God’s dwelling place on earth, and wherein is carried out the will of God on earth.

When these early churches therefore commended a saint from one church to another, e.g., Phœbe (Romans 16. 1, 2) and Epaphroditus (Philippians 2. 29), or sent greetings (Romans 16. 8, 11, 12, 13 ; 1 Corinthians 16. 19) such was done “in the Lord” as befitted assemblies where the authority of the Lord was acknowledged. Churches of God must necessarily carry out the revealed mind and will of God, giving effect to the Faith which has once for all been delivered to the saints. With this, viz., the Faith, the Lord has co-joined His great name. “One Lord, one Faith” (Ephesians 4. 5). And exhortation is given to stand fast in both. “Stand fast in the Lord” (Philippians 4. 1 ; 1 Thessalonians 3. 8) ; “Stand fast in the Faith” (1 Corinthians 16. 13). It would be a fallacy to claim that one was in the Lord where the Faith was being denied by disobedience to its teaching. There will be a practical application of being “in the Lord” in carrying out God’s will and giving effect to the pattern of His house. This involves our subjection to the authority of the Lord, both in our relationships to one another and to those who are outside the house of God.

Various cases are briefly given for consideration :—

1. Oversight. “. . . over you in the Lord ” (1 Thessalonians 5. 12). If the authority of the Chief Shepherd is to be exercised, it is necessary that there should be those “ that labour among you, and are over you,” “ and admonish you.” These “ have the rule over you ” and “ exercise the oversight ” and “ tend the flock of God,” who must also be obeyed in the Lord by the saints for the well-being and continuance of the Testimony upon the earth. Where both overseers rule and the saints obey in the Lord, happy and blessed indeed will be that people.

2. Wives. “ Be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord ” (Colossians 3. 18). For those who find their place in God’s house there is an attitude that befits such a position of being “ in the Lord.” It is one of subjection, where such is not in conflict with the will of God.

3. Children. “ Obey your parents in the Lord : for this is right ” (Ephesians 6. 1). Here again is that subjection to authority, which is declared to be right. How quickly and effectively is the Testimony marred by disobedience! Let those that would be “ in the Lord ” learn obedience even in young years. “ In the Lord ” is right ; insubjection or disobedience is wrong and not honouring to the Lord.

4. Estrangement. “ Be of the same mind in the Lord ” (Philippians 4. 2). Differences, clashes of personality and such like, if let go loose will soon cause differences of mind in spiritual things and coldness of brotherly love. Where the rule and authority of the Lord are heeded through the cleansing word, where there is subjection one to another and where there is due regard for “ labour ” (verse 3) then “ in the Lord ” will bring about the blessed unity so needful in the house of God.

5: Marriage. “ Free to be married . . . ; only in the Lord ” (1 Corinthians 7. 39). This does not mean that a believer within the house of God and a believer outside the house are free to marry. “ In the Lord ” are restrictive words that include only those who are obedient to the revealed truth of God, having been baptized and added to the churches of God. Marriage is between two who both firstly obeyed the Lord to please Him alone. It is not to be entered into as an inducement to seek fellowship.

Other matters (e.g. Colossians 4. 17 ; 1 Corinthians 15. 58) have been brought within the terms of “ in the Lord ” and the principles set out above will apply. In fact, it can safely be said that, wherever the name of the Lord is used in connexion with that in which believers may engage, it carries the weight of obedience and subjection to the risen Lord in the doing of the revealed will of God on the part of those who would be so engaged (e.g. in the Remembrance).

“ Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord : walk as children of light . . . proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord (Ephesians 5. 8, 10).

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FROM THE HEART

“ My son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind : for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts ” (1 Chronicles 28. 9). “ Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart ” (1 Samuel 16. 7).

The words of David to his son Solomon are very revealing, showing the heart of David, and his knowledge of the ways of God. But though Solomon was so plainly told by his father, this truth does not seem to have gripped him, for in his latter days we read that “ his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father ” (1 Kings 11. 4). Little by little other things crept into his heart, and the wise words of David were forgotten. He still offered sacrifices, but his heart was no longer perfect with the LORD.

We also need to learn this important truth that the Lord is searching our hearts, and that He understands all the imaginations of our thoughts. To Him, thoughts are the same as words or deeds. So we read “ Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer ” (1 John 3. 15). To men, there is a great difference between merely hating and murder, but before God they are the same. It is the pure in heart who see God (Matthew 5. 8). Let us take care of the inside and the outside will take care of itself.

Moses commanded the people of Israel to love the LORD with all their heart and soul and might (Deuteronomy 6. 5). David said, “ Serve Him with a perfect heart ”; and Paul uses strong words when he says, “ If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema ” (1 Corinthians 16. 22). We must guard against a heart that turns away from the living God. Coldness of heart toward God is something to be confessed with tears before Him. Lukewarmness in prayer and in reading the word is an evidence of a heart that is not right with Him. We may continue in our attendance at meetings, and yet the heart may well-nigh have ceased to love the Lord. Our brethren will look at the outward appearance, and note our attendance at the meetings, but the Lord is looking on our hearts. How are we in our hearts? How am I? How are you? Sometimes when we visit the hospitals in Burma, and talk with the patients, they will show us the big X-ray photograph of their bodies. They know that their physical health depends upon the condition of the vital organs inside, and not merely the condition of their skin.

Oh then let us be concerned about the inside of our spiritual being, the thoughts of our hearts! Let us see that these are right with the Lord and with our brethren. We know that if anyone sins against us, and confesses his fault, we must forgive him, but the Lord added something to that, and He said that we must forgive him *from the heart* (Matthew 18. 35). Why did He add that? Is it not enough that we are prepared to try and forget about it, and let bygones be bygones? Ah no! He knows us better than we do ourselves. He knows that the human heart is treacherous, and deceitful and

desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17. 9). When we have agreed to forgive and to shake hands and smile again, we need to go into the presence of God alone, and there seek grace, and declare before Him that it has been done from the heart. In the very hour that we are looking into the face of our brother or sister, the Lord is looking into our heart. If we have truly learned the lesson that "the LORD looketh on the heart," then we shall be saved from a hundred pitfalls. It will save us from all deceit and hypocrisy, and we shall become pure in heart.

In Acts 4. 32, we read about the multitude of the disciples, that they "were of one heart and soul." That was a wonderful condition, for they were all so dissimilar in many ways, even as we are. "They continued stedfastly," we read, "in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers." But they did more than that! They did it with one heart and soul, and that oneness of heart and soul brought great grace and great power when they prayed (Acts 4. 31-33). Great power and great grace have never been known except where there was great oneness of heart and soul. Why so? Because the Lord looketh on the heart, and He will never trust His power, that is the power of the Holy Spirit, with those whose hearts are not truly one with their brethren and sisters.

What shall we do then? Shall we not resolve with a great resolve of heart, that every base thought, and every deceitful thought, and every proud thought, shall be brought out before God, and solemnly confessed before Him, and forgiveness obtained? And if we have wronged brethren or sisters, by any wrong thought or word or act, shall we not go to them, and confess it before them, and seek their forgiveness? If the presence and the power of God can only be found by those who are pure in heart, and who are of one heart and soul, then let us pay the price whatever it may be.

If on the other hand we are not prepared to pay the price of openness and oneness of heart and soul, then let us resign ourselves to the fruitless and powerless lives that we may live, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. But even though we choose to cover the thoughts of our hearts now, the day is coming when the Lord "will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (1 Corinthians 4. 5). Whichever way we choose the thoughts of our hearts cannot be hid. But with so short a life, and so great an opportunity of service for God, shall we not cry as David did—

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart :
Try me, and know my thoughts ;
And see if there be any way of wickedness in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting"* (Psalm 139. 23-24).

But do not let it finish there. When He has searched and known and tried us, then let us follow as He leads us. Even if it mean humbling and confession then let it be so for His glory. This will be followed by the sweetness of His presence, and the greatness of His power.

G. JARVIE.

THE POWER OF EXAMPLE

In most of the manual occupations it is customary to link the apprentice to a man of experience, so that the learner may master his trade both in theory and practice. He not only is given instruction as to what he should do, but is perfectly entitled to ask for a demonstration. A good journeyman will be delighted to do this for the young learner and as he sees his progress, encourage him to use what personal gift or skill he may be endowed with.

The apostle Paul wrote to his child in faith, Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2. 15).

The apostle had no hesitation in instructing Timothy with important work. He had served alongside that prince of workmen and had proved himself a worthy servant and fellow-worker. Writing of him to the Philippians Paul said, "But ye know the proof of him, that as a child serveth a father, so he served with me as the ministry of the gospel" (Philippians 2. 22). Timothy, and all others who heard the apostle's teaching, saw in the teacher a living example of the doctrines; hence Paul could say, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11. 1).

The spiritual growth of young disciples must certainly give us grave concern today. It is very easy to point out some of the errors of their ways, but more than that is called for to effect their deliverance from these errors and to lead them on in the right ways of the Lord. To be effective, right precepts need to be strengthened by example—thus it was that Paul exhorted Timothy as in 1 Timothy 4. 10, "Be thou an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity."

The more mature amongst God's people must give the lead. What an incentive it must have been to the young warrior Joshua, as he led newly-redeemed Israel that day against that cruel and ancient foe, Amalek, to know that Moses was on the hilltop with his hands raised in supplication. "In all things I gave you an example," said Paul to the elders from Ephesus.

And who is this servant of the Lord, who was used so mightily during those eighteen months in Corinth? Let us go along to the home of Priscilla and Aquilla and see them together at their humble trade making tents. What a noble, yet unassuming man was "the apostle of the Gentiles."

"The things which ye both learned and received and saw in me, those things do, and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4. 9).

R. Shaw.

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

Three Hebrew words are used in the Old Testament for "forgive": *Nasah*, which literally means "to lift," "to carry"; *Salach*, to forgive or pardon, and of this word Gesenius says, the "primary idea is that of lightness, lifting up"; *Kaphar*, to cover, to make atonement, to expiate. Intimately associated with the thought of forgiveness is that of covering sin. Thus David sang in Psalm 32. 1, 2:

"Blessed (a plural of excellence) is he whose transgression is forgiven (Nasah), whose sin is covered. (Casah, to cover some person or thing with anything).

Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." (See Romans 4. 6-8).

Then he said,

"I acknowledged (Yada, to see and know) my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD, and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (verse 5).

When David said to Nathan the prophet, "I have sinned against the LORD," Nathan said to him, "The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Samuel 12. 13). The tremendous load which had lain upon David's conscience was lifted up and put away by the LORD. His terrible distress is revealed in the words,

*"When I kept silence, my bones waxed old
Through my roaring all the day long.
For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me:
My moisture was changed as with the drought of summer"*

(Psalm 32. 3, 4).

Here is a graphic description of a sinner under conviction of sin, and gravely afraid that he may die in his sin. His conscience is alarmed and his heart is bowed under the weight of his sin. But when he knew that his sin was forgiven and covered before the LORD, and that the LORD would not impute iniquity to him, his groans gave place to a song; the hand of the LORD which had been heavy upon him, now lifted from his conscience the burden of guilt. Such was David's experience.

Men then might, and men now may, point to David's sin, as they did and do, (and he gave cause for the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme), but the joy of forgiveness was David's, deep and abiding.

Often men have thought that God might for some reason withdraw His forgiveness and land them back in the place where they were before they were forgiven. Such was the thought of Joseph's brothers after their father died. They sent a message to him as is recorded in Genesis 50. 15-21 which, please read, noting verses 16, 17.

"Thy father did command before he died, saying, so shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive (Nasah), I pray thee now, the transgression of thy brethren, and their sin, for that they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the transgressions of the servants of the God of thy father":

Joseph had given to his brethren the kiss of forgiveness and of reconciliation, in Genesis 45. 14, 15. He had assured them that he would nourish them and would give to them the land of Goshen, the best part of the land of Egypt. But, alas, their past sins, which Joseph had forgiven years before, were a terror to them. Joseph told them not to fear; he would continue to nourish them as he had been doing for years.

There are, alas, those in our day, despite the faithful words of the gospel, who are tossed about between hopes and fears. One is not astonished at the fear of the Roman Catholics, whose forgiveness is simply the forgiveness of a mere man who is himself beset with sins, as many as, or more than, those whom he pretends to forgive. Also in their transaction there is the handing over of money. Simon Magus sought to obtain the gift of God with money (Acts 8. 18-24). The forgiveness of sins is a free gift from God to all who believe (Acts 10. 43), without the mediation of any man-made priest; and when God forgives He forgets the sins He has forgiven (Hebrews 8. 12; 10. 17). Thus there can be no imputing of sin to the believer, Hallelujah!—J.M.

JOTTINGS

Forgiveness and justification by faith are twin truths, but though they are twins they are not identical. Forgiveness (*Aphemi*, to send away) means the sending away of the sins of the forgiven sinner. It is well illustrated by the act of the high priest of Israel on the day of Atonement. The high priest having, with the blood of the goat on which the lot fell for Jehovah, made atonement for the holy place, the tent of meeting, for all the assembly of Israel, and the altar that was before Jehovah, presented the live goat for Azazel (or the scapegoat), which means the goat for departure or dismissal. The words of the law concerning this are—

“ And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins ; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a man that is in readiness into the wilderness : and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a solitary land : and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness ” (Leviticus 16. 21, 22).

This illustrates what happened at Golgotha. Isaiah says, “All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all ” (Isaiah 53. 6). Peter taking up the same theme says, “ Who His own Self bare our sins in His body upon the tree ” (1 Peter 2. 24). Isaiah and Peter speak the language of believers of the atonement of Christ. John the Baptist speaks not of sins, but of sin, when he says, “ Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ” (John 1. 29). This must not be read, “ the sins of the world ” ; the “ sin of the world ” is what is called “ original sin,” that is, that state of sin transmitted to all mankind (with the exception of the Lord in whom there was and is no sin), of which Paul writes, “ Through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners,” and, “ Through one man sin entered into the world ” (Romans 5. 19, 12). The Lord has taken away the sin of the world, therefore no infant shall be lost because it is one of Adam’s ruined race. It is a tragic fallacy that unless an infant is sprinkled with water from a priest’s hands, or a nurse’s or doctor’s hands, its hope of eternal bliss is gone. It is the blood of the Lamb of God that secures for the infant a place in eternal glory. No one of Adam’s ruined race will be lost because of original sin, because of being shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin (Psalm 51. 5). Did not David, whose transgression was forgiven and sin covered, say of his child that died, “ I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me ” (2 Samuel 12. 23) ; this child had no priestly water sprinkled upon it and would be in happiness in the place where its father David would also be.

Justification means the showing or declaring a person to be just. In the case of the Lord it is said, “ He is near that justifieth Me ” (Isaiah 50. 8), and He was “ justified in the Spirit ” (1 Timothy 3. 16). Though men condemned Him to death and crucified Him, God has shown Him to be just, in His raising Him from the dead, and will yet declare Him to be just before the inhabited earth. The inherent righteousness of the Lord, both as God and Man, was unstained by the lawless action of men toward Him.

In the case of the believing sinner, whose sins are all forgiven for Christ’s sake, and who has no righteousness of his own, “ his faith is reckoned for righteousness ” (Romans 4. 5). Righteousness is imputed to him, so that one who was barren of all righteousness receives what is called in Romans 5. 17, “ the gift of righteousness.” He becomes the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5. 21). Isaiah speaks of this transaction, which had been his own experience, in pictorial language, when he says, “ He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with a garland, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels ” (Isaiah 61. 10). In such beautiful garments saints shall remain for ever, fit inhabitants of heaven and of the land of glory yet to be revealed because of God’s work on them in Christ. They are justified by God (Romans 8. 33), and by Christ (Acts 13. 39). They are justified by His blood (Romans 5. 9), by His grace (Romans 3. 24), and by faith (Romans 5. 1). Note that forgiveness and justification are twin brothers, in Acts 13. 38, 39 ; Romans 4. 1-8, 25.—J.M.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

ANTIOCH IN SYRIA, THE GENTILE CENTRE

Following upon the defence of Peter before the brethren who were of the Circumcision in Judæa as to his going in to eat with men who were uncircumcised, in which at that time he successfully quenched their opposition to his action, we are told that "when they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11. 1-18). After this the Spirit, through Luke, takes up the theme of the scattering of the disciples from Jerusalem, which he had left off in Acts 8. 4 to tell of the Lord's work in Samaria through Philip, and other matters consistent with the flow of his narrative. Those that were scattered "upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews." Among them were "men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus" (Acts 11. 19-26). Quite independently of the revelation which was made to Peter in Acts 10, these brethren seemed to be led of the Holy Spirit to speak the divine message to the Greeks. This is both an interesting and remarkable fact. The outward flow of the word of God was not here through the apostles, but through men who, no doubt, had been reached in Jerusalem through the preaching of the apostles. It shows how God may and can bless the preaching of His gospel through what we may call, if we are not misunderstood, ordinary men who are filled with zeal for the furtherance of His work. This is encouragement for all who would serve the Lord. We are told that "the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord." It is evident from these words that these persons went further than simply believing on the Lord Jesus, they went on to bow to the lordship of Christ; they believed and turned unto the Lord.

The report of this work of God reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas "as far as Antioch." These words are important as showing that Barnabas was not sent forth wholly to the Lord's work, as he was later when he and Saul (Paul) were sent forth by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13. 1-3).

When Barnabas reached Antioch he was glad when he saw the manifestation of the grace of God in those who had been reached with the word, and he exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they should abide with (*Prosmenein*) the Lord to whom they had turned. Barnabas we are told "was a good man and full of the Holy Spirit," and in consequence of his visit, the church of God in Antioch was planted in fellowship with the church of God in Jerusalem and all other similar churches. This is clearly seen in the words, "much people was added unto the Lord." We have only to go back to Acts 2 to see the meaning of these words "added unto the Lord." Verse 41 says, "They then that received his word were baptized:

and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls." Again in verse 47 we read, "And the Lord added together (R.V. marg.) day by day those that were being saved." And yet again we read, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5. 14). Such as were found in the churches of God were both added by the Lord and added to the Lord, to be subject to His authority and obedient to His word.

As the work of God grew it seems evident that Barnabas felt the need of a co-worker, so we are told, "And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul." He and Saul had earlier association in divine things, for when Saul came to Jerusalem from Damascus to become acquainted with Peter, and sought to join (to be glued to) the disciples, they were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple, it was Barnabas who took him and brought him to the apostles, and declared how he had seen the Lord in the way and had preached boldly in the name of Jesus at Damascus (Acts 9. 26, 27). When he had found Saul he brought him to Antioch and for a whole year they were gathered with the church, which had been planted earlier on the coming of Barnabas from Jerusalem, and they taught much people. The effect of their teaching was manifestly seen in the lives of the disciples in the church in Antioch, for there the disciples were first called Christians. The word "called" here (*Chrematizō*) is frequently used in the New Testament of God for giving a warning or communication (Matthew 2. 12, 22; Luke 2. 26; Hebrews 11. 7, etc.), but the word as commonly used by the Greeks showed how they named persons because of the business in what they were engaged. In this sense it is used here; the disciples, as to their work, were viewed as Christ's ones, followers of Christ, that is, their behaviour and work were like His. It is used in a similar way in Romans 7. 3 where an unfaithful spouse is called an adulteress. Her actions led to her being so called. See Acts 26. 28; 1 Peter 4. 16, where the word Christian is also used. The name Christian, by whomsoever coined, is not an opprobrious name, but a name to glorify God in, and not to be ashamed of.

Acts 11. 27-30 shows how truly the church of God in Antioch was joined in fellowship with the churches of God in Judæa, for when Agabus a prophet (Acts 21. 10) signified by the Spirit that there was to be a great world famine, which came in the days of Claudius, the disciples in Antioch determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa. Let verse 30 be carefully noted that they sent the relief to the elders of the churches in Judæa by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. Here we see the elders of the churches in Judæa acting together in dealing with the supplies which had come to meet the distress of the needy in those churches. We see the churches of Macedonia and Achaia acting together in sending relief to the saints in Jerusalem at a later time (Romans 15. 26; 1 Corinthians 16. 1-4; 2 Corinthians 8. 1; 9. 2, 13). This acting together of churches and the elders of those churches in Roman provinces is one of the essential features of a people dwelling together and acting in

unity. The joint acting of elders is seen both in the nation of Israel and among God's New Testament people.

Acts **12** is largely taken up with the persecution of certain in the church in Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa I, son of Aristobulus and Bernice, and grandson of Herod the Great (so called). He killed James the brother of John with the sword and imprisoned Peter. He would have killed him also to please the Jews, but by the earnest prayer of the church, and by an angel of the Lord, Peter was miraculously delivered. Herod in his wickedness, well pleased with himself, after he had made an oration, when the people said, "The voice of a god, and not of a man," was smitten by an angel of the Lord, "because he gave not God the glory" and was eaten of worms. A strange god that worms could eat! Thus was brought to an end his miserable life of intrigue and sin. Though Herod was eaten, the word of God grew and multiplied in the hearts of those who received it.

The last verse (25) of chapter **12** takes up again the story of Barnabas and Saul, who, when they had fulfilled their ministration of bringing relief to the disciples in the churches of Judæa returned to Damascus taking John Mark with them.

Acts **13** opens with recording the names of outstanding men, prophets and teachers, in the church in Antioch. These were Barnabas, then Symeon called Niger, which means black, perhaps one of the black-skinned Jews, Lucius of Cyrene, not Luke the beloved physician, the writer of the Gospel and the Acts, Manaen the foster-brother of Herod Antipas, the Herod who slew John the Baptist, and set at nought and mocked the Lord. Perhaps these men grew up as boys together, but how different the course they took and how different their end! Last of the five is Saul, the least yet the greatest of all. These ministered to the Lord in the church in Antioch, and fasted. How the Holy Spirit spoke, whether by one of the prophets, or otherwise, we are not told, but His word was, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Paul was saved and called with a holy calling, not according to his works, but according to God's purpose and grace given him in Christ Jesus before times eternal (2 Timothy 1. 9). He was separated unto the gospel of God (Romans 1. 1) even from his mother's womb, and now he with Barnabas was separated from his co-workers to be publicly seen and acknowledged as an apostle of the Lord, though, alas, some seemed to challenge his apostleship in his day, but none do so now (1 Corinthians 9. 1; 2 Corinthians 12. 11, 12; etc.). Two Greek words are used for "sent" in "they sent them away," and, "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit," etc. The former is *Apelusan*, to let go, a form of the verb *Apoluō*, *Apo*, from *Luō* to loose. It may be illustrated by a vessel putting to sea on a voyage, the ropes which held it being loosed from the quayside. The words "sent forth" are from the word *Ekpempō*, *Ek*, out of and *Pempō* to send, to dispatch on any message, embassy, business, etc. This word may be illustrated by a captain being sent out on a voyage by the shipowners, receiving full instruc-

tions as to the voyage when he sails. Thus it was that the Holy Spirit sent forth these two servants, who knew the business that they had to do under the control and power of the Holy Spirit. Then Barnabas and Saul went down to Seleucia and sailed to Cyprus having John Mark as their attendant (*Huperetes*, literally a species of rowers, but used also of an attendant on a magistrate or of a synagogue, etc.).

J. MILLER.

THE TABERNACLE

Gold Covered Boards

(Exodus 26. 15-30 ; 36. 20-34).

We have already dealt with the sockets of silver referred to in the above scriptures, and now we come to the boards which stood on the sockets. This heavy, structural part of the dwelling is replete with spiritual teaching, and we feel how much we require the help of the Holy Spirit of God that He may grant us discernment in the truth, and ability to set forth His mind in lowliness and love, as indicated in the lines :—

*“ And as we scan each sacred page,
May lowly thoughts our mind engage ;
Thoughts of Thy love, Thy gift, Thy Son,
Who died for us by sin undone ! ”*

NOT THE VERY IMAGE

It will be well at this point to draw attention to Hebrews 10. 1 where we read, “ For the law having a *shadow* of the good things to come, not the very *image*.” This is important, and if borne in mind will save us from pushing interpretations of types too far, and seeking the exact image (*eikōn*) where only a shadow (*skia*) is given. A shadow is dependent on light for its production, and the light which has produced the shadows of the tabernacle is that of the Holy Spirit. The thought presented in the word *image* may be gleaned from the Lord’s words in Matthew 22. 19, 20 : “ Shew Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose is this *image* and superscription ? ” There was a material likeness in the image, but this must not be expected in the shadow.

We hope our readers will read the portions of Scripture referred to above, for it is all important that we get to the Scriptures which take us to God.

OUR NATURAL STANDING

We may consider trees in their natural standing. Who has not been impressed with their stateliness as proudly they stand with upright trunks, with limbs outspread, and with branches waving to the breeze ? And yet the Holy Spirit through David says, “ I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil ” (Psalm 37. 35). This should remind us that natural beauty cannot fit a person for service in God’s house. “ In all Israel

there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty : from the sole of his foot even to the crown of His head there was no blemish in him " (2 Samuel 14. 25) ; yet he was unprofitable to God. " That which is born of the flesh is flesh " (John 3. 6). " 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 " (Romans 8. 7, 8). How true are the words of Romans 3. 12, " They are together become unprofitable " !

LAI D LOW

What then is the first thing necessary if there is to be service to God in His house ? The axe must be laid to the root of the trees : they must lose their natural standing : they must be laid low. Of man in a future day the LORD says, " The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day " (Isaiah 2. 11). In its working the word of God is like an axe, and very many, thank God, are being brought down to the feet of the Lord Jesus in true repentance for their sin. Such can say,

*" My highest place is lying low
At my Redeemer's feet ;
No higher joy in life I know,
Than in His service sweet."*

Should these lines be read by any who have not yet had the experience of being brought down and humbled before God, we would say to such, acknowledge the truth of God's word about your guilt and your unprofitableness, and allow the sharp edge of the word to bring you to the feet of the Saviour, who is able to give you a standing before God in His house. .

STANDING UP TOGETHER

In order to form God's house it was necessary that the boards should not only be standing up, but also *standing together*. This reminds us of the words, " Gather My saints together unto Me ; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice " (Psalm 50. 5).

This gathering together of God's saints is seen in operation in the New Testament. As the gospel was preached on the day of Pentecost, and hearts were bowed in repentance, we read, " They then that received his word were baptized : and there *were added* unto them in that day about three thousand souls " (Acts 2. 41). *Prosetethesan*, translated *were added*, means, were laid by the side of, or placed side by side. This will show the thought in the mind of the Spirit.

The twenty boards on the south side of the tabernacle, and the same number on the north, with six on the west and two corner boards, were placed side by side in the formation of the house of God in the wilderness. Had the forty-eight boards stood up in divers places *apart*, we can readily see how the purpose of God in them would have been frustrated. To form the dwelling they must be *together*. Scattered saints in various sectarian places should give earnest heed to this

matter. We ask, Are you an *added* one? Have you been numbered with those who are together forming a divine unity on earth? Are you part of God's spiritual house? This is something quite distinct from being a member of the Church which is the Body of Christ, for in the Body all saints have both place and privilege that cannot be forfeited. We are placed therein at the moment of the new birth by Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, who baptizes in the Holy Spirit into the Body, but addition to God's dwelling on earth is a thing that follows baptism in water, as the scripture from Acts 2 just quoted very clearly shows.

Saved through faith in Christ, baptized in water in obedience to the Lord, and then added unto those who are already together in the will of God are important matters to which the shadow of the boards point, so far as we have now traced them.

“ ’Tis precious too, O God,
Thine eye should look upon
Thy scattered children here
United into one.
Lord, may Thy word for ever be
Our guide to perfect unity.”

THE ACACIA WOOD

The acacia wood of the boards would remind us of the new nature of the believer in Christ. The shadow is seen in the natural standing of the boards, but in addition to being brought low there is a mysterious change, effected from God, which results in a new nature. “Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.” Just as the old, sinful, fallen nature is incapable of good, so the new nature, the new man, is incapable of evil. Many are the passages of Scripture which bear testimony to these truths, and we need to be kept in constant remembrance of them. See 1 John 3. 9. Paul says, “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7. 18): and on the other hand John says, “We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but He that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not” (1 John 5. 18). Why then does the child of God sin? It is because of the evil principle in his flesh, and because of failure to present himself a bondservant unto obedience and righteousness. “If ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (Romans 8. 13). May we be helped to manifest increasingly the new nature, and reckon the old as dead! Wholesome words on this subject are found in Colossians 3. 5-11. Note that there are *members to mortify*, and that there are *things to put away*. The old man with his doings is spoken of as having been *put off*.

OVERLAID WITH GOLD

How bright and beautiful the boards appeared in their covering of gold! Gold speaks of that which is divine, and the words of Peter in his second epistle chapter 1. 3, 4 come to mind, “His divine power

hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that called us by His own glory and virtue ; whereby He hath granted unto us His precious and exceeding great promises ; that through these *ye may become partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust." Let us lay hold on these precious and exceeding great promises and thus will be seen increasingly the gold, a likeness to Him who hath called us. He is presented in the Scriptures as Love, and to be like Him we must manifest this love. " But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you ; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven : for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust " (Matthew 5. 44, 45), is the teaching of the Lord Jesus, and in which is indicated a likeness to God the Father in heaven—sons of your Father.

This is something that will afford us constant exercise of heart before God. It is so easy to forget His promises, and to view things from a natural standpoint instead of from the spiritual. We have much to add to our faith, as Peter shows in his second epistle, but these additions reach the apex in " love of the brethren ; and in your love of the brethren *love*" (2 Peter 1. 5-7). At one time "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold " were " esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter " (Lamentations 4. 2), and the cry of Jeremiah was, " How is the gold become dim ! how is the most pure gold changed ! " The answer is that disobedience and rebellion against God had made the change. May the people of the Lord ever be kept humble and obedient before Him, and remembering that His desire is

*" That we as like Thee might become,
As we unlike have been."*

BARS OVERLAID WITH GOLD

Five bars of acacia wood overlaid with gold bound the boards of the tabernacle together on all three sides. They had rings of gold as places for the bars, and the middle bar passed through from end to end. These seem to speak of those precious qualities of the new nature, and that which is of God, which when manifest in the disciple of the Lord will have the effect of binding the saints together in the house of God. Many interpretations of these bars have been suggested : such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Others have seen the bars in Acts 2. 41, 42. Others have drawn attention to those five things in Ephesians 4. 2, 3 which are in agreement with a walk worthy of God. These are,

Lowliness,
Meekness,
Longsuffering,
Forbearing one another in love,
Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the
bond of peace.

Where these are manifested in the house of God saints will be blessed with peace, and will be bound together in love and harmony. May these bars not be lacking! Lowliness here means lowliness of mind. It is thus translated in Acts **20. 19** where Paul recounts the manner of his service for God while he was in Asia, "Serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials." Then follows meekness. This is not weakness, but is absence of antagonism, and the presence of that spirit that enabled Moses to pray on behalf of those who treated him so unkindly, whereby he earned the appellation—the meekest man in all the earth. Longsuffering requires love if it is to operate. Love suffereth long and is kind. To forbear also demands love—that love which never faileth. Thus should we endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. G. PRASHER.

THE PASSOVER

The exodus of the children of Israel from the land of Egypt is recorded in Exodus **12**; the previous chapters tell of the birth and the call of Moses, and the various plagues which fell upon Egypt.

The words of chapter **12. 2** are words of hope for the people in Egypt's bondage—"This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you." It is called the month of Abib, which means "to sprout forth" or "to shoot into the ear." How significant this is when we think of the children of Israel, so long suppressed and subdued, springing into life like nature through the working of Jehovah their God! (The word Nisan is used twice in the later writings of the Old Testament, Nehemiah **2. 1**, Esther **3. 7**; its meaning seems to be similar to that of Abib.)

It was not only the beginning of months in respect to a change in the arrangement of their calendar, but it was the beginning of a new life for Israel, the details of which were to be unfolded at a later time. The first necessity was that they should be called out from the land of Egypt.

*They could not come out of themselves, for they were slaves, but God brought them out. The plan and power of deliverance were His; He "took them by the hand to lead them forth out of the land of Egypt" (Hebrews **8. 9**).*

Their coming out from Egypt was not merely an escape, it was a deliverance, and this required the work of another. The sacrifice of the passover was in effect the end of their old life in Egypt, and the embarking upon a new life with the LORD their God in the wilderness, and later in the promised land.

Although briefly mentioned in Leviticus **23. 5** and Numbers **28. 16**, full instructions as to the keeping of the passover are given in Exodus **12**, Numbers **9**, and Deuteronomy **16**, and in each case there is a distinctive feature about the instructions.

In Exodus **12** the central point is the lamb, and much is said about it and about the blood. In the book of Numbers, the book of the wilderness, the instructions have to do with the condition of the people who are participating in the sacrifice. Then the book of Deuteronomy, which speaks so much about "when ye be come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee," deals mainly with the place where the passover was to be sacrificed, not in their own houses or tents, but at the place which the LORD shall choose to cause His Name to dwell there. All this has instruction for children of God today, for the deliverance of men and women from the power of Satan has an objective in their life on earth as well as an objective in heaven. It is good for a man who knows deliverance by the blood of the Lamb, to seek unto the Place where he may serve God in association with His gathered people.

In Exodus **12** those two matters are set forth clearly. There was safety or shelter under the blood, which was put upon the two side posts and upon the lintel.

There is also the eating of the flesh in the houses which were thus sheltered by the blood. Eating is typical of communion (see 1 Corinthians **10. 18** : "Have not they which eat the sacrifices communion with the altar?"), but communion can be a very changeable thing, and it is a good thing for us that our security and safety against the judgement of God depend alone upon the blood of the Lamb.

The LORD said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over you," not when I see you eating of the flesh. Who can estimate the value of the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed at Calvary? and who can estimate its value to a soul through a simple act of faith, in taking shelter under the blood? Salvation is apart from works and apart from feelings. It is by faith alone, for the value is in the blood. The judgement had fallen already upon the lamb, and it would not fall again upon those who took refuge under its blood.

The passover is a type of Christ, as we are told so clearly in 1 Corinthians **5. 7** . . . "for our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ," and we may well let our thanksgivings abound unto God for giving Him up to death that we might go free. Israel were set free from the bondage of Egypt that they might be free to serve the LORD. So we also are set free from the bondage of sin that we might be free to serve Him. Let us not fall short of His just claims upon our service.

The night of the passover was a night of watching unto the LORD (Exodus **12. 42**, R.V.), and it behoves us to learn some important lessons from this. It points forward to the darkest night this world ever knew—the blackest night in its sordid history—when the Son of God from heaven spent a lonely night of watching in the place called Gethsemane. He had kept the passover in the upper room with His disciples, then Judas went out after the dipping of the sop, "and it was night" (John **13. 30**). After the Lord's discourse with the eleven, they went forth from the room and entered into the garden of Gethsemane.

There followed that hour of dreadful agony, when the blessed Son of God poured out His prayer with strong crying and tears, while He lay, a prostrate Suppliant, on the ground. He came back to His disciples and found them sleeping, and said, "What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?" The multitude came, led by Judas, and they rushed Him off to a mock trial and shameful handling, till finally they had Him nailed to a cross on that morning. Between the two evenings means on the going down of the sun (Deuteronomy 16. 6). The Lord had kept the passover with His disciples in the upper room, but the Pharisees had not yet kept it (John 18. 28), and the Lord Himself was our Passover when He was sacrificed on the cross.

"A night of watching," or "a night to be much observed," are striking expressions. Israel were commanded to observe it for a memorial throughout their generations for ever. It was to be a basic feature of their national life, and however much they might wander and stray in their thoughts and ways, the passover, if properly observed, should have had the necessary restorative effect in bringing them back to the LORD.

The two revivals, in Hezekiah's and Josiah's times, were marked by a return to the observance of the passover, and what joy and gladness marked those occasions, though in Josiah's time Judah returned only feignedly to the LORD (Jeremiah 3. 10).

In the night of that last passover in the upper room, after the washing of the disciples' feet, when Judas had gone out, the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the breaking of the bread. For simplicity it can scarcely be surpassed, for the elements used consist only of bread and wine, yet what an effect it has on the hearts and lives of those who love the blessed Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whose body and blood those symbols speak. May the Lord give His people a deeper longing to observe it according to His word, "This do in remembrance of Me," so that it may effect in them the restoration of soul that they so much need.

H. KING.

IS HEAVEN OUR ETERNAL HOME ?

Thoughts of the future must sometime arise in the minds of men and women, for all human beings are inexorably being moved forward by the process of time—whither ?

Heaven has been associated with that which is above, the vault of the sky, and also what lies beyond. Hell in the Gospels may be the English rendering of two words, "Gehenna" and "Hades." Gehenna is the place of torment and destruction, the "Gehenna of fire" (Matthew 5. 22). See also verses 29, 30, etc. The Lord Jesus refers to Hell (or Hades) only twice, in Matthew 11. 23 and Luke 16. 23. Hell is beneath, and the word means "that which hides," and is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word, "Helian," meaning "to hide."

The Hebrew equivalent is "Sheol," which means a "hollow and subterranean place," the abode of the souls of the dead, not the grave where the body is buried. The Greek *Hades* is the equivalent of *Sheol* and *Hell*. Hades literally means the "unseen," which is similar in meaning to Hell, which means "to hide."

Prior to the Lord's death and resurrection the souls of all the dead, whether of the redeemed or the unredeemed went to Hades or Hell. Hades, as we learn from Luke 16. 19-31, is a place in which there is a great gulf fixed; on the one side was the rich man in torment of the fire of divine judgement, and on the other side was Abraham with Lazarus in his bosom. The Lord at death went to Hades (Acts 2. 27 and 31), and thither, too, went the forgiven robber (Luke 23. 39-43) when he died. That part of Hades the Lord named Paradise.

When the Lord rose from the dead and ascended to heaven, He delivered from Hades, from the place He had called "Paradise," a multitude of captives (Ephesians 4. 8; Hebrews 2. 14, 15). These were the Old Testament saints, amongst whom was David, who, when he died, ascended not into the heavens (Acts 2. 34), but went to Hades like all the other Old Testament saints. The Lord did not empty Paradise, I judge, but delivered from Hades (Paradise) such as were "accounted worthy to attain unto that age (the age of Messiah's millennial reign), and the resurrection from the dead" (Luke 20. 35, R.V.M.). Many will rise from Hades (Paradise) at the Judgement of the Great White Throne to find their names in the book of life (Revelation 20. 11-15), and there to receive eternal life (Romans 2. 6, 7). The wicked will be raised from Hades, from the place of fiery torment, to be judged according to their works, and to be cast into the Lake of Fire.

Whilst the death and the resurrection of the Lord makes no change in the case of the wicked (they go to Hades or Hell as they did before the Lord's death), great is the change in regard to the righteous! All the righteous, that is, those who are justified by faith, since the ascension of the Lord to heaven, go to be with HIM when they depart this life, which, in the words of Paul to the Philippians, "is very far better" (Philippians 1. 23), and again Paul says that to be absent from the body will mean for all saved people to be at home with the Lord (2 Corinthians 5. 8). This simply means that they will be with the Lord in heaven. But, is Heaven our eternal home? The answer to this question is not found in hymns but in the Scriptures. That saints who die in this dispensation of grace, from the beginning of the Acts until the Lord comes for the Church, which is His Body, will be in Heaven cannot be questioned. But what will transpire when He comes and after? After He comes, when all in Christ are caught up to meet Him in the air, saints will stand to give account to Him and to be rewarded or suffer loss, at the Judgement-Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5. 10; 1 Corinthian 3. 13-15). Thereafter the saints

will be presented in glory by the Lord to His Father (Jude 24). After which, I judge, the marriage of the Lamb will take place (Revelation 19. 7, 8). Then the Lord will descend as Son of Man to the earth with His saints, with all who have believed (2 Thessalonians 1. 7-10), and with all the angels with Him (Matthew 25. 31), and during the Millennium the saints will be on the earth with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4. 17).

After the Millennium and the judgement of the Great White Throne, the Bride of the Lamb, seen in the New Jerusalem, will descend from God out of heaven to the new earth. The glory of that scene is depicted to us in Revelation 21 and 22, and there will be the eternal abode of saints.

Heaven is the temporary abode of saints until the Lord's coming, and then with Him they will share millennial glory, and after that the glory of the city which hath the foundations whose Builder and Maker is God, in an earth in which righteousness will dwell for ever.

J.M.

THE POTTER AND THE VESSEL

At God's bidding Jeremiah was told to "go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words" (Jeremiah 18. 2). He went down, and "behold, he wrought his work on the wheels." Until a recent visit to Australia I had not seen a potter at work, and from all that I observed it seems that amidst the many improvements of our modern age the art of the potter remains almost the same as it was in the days of Jeremiah. "Behold, he wrought his work on the wheels." As the prophet stood quietly beside the potter he saw him take from the mass of clay that lay beside his hand a piece which he kneaded to rid it of air bubbles—a most important operation. Then he placed it upon the wheel which was rapidly revolving in a horizontal motion. From that moment his hands were at work within and without shaping the clay with his deft touch, here widening and then leading it up into a more slender form; then opening out the lip so that there emerged from the shapeless clay a fair and beautiful vessel fit for exhibition. But in the Jeremiah story, as the vessel was near to completion, it was marred in the hand of the potter, perhaps because of a flaw in the material. The prophet naturally expected the potter immediately to take another piece of clay and produce the ideal which had been so hopelessly marred in the first operation. Instead of this, however, the potter began again with the same clay to the astonishment of the prophet, and "made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." Perhaps this second vessel did not seem so fair as the first, but with the application of his skill it became just as beautiful in his hand. Here was not only a vessel of usefulness and beauty but a tribute to the patience of the potter in making something of value with the clay in which there had been disappointment and failure.

In our understanding of the Scriptures we should first find the primary application and then seek to learn the practical application. To Jeremiah and to us comes the message, "Cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand." The primary purpose of this vision seemed to be to bring home to God's people Israel that there was still hope for them if only they would yield themselves to the touch of the Great Potter. Those years of disobedience which had marred His fair purpose and work in His people He would forgive, and He was prepared to make them again into a vessel of honour that would be sanctified for His own use.

These things written aforetime are for our learning. Who is there of us who is not conscious of having marred and resisted the touch of God's moulding hand? and who is there that would not like to be made again "as it seemeth good to the Potter"? Has it ever occurred to us that with the first man, Adam, the Potter had an ideal before Him? God made Adam of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Then God placed man in Eden to obey His commandments, and the Creator looked forward to finding joy in the creature of His hands; but because of sin the work was marred and became one of sorrow. Down through time the vessel has remained marred, but the Potter does not intend it to be always thus. He has revealed to us the ideal He ever had, a vessel of perfection, of whom He said, "In whom is all My delight." It was His Son, holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, without flaw within or without. Christ was the perfect answer to God's ideal.

In 1 Corinthians 15 the first and last Adam are contrasted, the first being of the earth, earthy, and the second is the Lord from heaven. The Potter will complete his work with redeemed man in the day of resurrection; they that have been as the earthy, shall be as the heavenly. Another vessel shall be made as seems good to the Potter to make it. "He shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subject all things unto Himself."

The Architect has conceived the plan of the building to be erected before the spade cleaves the sod. I know not if we shall be permitted to see the transcript of God's original purpose in our lives, but sure I am that our lives have not been what the Potter intended. See Romans 12. 1, 2; 1 Peter 1. 14-16.

The potter achieves his purpose by means of the wheel and the water. The wheel might suggest to us the revolution of daily circumstances and commonplace tasks. Do we complain about the monotony of our life in private or in the assembly? Let us be patient, for God has an end in view for us, and He is seeking to make something of us in His work now, and for His palace hereafter. This is not done in a day, but is the work of a lifetime. Let us remember that clay will take any shape if it is moistened with water.

In the making of pottery most is done by the potter's fingers. How delicate their touch! how fine his sensibility! Do we know day by day the delicate touch of God's Spirit in us, both to will and work for God's good pleasure?

The wheel and the hand working together do the work. This is necessary if the desired end is to be effected. Do we sometimes find ourselves in circumstances strange and inexplicable? Let us be still and refrain from murmuring. Some day we will understand!

"He made it again." Although the Potter does not seem able to make of us what He wishes, shall we not let Him do His next best? He often has to make us again. He had to make Jacob again when He met him at the Jabbok ford. Finding him a supplanter He wrestled until there was no fight left in him, and He changed his name from Jacob (crooked; supplanter) to Israel (prince of God).

What shall be our attitude to the Great Potter? Shall we be like the clay and yield to Him? Shall each particle say "yes" to the wheel, and to the Hand, and to the water as they are used in their proportion by God? If there is resistance the work will be marred. Let God have His way with us. Do not let us look back regretfully on failure, but seek forgiveness for the past and restoration and re-making by His hand. Even though the clay has received its final shape the baking in the kiln must be endured, and after the colouring has been done it can only be rendered permanent by fire. Oh, that we might be "still and know that I am God."

*"Have Thine own way Lord, have Thine own way;
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mould me and make me after Thy will;
Whilst I am patient, ready and still."*

Vancouver.

A. MACDONALD.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Question: What phase of sanctification is referred to in Acts 20. 32, and in Acts 26. 18?

Answer: Both scriptures above refer to the same sanctification. The inheritance is among them that are sanctified. The inheritance is not that which is future, "of the saints in light" (Colossians 1. 12), which is "reserved in heaven" (1 Peter 1. 4), and of which the Holy Spirit is an earnest (Ephesians 1. 14). It is a present inheritance among saints which are separated believers who are sanctified in the truth (John 17. 17). Note that the inheritance is among (*En*, in collectively, therefore among) the sanctified ones. The kingdom of God is part of that spiritual inheritance. See 1 Corinthians 6. 9; Ephesians 5. 5.—J.M.

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Box 240, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

The work of the blessed Person of the Holy Spirit can be traced throughout the entire volume of the Holy Scriptures, from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. In Genesis 1. 2, it is said that "the Spirit of God moved (or was brooding) upon the face of the waters," and in Revelation 22. 17, the Spirit is heard saying, together with the Bride, "Come," to all that are athirst, that they should come and "take the water of life freely."

The brooding of the Spirit upon the waters was vital to the work of God (*Elohim*, the triune God), in His making the heaven and the earth, and earth's inhabitants in six days. These six days' work must not be confused with the creation of the heaven and the earth "in the beginning." The work of the Spirit in that past time is like the work of the Spirit in the darkness of the human soul, in which He moves until the moment when God says, "Light shall shine out of darkness", (which is a free rendering of the words in Genesis 1. 3, "Let there be light") "who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Corinthians 4. 6). Evidently there was light in each of the first three days of Genesis 1, the day being made up of periods of evening and morning, of darkness and light, before the fourth day when He set the sun and the moon to give light upon the earth, and, besides other things, "to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness" (verse 18).

Reference to the Spirit's work is made again, in Genesis 6. 3, where we read, "My Spirit shall not strive with man for ever, for that he also is flesh : yet shall his days be an hundred and twenty years." The Hebrew word for "strive" is *Duwn* and means "to rule or judge," and it is suggested that it also means "to strive, as at law." As the Spirit of God is seen at work in the dark physical night of this world, in Genesis 1, He is seen in the world's dark moral night, in Genesis 6. God said that His Spirit would not rule in the heart of rebellious man, or strive with man, plying His case at the bar of the human conscience, for ever; His striving would have an end more quickly than it had been heretofore, for man's life was to be cut down from almost a millennium to but one hundred and twenty years. This time has nothing whatever to do with the length of time which Noah took to build the ark. Noah took much less than a hundred years to build the ark. This is easily proved by the records that Noah was five hundred years when the first of his sons was born (Genesis 5. 32) ; his three sons grew up and married ; and then, Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came (Genesis 7. 6).

The Spirit of God is again seen at work in a time of world extremity, in the famine in the days of Joseph. It was a world-wide corrective to general human disorder, and besides, disorder had seriously invaded the chosen family of Jacob. We have but to mention one or two matters to show how sad and sorrowful had been Jacob's experience with his sons. In his family were cases of fornication and adultery, murder, and man-stealing in the stealing and selling of Joseph into Egypt by his brothers. Joseph was sent before them to preserve them a remnant in the earth, and to save them alive by a great deliverance (Genesis 45. 7). Well did Pharaoh say to his servants about Joseph, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" (Genesis 41. 38). Why did Joseph become so great? The answer is, because he was indwelt by the Spirit of God, and that he himself lived according to the principles of truth and uprightness, and the Spirit found him a fitting instrument for His service.

When we pass from the wide-open spaces of the book of Genesis, we enter an area of much more restricted yet far greater activity. Israel is in captivity in Egypt. The events flash quickly before the mind, Moses' birth, his rejection, his return to be their deliverer. The Spirit of God finds again a man through whom He can work, but in time through his many labours and the murmuring of the people his noble heart is crushed and God gives him some relief in placing the Spirit which was on Moses upon seventy elders to help to bear his burden. The great worker in it all was the blessed, Holy Spirit.—J.M.

JOTTINGS

Throughout the Old Testament the work of the blessed Holy Spirit is manifest, and this becomes the more evident when we reach the book of Exodus. The Spirit was upon Moses, the leader of God's people (Numbers 11. 17). Also, the Spirit was in Joshua (Numbers 27. 18), and also Caleb (Numbers 14. 24). Bezalel was filled with the Spirit of God that he might build the tabernacle, working in wood and copper, in silver and gold, and in precious stones. Even upon such a wicked man as Balaam came the Spirit, that he might prophesy, saying all that, but no more than, God intended him to say (Numbers 24. 2), though he would have cursed Israel if he could. In the book of Judges the Spirit of the LORD came upon Othniel (3. 10), on Gideon (6. 34), and on Samson (14. 6, 19). The Spirit of God came upon Saul the king of Israel (1 Samuel 11. 6). In Saul's case, although it is a sad episode, we can see clearly the great distinction between the giving of the Spirit to certain outstanding servants of God in the Old Testament, and the giving of the Spirit to all believers in this dispensation. It says, "Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him" (1 Samuel 16. 14). When David sinned, we hear him say in his confession to God, in Psalm 51. 11, "Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." This would have been a spiritual calamity for him, but God forgave the sin of His heartbroken servant and restored unto him the joy of His salvation; not salvation itself, but the joy of it. Many, alas, have lost the joy of salvation through sin, but they could not lose God's salvation which is eternal (Hebrews 5. 9). While it was possible for God to take His Holy Spirit from men in a past dispensation, God will not take His Holy Spirit from believers now. He abideth in them and shall be with them for ever (John 14. 16, 17). They are sealed with the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 1. 13, 14; 4. 30), which is the same day as that of their adoption (Ephesians 1. 5), when the bodies of believers will be redeemed (Romans 8. 23.)

One of the great phases of the work of the Spirit is the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and of this miracle Peter writes, "No prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1. 21). Here was a divine movement, mighty, far-reaching, and more permanent, than when God the Spirit moved on the face of the waters, in Genesis 1. 2. Heaven and earth will pass away with all the waters of the great deep, but God's word shall never pass away (Matthew 24. 35; Isaiah 40. 6-8). Such words as were uttered by the feeble lips of men, thrown on the air by a disappearing breath, and committed to papyrus or parchment by the stylo in a faltering hand, were yet permanent and abiding as the mount Zion above. When weary mortals, kings and priests, counsellors and merchants, and men of the common herd, have wended their way in the vast sepulchral procession to the dust whence they came, the word of the LORD, changeless as His very Being, shall shed its life-giving undiminished rays, though the hands that wrote the word have crumbled into dust. Here are the living Oracles, here is the light to direct man's way heavenward and a lamp to keep his feet from stumbling. God's word is no more rare or scarce, it may be had for a few pence, yet because, perhaps, it is plentiful, it is despised; its jewels are counted as stones in the street to be trodden on. Did not the Lord say one day, no doubt grieved at men's unbelief, "Neither cast your pearls before swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you" (Matthew 7. 6)? That some men behave like swine toward God's precious word is without the least doubt, and some of these are men of education, according to the world's standard.

Though the A.V. says that "holy men spake," yet more than holy men spoke, for we have such cases as those of Balaam in the Old Testament and Caiaphas in the New Testament who prophesied as God's Spirit moved them. The normal way of course was that "God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began" (Acts 3. 21). Sometimes in the dealings of God with His people we have a number of prophets who lived at the same time who like great springs gushed with the water of life, as, for instance, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, and sometimes the prophetic message was rare, when there was no open vision, and men sat dreary by what seemed a dry fountain. The fault was not God's, for it is His delight to speak to men by His Spirit.—J.M.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY: THE CHURCHES OF GALATIA (VI)

Barnabas and Saul having been sent forth by the Holy Spirit, and the prophets and teachers in Antioch having laid their hands on them and loosed them for the Lord's work to which they had been called, went down to the seaport of Seleucia and sailed from thence to the island of Cyprus (Acts 13). Barnabas was "a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race" (Acts 4. 36). They reached the city of Salamis and proclaimed the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They had John Mark as their attendant. They went through the whole island and came to Paphos. There they found a sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, who had the double name of Bar-Jesus (meaning, son of Jesus) and Elymas. Sergius Paulus the proconsul, a man of understanding, sought to hear the word of God from Barnabas and Saul, but this wizard Elymas withstood them and sought to turn the proconsul from the Faith. Saul (and here his name is changed to Paul) fastened his eyes on him and being filled with the Holy Spirit, addressed him, not as a son of Jesus, but as a son of the devil, an enemy of all righteousness and full of guile and villainy, and asked him, "Wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Paul told him that the hand of the Lord was upon him and that he would be blind for a season. The proconsul, when he saw blind Elymas seeking someone to lead him by the hand, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord. Whether there were many or few of the Cypriots converted we are not told; the only case recorded is that of the Roman proconsul.

Paul and his company set sail from Paphos and arrived at Perga in Pamphylia. We know not who were in Paul's company, save Barnabas and John Mark. Here at Perga John left them and returned to Jerusalem. What was the cause of John leaving the work we are not told, and it is vain to conjecture without any definite proof of what led John to take this course. But his action had a serious effect on the life of Barnabas, as it subsequently disrupted the fellowship in service of Paul and Barnabas; for after the counsel of apostles and elders in Jerusalem, (Acts 15), Paul proposed to Barnabas that they should return and visit the brethren in every city where they had proclaimed the word of God. Barnabas was minded to take John Mark with them, but Paul thought that it would not be good to take him with them as he withdrew on the former journey and went not with them to the work. The terse and sorrowful account of this is—"There arose a sharp contention, so that they parted asunder one from the other" (Acts 15. 36-41). Two things emerge in these events, (1) it behoves those who are in the Lord's work to be careful of their actions lest Satan may make trouble which will have far-reaching consequences, and (2) it is not easy for two men of strong minds to co-operate, only grace and yieldingness can make this possible.

Continuing the narrative we see them leaving Perga and coming to Antioch of Pisidia, where they entered the synagogue on the sabbath day. After they had read the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, addressing them "Men, brethren" (for all were males in Paul's company), and asked if they had any word of exhortation for the people. Whereupon Paul stood and beckoning with his hand, a characteristic attitude of Paul, he addressed those gathered. This is one of the few recorded addresses of Paul. It contains a review of the dealings of God with the people of Israel, beginning from the time of their sojourn in Egypt to the death and resurrection of the Lord, closing with a clear statement on forgiveness and justification and a warning against the sin of unbelief and its consequences.

We do not stay to comment in detail on Paul's address. There is some difference in the text, as between the A.V. and the R.V. ; in the former it says that when the Jews had left the synagogue, the Gentiles asked that these words might be spoken to them on the following sabbath, but the latter says that it was those who had attended the synagogue who asked Paul to speak to them the next sabbath. However, that is a matter of detail; the thing that matters is the effect that Paul's address had on many Jews and devout proselytes. They quite evidently believed Paul's message, for they followed Paul and Barnabas, who urged them to continue in the grace of God.

The fame of Paul's address spread throughout the city, so that the next sabbath the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. This excited the jealousy of the Jews and they contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. The apostles spoke out boldly and told the Jews, that it was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to them, but seeing that they thrust it from them and judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, they would turn to the Gentiles. Thus, they said, that the Lord had commanded them, and they quoted the words from Isaiah 49. 6 :

*"I have set Thee for a Light of the Gentiles,
That Thou shouldst be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

Upon this the Gentiles were glad and glorified the word of God. Then we are told that "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Parkhurst gives a helpful comment on the Greek word *Tetagmenoi*, which is the perfect participle of the verb *Tassō* (ordained) "To be disposed, adapted And as many as were disposed, adapted, or in a right disposition and preparation, for eternal life, believed. This . . . appears to me to be true meaning of the text The expression does not seem to have any reference to the divine predestination of particular men to salvation." The same Greek word *Tassō* is used in Romans 13. 1, "The powers that be are ordained of God." Could we say that they are foreordained? I think not.

We are told that the word of the Lord spread abroad throughout all the region. But, alas, the Jews, who were "as touching the gospel . . . enemies for your sake" (Gentiles) (Romans 11. 28), stirred up

the devout women of honourable estate, and the chief men of the city, and they persecuted the apostles and cast them out of their borders. They (the apostles) shook off the dust of their feet against them and came to Iconium. The disciples whom they left in Antioch of Pisidia were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. This was a further stage in the growth of the Fellowship.

They entered the synagogue in Iconium, and it says that they "*so spake*, that a great multitude both of Jews and of Greeks believed." It would be an unspeakable blessing if we could catch somewhat of this "so" speaking. Here again the disobedient Jews stirred up the souls of the Gentiles with the result that they were antagonized to the apostles, who remained a long time there speaking boldly the word of the Lord, who bare witness unto the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done. The multitude became divided, some held with the Jews and some with the apostles. An onset was made, both by Gentiles and Jews with their rulers, and the apostles were threatened with stoning, and being made aware of this they fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia which formed a part of the Roman province of Galatia.

At Lystra they healed a man who had been a cripple from birth. It says of this man that Paul saw that he had faith to be made whole. There were two things in the matter of divine healing which should be carefully observed: (1) a knowledge by the would-be healers that it is God's will that the sick person should be healed, and (2) an insight that the person has faith to be healed. Apart from such knowledge would-be healers will go blundering on in the darkness, and their supposed faith-healing can but be a reproach to God. For our part we believe that divine healing in the days of the Lord and His apostles was for a purpose, and that was to attest to the Divine Being of the Lord, and in the case of the apostles to attest the divine character of their message. The divine character of the message as now contained in the New Testament Scriptures having been attested, further need for attestation is not necessary, and so miraculous powers were withdrawn, as history of past time bears witness.

The healing of this cripple at Lystra first brought to the apostles such unwished-for honour, that the multitudes cried, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men" (Acts 14. 8-18). Barnabas, they called Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury. The priest of Jupiter would have sacrificed with oxen and garlands, but the apostles rent their garments and sprang forth among the multitudes and addressed them on the evil of idolatry, and told them that they were but men, and announced to them facts regarding the true God.

With the arrival of Jews from Antioch and Iconium the Jewish scheming against the apostles was again manifested, for the multitudes, being persuaded by them, stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, supposing that he was dead. The disciples in Lystra stood round

the prostrate and battered form of the man to whom they were indebted for bringing to them the light and blessing of the gospel. But Paul rose up and entered into the city. One has said, that if ever there was a miracle this was it. A man apparently battered to death by stones becomes so strong that he is able to rise up and walk into the city! Possibly we have here the historical setting of that which Paul refers to, in 2 Corinthians 12. 1-10, especially the words of verse 9, "And He (the Lord) hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My power is made perfect in weakness."

We are told that on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe. Not much is said about the work in Derbe, only that they preached the gospel there and made many disciples. One thing of particular interest which, I judge, occurred in Derbe, was that Timothy was reached with the gospel. By comparing Acts 16. 1, 2 with 20. 4 it seems reasonably clear that Timothy belonged to Derbe. Timothy's mother and grandmother come in for honourable mention, in 2 Timothy 1. 5, as to their unfeigned faith, and of their love for the Scriptures (2 Timothy 3. 15).

Paul and Barnabas, having planted churches of God in Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, returned by the way they came. From Derbe they journeyed to the other cities mentioned. Their purpose now was to confirm the souls of the disciples. In this confirming ministry four things are mentioned,

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. The Faith. | 3. Elders. |
| 2. The kingdom of God. | 4. Every church. |

These terms should neither be overlooked nor lightly passed over as they are pointers to lines of truth in the New Testament which are vital to the gathering together and the collective life and functioning of God's people in this dispensation of grace.

Firstly we ask, What is the Faith? It is not faith (subjective), which means that a person is persuaded and accepts facts or tidings which are placed before him. We can believe both the witness of men and of God. But in contrast, the Faith is something which was delivered to the saints, and for which they are to contend earnestly (Jude 3). It is the body of doctrine to be received and kept by all the faithful, and it can only be kept in its fulness in the churches of God. This (the) Faith has been called "faith objective".

Secondly, what is the kingdom of God? This is the rule of God over His gathered people. It was seen in the past dispensation in Israel, who were a people governed of God. This favoured place was forfeited by them, when they not only rejected the law of God, but they rejected and crucified the Son of God, the Heir in the parable of the vineyard, in Matthew 21. 33-46. With the killing of the Heir, the Stone which was rejected by the builders became the Head of the corner. The kingdom of God was taken from the Jewish people and

given to another nation, which should bring forth to God the spiritual fruits of the kingdom. This other nation was God's little flock of the New Testament. To them the Lord said, "Howbeit seek ye His kingdom (the kingdom of God), and these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12. 31, 32). This is the same kingdom of which we read, in Revelation 1. 5, 6, "Unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by His blood; and He made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto His God and Father; to Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen." The government of God's people God has placed in the hands of His Son, our Lord, and to Him the elders, appointed by the Holy Spirit and acknowledged by men, are directly responsible for the rule and care of His people and to Him they must give account (Hebrews 13. 17).

Thirdly, Who are the elders? They are not simply old men, as in Titus 2. 2. In Acts 20. 17, 28, we are told that Paul called the elders of the church of God in Ephesus to meet him at Miletus, and amongst the things he said to them was this, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops (overseers, A.V.), to feed the church of God." Thus it is clear that an elder is an overseer, an elder as to his maturity in divine things, and an overseer as to the work he does. There is absolutely no difference between the men who are called *Presbuteroi* (elders), and *Episkopoi* (overseers, called by men bishops, which is simply the Greek word anglicized). The Lord Jesus our Shepherd is called the Overseer (Bishop) of our souls (1 Peter 2. 25). The work of the overseers is to care for the souls of the saints under their charge, even as the Lord cares for His own.

Fourthly, What is meant by every church? The greatest confusion exists in the minds of believers, not to speak of religious unbelievers, on this matter of the churches of the New Testament. There were four churches in Galatia that we know of, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium and Antioch. In each of these churches elders were appointed. Churches of God were ruled by a plurality of elders or overseers, not one overseer or bishop over a church, far less one bishop over a number of churches. These men were to rule and care for those churches and for the saints therein.

Then Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch in Syria whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled. We must not assume that this was all the work that the Spirit had in view when the Spirit called them. The Spirit said, "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." This, I judge, covered all the work which those apostles did for the Lord in their lives afterwards. They had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled, but that grace of God, as seen in Romans 1. 5, covered much more than their work in the churches of Galatia.

J. MILLER.

THE TABERNACLE

The Three Screens

We have already given some consideration to the gate of the court, but we wish now to think of it in connexion with the screen of the door, and the veil of the sanctuary. Instructions for making the veil and the screen for the door are found in Exodus 26. 31-37, while chapter 36. 35-38 records their being made. Directions for fashioning the gate are given in chapter 27. 16.

DIVIDING AND COVERING

There are two words used here by the Holy Spirit to which we draw attention. *Paroketh*, meaning a divider, is translated *veil*, and is used only for the veil which divided between the holy and the most holy place. *Masak*, meaning a curtain or covering, is translated variously as hanging, covering, curtain, in the Authorized Version, but the Revisers uniformly render it screen. On one occasion *masak* is used alone for the dividing veil (Numbers 3. 31), but in the four other occasions where it is used for the veil, *paroketh* is employed with it; as, "the veil of the screen" (Exodus 35. 12; see also 39. 34; 40. 21; Numbers 4. 5). Thus dividing and covering are associated with the inner veil; but covering in the sense of screening is the thought connected with the door of the house, and the gate of the court.

THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

When the Lord said to the disciples, "And whither I go, ye know the way," Thomas said, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?" This question brought from the Lord Jesus the reply, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John 14. 4-6). It would seem that this precious truth is shadowed in the three screens of the tabernacle. When a man went into the most holy place to God he had to pass through these three screens.

Christ as the Life is surely seen at the gate, because when one passed through the gate he was face to face with the altar. There he viewed the slain victim. It was the place of death. Some might consider this a strange place to bring one to see Christ as the Life, but we know of no other place where life can be had save at the cross of Christ to which the altar and its victim point. The sinner who is dead by reason of sins and trespasses can receive life only where life has been given. "Christ died for the ungodly." "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5. 6, 8). It is worthy of very serious consideration that, prior to receiving life through faith in Christ, religious activities are merely "dead works," from which it is necessary to receive repentance from God (Hebrews 6. 1).

The gate of the court was like the door of the tent in that the work was the work of the embroiderer. Perhaps this work indicated somewhat of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, since there was the piercing of the material by the embroiderer which raises thoughts of

the trials which the suffering Saviour endured, both those He bore in His life, when "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases," and also those vicarious sufferings when His soul was pierced in death. Precious Saviour! and how much we owe to Him!

A SCREEN FOR THE DOOR

A notable difference between the gate and the door was that whereas the gate was twenty cubits wide, the door was only ten. The entrance to the house was much narrower than that to the court. This suggests to us the narrow path in which the disciple of the Lord is called to walk if he is to enter the house of God and do Him service therein. The same truth is seen in 1 Peter 2. 1, 5, where, before referring to the spiritual house and the holy priesthood, there is the call to be "putting away therefore all wickedness, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings." The broad way of self-choice is still preferred by many of God's children because the path of separation is much too narrow for them; but "Come ye out," and "Be ye separate," are still enjoined upon those who seek to please the Lord.

Though the door was much narrower than the gate, yet its height was ten cubits—double that of the gate. The area of each, however, was the same, since 20 by 5, and 10 by 10 are the same—100 square cubits. It is the same blessed Person that is seen in both screens, but we judge this high door reminds us that the Lord Jesus is now upon the throne exalted by His Father. "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly," said Peter, "that God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified" (Acts 2. 36).

CHRIST AS THE TRUTH

Here we think we see Christ as the truth. It is the will of God "that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2. 4). *Epignosis* has the idea of full knowledge. The appointment of Paul to *preach* and *teach* (verse 7) illustrates this quite clearly. The preacher or herald went out with the message of reconciliation, and when men accepted the divine terms and were saved, then the teacher laboured in the word and teaching to bring them to a full knowledge of the truth. Paul, it will be recalled, remained in the city of Corinth teaching after he had preached the gospel, and so we read: "Many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. . . . And he dwelt there a year and six months, *teaching* the word of God among them" (Acts 18. 8-11).

As the Lord spake one day concerning His death, and His doing always the things that are pleasing to the Father, we read: "As He spake these things, many believed on Him. Jesus therefore said to those Jews which had believed Him, If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8. 30-32). To know the truth, therefore, is of the utmost importance to the disciple; and we should note well that it is conditioned by, "if ye abide in My word." "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching" (John 7. 17).

Those who know of the teaching will show appreciation of the house of God, and may in measure experience what was true of the Master, "The zeal of Thine house shall eat Me up."

When the priests passed through the screen of the door they were in the house of God, and there they performed divine service at the table with its shewbread, at the golden altar, and at the lampstand, besides sprinkling of the blood before the veil of the sanctuary. Our Great High Priest in the sanctuary above has performed the work of which the sprinkling of the blood speaks, but there is much in the way of offering to God in the holies that is the privilege of those in the house of God, and it is a joy to know that such spiritual sacrifices reach Him through Christ who is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

The screen of the door hung upon five pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, and the pillars stood on sockets of copper. The copper of the sockets again speaks of judgement. Moral and doctrinal evil must always be dealt with if God is to dwell with men, and we refer to 1 Corinthians 5. 3-5, 1 Timothy 1. 20, 2 Thessalonians 3. 6 and 1 Peter 4. 17, in this connexion.

THE VEIL OF THE SCREEN

The veil was a divider between the holy and the most holy place, beyond which the high priest of Israel went "alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Spirit this signifying, that *the way* into the holy place (holies) hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing" (Hebrews 9. 7, 8).

A contrast is made when we come to verse 11 of this chapter, "But Christ having come a High Priest of the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption." His "one sacrifice for sins for ever" (10. 12) has secured remission of sins and iniquities, so that there is no more offering for sin.

A climax in the epistle to the Hebrews is reached in chapter 10, and a worshipping people, cleansed and clothed, are encouraged to "draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water." This drawing near is "by the way which He dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (20). From these passages it will be observed that the *veil* and the *way* are definitely linked in the Holy Spirit's statements.

The fabric of the veil was similar to that of the door and the gate, but it also had cherubim, and it was the work of the cunning workman, not of the embroiderer. The presence of the cherubim was in keeping with the LORD's throne where judgement is dispensed.

The Psalmist says,

“*Righteous art Thou, O LORD
And upright are Thy judgements*” (119. 137).

The blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen of the veil typify the beauties of the Saviour, as does also the fabric of the door. The Holy Spirit delights to keep before us the character of Christ—His heavenly origin in the blue, His kingly rights in the purple, His perfect manly qualities in the scarlet, and His righteousness in the fine twined linen.

PILLARS FOR THE VEIL

The pillars were acacia overlaid with gold, and their sockets were of silver. We recall the thought expressed relative to the pillars of the gate, and hope that within the house of God in the midst of His sanctuary there may be pillars who will hold up His Son before God. No higher service can men engage in than that of waving Christ before His Father's face. Our approach must always be *in* the Spirit, *by* the Son, *to* the Father. Their harmonious workings while the Son was on earth is continued now that the Son hath ascended “where He was before.” On our part may we be helped to “hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; for He is faithful that promised.”

G. PRASHER.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (II)

(Continued from page 142, 1958)

The God revealed in Holy Scripture is invisible (Colossians 1. 15). He has never been seen by mortal man (John 1. 18). Manifestations of God have been given (e.g., see Exodus 33. 17-23), but, although God can be known by man in mortal body, He has never been seen by mortal eyes. A most mysterious and wonderful fact which God has revealed about Himself is that there are Three Persons in the Godhead. It is impossible for finite minds to fathom or explain this mystery. The Father is God (Philippians 2. 11), the Son is God (Hebrews 1. 8) and the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5. 3, 4). Such a Being could never have been conceived by man had He not graciously revealed Himself in Holy Scripture. In attempting to explain the mystery of the Trinity some have suggested that the terms Father, Son and Holy Spirit are used to describe three forms in which one and the same Person is manifested, as, in human affairs, one and the same person may be the father of a family, the commander of an army and the sovereign of a kingdom. Such a conception is quite contrary to the revelation of God in Scripture. The Father is described as *sending* the Son (1 John 4. 10) and the Father and the Son as *sending* the Spirit (John 14. 26 and 16. 7). At the river Jordan when Christ was baptized, the Father spoke from heaven, and the Spirit of God descended in bodily form as a dove upon the Son (Matthew 3. 13-17). Such examples of the activities of the Persons in the Godhead are plainly inconsistent with the idea of the Trinity being three manifestations of one Person. The mode of existence of the Divine Being is unique and therefore attempts to illustrate it are futile. There are three Persons—there is One God.

The doctrine of the Trinity is clearly discernible in the Old Testament Scriptures, but is fully demonstrated in the New Testament. The declaration of the Risen Saviour, "Baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28. 19), requires the acceptance of this doctrine by all those who submit themselves for baptism as His disciples. Note the singular, NAME (not names). The full revelation of the Triune God to men could only be accomplished through the incarnation of the Son and the sending forth of the Spirit.

The relationship of the Persons in the Godhead is eternal. There are some who profess to accept the doctrine of the Trinity and of the Deity and Eternity of the three Persons in the Godhead, but who affirm that our Lord's Sonship is a development which took place in time and is not therefore original and eternal. Many passages of Scripture (e.g., Hebrews 1. 2, Colossians 1. 15, 16) clearly indicate that the relationship antedated creation. And, further, the Fatherhood in the Godhead is the primary pattern from which the very idea of fatherhood is derived. To say that the divine Fatherhood began at our Lord's incarnation, or at some other point in time, is clearly inconsistent with such a passage as Ephesians 3. 15. Because it is beyond human comprehension we are unable to define what is involved in this relationship of Father and Son in the Godhead, but we believe that the essential and ineffable glory of the Son of God is bound up in it. And we also believe that the Scriptural treatment of this important matter, in its totality, demands acceptance of the doctrine of the *Eternal* Sonship of our Lord Jesus Christ as an article of faith.

In many parts of Scripture the work of the Trinity in unity of purpose to secure salvation for mankind can be clearly discerned. In the well-known passage, Ephesians 1. 4-14, we read of the Father choosing, the Son redeeming and the Spirit sealing the believers. This shows the complete accord in the counsels of the Godhead, and also indicates subjection on the part of the Son to the Father and of the Spirit to the Father and the Son. This subjection carries no implication of inferiority. In the performance of divine purposes it is a further demonstration of the unity of the Divine Being.

Three important statements regarding the nature of God are given in the writings of the apostle John :

- (1) "God is a Spirit" (John 4. 24), He is entirely free from the limitations of space and time ;
- (2) "God is light" (1 John 1. 5), implying absolute purity and holiness ;
- (3) "God is love" (1 John 4. 8), love is inherent to His Being ; as He is Spirit, and as He is Light, so in His very nature He is Love. All His actions are consistent with His nature. He works in unsullied light, impelled by infinite love.

Many passages in the Psalms and the prophets (e.g., Psalm 93, Isaiah 40. 12-26) refer to the greatness and majesty of God, and extol

His power and omniscience. Such themes have captivated godly men in all ages. No earthly joy is to be compared with the joy of the Lord. The tendency of modern materialism is to deify man and his achievements. The reverential fear and unalloyed joy which spring from the knowledge of God are rare in the earth today. To know God we must find time to reflect in quietness and solitude on the priceless revelation of Himself in Holy Scripture. Thus, also, will we get a true estimate of ourselves, a necessary and valuable experience. In the divine presence human pretensions evaporate. Self-disclosure is a first result of the discovery of God. Said Job :

*" I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear ;
But now mine eye seeth Thee,
Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent
In dust and ashes "* (Job. 42. 5 6).

and Isaiah :

*" Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips,
and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have
seen the King, the LORD of hosts "* (Isaiah 6. 5).

Knowledge of God begets love of God. Many are " believers in God," fewer are " lovers of God " (2 Timothy 3. 4). Unashamedly, the lover of pleasure pursues his objective ; conversation, demeanour and conduct all reveal the bent of his mind. So with the lover of God there is an increasing dedication of his powers to one supreme objective. He, of all men, has learned the true meaning of life :

*" For the heart only dwells, truly dwells with its treasure,
And the languor of love captive hearts can unfetter ;
And they who love God cannot love Him by measure,
For their love is but hunger to love Him still better "* (Faber).

To share God's thoughts is the privilege of all who are prepared to listen to His voice. Such are in the minority today but, blessed be God, the time will come when

*" the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD,
as the waters cover the sea "* (Isaiah 11. 9).

Oh Lord, hasten that day !

T. M. HYLAND

RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN

The recognition by saints of each other in heaven is a subject on which there has been from time to time some difference of opinion, some thinking that we shall not recognize each other, while others have considered that some of the joy of the eternal state would be lacking were saints to be together without knowing one another. In the view of both, there is no difference of mind on the subject of the rapture of saints at beholding the Lord and knowing Him and being enraptured for ever by the manifestation of His glory.

On what is recognition based in this life ? It rests upon the diversity of all human beings (we speak not of animals in which the same diversity is to be seen). This difference in personality is

expressed in the difference in bodily appearance, especially in the features of the face. It is well known that children of the same family, born of the same parents, are not alike, neither in appearance nor in other respects. What a world of confusion it would be if every human being was exactly alike! Variety is the law of the universe.

Each human being bears the image of Adam, and so will the redeemed bear the image of Christ. This Paul shows in the words, "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Corinthians 15. 49); the earthy and the Heavenly refer to Adam and the Lord. Though we all bear the image of Adam yet there is a difference in each, even so it will be with the saints in glory. This again Paul states in verses 41, 42: "For one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." All saints will bear Christ's image, but all will be different from each other. On such a fact will rest identification and recognition.

Will there be the memory of persons we have known on earth? The answer to this question must be, Yes. The Lord shows this in the stories of the unjust steward and that of the rich man and Lazarus, in Luke 16. The application of the story of the unjust steward is given in the Lord's words, in verse 9, "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." The "eternal tabernacles" are in contrast in the story to the unjust steward being received into the houses of those whose accounts to his master he cut by half in some cases (verse 4). His friends were those he helped, though unjustly. The friends we make are such as we have helped here with money, our own, not other people's money, which the Lord calls the mammon of unrighteousness. Thus saints in glory will receive those who have befriended them remembering both them and their kindness.

The story is in reverse in the case of the rich man and Lazarus. No kindness was shown by the rich man to Lazarus, the poor and much afflicted beggar, he did not seem to get even the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. Death changed all for both. The rich man in the torment of hell recognizes both Lazarus and Abraham, though he saw only their souls. Abraham's mortal dust lay in the cave of Machpelah, and where that of Lazarus was, we know not. In that disembodied state each could remember his past life. Abraham said to the rich man, "Son (Greek, child), remember." Abraham knew the life the rich man had lived. They each could both think and feel.

On the mount of Transfiguration the three apostles knew Moses and Elijah, for Peter said to the Lord, "Let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah" (Luke 9. 28-36).

In the day of the Lord's coming to earth, the sons of the kingdom, who will be cast into outer darkness, will see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God (Luke 13. 28).

Saints are called upon to obey them that have the rule over them, for their elders, who watch on behalf of their souls, shall give account in regard to them at the judgement-seat of Christ (Hebrews 13. 17). This clearly implies memory of past events and the identification of persons.

The apostles were to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22. 30 ; Matthew 19. 28). It would be a strange scene indeed if these men did not know each other, the memory of past days on earth being entirely obliterated.

That natural relationships shall cease is clearly taught by the Lord, in Matthew 22. 30. Saints then shall be as the angels in heaven.
J.M.

THE EARNEST OF OUR INHERITANCE

“ In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God’s own possession, unto the praise of His glory ” (Ephesians 1. 13, 14).

The Holy Spirit, as promised by the Lord Jesus on the night of His betrayal, had been bestowed upon the Ephesian saints. The Holy Spirit was an earnest or a pledge to these believers of an inheritance which should ultimately be theirs.

The word “ earnest ” is instructive and interesting. The Greek word for it is *Arrhabōn* and is still used as signifying a token payment or pledge in business transactions. *Arribona*, in modern Greek, is an engagement ring. Even in parts of England and Wales in past days when a field was offered for sale, a piece of turf taken from the field was brought into the auction room. When the bidding was completed, the turf was handed to the buyer as an “ earnest ” of the transaction. He could leave the sale knowing full well that the turf he carried was just a very small, but nevertheless fair, sample of what now really belonged to him though he might not even have set eyes on the field itself.

There are two Old Testament stories which illustrate a similar thought. When Abraham’s servant, Eliezer, went to get a bride for his master’s son, he took with him ten camels, jewels of silver and gold and raiment. These were only samples of Abraham’s wealth for the Lord had blessed him in all things and he was very rich in cattle, silver and gold. The one cluster of grapes from the valley of Esheol together with the figs and pomegranates would be an assurance of the fruitfulness of the land wherein nothing would be lacking.

Here and now we see as through a glass darkly. On earth, through the Holy Spirit, we can only get a glimpse of the joys that await us in that land that is fairer than day. When we enter into our

complete and eternal inheritance, we shall drink more deeply of those streams that we have tasted here below.

*“What will it be to dwell above
And with the Lord of glory reign,
Since the sweet earnest of His love
So brightens all this dreary plain!
No heart can think, no tongue explain
What joy ’twill be with Christ to reign.”*

There are some comparisons in Scripture from which we can learn true values. Wisdom, we are told, is better than weapons of war. Wisdom, too, is better than rubies. Better is the little that the righteous hath than the abundance of the many wicked. Paul wrote to the Philippians that to depart and be with Christ was very far better than to abide with them; and the early Christian pilgrims desired (Gr. = stretched out for) a better country.

Sometimes anticipation is better than realization, but this is not so with the eternal glories that await us through the gates of heaven. The best wine has been kept to the last. We do well to remind ourselves continually that we are reaping what Christ did sow in tears. We trace all our joy now and in the future to His sore grief on the cross. None of these blessings would have been ours apart from His death. “Where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of Him that made it.”

*“There amidst the wealth of bliss
Which Christ’s poorness brought us,
We shall treasure none like this,
’Twas Himself that bought us.”*

R. CAPEWELL.

FRAGMENTS

No person can grow without taking food, even so also, no one can grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ who does not read and meditate in the Scriptures (2 Peter 3. 18).

True soul prosperity comes through meditating in God’s word, and from such prosperity will issue fruitfulness (Psalm 1. 2, 3).

No one can meditate in the word whose mind is roaming about in all manner of questionable places and things, therefore we should gird up the loins of our minds (1 Peter 1. 13).

ERRATUM:—In May issue, page 69, line 19, for ‘Damascus’, please read ‘Antioch’.

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England, and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

The canon of the Old Testament was drawing swiftly to a close at the time of the return of the Remnant from Babylon. In Jerusalem the last message of the Spirit was given. The Spirit of Grace in patient, unwearied care, was nursing men's minds, particularly those of the people of Israel, as a loving mother does her child, speaking to them, nourishing and cherishing them, so that they might respond and grow to spiritual maturity. But, alas, they were throughout their history like what they were in the wilderness under Moses. We may take their wilderness journey with its murmuring, sin and rebellion as a sample of what they were afterwards. Let us quote what Jehovah their God said about them by Isaiah:

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old. But they rebelled, and grieved His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy, and Himself fought against them. Then He remembered the days of old, Moses, and His people, saying, where is He that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of His flock? Where is He that put His Holy Spirit in the midst of them? that caused His glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses? that divided the water before them, to make Himself an everlasting name?"
(Isaiah 63. 9-12).

Who that reads these touching words of the prophet is not moved inwardly by them as he pleads with God for that people whom God loved with an everlasting love? Here in the prophet's words is one of the strong proofs of the personality of the Holy Spirit. He says, "They rebelled, and grieved His Holy Spirit." You cannot grieve a thing, nor can you grieve an influence. The A.V. gives the word "vexed" for "grieved." Vexed may mean one of two things, to anger or to grieve, but to grieve has but one meaning. We in our time are told, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4. 30). We say again that you cannot grieve a thing. The blessed Spirit is a Person who loves, can be grieved, and has a will as no mere thing has. As is His fruit even so is He Himself, for as a tree is known by its fruit, so a person is known by what he produces. What a gracious Person the Holy Spirit is, when His fruit is said to be—

"Love,	Longsuffering,	Faithfulness,
Joy,	Kindness,	Meekness,
Peace,	Goodness,	Temperance!"

It is against such a Spirit in the believer that the flesh lusts to destroy in him the fruit of the Spirit by the works of the flesh which are,—

"Fornication,	Idolatry,	Enmities,	Factions,	Drunkenness,
Uncleanness,	Sorcery,	Strife,	Divisions,	Revellings,
Lasciviousness,		Jealousies,	Heresies,	And such like."
		Wraths,	Envyings.	

The breath of these lusts is noxious and deadly, like the foul gases from a sewer, and if they are allowed to blow upon the fruit of the Spirit then the fruit will wilt and die.

In Israel, even as now, there was a collision between the flesh and the Spirit, the flesh in men was hard, callous, sinful, rebellious, the work of the devil in men; whilst the Spirit on the other hand was kind, gracious, longsuffering, who retired often to grieve at the state of the people He loved. Strange, yet how gracious and loving, Jehovah put His Holy Spirit in the midst of Israel! If He had remained on mount Sinai and on the top of such other eminences on the journey to the promised land, and from thence to speak to Israel, that would have been grace, to humble Himself to talk to men on earth. But to come into their very midst and to hear from time to time the deep, ominous rumble of rebellion from the tents which surrounded His tent, we say, what grace that He should have endured it! But how much different are we, who have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, and whose bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who also has deigned to dwell in the midst of His gathered people in churches of God? I ask, How much different are we?—J.M.

JOTTINGS

As God put His Holy Spirit in the midst of Israel in Moses' days, so did His Spirit abide with the Remnant which had returned from Babylon to build the house of God.

" Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the LORD; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the LORD, and work: for I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts, according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, and My Spirit abode (should be as R.V. marg. "abideth," A.V. "remaineth") among you: fear ye not" (Haggai 2. 4, 5).

The Holy Spirit was present among them energizing and superintending all the work of that feeble remnant in their herculean task of providing food for themselves and their little ones, protecting themselves from all enemies and evils, and building God a house. He was present with them in association with the terms upon which God took them to Himself as His covenant people, and was awaiting the time when He would indwell the house of the remnant. It was then as of old, "In all their affliction He was afflicted." Were the men of Israel without homes on their return to their city and land? He too was without a house. He shared with them in their sorrow, sorrow brought upon them by the sin of their fathers and by Nebuchadnezzar the executioner of divine vengeance. Sin ever brings its pains and its sorrows, and children often reap the folly of their fathers.

The children of Israel toiled on, energized by God's Spirit, until they saw the work completed, and the Spirit of God dwelt again in a house of far less adornment than that of Solomon's temple and even, perchance, than the tabernacle of Moses. It was God's house, accepted by Him as His dwelling and that was what mattered. It was destined to yet more magnificence when the Messiah would build the temple of Jehovah, but the house of the remnant was sufficient for the present. It was accepted on the principle according as a man hath, and not as he hath not. Two mites from a widow were more in the Lord's sight than the abundance of the rich as they cast their gifts into the temple treasury. The principle in calculating what is given is—How much is left after what has been given? The widow gave her all. What had she left?—God!

Alas, the toilers, despite all their blood and sweat and tears, were betrayed by those that came after them, for both Ezra and Nehemiah found unworthy sons of great fathers doing grievous mischief even in the very temple itself. And though they sought to cleanse the temple and the people, the roots of the cancer of departure from God were too widespread to be removed by such diligent reformers as Ezra and Nehemiah. So on they went in the ruinous course until God sent Malachi His messenger with His message, in which he addressed the priests saying, "Oh that there were one among you that would shut the doors, that ye might not kindle fire on Mine altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand" (Malachi 1. 10). God would have been glad apparently to see the whole priesthood shut out of His house. How soon the fine gold had become dim! It is ever a pleasure to hear the tale of the struggles of men and women towards the light and truth of God. It is ever a grief to see God's saints living in ease and affluence and forgetful of God and His things. And it is a great sorrow to see others deliberately turning away from God.

The messages of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi brought to a close the canon of the Old Testament, and sad to say the last word of inspired scripture of the Old Testament is "curse." "Lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Why a curse? Because that the law of Moses was being forgotten, those first words of inspiration of the Divine Spirit which flowed from the pen of Moses, words fundamental to all scripture, for the Lord said, "If ye believe not his (Moses') writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John 5. 47). How? How?—J.M.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY: THE CHURCHES OF MACEDONIA (VII)

Before Paul set out on his second journey a serious state of things developed in the church in Antioch (of Syria). Certain men came down from Judæa and taught the brethren, that except they were circumcised they could not be saved. We are told that Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and questioning with them, and as a result of all this, the brethren appointed Paul and Barnabas and certain others to go to the apostles and elders at Jerusalem about the matter. It seems also that Peter was visiting Antioch at this same time. This we learn from Galatians 2. 11-21. The men of Acts 15. 1 seem to be the same as the certain that came from James (Galatians 2. 12). When these men came, Peter, who had been eating with the Gentiles, withdrew and separated himself from the latter, fearing those men of the circumcision. Thus a cleavage took place, and even Barnabas, Paul's fellow-worker, was carried away with this hypocrisy or pretence. Paul withstood Peter to the face because he stood condemned, for Peter knew the gospel better than act thus. But the fear of man ever brings a snare, and Peter, knowing the strong current of law-keeping amongst the Jewish people in the Fellowship in Jerusalem, gave way before these men.

Not only did Paul go up to Jerusalem with the rest of the brethren from Antioch, as sent by the brethren there, he went up by revelation to lay before the apostles, the men of repute, in Jerusalem, the gospel which he preached among the Gentiles. Unity of mind was reached among the apostles on the gospel, and fellowship was established as to the different spheres of service of Peter and Paul (Galatians 2. 1-10). After this came the general counsel of the apostles and elders to consider the same subject of the gospel and what should be required of the Gentiles as to behaviour, not as to salvation, which is ever by grace through faith and through faith *alone*. Here again unity of mind was reached by the apostles and elders under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, for they said, in the letter which they addressed to the brethren in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us" (Acts 15. 28).

Judas and Silas were chosen to carry the letter to those to whom it was addressed. These two brethren continued sometime in Antioch after they had delivered the letter, the contents of which brought much joy and consolation. Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch with many others, preaching the word of the Lord.

After this, Paul proposed to Barnabas that they should return and visit the brethren where they had proclaimed the word of the Lord. Then came the division of Paul and Barnabas, to which we have already called attention. Barnabas was minded to take with them John Mark (who was a cousin of Barnabas—Colossians 4. 10), but Paul opposed this, and after differing sharply they parted asunder from each other. Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed

for Cyprus, his home island, but Paul chose Silas, and being commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord, he went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches.

Following this no doubt he crossed the Taurus mountains, probably by the pass called the Cilician Gates, and entering Galatia he came to Derbe and later to Lystra. Timothy, as we have said before, belonged to Derbe. Timothy had been saved on Paul's previous visit to Derbe, and possibly his mother and grandmother also. These were Jewesses, but Timothy's father was a Greek. The fame of Timothy reached to Lystra and Iconium, and the brethren there gave a good report of him. Paul would have Timothy go forth with him to the Lord's work, and here began one of the sweetest partnerships in the work of the Lord to be found in the Scriptures. It is a pattern for all time, of an older and a younger man being yoked together, a spiritual father and his beloved and true child in faith. This with the sending forth of Barnabas and Saul are the guiding scriptures in the New Testament in connexion with the sending and going forth of whole-time servants of the Lord into His service (Acts 13. 1-4 and 16. 1-3). This gift of divine service was given to Timothy by (*Dia*, through, by means of) the laying on of Paul's hands (2 Timothy 1. 6), and through (*Dia*) prophecy with (*Meta*, together with, party with, as indicative of the fellowship of) the laying on of the hands of the presbytery or elderhood. This elderhood comprised the elders of the churches of Galatia, with Paul as the representative of the elderhood in a wider sense than that in Galatia. Thus Timothy went forth with the full fellowship of the elders responsible in their care of the Lord's work and servants. The going forth of the Lord's servants to whole-time service calls for the safeguarding of the principles of fellowship, that is the manward side, and the other, the Godward side of such an action, is, to be assured that the man who is going out has the gift and calling for such a work.

Paul took and circumcised Timothy before they set out together, and it might be questioned whether Paul was not going contrary to the decision regarding circumcision in the counsel of apostles and elders in Jerusalem, as given in chapter 15. Also, it might be reasoned that Paul was going against what he wrote on the subject later in his epistle to the Galatians. Acts 16. 3 gives his reasons for so acting. He did so for two reasons, (1) "because of the Jews that were in those parts": and (2) "for they all knew that his father was a Greek." His action was because he did not want Timothy's uncircumcision to be a barrier to his ministry to Jewish people. It was in keeping with his avowed method of reaching men with the gospel, "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9. 19-23).

Having delivered the decrees of the counsel of the apostles and elders to the churches of Galatia, (by which these churches were strengthened), they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, but were

forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. They had also to pass Bithynia, and Mysia, the latter being part of the Roman province of Asia, so they came to the seaport of Troas. Here Paul had the vision of the man of Macedonia beckoning him to come over into Macedonia and help them. As a result of this, we read, "Straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us for to preach the gospel unto them" (Acts 16. 10). Here we have a matter of considerable interest contained in the plural pronoun "we." Here at Troas Luke, the beloved physician and Paul's companion in travel, joins the little band of the Lord's workers. It is the first time in the Acts that Luke the writer uses "we," as including himself.

Setting sail from Troas they reached Neapolis (new city), and then went on by land to Philippi, the first city of the district and a Roman colony. The work in Philippi began in an unostentatious way. In other cities which Paul visited he went into the synagogue and there with one address so moved his audience that many disciples were made. But here in Philippi the Lord's servants went out on the sabbath day by a river side, where they supposed there was a place of prayer. We do not read of any men being there, but they sat down and spoke to certain women which had come together. One of these was Lydia the purple-seller from Thyatira, a woman that worshipped God. The Lord opened this dear woman's heart to give heed to the gospel which Paul spoke. She became a disciple, and those of her household did also and they were all baptized. Not only was her heart opened, the door of her house was opened to the apostle and his companions. Such is the sweet and beautiful effect of the gospel in human hearts, it sweetens and cleanses every channel of human thought, and casts out selfishness and hardness of heart.

As Paul and the others went from time to time to the place of prayer they were followed by a young woman, a fortune-teller, who kept crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation" (Acts 16. 17). Paul, being sorely troubled, turned one day and said to the spirit which had taken possession of her, "I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour." What became of this maiden is not revealed to us, but one may express a wishful thought, that she found her place with the rest of those beloved saints in Philippi in the church there.

This kindly act of the apostle to this maid in ridding her of this evil spirit brought down the ire of her covetous masters, the hope of their gain being now gone. Paul and Silas were brought before the magistrates and were beaten with rods and cast into the inner prison and their feet were made fast in the stocks. In the wretchedness of their position they prayed to God, and in the joy of their spirit in being counted worthy to suffer for the Name they sang hymns. Then we are told—"And the prisoners were listening to them." Such words and such songs the prisoners had never heard before. It would no

doubt seem to them, that "heaven came down their souls to greet." But not only were the prisoners listening, God was listening, and He gave the earth a shake. There was an earthquake, and such was the mystery of this earthquake, that the doors were opened and every one's bands were loosed. They were free; God had freed them all for the sake of His servants. The earthquake roused the sleeping jailor, and when he saw the open doors he thought that all the prisoners were gone, and this would have been a tragedy for him on the morrow, so he sought to escape the consequences of his sleep by taking his own life, as many others have done to escape the consequences of their deeds. But, lo, a voice from the inner prison startles him. It was the voice of Paul, the praying and singing man, now about to be the savior of a would-be suicide. "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." The jailor "called for lights, and sprang in (such was his urgent desire to be saved), and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" What a change God can make in a few minutes! The bruised and battered men of a few hours before are now the men at whose feet the jailor bows. Their message to the jailor is one of the clear testimonies of the gospel, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." This does not mean that the members of his house would be saved by proxy, saved because the head of the house, the jailor, was saved, but it means that as he would be saved by believing on the Lord Jesus, so also could they be, each one of them. The sequel to this remarkable story was that the jailor was saved, and Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to him, with all that were in his house. The jailor took them and washed their stripes, and he was baptized, he and all his immediately. He brought them into his house and set meat before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God. There is nothing in this passage to support or give countenance to the practice of such as believe in, so called, "household baptism," that is, the baptism of unsaved persons because the head of the house has been saved and baptized. The singular verb *Parathēken* which shows the action of the jailor placing food upon his table for Paul and Silas, in which verb the pronoun "he" is implied, must take the singular perfect participle *Pepisteukōs*, rendered "having believed," and gives not one whit of encouragement to the thought that the jailor believed and his household did not. The fact that there was household rejoicing proves conclusively that the opposite of this took place.

The leaving of the prison by Paul and Silas was one of honour, for the magistrates who had condemned them had to come down and bring them out of the prison. They also asked them to go from their city. Thus they came out of the prison and entered into the house of Lydia, and when they had seen the brethren and comforted them they departed.

From Philippi they took their journey through Amphipolis and Apollonia and at length came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue

of the Jews (Acts 17). This statement about this Jewish synagogue may reflect upon what happened in Philippi, in which city there is no reference to a synagogue. We are told that Paul as his custom was went in unto them in the synagogue for three sabbath days and reasoned with them from the Scriptures ; the subject of which reasoning was that Christ must suffer and rise from the dead, and that Jesus was the Christ. Some of the Jews were persuaded, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. Thus the divine message went on its triumphant way, as Paul said, "Thanks be unto God, which always leadeth us in triumph in Christ" (2 Corinthians 2. 14). But here again, as in the cities of Galatia, the Jews were moved with jealousy, and took certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd set the city in an uproar. The house of Jason was assaulted and he with certain brethren were dragged before the rulers of the city. The indictment against the Lord's servants was, "These men that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." Jason was also accused of having received these men who acted contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, and said that there was another king, one Jesus. This Jewish scheming and stirring up trouble greatly disturbed the multitude and the rulers of the city, and when the rulers had taken security from Jason and the rest they let them go. During Paul's visit, we judge, the church of God in Thessalonica was planted.

Following this uproar the brethren sent away Paul and Silas by night to Berœa, and when they arrived there they, as their custom was, went into the synagogue of the Jews, and we are told that the Jews of Berœa were more noble than those of Thessalonica, and "that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11). Many of them believed and also of the Greek women of honourable estate, and of men, not a few. There can be little doubt that the church in Berœa was planted at that same time. Thus we know of three churches in Macedonia, those in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berœa. The work however was not allowed to go on long in peace, for when the Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul had proclaimed the word of God in Berœa, they came thither and stirred up the multitude and again Paul was sent forth by the brethren as far as the sea. Timothy and Silas abode still in Berœa. Paul was conducted and brought to Athens, and those who conducted Paul to Athens received command to Timothy and Silas, that they should come to Paul at Athens with all speed.

More is to be learned of the work in Thessalonica from the two epistles of Paul to that church. Of them it is said, "Ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit." Also, "Ye, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judæa in Christ Jesus : for ye also suffered the same things of your own countrymen, even as they did of the Jews ; who both killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drave out us, and please not God, and are contrary to

all men ; forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved ; to fill up their sins alway : but the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost " (1 Thessalonians 1. 6 ; 2. 14-16). Such is the solemn indictment of the Holy Spirit through Paul against the Jewish people because of their deeds, which were in evidence against the Lord's work both in Galatia and Macedonia. J. MILLER.

THE TABERNACLE :

The lampstand with its lamps

The account of the making of the lampstand and its vessels is given in Exodus 37, and the instructions to Moses for the making of it are found in chapter 25. Its material and workmanship afford many lessons of deep spiritual significance, and in this article we wish to draw attention to some of these.

Firstly we remark that the word *lampstand* is the correct translation, as anyone can discern from the fact that it was a stand for a number of lamps that burned olive oil. This oil the children of Israel were commanded to bring to the house of God, "to cause a lamp to burn continually." It was to be beaten from the olives (Exodus 27. 20).

The stand was made of pure gold, and of *beaten work*, even its base, and its shaft ; its cups, its knops, and its flowers were of one piece with it. There were six branches going out of the sides of it, three out of one side of the lampstand, and three out of the other side. Almond-blossoms, a knop and a flower, adorned all the branches, as well as the main shaft of the lampstand ; but the shaft had four such knops and flowers, whereas the branches had but three each. There were seven lamps, which were to give light over against the lampstand. Tongs and snuffdishes were among the vessels thereof. All were made of *pure gold* ; a talent of this precious material was used in the making.

The LORD enjoined that these were to be made after their pattern, which He had shown Moses in the Mount. This was an essential matter as we have earlier emphasized (Exodus 25. 40).

Let us now consider the great value of the lampstand and its vessels, which were made, as we have seen, from a talent of pure gold. We are not told how high it stood, nor are we informed how widely its branches stretched. These omissions would suggest to us that what is being set forth does not relate so much to size, but being made of pure gold suggests rather that the quality of the lampstand is all important.

A talent (114 lbs.) of pure gold at the present high price of gold would be worth over £13,000. This alone makes it clear that we are dealing with something that is very high in value. We wish, however,

to ask the attention of our readers to the manner in which the lampstand was made, because this, we judge, enhances its value considerably. It was

MADE OF BEATEN WORK

The work would have been comparatively easy had it been cast, but twice over we read, "of beaten work shall the lampstand be made." Day by day the skilful workmen would use their hammers. Many heavy blows would fall upon the impressionable gold, and many light taps would be necessary. Great skill would be needful to turn out so magnificent a piece of work.

A beloved fellow-worker had dealing with an engineering firm, which sent him a present which consisted of a small paper-weight in the shape of a tray with a little frog neatly poised in the centre. Being deeply interested in the workmanship he enquired from the firm about it, and learned that the value of the copper contained in it was about one penny, whereas the finished article was valued at ten shillings and six pence. This will serve to illustrate how workmanship enhances values. When applied to the lampstand we can readily understand that its value as a finished article was beyond that of the talent of gold itself. We would not risk making an estimate, but readers will be able to glean what we are seeking to illustrate. We draw attention to these things because we desire it to be clear that whatever the Holy Spirit is symbolizing that thing is of great value in the sight of God.

We should also pay attention to the fact that what is of great value with God is not always so in the sight of men. The thoughts and ways of God and men are very different. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55. 8, 9). Then the declaration of the Lord Jesus in Luke 16. 15 is most solemn. He said to the Pharisees, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God." It follows that what God values highly men are likely to esteem lightly, unless enlightened by the Spirit and word of God.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LAMPSTAND

What then does the lampstand symbolize? The answer to this question is given in Revelation chapter 1 by the Lord Jesus Himself, "The seven lampstands," says He, "are seven churches" (verse 20). The seven stars held in the right hand of the Lord represented the angels or messengers of the seven churches, but the lampstands represented the seven churches. Though there was only one lampstand in the tabernacle there are many churches of God. Numbers do not affect the type (e.g. as of boards or curtains); the type is of a church of God. A lampstand therefore sets forth *a church of God*.

Here we must pause to ask our readers to make quite sure from the Scriptures what a church of God is. Perhaps few phrases are more laxly used than the phrase, "the church of God." Many apply it to the Church which is the Body of Christ, others apply it to the whole of Christendom as it appears on the earth today. These, however, are not how the Holy Spirit uses the term. Always in the Scriptures the term *church of God* refers to a local company of saints gathered together of God, and separated from what is contrary to the will of God (Acts 20. 17, 28 ; 1 Corinthians 1. 2). What encouragement is afforded us who are outside the camp with the Lord to know that He sets so high a value upon a church of God !

DIVINE TESTIMONY

The church of God locally is a lampstand, and is a testimony-bearer for God, forming part of the house of God. After the seventy years' captivity when the LORD's house was being built again by Zerubbabel and the Remnant, the prophet saw a vision of a lampstand, and he was told that the work though small was not to be despised, because the work was of the Spirit of God : "Not by might (an army) nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 4. 6). The plummet was in the hand of Zerubbabel (verse 10), which suggests the work of the careful builder, and reminds us that in our day the plummet of the word of God must be used if we are to build His house according to His revealed will. It is just here that so many have erred ; instead of coming to the Scriptures to learn how God would have them build they follow either their own ideas, or those of some other person. This accounts for the multiplicity of sects in our time, a state of things that is in exact opposition to what the Lord Jesus prayed for before He went out to endure the cross for us. Thus He prayed concerning His own, "These are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me, *that they may be one*, even as We are . . . That they all may be one . . . that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (John 17. 11, 21). The Lord Jesus thus had before Him the matter of testimony-bearing on the part of His disciples, and to be together as *one* was an essential if this witness were to be borne.

The church in Ephesus had left its first love, and the Lord sends this solemn message to it, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works ; or else I come to thee, and will move thy lampstand out of its place, except thou repent" (Revelation 2. 5). It we could but remember that the Lord died that He might have a people together as *one* it would certainly encourage us to respond to His desire and commands. The Spirit tells us that Christ died "not for the nation only, but that He might also gather together into *one* the children of God that are scattered abroad." (John 11. 52).

THE SPIRIT'S ACTIVITY

The lampstand had seven lamps of fire burning on it. As John the beloved disciple looked into heaven he saw "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God" (Revelation 4. 5). The term "seven Spirits" of God, used earlier in chapter 1. verse 4, sets forth, I judge, the perfect activities of the Holy Spirit. We are assured that in heaven before God's throne the Holy Spirit is in perfect activity. There is none there to quench Him, to resist Him or to grieve Him. God's will is that as it is in heaven so it should be on earth. And where on earth should we turn to find a spot in which the blessed Spirit could have this liberty? There is only one place where this can be known, and that is in the church of God. This place is signified by the lampstand with its seven lamps of fire. The church of God therefore is the place wherein the truth of God is acknowledged and taught; where the desire expressed in the prayer the Lord taught His disciples to pray, "Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth" (Matthew 6. 10) should be realized. Oh that the solemnity of being in the church of God were more impressed upon us, that we might be increasingly conscious of the greatness of the responsibility this position involves!

Somewhat of the value of the church of God may be gathered from the apostle's words in Acts 20. 28. There, addressing the elders of the Ephesian church he says, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops (overseers), to feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood." He possessed it by mighty purchase—the blood of His own (Son). Here we should note that the term church of God applies to the church of God in the city of Ephesus, the elders of which Paul was addressing.

LAMPS BURNING AND SHINING

The individuals in the church of God in the city are lamps or lights. A daily supply of the oil, which is the Spirit and word of God, is needful if the lamps are to burn and shine. God forbid that His people should be clear and cold as the moon. Of John the Baptist the Lord said, "He was the lamp that burneth and shineth" (John 5. 35). There were in John's life and ministry both warmth and light like the sun. If we are conscious of being a luminary let us see to it firstly that we get our daily supply of the oil, and then let us be quite sure that our lamp is on the stand, that is the lampstand. The Lord Jesus says, "Is the lamp brought to be put under the bushel, or under the bed, and not to be put on the stand?" (Mark 4. 21). Is the reader's lamp on the stand? The lamps on the stand were to give light over against it, or "in front of the lampstand" (Numbers 8. 2, 3). This was in the house where the priests were continually serving the LORD. This speaks to us of priesthood service, the highest service in which the redeemed can engage. If we are bringing our light to the house there is certain to be luminaries in the world.

G. PRASHER.

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

The believer is a citizen of heaven (Philippians 3. 20), and he should manifest this fact in the sight of men. Children of God, young and old, have come to realize in various degrees, the power and influence of the world and its ways, in attracting the flesh within them, causing that continuous warfare, of which the apostle speaks, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh" (Galatians 5. 17). But while this conflict may cause warfare within the believer, this is not necessarily evident to those around, who should see in him only a manifestation of Christ. Testimony is borne of certain of the early disciples that onlookers "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4. 13). There were things about them which marked them out as His followers.

We can well ask ourselves, "Is there that about us, which marks us out as different from others?" It is not so much what we say, as what we are, and do. Do we, by the manifestation of the truth, commend "ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God"? (2 Corinthians 4. 2). If we have heard the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, and have received it, not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God; if we have learned that, through His Cross the world has been crucified unto us, and we unto the world (see Galatians 6. 14); if the truth of the Lord's return has had the purifying effect upon us which it is intended to have (see 1 John 3. 3); then men would see in us something different from that in others, who know not Christ. Our lives and conversation will be different; our homes will be different; our feet will not carry us to places where we would be ashamed to be found, if our Lord returned.

A flood of literature is pouring out from the world's printing presses, religious, educational, entertaining, but very much is demoralizing. It has been said, "A man is known by the books that he reads, as well as by the company he keeps." It may be that on business calls we have scanned the room for evidence of life, or interest in spiritual and eternal things. Such evidence we have found displayed on the bookshelves, or in the type of newspaper, or in the pictures on the walls. If the Cross of Christ activates us, we will be careful as to what type of literature engages our attention or is seen in our own homes.

Television may have its practical uses. There are the subjects educational; there are the business advertisements; there are the things entertaining to the flesh and to the carnal mind, but oftentimes nauseating to the spiritual mind. But, we judge, the believer should not desire television in his house. Television in the home and an appetite for the Word of God do not agree.

The radio has its very practical uses, and we would wish to deny it to none who require it for any useful purpose ; but let each believer ask himself the question, " Why have I got it ? " Have we not heard it said by some that " our young people cannot go here or there, they are debarred from this and that, and they must have something ? " Surely, if our young people know and love the Lord, and His word, they would not be longing for the flesh pots of Egypt, and if such be the excuse of parents for bringing into the home television and radio it seems that spirituality in such cases is reaching a low ebb and spiritual disaster may not be far off. Moreover, let us take heed lest by such action it should be a cause of offence to the consciences of others.

While it is needful for most of us to " profess honest occupations for necessary uses " (Titus **3. 14**, R.V.M.) and " to provide things honest in the sight of men," let us aim at making manifest the fact that our calling and " citizenship is in heaven ; from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ," thus commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

T. W. FULLERTON

THE HOUSE OF GOD

" The house of God " is a term which is greatly misunderstood and misapplied by many believers today. To very many it means a material building in which people congregate for religious purposes. Oftentimes several such buildings are found within a stone's throw of each other, all with the same claim of being the house of God, although these people differ greatly in doctrine. We might ask, Where do such people obtain the idea that their buildings are God's dwelling places ? Unhesitatingly we would reply—certainly not from the Scriptures of the New Testament. In **1 Kings 8. 27**, when Solomon had built a material house for God, we read the heart-searching words by that king, " But will God in very deed dwell on the earth ? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee : how much less this house that I have builded ! " The answer to Solomon's question undoubtedly is that God did do so, when men were prepared to build as He would have them, always remembering that " the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God " (**1 Chronicles 29. 1**).

King David gave to Solomon the pattern he himself had received in writing from the hand of the LORD (**1 Chronicles 28. 19**). Prior to this God had given to Moses the pattern for the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness, which was the house of God in that day (**Exodus 25. 8, 9 ; Numbers 12. 7**).

It should be noted that there was only one house of God on the earth at one time, and we do not find in the Scriptures the plural word "houses" of God.

From all over Palestine the people of God converged upon Jerusalem at stated times in the year because there, and there alone, God had placed His name, and His house had been built according to His own pattern.

When a Boy of twelve years the Lord Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the Passover with His parents (Luke 2. 41-50). Later when they missed Him from the company who were returning home, they returned to Jerusalem and found Him in the temple. His answer to their query was, "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" Christ loved the house of God and was ever jealous for the things of His Father. When He saw the rulers of the people turning the house of God into a place of merchandise, He was filled with righteous indignation, and having made a scourge of cords He drove out the animals and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and "His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house shall eat Me up" (John 2. 15-17). Later, when nearing the end of His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus lamented over Jerusalem, as we read in Luke 13. 34, 35. They had rejected Him and God had rejected them and left that which had been His house, and the Lord called it "your house." The Lord's words were, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." How sad indeed!

Was this then the end of the precious truth of God having a house in which to dwell in the midst of His people? By no means. Whilst it is true that, in the present dispensation, as Stephen stated, "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands," yet, as the Epistles clearly show, God still dwells with a people who build according to the divine pattern—of such Paul wrote in Hebrews 3. 6, "But Christ as a Son over His (that is God's) house: whose house are we, if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end," while Peter, in 1 Peter 2. 5, writes, "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Also in 1 Peter 4. 17 it is recorded, "For the time is come for judgement to begin at the house of God: and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that obey not the gospel of God." The pronouns "we," "ye" and "us" in these passages clearly demonstrate that in the New Testament there was a people designated the house of God, a people divinely gathered though scattered geographically, and the house of God is ever a possibility where people conform to the pattern contained in the New Testament.

Where then in the New Testament do we find the pattern of God's present house, for, as we have shown, anything will not do for God? Let us go back in thought to Jerusalem, not to the material temple which had become desolate, although many were still doing

service of a sort there, but to see the pattern of the New Testament house of God. Here we find the disciples of the now risen and exalted Lord Jesus Christ gathered together at the command of Him, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given. In His prayer to His Father in John 17, besides other things He said, concerning His disciples, "I have given them Thy word . . . sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth." These beloved disciples who were prepared to become a habitation of God in the Spirit are seen in Acts 1 and 2 "waiting for the promise of the Father." When the day of Pentecost was now come the Holy Spirit of God descended, and the sound of the rushing of a mighty wind filled the house where they were sitting, and divided tongues as of fire appeared and "sat upon each one of them" (Acts 2. 1-3).

Two things took place simultaneously here; each disciple received the gift of the Holy Spirit and was baptized by the Lord Jesus Himself into the Body, and the assembled company of disciples became an habitation for God, God's house. This was the first church of God, the church in Jerusalem. It was not simply a little group of believers.

Later we read, "They then that received his word were baptized; and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2. 41, 42). Being saved from hell did not bring those three thousand into the church nor house of God and neither did baptism in water. Having been baptized, they were then added to the one hundred and twenty who were already together and became part of the church of God in Jerusalem, and of the house of God. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine. In 1 Timothy 3. 14, 15, Paul writes, "These things write I unto thee . . . that thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

As the testimony spread in those days other churches were planted, and so we read of the churches of God in Judæa (1 Thessalonians 2. 14), and the Churches of Galatia (Galatians 1. 2), but though there were many churches of God there was only one house of God. Peter's letter was to a large area, to saints in churches of God in five provinces of Asia Minor—many churches, but only one spiritual house which included all those churches and also churches elsewhere. "Each several building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2. 21). What a pleasing sight for the eyes of the Lord to look upon, men and women gathered together according to His word in churches of God in various cities, towns and villages and yet one house, one temple, a spiritual house composed of living stones, with God dwelling in their midst, according to His own word, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians 6. 16)!

“THE THICK DARKNESS WHERE GOD WAS”

(Exodus 20. 21).

The association of God with darkness is contrary to all our conceptions of Him who dwells “in light unapproachable,” who “is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Yet it is into darkness that Moses goes to meet with God on behalf of His people, and out from that darkness that the light of His law proceeds.

Again and again this record is verified in the experiences of His people. It was in “the fourth watch of the night” that the Lord came to His distressed disciples, and in the darkness of life’s difficulties, temptations, sorrows and loss He still may be found who said, “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee.” Therefore, though

*“The way is dark, the hill is steep,
And loud the thunder rolls and deep,”*

yet can we not say, “I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me,” even though it be “through the valley of the shadow of death”? One has well written,

*“I had rather walk in the dark with God,
Than walk alone in the light,
I had rather walk by faith with God,
Than walk alone by sight.”*

A. G. JARVIS

*“He made darkness His hiding place, His pavilion round about Him;
Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies”* (Psalm 18. 11).

*“Clouds and darkness are round about Him: Righteousness and
judgement are the foundation of His throne”* (Psalm 97. 2).

FRAGMENTS

Be careful of your thoughts, for thoughts build your character as bricks build a house.

Human depravity springs from the state of the heart, whence come forth evil thoughts (Matthew 15. 19); hence the thoughts of man’s heart is only evil continually (Genesis 6. 5); and that from his youth (Genesis 8. 21).

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

Amongst the proverbs of Solomon, which the men of king Hezekiah copied out, is this,

*“As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold,
So is a wise reprovee upon an obedient ear”* (Proverbs 25. 12).

This is a happy combination—“a wise reprovee,” and “an obedient ear.” It may not be of frequent occurrence. Indeed Solomon again says,

*“A scorner loveth not to be reproveth :
He will not go unto the wise”* (Proverbs 15. 12).

The A.V. rendering is, “A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him.”

Such indeed was Ahab of old. When Jehoshaphat went down to Samaria to Ahab (and indeed it was a downgrade movement for Jehoshaphat, for he initiated steps followed by his wilful and disobedient son, Jehoram, who had married Ahab's daughter Athaliah, who, in turn dragged Jehoram still further down), and when Ahab proposed to Jehoshaphat that they should go against the Syrians to Ramoth-gilead to battle, Jehoshaphat was anxious to hear what a prophet of the LORD had to say about this enterprise. They had heard Ahab's four hundred prophets say, “Go up ; for God shall deliver it into the hand of the king.” With this Jehoshaphat was not satisfied, so he said to Ahab, “Is there not here besides a prophet of the LORD, that we might inquire of him ?” Ahab's answer was, “There is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD : but I hate him ; for he never prophesieth good concerning me, but always evil : the same is Micaiah, the son of Imla.” Jehoshaphat, who knew something of the value of a prophet of the LORD, a man with the LORD's message, said, “Let not the king say so” (2 Chronicles 18. 5-6).

Ahab was a scorner of all persons and things that were good, and in him was fulfilled the word of Solomon written before his day, “A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him.” Ahab did with Micaiah as Herod Antipas did with John the Baptist at a later time, and as men did with Paul also, but Paul said that the word of God was not bound. So it was with Ahab ; the hand of God was present at the battlefield at Ramoth-gilead and brought Ahab down with an arrow which pierced him between the joints of his coat of mail. Ahab might reject Micaiah and treat him with dishonour, but it was not within his power to keep the arrow of divine judgement from fatally piercing his carefully mailed body.

The people of Israel were in a sad way when they laid a snare for him that reproveth them in the gate (Isaiah 29. 21), the faithful elder in the capacity as judge who sought to correct the wrongs that he saw in his people. It is a sad day when the voice of the judge is smothered by whatever evil means the lawless adopt. It is said by Amos, who lived in a dark period of Israel's history, “They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly” (Amos 5. 10). Was it not so, that many were willing to run after a man of Absalom's character and to reject the sound and solemn words of men of the character of David? Even in affairs of this world some men of no outstanding ability have clambered to heights of notoriety on the willing shoulders of others whom they afterwards sought to pull up after them. Indeed the world is full of this kind of thing in smaller circles of human intrigue and preferences. The voice of wisdom and integrity is often hushed by the shifting winds and schemes of perverted thought. It is said of the Lord as Jehovah's Servant, in Isaiah 11. 3, 4,

*“His delight (Scent, “Quick understanding,” A.V.) shall be in the
fear of the LORD : and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes,
neither reprove after the hearing of His ears : but with righteousness shall
He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth”*
(Isaiah 11. 3, 4).

Happy indeed is our case when we are able to say with David the psalmist,

*“Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness ;
And let him reprove me, it shall be as oil upon the head ;
Let not my head refuse it”* (Psalm 141. 5).

Let us hearken to the reproofs of instruction which are the way of life (Proverbs 6. 23), for “He is in the way of life that heedeth correction (or instruction) : but he that forsaketh reproof erreth” (Proverbs 10. 17).—J.M.

JOTTINGS

To reprove others is a work suited only to those of upright character and integrity. The Hebrew word for "reprove" is *Yakach* and means literally "to be in the front," "Hence figuratively," Gesenius says, "to be in the sunshine, to be clear, manifest, to appear." Hence a reproof administered by one whose arguments may be as clear as daylight, but whose actions are shady and inconsistent, must in the very nature of things fail in its effect. Did not the Lord say in this connexion,

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me cast out the mote out of thine eye; and lo, the beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matthew 7. 3-5).

These words are corrective and powerful and give guidance to those who would administer a reproof.

That reproofs are needed, both within and without the Fellowship, is clearly seen from Paul's words to Timothy, especially in the light of the apostasy which like a flood was beginning to carry many away from the teaching of the apostles.

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine (teaching); but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (2 Timothy 4. 2-4).

And from his words to the Ephesians we see that the saints were to reprove such as lived in and wrought in the darkness.

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them; for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of. But all things when they are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light" (Ephesians 5. 11-13).

This is one of the most difficult things to do, to administer a timely and wise reproof. But how it reacts upon one's own conduct! The utmost care must be taken that one's own actions are pure, otherwise the reproof had better never be given. Even to such as those whose life is above reproach there may be a deal of enmity and reproach and persecution stirred up by those who are offended at being reprovèd. Thus it was that Solomon wrote,

*"Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee:
Reprove a wise man, and he will love thee"* (Proverbs 9. 8).

Did not John the Baptist lose his life because he reprovèd Herod for his wickedness?

"Herod the tetrarch, being reprovèd by him for Herodias his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison" (Luke 3. 19, 20).

And to this infamous act he added yet more to his many deeds of sin and shame, he ordered John to be beheaded in prison, an act next door in wickedness to that of the murder of the Son of God at Calvary, in which Herod shared.

We are told, in Luke 9. 7-9, that when Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of the Lord's works, he said, "John I beheaded: but who is this, about whom I hear such things? And he sought to see Him." His wish was given, for he happened to be in Jerusalem at the time of the Lord's arrest, judgement and death. When Pilate heard that the Lord was of Galilee, which was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod. Then we read,

"Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was of a long time desirous to see Him, because he had heard concerning Him; and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him" (Luke 23. 8).

Though Herod questioned the Lord, the Lord had no word for him, and "Herod with his soldiers set Him at nought, and mocked Him." He might silence John the Baptist by imprisonment and death, he might join in silencing the Lord in the same way, but he can never silence the rebukes of his own conscience for ever.—J.M.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

PAUL'S SECOND JOURNEY: THE CHURCHES OF ACHAIA (VIII)

As we saw in our previous article, the brethren who conducted Paul from Berea received a commandment for Silas and Timothy that they should come with all speed to Paul at Athens. We do not know that Silas ever came to Paul at Athens, but Timothy came and was sent back to Thessalonica. While Paul waited at Athens his spirit was provoked within him for he saw that Athens was full of idols. It is apparent that human wisdom, called philosophy, did not clear the minds of the Greeks, who sought after wisdom, from the evils of idolatry and the immorality which ever attends it, so that Greeks with all their professed wisdom knew not God any more than did the other heathen who were regarded as barbarians.

Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue and also in the market place every day with such as met with him. Certain of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him, and some said, "What would this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection." A babbler means a seed-gatherer, spoken of birds that pick up seed that is sown, hence used of poor persons who picked up things dropped in market places, also spoken of as worthless, abject fellows. They regarded Paul as having picked up stories and went round retailing them in the market places. The word for gods is demons. Demons, according to the Greek mind, are described in the following words, given in Parkhurst's lexicon, "Every demon is a middle being between God and mortal men." If you ask what he means 'by a middle being'? he will tell you . . . "God is not approached immediately by man, but all the commerce and intercourse between gods and men is performed by the mediation of demons." "Demons are reporters and carriers from men to the gods, and again from the gods to men, of the supplications and prayers of the one, and of the injunctions and rewards of devotion from the other." Was there ever a greater satanic triumph than this to keep men from God, and God from men? This same iniquity is enthroned in the Roman Catholic Church wherein the legendary figure of the Virgin Mary is the supposed intercessor on behalf of the poor deluded Romanist. The Scriptures are clear as crystal that there is one Mediator between God and men, Himself Man, Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2. 5). There is also only one High Priest, Jesus the Son of God (Hebrews 4. 14). Rome has enthroned (supposedly) Mary as queen of heaven, the prime intercessor between Rome's votaries and God the Father and the Son. Besides, she has endless intercessors in angels and saints. Christ, the sole way of approach to God the Father, is debased and creature mediation exalted. This is paganism with a veneer of Christianity.

The essence of the Epicurean and Stoic forms of philosophy has been summed up as "Pleasure and Pride," the unbridled lust of the flesh in the Epicureans, and the glorification of the flesh in the

restrictions which they thought seemly to apply to themselves, on the part of the Stoics. These philosophers took Paul and brought him to the Areopagus (Mars' Hill) and there they inquired what this new teaching was. Then we are told of the occupation of the Athenians, that they spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear, some new thing. It has been well said about all spiritual and fundamental knowledge, that what is true is not new, and what is new is not true. Principles are not new, applications of principles may be.

In the midst of the Areopagus, Paul addressed the assembly, and spoke of their superstition (which means to be "very reverent to demons.") May we say in passing that demon-possession was one of the things that the Lord and His apostles had to contend with? Paul spoke of the objects of their worship and of seeing an altar with the inscription, "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD." This provided Paul with his subject and he declared to them the God whom they did not know. His address, given in brief by Luke, was like all Paul's ministry, both oral and written, Spirit-given, masterly and clear, and withal powerful. The God he proclaimed to them was the Maker and Lord of heaven and earth and all things therein. He "dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is He served by men's hands, as though He needed anything." He is the Giver of all things, and He is not far from each one, for all created intelligences live and move and have their being in Him, and in consequence men, because of the nearness of God to them, should feel after Him and find Him. He cited the writing of certain poets, as proof that men should not think of the Godhead as of wrought gold or silver, etc., for man is God's offspring. This was written by both Aratus of Tarsus, and Kleantes of Assos. We must distinguish between man as an offspring of God by creation, and the believer in Christ being a child of God by regeneration, these are two entirely different relationships. Though Adam is said to be son of God, in Luke 3. 38, yet through the entrance of sin, and death through sin, the original relationship was lost, and man, to become a child and son of God, must be born again. An idol is a stupid, vain thing, and, as Paul said, "We know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one" (1 Corinthians 8. 4). They that make and worship them become like unto them, for man becomes like the object of his worship. But what is behind idol-worship? That too Paul makes plain. "But I say, that the thing which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with demons" (1 Corinthians 10. 20 mg.). Here the Roman and Greek churches, and others, are unveiled in their idolatry; their sacrifices of the mass, etc., are forms of demon worship.

God overlooked the times of the ignorance of the Gentiles in the past, but now, since the coming of Christ, a new era had been opened up in the world-wide message of the gospel, and men all everywhere are commanded to repent. This repentance toward God is in the light of the day of the judgement of the inhabited earth, and that by the

Man Christ Jesus, the appointed Judge. This Judge was once dead but has been raised from the dead. This reference to the resurrection of the Lord brought the proceedings to an end, for some mocked at the thought of the resurrection of the dead. Others said, "We will hear thee concerning this yet again." But in contrast to the mockers and the procrastinators, there were those who made their decision as the result of that day's address, of whom were Dionysius, and a woman called Damaris, and others with them.

Whether these believers formed a church of God in Athens is not revealed to us.

Following this Paul departed from Athens and came to Corinth (Acts 18). He tells us what spirit he was in when he approached the commercial centre of the province of Achaia. He says, that he came not unto them with excellency of speech or of wisdom to proclaim the "Mystery of God," even Christ (Colossians 2. 2). His purpose was to preach Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2. 1-5). When he arrived in Corinth, he found a Jew named Aquila, who with his wife had been, with other Jews, expelled from Rome by the emperor Claudius. So Paul came unto them and being of the same trade as Aquila he abode with them, and they wrought as tentmakers together. Those were great days for Aquila and Priscilla his wife. So thoroughly disciplined and profoundly taught were they by Paul, that wherever you find that godly pair they are found devotedly serving the Lord, and at one time they laid down their necks for Paul (Romans 16. 3, 4).

Paul, as his custom was, entered the synagogue and reasoned and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. But when they blasphemed he shook out his raiment, and said unto them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." He left them and went to the house of Titus Justus, a worshipper of God, whose house adjoined the synagogue. Then we are told that "Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" (verse 8). Paul was encouraged by the Lord in a vision saying, that he was not to be afraid, but to speak, for He was with him and that no man would harm him, for He had much people in Corinth. Paul remained there for a year and six months teaching the word of God among them. During those months the church of God in Corinth was planted by Paul (1 Corinthians 3. 5-9). Paul planted and Apollos watered and God caused it to grow. Planting involves the sowing of the seed of the gospel broadcast, and when the seed has germinated in the hearts of believers, and they have become plants, then those believers were called out from those with whom they were previously associated (2 Corinthians 6. 14-18), and planted together (or added together, Acts 2. 41, 47) to grow and bear fruit unto God.

The Jews here, as in other Gentile cities where Paul had been, rose up with one accord and brought Paul before Gallio, the proconsul, and charged him, saying, "This man persuadeth men to worship

God contrary to the law." When Paul was about to make his defence, Gallio said, "If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villany, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters. And he drave them from the judgement-seat." Then the Jews in their bitter enmity laid hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgement-seat, but we are told that Gallio cared for none of these things.

After these scenes in Corinth Paul tarried yet many days, then he took his leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and with him went Priscilla and Aquila. These accompanied him only to Ephesus. Paul entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews, and when they asked him to remain longer he consented not, but promised to return, in the will of God, and then he set sail and landed at Cæsarea. When he landed he went up and saluted the church and then went on to Antioch.

We know of only two churches in Achaia, Corinth, and Cenchræ to which Phœbe belonged, but that does not mean that there were not many more.

The epistles to the Corinthians are the only epistles which are distinctly addressed to the church of God, with all saints who were similarly gathered elsewhere, so all epistles were addressed to those who were in the churches of God. Some are addressed to individuals, others sent to specific churches, and others to groups of churches either in a Roman province or in a number of Roman provinces.

The first epistle to the Corinthians has much to do with church order and government and in it many errors are corrected. Paul deals with sectarianism first of all, in chapters 1—4. In chapter 5 he deals with immoral conduct. In the first part of chapter 6 with brother going to law with brother, and in the second part he returns to the matter of moral conduct as to the proper use of the believer's body, which is temple of the Holy Spirit. Chapter 7 deals with the matter of marriage and the proper behaviour of husbands and wives, and also with the case of virgins and virginity. Chapter 8 deals with the fact that there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, and in contrast to this, with the matter of idolatry, and things sacrificed to idols. In chapter 9 he deals with his apostleship; his determination not to be a burden to any in his service for the Lord; his zeal in reaching sinners with the gospel and his keeping his body in control as necessary in this work. In the first part of chapter 10, he deals with sundry examples of how God dealt with Israel in the wilderness, as providing instruction for us now. Then in the second part he returns to the matter of idolatry, and says that saints are to flee idolatry. In the first part of chapter 11 he deals with the headship of the man and the proper conduct of men and women in assembly life. The sign of headship was to be seen in the man having his head uncovered in all assembly gatherings, and the woman having her head covered, an evidence of her subjection to the man. Also he

points out the matter of the hair, the man if he had long hair it was a dishonour to him, and the woman if she had long hair it was her glory. There were to be no contentions about such things in the churches of God. In the second part of the chapter Paul deals with the matter of the church being together in church and with the proper order of the Lord's Remembrance, in regard to which there was evidently much disorder in the church in Corinth. This order in regard to the remembrance Paul claimed he had received directly from the Lord. He shows how the Lord had been judging the Corinthians because of their wrong condition and the improper way in which they were carrying out the Lord's command regarding the Remembrance. In chapter 12 he deals with spiritual gifts, and shows that just as the members of the human body have their proper functions for the well-being of the whole, even so the members of Christ's Body have their peculiar endowment of gift to be used for the good of the Body. Then in chapter 13 he shows the more excellent way in which gifts are to be used. All that was done was to be done in love, for love never faileth. They were to follow after love, but at the same time they were not to despise spiritual gifts. In chapter 14 Paul deals with prophecy and speaking with tongues. Tongues were human languages. Prophesying was the act of conveying a message from God to His people, and it was unto edification, and comfort, and consolation (verse 3). Unless a person spoke in a tongue known to those in the church or could have it interpreted, either by the speaker or an interpreter, then he was to speak to himself and to God, but was to keep silence in the church. The speaker in a language knew what he himself was saying, for he could speak to himself and edify himself. There was nothing in the speaking in tongues of the nature of the modern speaking with tongues, where the speaker does not know what he or she is saying. Moreover, no woman is ever recorded as speaking in tongues. In chapter 15 Paul deals with the truth of resurrection, that is, the raising up of the bodies of persons who have died. There are many references to the truth of resurrection in the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, the resurrection of the dead being one of the first principles of Christ (Hebrews 6. 2), but nowhere is the subject dealt with to such length, and in so much detail, as in this chapter. The resurrection of the dead rests on the fact that the Lord Himself has been raised from the dead. The first part of chapter 16 deals with the collection for needy saints, in this case for the needy in Jerusalem. Each first day of the week the saints were to lay by them in store as each may prosper, so that no collections should be made when Paul came to Corinth. Paul had given instructions to the churches of Galatia and of Macedonia regarding the collection for the saints. Sundry other matters are mentioned in the second part of this chapter.

In the second epistle to the Corinthians we have various matters mentioned which are dealt with in the first epistle. Paul in chapters 10-12 finds it difficult to defend himself and his apostleship before the Corinthians because of the evil work of those who were false apostles and

deceitful workers (11. 13-15). How sorely Paul was beset with perils without and perils among false brethren! But he won through and gained the crown which will adorn the victor's brow in the coming day of reward.

J. MILLER.

THE TABERNACLE

The Table of Shewbread

The table was part of the furniture in the holy place in the house of God. It was made of acacia wood, and was overlaid with pure gold. It was two cubits long, one cubit broad, and one and a half cubits high. It had two crowns of gold round about, with a border of an handbreadth between them. There were four rings of gold in the four corners, in which were placed the staves made of acacia wood overlaid with gold. These were for bearing the table on the journey. There were dishes, spoons, flagons and bowls of pure gold, and on the table were twelve loaves of shewbread continually. (See Exodus 25. 23-30.)

A MAN IN THE GLORY

The table, we believe, speaks of Christ. All the furniture in the sanctuary which was made of acacia wood and covered with gold speaks of Him. "In His temple everything saith, Glory" (Psalm 29. 9). The glory and beauty of the Lord Jesus are everywhere seen within the sanctuary.

The acacia wood sets forth His humanity, as we have noted in earlier articles, and the truth concerning the Lord's return to the glory in the body in which He arose from the dead calls for our careful consideration. As He stood and blessed the disciples, He parted from them and was carried into heaven, and in those uplifted hands were the prints of the nails. Thus He went up into heaven, and in that same body He sits at God's right hand upon His Father's throne. "For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and men, Himself Man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2. 5, 6).

*"Lo, the tokens of His passion
Still His glorious body bears,
Cause of endless exaltation
To His ransomed worshippers.
Hallelujah!
Now the day of Christ appears."*

THE LORD'S HUMANITY

We dwell on this important theme yet further, and ask our readers' attention to the Spirit's statements concerning Him, both prior to His birth and during His earthly sojourn. We read, "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1. 18). An angel of the Lord explained to Joseph saying, "Joseph, thou son of David,

fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife : for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit." Earlier, "the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David ; and the virgin's name was Mary . . . And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary : for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS . . . The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee : wherefore also the Holy Thing which is to be born shall be called the Son of God " (Luke 1. 26-35, R.V.M.).

Matthew gives the genealogy of the Lord through Joseph, whilst Luke gives it through Mary. Both draw attention to *the virgin birth*, the conception being in keeping with the prophecy, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel " (Isaiah 7. 14). Special emphasis seems to be laid upon His holiness, in the angel's words—

" THE HOLY THING

which is to be born." In these days when so many deny these fundamental truths concerning our Lord's humanity, it is good to be reminded of their verity from the inspired word. Men carnally reason that such a birth is impossible, and in the same manner would reason away all the miracles performed by the Lord during His life and ministry. It is sufficient to faith that God has related the facts. The virgin birth was a miracle—one of the many acts of God which are beyond the ordinary laws of nature. Why should men judge it impossible for God so to act when He pleases ? The course of time affords ample evidence of such variations as retardment, cessation and alteration in the working of natural laws. For example, God made Adam *without the agency of man and woman* : He made a woman, Eve, without a woman : and He "sent forth His Son, born of a woman " who was a virgin. These three scenes may well impress our minds and hearts. By so bringing His Son into the world as Man He broke the entail of sin. The conception was of the Holy Spirit of God, and the body prepared by God for His Son was immaculate, sinless, and holy. Unlike the sons of men, who are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin (Psalm 51. 5), the Son of God was shapen in rectitude, and conceived in holiness.

" Amen, Lord, we bless Thee,
Born for our salvation,
Lord Jesus, for ever be Thy name adored ;
Word of the Eternal,
Late in flesh appearing ;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord."

OUR LORD'S IMPECCABILITY

As to the life of our Lord a comprehensive statement is given in Hebrews 7. 26. He is described as *holy, hōsios*, that is supremely

holy, pure: *guileless*, 'akakos, free from evil, innocent, harmless: *undefiled*, *amiantos*, without even a tinge of the corruption and pollution that were around Him. His excellence continued unimpaired as the years of service passed, and His blamelessness remained inviolate. Great contrast this to the first man who was so soon defiled, depraved and unchaste through the one act of disobedience! Try as the devil would, and try he did, he could find nothing in Christ. Surrounded with desert wastes, and the wild beasts, experiencing gnawing hunger and weariness, beset by Satan's subtle wiles—all were unavailing to deflect Him from the path of rectitude. It was impossible for our Lord to sin. There is still another word in the list before us, namely, *separated* from sinners. Though moving about in the midst of sinners He was separate from them. Repentant ones found in Him a Friend, as in the case of the woman who stood condemned to die, but her would-be accusers found it impossible to abide the presence of the "holy One of God." They went out one by one, beginning from the eldest, even unto the last.

The essential holiness of the Son of God severed Him from the evil of mankind. *Kechorismēnos*, translated *separated*, means *sundered* or *disunited*. That is what sin effected when it invaded Eden, but when the Son of God became incarnate the separation He maintained was from all that would defile. Fitting it is that He should be elevated above the heavens. He is a High Priest "that hath been in all points tempted (put to the trial) like as we are, *yet without sin*." This is the One who is shadowed in the acacia wood of the table which stood in the holy place.

THE GLORY OF GOD

The table was overlaid with pure gold, and this, we understand, shadowed the glory of Christ's Deity, His Godhead. When God indicated the glory of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, He showed that monarch an image with its head of fine gold, and said, "Thou art the head of gold" (Daniel 2. 38). As the acacia wood speaks to us of Christ as Man, so the gold speaks of the glory of God. The table with its acacia wood overlaid with pure gold sets forth the God-Man, Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God frequently speaks of Christ as God, as in Psalm 45. 6, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever"; and in Hebrews 1. 8 the writer says, "But of the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." Again in Isaiah 9. 6 He is called, "Mighty God," and in John 1. 1 we read, "and the Word was God." This was the revelation received by Thomas as he exclaimed, "My Lord and my God" (John 20. 28). He is called the Image of God in 2 Corinthians 4. 4, Colossians 1. 15 and Hebrews 1. 3. "Being in the form of God" is the description of Him given in Philippians 2. 6; and He is referred to as Creator in John 1. 3, 10; 1 Corinthians 8. 6; Colossians 1. 16. In Him all things hold together throughout the universe (Colossians 1. 17), and He is the Upholder of all things (Hebrews 1. 3).

*“ In Him I see the Godhead shine,
 Christ for me.
 He is the Majesty divine,
 Christ for me.”*

The table, standing in the sanctuary, covered with gold, speaks to us of the Lord Jesus as He now is upon the throne above. He is there in all the brightness of His eternal glory. Our mortal eyes could not endure the sight of such glory, but, thank God, we shall one day be fitted for that sight when “The beauty of the Saviour shall dazzle every eye.”

Yet, despite the outshining of His glory, how comforting for us to remember that He is Man nevertheless! when He was down here in the flesh His humanity was apparent, but to most His Deity was veiled, yet He was God nevertheless; so up yonder, though it is His glory as God that is manifest, yet He is Man, the Man Christ Jesus, “One that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,” and can therefore be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. It is thus that He is a High Priest able to bear gently with the ignorant and erring, and ready to dispense both mercy and grace. Surely such an High Priest becomes us!

KING AND PRIEST

There were two crowns around the table with a border of an handbreadth between them. These rims or crowns of gold are very suggestive in connexion with the glorification of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some are reminded by them of the Headship of the Lord, as Head of creation, and Head of the Body, the Church; but the writer is caused to think of two crowns that belong to Christ. We know that the *kingly* crown is His by right (Jeremiah 23. 5; Isaiah 32. 1), and in the coming day men will say: “The LORD is our King; He will save us” (Isaiah 33. 22); but there is another crown which His brow adorns—that of the priestly office. “Make a crown, and set it upon the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest,” was the command in the days of the Remnant. A holy crown is worn by the Great High Priest. “He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a Priest upon His throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6. 11-13, R.V.M.).

The uniting of the kingly and priestly offices in one person was not found in operation since the days of Melchizedek, king of Salem, and priest of God Most High (Hebrews 7. 1).

Uzziah, king of Judah, apparently sought to unite these offices. He was a good king, and for long time he sought the LORD and prospered, being helped by a man named Zechariah who had understanding in the vision of God. But alas! the time came when “his heart was lifted up so that he did corruptly, and he trespassed against the LORD his God; for he went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense” (2 Chronicles 26. 16). He was punished for his presumptuous sin, and was leprous in his forehead

even while he stood at the altar of incense, and was a leper until the day of his death. The honour of being king and priest is reserved for Him whom God delighteth to honour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will be a Priest upon His throne. Here we see the dual crown.

Despite the attitude of the nations to the LORD and to His Anointed, God has set His King upon His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2. 6); and yonder within the veil, as a Forerunner, Jesus has entered for us, having become a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6. 20).

G. PRASHER.

TEMPTATION

Since the day that Satan entered the fair scene of Eden and beguiled the woman, and thereby brought about the fall of Adam, this great arch-enemy has dominated the lives of men and women, who have not known deliverance by the greater power of God.

Man's inherent nature is to do wrong, and the evil within quickly responds to evil temptations. The devil exploits every human weakness in endeavouring to cause men and women to commit sins. The long, dark page of human history repeats the sad evidence of his success in this foul purpose.

Satan, who fell as lightning from heaven (Luke 10. 18), was cast out from the divine Presence because of pride and rebellion against God; and knowing his final doom is forever sealed, his malicious intent is to drag as many as he can of the sons of men with him into the eternal fire, which the Lord said is "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25. 41).

The Scriptures clearly teach that temptations arise from two sources, (1) man's own evil nature, and (2), from the devil. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man" (James 1. 13). "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 4. 1). It is clear from these scriptures that every temptation, which the Lord Jesus knew, as the God-Man, came from without.

While the whole world lieth in the evil one (1 John 5. 19), and men are held captive by Satan and sin, yet it is his greatest triumph when he causes a believer in the Lord Jesus to sin, either morally or spiritually. It is gloriously true that neither sin nor Satan can mar the believer's eternal standing in Christ, yet sin *can* mar the present life and testimony for God, and render it ineffective.

Temptations, varying in kind and subtle in approach, come into the lives of God's people every day. We cannot over-emphasize the great need for watchfulness. Have we not witnessed with sadness the havoc wrought in the lives of many through sin, lives that were destined for higher and nobler things? Alas, they yielded in the hour of temptation!

God has provided, through the medium of His word and prayer, the proven weapons of defence and deliverance in temptation. How good it is to do as the psalmist, who said, "Thy word have I laid up in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (Psalm 119. 11). What the writer of this psalm did is equivalent to memorizing the Scriptures.

A closer look at the James 1 scripture about temptation, shows five steps in its progressive development, (1) "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, (2) and enticed." (3) The lust conceives, (4) it beareth sin, (5) sin, fullgrown, bringeth forth death (James 1. 14, 15).

Thus the sin is not in being tempted, for temptations will come, but it is in yielding to it, the consent of the will and the performance of the act. Human thoughts and imaginations are the fertile ground of temptations. The mind of the flesh responds to evil; the old nature is in continual conflict with the new man in Christ.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthian church, likens the mind of a Christian to a garrison under siege. He portrays the weapons of light battling against the strongly entrenched desires of evil thoughts and imaginations in the citadel of the mind. To live a life of victory in Christ, this stronghold must be conquered and *every* thought brought into captivity, "to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10. 4, 5).

The beginning of temptation is a wrong or evil thought. It may be only a thought, but when it comes we should seek the help of God through His Word and indwelling Spirit to drive it quickly from the mind.

*"When temptations round you gather
Breathe that Holy Name in prayer."*

Someone has well written of temptation, "First there cometh to the mind a bare thought of evil; then a strong imagination thereof; afterward delight, an evil motion and consent." A clean mind and pure thoughts go together, and to maintain such we must live in a healthy atmosphere. Habitual reading and meditation on the Word of God are essential to spiritual growth. Beloved, for His sake who loves us, and for our own spiritual health, shall we not heed Paul's exhortation, "Give heed to reading"? Do we still gather round after the evening meal to read the Scriptures? Do we still find precious hours to be alone with the Lord for a quiet time? Here, and here alone, we find spiritual food, and a spiritual atmosphere, in which life in Christ and the Spirit will develop. The word of God promotes mental health. An evil thought can be admitted to the mind through reading books which ought not to be read by us, or feasting the eyes on pictures which we ought not to look at. Indeed there is no scarcity of books of a questionable character, and of lewd pictures also there is no lack in this shameless and brazen age. Evil thoughts may come through conversation with company which should be shunned. May we who name the Name of the Lord, "depart

from unrighteousness," . . . "abstain from every form (all appearance) of evil" . . . and be "a companion of all them that fear Thee" (Psalm 119. 63).

Be the evil thought covetousness, the acquiring of earthly gain, be it lasciviousness, ("Every one that looketh on a woman" Matthew 5. 28), or be it worldly ambition, ("the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" Matthew 4. 8), let us make no mistake, if such thoughts are entertained, the play on the imagination will result in sin. Imagination may conjure up the golden prospect of riches (Judas said, "What are ye willing to give me?"), or fleshly indulgences, or the elevation and influence of worldly advancements. What then? To the extent to which these are mentally enjoyed, there is guilt, and to the extent to which they are abhorred, there is innocence. While such observations penetrate into the secrets of our lives and hearts, where only God can see, such things must be dealt with and put away or spiritual life will wither and die. Instead of the "fruit of the Spirit," there will be nothing but leaves.

Strong, persistent temptation assailed Joseph in Egypt during those days in which he admirably performed his faithful stewardship in the house of Potiphar, but he won the victory when he fled and got out from the presence of that wicked woman. There can be absolutely no confidence in the flesh. Paul testified of this when he wrote, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Romans 7. 18).

Fresh encouragement comes from consideration of the temptations of the Lord Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4. 1 to 11). They were very real, because He was a Man; as such He felt the severity of the relentless onslaughts of Satan, who found nothing in the Lord's perfect nature that responded to his temptations. As a dependent Man He defeated the tempter with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

Evil thoughts, entertained, defile the mind; full-grown sins, practised, defile the body and spirit, bringing unhappiness and misery. The blessed Holy Spirit is grieved. He withdraws His power. Communion with God is broken. If such sins are not confessed and forsaken, judgement from God may result. "The Lord shall judge His people" (Hebrews 10. 30).

Yielding to temptation will result in hidden and sometimes unconfessed sin in our lives, not to speak of the sins of the disposition, such as anger, bitterness, resentment, gossip, criticism, jealousy, evil-speaking, all of which are causes of stunted spiritual growth and barrenness in service for God. O how often we grieve and quench the Holy Spirit!

Beloved, the night is far spent, the Lord's return is near. What shall we do? We need to seek the Lord with all our heart, and in humility seek cleansing from all sin, and seek to cleanse ourselves (by His word on our ways) from "all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7. 1).

As of old, God is waiting to pour out on His people in the churches of God a rich blessing : to open the windows of heaven, to revive His work in our midst, but it can only be on His terms, obedience to His word, and clean hands and a pure heart.

Shall we begin to prove this today ? In the words of the prophet of old, "Who knoweth whether He will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him ?" (Joel 2. 14).

Vancouver, B.C.

R. ARMSTRONG.

THE ATONEMENT

Some have held that the Lord made atonement through His death for the elect only. This is plainly not the case. If it were, how could it be said, as we have it in the words of Paul, that it is the will (wish) of God that all men should be saved (1 Timothy 2. 4), if provision has not been made for all men ? How could we bear that gospel to men which proclaims the world-wide love of God, that whosoever believeth should not perish, but have eternal life ? (John 3. 16). That the preacher does not know who the elect are as he preaches the gospel is well enough known, but he preaches a gospel to whosoever will believe. We are not asked to fathom the mystery of divine election and human responsibility. That both things are clearly taught in the Scriptures is undeniable. We must carry forth a gospel that God loves all and Christ died for all, not some of the ungodly, but all the ungodly.

The following scriptures show that provision has been made in the Lord's atonement for all sinners.

"Christ Jesus . . . gave Himself a Ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2. 5, 6).

"By the grace of God He should taste death for every man" (*Huper Pantos* means "on behalf of all") (Hebrews 2. 9).

"He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2. 2).

There can be no doubt as to the implication and meaning of these passages, that in the death of Christ there is provision made by God for all sinners. God loved the world, Christ died for the world, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, all with a view to the salvation of a world of lost sinners. God has reduced His message to men to the most meagre limit, for, to be saved all the sinner has to do is to repent and believe in the gospel (Mark 1. 15). In agreement with this, Paul preached "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20. 21).

We must distinguish what the Scriptures are clear about, that on the one hand Christ died for men, for sinners, the ungodly and the unjust, and on the other He died for our sins, the sins of the believer. The language of faith says, "that Christ died for our sins according

to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15. 3), "Who His own self bare our sins in His body upon the tree" (1 Peter 2. 24). It is scriptural to say to the sinner that Christ died for him, but it would not be scriptural to say that Christ died for and bore his sins on the cross. It should be noted, that in 1 John 2. 2 the A.V. adds words which are not part of the Scriptures when it inserts *the sins of the whole world*. The R.V. is correct when it gives "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." This is not a matter of hair-splitting, but of correct scriptural language. Christ died as the sinner's *Substitute*, and He died for our sins. The sinner may accept or reject his Substitute, but the believer rejoices that His sins are all forgiven for His name's sake (1 John 2. 12; Acts 10. 43; 13. 38).
J.M.

"A FREEWILL OFFERING UNTO THE LORD"

(Exodus 35. 29).

The variety of gifts presented for the establishment and service of the tabernacle is full of instruction. We do not here comment upon the typical significances of the material given. We simply note that although the intrinsic values differed greatly, ranging from precious stones and gold to skins and linen, yet all was valued as it was freely offered, not indeed as a substitute for personal consecration, but as an evidence of loving response to a divine desire. We are so apt to be cast down because we cannot give as others do; we would delight to give gold, but can only give a "skin," but the One to whom we give fully knows the cost to the giver. His verdict on the widow's two mites was that she gave "more than they all." There are today worldly standards of value, but these have no place in the assessing of the value of what we offer to God. There are things which are "in the sight of God of great price." The calls to give today are many and varied. Giving means "sacrifice," first, Your bodies are a living sacrifice. Of some it is written, "They gave their own selves to the Lord," "To do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Here is encouragement, " whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord."

"My Servant" is one of the most honourable titles of the Lord Jesus Christ, but not exclusively His. Others, too, have been so called. We too, in our day, may know this honour. "Ye serve the Lord Christ."
A. G. JARVIS.

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

The Bible is a book covering a vast range of subjects. It is by far the oldest book recording with accuracy and simplicity the most ancient facts, yet it is the most modern and up to date, and readable by children and persons of simple minds; at the same time it contains truths which in their profundity baffle the wisest minds and the most acute intellects. Its treasures are open to the believer; but are hidden from the wise and prudent. Often we are asked as to what is the best way to study the Bible. Various answers may be given to this inquiry. It is, we think, necessary to gain an understanding of the layout of the book in its record of historical facts, beginning with the creation before the creation of man, and travelling onward through the events given in the book of Genesis. Thereafter the history of that unique race, the children of Israel, bursts upon us as we enter the book of Exodus, and their history covers the whole of the Old Testament to Malachi, the last of the prophets.

Passing from the Old Testament to the New we come to the birth of the Lord which was preceded by the birth of John the Baptist. After a brief introduction of the Lord in the ministry of John there follows the manifestation of the Lord, His ministry and miracles, concluding with His betrayal, condemnation and crucifixion, followed by His resurrection on the third day, and after forty days His ascension to heaven from the midst of His disciples. He went up and sat down on the right hand of God His Father on the throne of heaven, fully justified by God in regard to all He had suffered and accomplished. Men condemned Him, but God justified Him, that is, showed Him to be righteous.

Leaving the Gospels we enter the Acts and in the beginning of the book the disciples are seen awaiting the coming of the Spirit before they set out on their life-work of publishing abroad the message of life and salvation. As given in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week, fifty days after the Lord was raised from the dead. Then the great work began in Jerusalem and from thence the tide of divine testimony flowed on through Samaria, Galilee, to Antioch in Syria, the Gentile centre from which Paul and Barnabas went forth as apostles of the Lord. The Acts ends with the account of Paul reaching Rome as a prisoner of Rome, but much more, a prisoner of Christ Jesus and a prisoner in the Lord. He was a guarded prisoner in his own hired dwelling. From the pen of Paul we learn the most that we know of the great purpose in this dispensation as to the building of the Church which is His (Christ's) Body, and as to the churches of God, local companies of saints called out to engage in the worship and service of God where they are located. At the conclusion of this dispensation of grace, the Lord Jesus will come again to the air and call all the saints who are in Christ, living and dead, to meet Him.

After this dispensation is completed God will turn again and deal with the people of Israel. Between the coming of the Lord to the air for the Church and His coming as Son of Man in judgement for the deliverance of His greatly afflicted people during the time of the great tribulation, there must be seven years, but the beginning of the seven years is not marked by the Lord's coming for the Church; it is marked by the prince that shall come, the antichrist or beast (wild beast, as God calls him), entering into a covenant with many of the Jewish people for one week, not of days, but of years. See Daniel 9. 24-27, especially verse 27. In the middle of the week he will break his covenant, the sacrificing of the Jewish people will cease, being forbidden, and instead, the abomination of desolation, the image of the beast, will be set up in a holy place, and the beast, antichrist or man of sin, will sit in the sanctuary, and then will commence the worship of the beast and his image. This will continue throughout the second half of Daniel's week of years. Fearful will be the persecution and martyrdom of this period. Such a time of suffering and sorrow never was before those days and never will be again. At the end the Lord will come for the deliverance of His people and the judgement of the wicked. Then will follow the millennium, the reign of Christ for a thousand years. This will be followed by the rebellion and destruction of Gog and Magog. Thereafter we have briefly announced to us the judgement of the great white throne. Then follow the day of God or day of eternity, the descent of the New Jerusalem from heaven, and the eternal state. Such in brief is an outline of the flow of time from eternity to eternity.—J.M.

JOTTINGS

In the study of the Bible it is necessary, if we would know our location in the ocean of time, to know something of the historical facts which the Bible records, in which we have an account of the dealings of God with men in different epochs and dispensations. God has been pleased to reveal Himself in an especial way to certain chosen men and people, yet at the same time He has not hid Himself from any who sought after Him to find Him. His ways in this respect were declared by Paul to the idolaters of Lystra, "Yet He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14. 17). Paul again says, "For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse" (Romans 1. 20). Such as cannot see somewhat of the Divine Worker in His work are blind indeed. Though men now as never before are learning something of the wonders of creation in the things which God made in the beginning, and are seeking to penetrate into the vastness and infinity of space, yet in the light of all this men are surely drifting with ever-increasing speed away from God, and all their researches into the mysteries of God's work seem to be with the object of defending themselves while they destroy others. What can stop all this folly? Only a return to the Bible and to the Divine Man of Calvary.

The study of the Scriptures may be put under different heads: (1) The study of God, (2) the study of man, (3) the study of Church truth, (4) the study of the Israel nation and of the forefathers thereof. Whilst these four subjects flow through the Scriptures like the four rivers which flowed from the river which watered the garden of Eden, we may think of many other streams of divine truth which are seen in the Scriptures.

In the study of the knowledge of God we see God revealing Himself, as the sun does by its light coming within the range of man's vision. The sun is self-revealing. Zophar asked Job, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job 11. 7). The answer to such a question must be, No. If God is to be known by man then He must reveal Himself. This is exactly what He does in the first verse in the Bible, which reads, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1. 1). This verse, if there were no other, crushes by the very weight of its revelation the notions of men that heaven and earth do not necessarily need a Creator; its existence, for them, is but a chance happening in the flow of infinite time. Is it a fact that to every effect there is a cause? What was the first Cause? The believer stands before those words of light in this first verse, bows his head in adoration of God the Creator of all, by whose will all things were and were created, as the holy inhabitants of heaven tell us (Revelation 4. 11).

If we are to know God He must not only show us His work but He must tell us His name, as Moses wished to know it when he was commissioned by God to go down to Egypt and deliver His people Israel. God revealed Himself as I AM, the changeless Jehovah of His covenant people. Here in Genesis He gives His name as Elohim which is the plural of Eloah. Some have said that Elohim is a plural of majesty or excellence, which means that it is actually a singular. It is as the Queen of this country does, according to ancient custom, in her proclamations, though speaking of herself she uses the plural pronoun "We," instead of the singular pronoun "I." We are not of that opinion that ELOHIM is simply a plural of majesty, though "created" is a singular verb. ELOHIM said, "Let Us make man in Our image," and again, "ELOHIM created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him" (Genesis 1. 26, 27). ELOHIM in counsel with those of His own image, speaks of "Us" and "Our." Then we are told that "God (ELOHIM) created man in His own image," so that "Our image" is "His own image." See Genesis 3. 22, where Jehovah ELOHIM says, "Behold, the man is become one of Us." Again in Genesis 11. 7, Jehovah says, "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language," when man sought to build the city and tower of Babel. Then again in Isaiah 6. 1, 5, 8, the Lord (ADONAY, the Lord, plural, used only of the Divine Being) whom Isaiah saw, who is also Jehovah of hosts, said, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"—J.M.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY : THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS AND THE WORK
IN ASIA (IX)

After Paul had spent some time in Antioch, he departed, and went through the region of Phrygia (a district of the Roman province of Asia) and Galatia. We are told that he did this in order (*Kathevēs*, successively, consecutively). This was ministry toward the saints, as it says, "stablishing all the disciples."

In the meanwhile a certain Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by race, a learned man, came to Ephesus. Alexandria was in those days a seat of learning. Apollos was mighty in the Scriptures. He was instructed in the way of the Lord, and besides, he was fervent in spirit, and he taught the things concerning Jesus, but his knowledge of the Lord's way was only as far as the baptism of John. This is a pleasant sidelight in the Scriptures as showing how far John's teaching and work had travelled. The same is true of the twelve disciples whom Paul found when he came to Ephesus, as recorded in chapter 19. Priscilla and Aquila heard Apollos when he began to speak in the synagogue, and they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more carefully. It is evident that Apollos was a man of a disciple spirit and accepted the instruction which he was given by Priscilla and Aquila. When he was minded to pass over to Achaia the brethren encouraged him, so it seems evident from this that there was a church of God in Ephesus at this time, and also that Apollos was added thereto before he passed over to Achaia. Thus it was that the disciples in Ephesus wrote to the disciples in Achaia to receive him, the church in Corinth being the outstanding church of Achaia. To the coming of Apollos to Corinth the apostle Paul refers in 1 Corinthians 1. 12 ; 3. 5, 6, 22 ; 4. 6, and he says, "I planted (the church in Corinth), Apollos watered ; but God gave the increase." Luke tells us that "when he was come, he (Apollos) helped them much which had believed through grace : for he powerfully confuted the Jews, and that publicly, shewing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18. 27, 28).

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul, having passed through the upper country, that is, the region of Galatia and Phrygia (18. 23), came to Ephesus. There he found certain disciples to whom he addressed the question, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" Some of the people who profess to speak with tongues have construed the words "Since ye believed" (A.V.) to mean that it is possible now that believers do not receive the Holy Spirit when they believe, and speak of the second blessing, meaning the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the speaking with tongues. This is pure perversion of the teaching of Scripture, for it is by baptism in the Holy Spirit that the Lord places believers in His Body, the Body of Christ,

and if only such as speak with tongues are members of His Body, then the Church which is His Body is a very, very small thing, and the vast majority of believers throughout this dispensation of grace would be outside that Church which the Lord will present to Himself at His coming again. This Church is composed of all believers from Pentecost who are indwelt by and baptized in the Holy Spirit. But what do the words mean, "when ye believed" (R.V.), or "since ye believed" (A.V.)? *Pisteusantes* in the Greek, translated "when or since ye believed", is an aorist participle, which simply means that they had become believing persons, and being such, had they at the time of believing received the Holy Spirit? They replied to Paul's question, "Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given" (19. 2). Though "given" is in the R.V. in italics, which shows that there is no equivalent word for it in the Greek, yet it seems clear that this is implied. The A.V. makes these disciples doubt the existence of the Holy Spirit. It says, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit." We do not think that this is the meaning of the Greek idiom here.

Paul then asked the twelve disciples into what they had been baptized, and they said, "Into John's baptism." Then Paul stated the meaning of John's baptism, which is the clearest definition of the meaning of that baptism; "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus." The difference therefore between John's baptism and Christian baptism may be summed up in this, that John's baptism was with a view to believing on the Lord when He was manifested; the baptism which the Lord commanded was in the light of the fact that persons had believed on Him. Faith in both cases was the means of salvation, not baptism. Baptism in both cases was bowing to the divine will and requirement.

When these disciples heard Paul's words they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. "Into the name of the Lord Jesus" does not alter the Lord's command that disciples were to be baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28. 19). It simply means, that whereas these men had been following the authority invested in John's baptism and teaching, now they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus and were forthwith under His authority. In a word, they were baptized into Christ Jesus (Romans 6. 3), in a similar sense as the children of Israel were baptized unto (*Eis*, into) Moses, who was to be from thenceforth their leader and commander (1 Corinthians 10. 2). When these twelve disciples had been re-baptized and Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spake with tongues and prophesied. They were thus brought up to date in the way of the Lord, for up till then they had been living in truth for the past, as Apollos himself had been.

Paul entered the synagogue as had been his custom in other cities, thus following the principle which he annunciated, in Romans 1. 16, "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." In the synagogue he spake boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the kingdom of God. Which I would judge means that a fundamental and dispensational change had taken place in God's dealings with men, that instead of divine rule being now vested in the people of Israel, it was now vested in the gathered together disciples of the Lord. Unto this end the new birth was a prerequisite to being in the kingdom of God, though entrance into that kingdom is not by the new birth, but no person can either see the kingdom of God or enter it who is not born again (John 3. 3, 5).

Some in the synagogue were hardened and disobedient, and spoke evil of the Way before the multitude. This is not the way of salvation, as in 16. 17, but is the Way wherein God's saints in this dispensation should walk. Note how Paul went to Damascus, that if he found any that were of the Way he would bring them bound to Jerusalem (9. 2). Paul before Felix the governor at Cæsarea said, "I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers" (24. 14). See references to the Way in 9. 2; 18. 25, 26; 19. 9, 23; 22. 4; 24. 14, 22. There are other references to the Way elsewhere in the New Testament. God has ever had a way for His people to walk in and to serve Him. When opposition arose in the synagogue to Paul's teaching relative to the kingdom of God, he separated the disciples from the synagogue, and afterwards reasoned daily in the new meeting place, even in the school of Tyrannus. This he continued to do for the space of two years, and all that dwelt in the Roman province of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

During Paul's two years' ministry God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul which are indicated in verse 12, and by these the power of the word of God was confirmed, that Paul's new teaching was not just that of another sect, adding yet another to the many forms of teaching which had even then segregated men into different groups and communities.

In Ephesus Paul came up against the evil work of Jews who wandered around, no doubt supplementing their livelihood by the satanic practice of being exorcists, and in their evil-doing presuming to name over them, which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus whom Paul preached. The seven sons of one Seva, a Jewish chief priest, did this. On one occasion the man with the evil spirit leaped on them and mastered them, and they fled naked and wounded. When this became known to the Jews and Greeks in Ephesus, fear came upon all and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

Many believers came confessing their evil deeds, and such as practised curious or magical arts brought their books of magic together

and burned them in the sight of all, the price of which was fifty thousand pieces of silver. They did well not to sell their books, thus spreading the evil of their magic, but they burned them. The Spirit's comment on all this is, "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed."

In Ephesus we see the devil apposing again the work of the Lord, but not this time through the scheming of the Jews, but by the work of Demetrius a silversmith, who with craftsmen of the same trade was engaged in making silver shrines to Diana, the great Diana of the Ephesians, the goddess which fell from Zeus or Jupiter. Truly it was a fallen goddess like all her votaries, all fallen men and women. It was one huge lie which deceived multitudes. Now this stronghold of the devil and demons was being attacked by the word of God, and their idol was being shown to be nothing in the world (1 Corinthians 8. 4). If men live long enough and they are honest with their own convictions, both lies and lying will be seen to be what they are. Truth will eventually be victorious. It would be a thousand pities if it were not so. The assembly (Ecclesia) of Demetrius we are told was in confusion (verse 32) and they set the city in an uproar, rioting prevailed, and the authorities had to step in, as is seen in the action of the townclerk (verse 35). He spoke to them of the courts and the proconsuls where matters could be settled, and of the regular assembly (Ecclesia) of citizens who dealt with the conduct and rule of the city. When he had thus spoken to and warned the church of Demetrius he dismissed that church.

In chapter 20. 1 we are told, that when the uproar ceased, Paul, having sent for the disciples and exhorted them, took leave of them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

Paul refers to these scenes of rioting in Ephesus, in 1 Corinthians 15. 32, "If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." He referred again to the scenes in Ephesus, in 2 Corinthians 1. 8-10 :

"For we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were weighed down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch that we despaired even of life: yea, we ourselves have had the answer of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: who delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver: on whom we have set our hope that He will still also deliver us."

Great indeed was the result of God's work through Paul in Ephesus during the time that he spent there teaching the word of God. But as it was the centre from which the word of God spread out throughout the province of Asia, it also saw the beginning of sectarianism, through evil men and false teaching, which in time rent the Fellowship in pieces. Paul warned the elders of the church in Ephesus of the

evil days that would come after he was gone (Acts 20. 17-35). He spoke of his work amongst them for three years (Acts 19. 10 speaks of his reasoning in the school of Tyrannus for two years), and of his work being carried on with tears. But while he exhorted them to cleave to God and to the word of His grace, this did not cancel the prophecy which fell from his lips on that solemn occasion, as to the disruptive effects of the work of the wolves and men from among themselves.

Paul exhorted Timothy to tarry at Ephesus when he was going into Macedonia, to charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine (1 Timothy 1. 3); this, I judge, is not the occasion when Paul departed into Macedonia after the rioting in Ephesus (Acts 20. 1), for at that time he had already sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, but he himself stayed in Asia for a while (Acts 19. 22).

The evil of false teaching had become so bad in Ephesus by the time that Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy (the last of all his epistles), that he called on Timothy with all that called on the Lord out of a pure heart, to purge himself with all others who held fast to the truth, out from those whose word ate like a gangrene. Every one that named the name of the Lord was to depart from unrighteousness (2 Timothy 2. 16-26). Thus undoubtedly a separation took place in the church of God in Ephesus, for only in this way could the truth of God be preserved from the blighting effect of false teaching.

The last view that we get of the church of God in Ephesus is not reassuring as to its continuance. It was still a golden lamp of testimony, but alas, the warmth of love of early days had disappeared. The effect of the satanic work of the false teachers had left the saints limp and lifeless. In a word, they had left their first love. There were many things to their credit, as the passage, in Revelation 2. 1-7, shows, but their leaving their first love tipped the scales against them, and unless there was repentance the Lord would move their lampstand out of its place. Its place was beneath the lamps (the lamps were the saints) on which they had been set to give a collective light as the church in Ephesus. In a word they would be unchurched. They would cease to be a church acknowledged by the Lord in the midst of which He walked. Such is the sad and melancholy view we get of the church of God in Ephesus, which began in such an auspicious manner.

It becomes all who are engaged in the Lord's work to take note of what befell so great a work as that which God accomplished through the apostle Paul in Ephesus, lest there be a repeat of events such as these, when men are no longer present who seek to keep others in the way of the truth.

J. MILLER.

THE TABERNACLE

The Shewbread

"And thou shalt set upon the table shewbread before Me alway."
(Exodus 25. 30)

Such was the command of the Lord when He had given instructions for making the table. Twelve cakes were made from fine flour, each of two tenth parts of an ephah, and they were set upon the pure table before the LORD every sabbath day, in two rows, six on a row. See Leviticus 24. 5-9.

They were a memorial of God's people in covenant relationship with Himself, and they also were provision for the priests. We will first consider the materials, and then deal with the purposes of the loaves.

THE FINE FLOUR

The fine flour is a delightful shadow of Christ in His softness in the hand of God, and His yieldingness to the Holy Spirit's influence. When the hand is put into fine flour how easily the impressions from the skin are left in the soft, impressionable substance! Thus God's perfect Servant was susceptible to the hand of God, and the Spirit found in Him One who never resisted Him, who never quenched or grieved the gentle, heavenly Dove. How different, alas, it is so often with us! How prone we are to resist the kindly, gracious influence of the Person of God's Holy Spirit! Of Israel Stephen said, "Ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye" (Acts 7. 51); and though He will never depart from the believer, yet how solemn to think of our possibly carrying about with us, within these bodies which are His temple, a gracious Friend who is quenched and grieved by reason of our hardness of heart!

Which of us has not marvelled at the evenness of the Lord's character, and the perfect balance He ever maintained toward His God, and in respect to human relations? We have gazed wonderingly at His munificence as He fed the five thousand men, beside women and children, and the frugality which directed the gathering up of the broken pieces that remained over. His rising from sleep, in which His humanity was so manifest, to still the tempest which tossed Gennesaret's waters,—which obeyed His omnipotent voice and sank to rest and peace—has surely filled our souls with awe and adoration. The tender compassion that attracted Him to the weeping widow of Nain, whose only son was being carried to the grave, operated in perfect harmony with the mighty power which clothed the words, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise."

*"What grace, O Lord, and beauty shone
Around Thy steps below!"*

The meal offering, which speaks so precious of the Lord's life on earth, had for its basic ingredient fine flour, and there is much in common between the loaves of shewbread and the meal offering on this account. They both set forth the humble, patient life which

marked the Man of Sorrows—sorrows and sufferings beyond our feeble comprehension.

“ *For ever on Thy burdened heart
A weight of sorrow hung:
Yet no ungentle, murmuring word
Escaped Thy silent tongue.*”

In His *doing well*, that whereunto every child of God is called, the Lord Jesus was faced with determined opposition and persecution. The powers of darkness found most willing tools in men of almost every shade of human thought, and He who loved righteousness and hated iniquity was the target of their evil aim. “It became Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author (Captain) of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 2. 10). He, “Though He was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became unto all them that obey Him the Author of eternal salvation” (Hebrews 5. 8, 9).

He who was altogether righteous could not pass through this unrighteous world without encountering the enemy; and in the measure that we are like Him, to that extent we too will require to bear the brunt of ungodly opposition. With Him there was no angling to secure the favour of the influential; there was no watering down of truth to make it more palatable to the perverted tastes around Him. In this we should note He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. “All that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

Besides all this the perfect Man with sympathies so complete, perfect, could not look upon the sufferings of others and fail to suffer with them, as witness His groans and tears near the grave of Lazarus, which caused the Jews to say, “Behold how He loved him!” He did not weep to be in the fashion that day; rather it was His perfect being, so harrowed by the ravages of sin which brought such sorrow and grief, giving expression to the pangs that were within.

THE MILLING PROCESS

We ask, “How is the fine flour produced?” and our thoughts turn to the milling process. The grains of corn are passed between the upper and nether stones of the mill where they are bruised and crushed. To obtain the fine flour this milling process is essential. It clearly speaks of sufferings. Often we use the phrase as a figure of speech, *he has passed through the mill*. Speaking reverently, no one has gone through the mill as did the blessed Lord Jesus. How severely He was crushed! There was the upper stone, the trials from the hand of God; and the lower stone, the powers of darkness, with man so often an agent of those powers. But what was the result of these daily trials? They merely manifested the fine flour. It gave expression to that gentleness, lowliness, harmlessness, and faithfulness which ever characterized the God-Man here below. To

change the metaphor, He was the Plant which the more It was crushed the more Its fragrance was emitted.

*“ Thy foes might hate, despise, revile,
Thy friends unfaithful prove ;
Unwearied in forgiveness still
Thy heart could only love.”*

PIERCED CAKES

The Hebrew for cakes is *challah*, from *chahlal*, to puncture, bore, pierce or wound. In the making of the cakes there was the suffering indicated by the baking, whether on a flat plate, or baked in the oven ; but here is something additional. Each cake or loaf bore the marks of wounding, and thus in the shadow we see the truth set forth by the prophet Isaiah, “His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” (52. 14). Of Joseph, the Spirit of God says, “ His soul entered into the iron ” (Psalm 105. 18, R.V.M.); here, shall we not say, the iron enters into His soul. The boring or drilling process suggests long, drawn-out agony, and is so different from the high explosive effect which can, without time for sufferings, involve death.

PURE FRANKINCENSE

Upon each row of bread was put the pure frankincense. This reminds us of the fragrance which ever ascended to God from His perfect Servant. We, too, should enjoy His fragrance, and should experience more of the meaning of the words,

*“ My Beloved is unto me as a bundle (bag) of myrrh,
That lieth betwixt my breasts.
My Beloved is unto me as a cluster of henna-flowers
In the vineyards of Engedi ”* (Song of Songs 1. 13, 14).

Where Christ is, the place is aromatized, and God His Father never fails to appreciate to the full the sweet fragrance of His name, His Person and His work.

The root thought in the word translated frankincense is the quality of whiteness, and we judge this is another connecting link with that righteousness which stands out so prominently in the teaching of the loaves of shewbread : but of this more later.

THE SONS OF KORAH

“ Some of the sons of the priests prepared the confection of the spices. And Mattithiah . . . the Korahite, had the set office over the things . . . baked in pans. And some of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the shewbread, to prepare it every sabbath” (1 Chronicles 9. 30-32). Among the honours that fell to the sons of Kohath was that of preparing the bread. When we recall how that these sons of Korah were snatched from the jaws of hell (Numbers 16), how precious it is to consider them in this holy employ within the house of God ! We, too, have been similarly snatched from doom, and, if within His house today, may also find occupation in preparing the bread of our God. This will be something on which we shall feed,

and which, having become life and strength to us, we shall be found presenting before God from overflowing hearts (compare Leviticus 3. 11 ; 21. 17, 22). This is that which goes up from the altar, which altar is Christ ; and may it ever be that when we appear in holy array to give unto God we may be found with something that we have *prepared* !

BREAD OF THE FACES

The term *shewbread* does not convey much to the English reader, and we may wonder what is the signification of the word. The literal rendering of the Hebrew is *bread of the faces*. Let us think of the twelve loaves set out before the LORD with their fragrant covering of frankincense, and recall that there were twelve tribes of Israel. We consider that the loaves thus upon the table represent God's redeemed people. There Israel were seen in all the blessed perfection of Christ Himself. Surely it was upon this pure gold-covered table that the LORD was gazing when He exclaimed through Balaam,

“ *He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob,
Neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel* ” (Numbers 23. 21).

Had He looked within the tents of the people iniquity and perverseness would have been easily traced. Alas ! as in our own case, failure was too often in evidence, but, blessed be God, there is a place where He sees His people in the perfection of His Son—that is in Christ.

“ *Reach my blest Saviour first,
Take Him from God's esteem,
Prove Jesus bears one stain of sin,
Then tell me I'm unclean.* ”

The golden crown which was round about the table is again of interest here, as the word *zer*, translated crown, is thought to come from the word *zahrar*, to bind. Bound within the enclosure of those crowns were the twelve pierced cakes, and bound up in the bundle of life are all the children of God.

We are thus reminded of the truth of *eternal life*, which the LORD gives to all who believe on Him. “ This life is in His Son ” (1 John 5. 11).

FELLOWSHIP

We now come to a very important aspect of the truth contained in the shewbread of the pure table, namely, that of *fellowship*. When the bread had been before God all week, and He had beheld *the faces of His people* before Him in perfection, these loaves were removed from the table and fresh loaves put there in their place. This bread became the food of the priests, the sons of Aaron. First of all the frankincense had to be given to God. It was all for Him, and the statute demanded that God have His portion first. Then when God had received His portion in the sweet smelling incense, what remained, the bread, was eaten by the priests. God and His servants were thus feeding together. This was fellowship.

CLEANNESS ESSENTIAL TO FELLOWSHIP

“ It shall be for Aaron and his sons ; and they shall eat it in a holy place : for it is most holy unto him of the offerings of the LORD made by fire by a perpetual statute ” (Leviticus 24. 9). “ Who-soever he be of all your seed throughout your generations, that approacheth unto the holy things, which the children of Israel hallow unto the LORD, having his uncleanness upon him, that soul shall be cut off from before Me : I am the LORD ” (Leviticus 22. 3). These verses show that to have fellowship with God the person must be clean as to himself, and also be in a clean place. This finds its counterpart in the New Testament in the words, “ If we say that we have fellowship with Him (God), and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth : but 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 ” (1 John 1. 6, 7). The sons of Aaron feeding upon the shewbread speak to us of priestly ones feeding on Christ. Possibly there is nothing that hinders more our feeding on Christ than our lack of keeping ourselves clean. Unconfessed sin will cause defilement, and make fellowship with God impossible. But encouraging are the words, “ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness ” (1 John 1. 9). He is faithful and will keep His promise ; He is righteous because the work of Christ enables Him to act in perfect righteousness.

Spiritual growth is always dependent upon prayer and feeding on the word, wherein we find Christ. John says, “ That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us : yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. ” Like Aaron’s sons, the priests, may we walk in the light. As they ministered in the sanctuary they did so in the light of the lamps, which were fed by the pure olive oil, which speaks of the light of the Holy Spirit.

G. PRASHER.

 OVERSIGHT AMONG GOD’S PEOPLE

It has been the writer’s privilege to travel in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States of America, as well as other countries of the world. In some of these countries—in particular Australia and the United States of America—when conversing with children of God who were not in the churches of God together in the one Fellowship, we have heard views expressed in relation to the subject of oversight as it is practised among us, which make it evident that very erroneous statements have been made and false ideas disseminated.

The purpose of this article is to state what the writer believes to be the truth concerning divine rule among God’s people as it is revealed in the New Testament Scriptures ; to explain how the

principles contained therein are applied, and then to add a few details as to how this works out in practice among the assemblies.

There will be agreement, between all who are prepared to take the Scriptures as their sole guide, that *men cannot make overseers*. The word in Acts 20. 28 is indisputable : overseers are made by the Holy Spirit and He alone is able to fit men to shepherd the flock of God.

From the early chapters of the Acts it is clear that in the beginning of the testimony in this dispensation, rule and government were vested in the apostles. It was they who were responsible to see that the will of the Lord was carried out in the churches. It must, of course, be clearly understood that the Supreme Ruler was then, and is today, the Lord Jesus Christ who is Son over God's house (Hebrews 3. 6) ; who is also the Shepherd and Bishop (Overseer) of the souls of God's people. He is the Chief Shepherd, and men, however great, whether even Paul or Peter, are but under-shepherds whose duty it is to see that the will of their Lord and Master is done.

It will, we believe, generally be conceded that the Scriptures do not contemplate a succession of apostles. They had a very special work to do at the beginning of the dispensation. It was the teaching of the apostles which was the guide for the people of God, and they were looked to in matters of difficulty or dispute to determine the will of the Lord in such matters. It was through them, for the most part, that the Lord gave the New Testament writings.

When once the Scriptures were complete they became the authority to which appeal was made, and now all questions relating to the will of the Lord are settled by reference to them.

In Acts 14. 23 we have the first mention of elders being appointed. This we understand to mean that Barnabas and Paul discerned brethren whom the Holy Spirit had fitted to care for the Lord's people in the cities mentioned, then pointed such men out to the churches. Although this is the first mention of the actual appointment of elders, it is evident from Acts 11. 30 that elders were known and acting as such in Judæa before that time.

The New Testament Scriptures use the terms "elders" and "overseers" to indicate the same persons. This is clear from Acts 20. In verse 17 we are told that the apostle called to him the "elders" of the church in Ephesus and in verse 28 he speaks of them as those whom the Holy Spirit had made "overseers." The word "elders" indicates the maturity in spiritual experience of the men, and "overseers" the nature of their service.

Elders then were men who were entrusted with rule and government in the churches of the New Testament, and it is important to notice that elders (plural) are always mentioned in each of the churches; we never read of one elder having the responsibility of caring for a church. There is no such thing in the New Testament Scriptures as one-man-rule in a church of God. Many portions might be cited to show this to be true. We have already referred to one in Acts 14. 23. Acts 15. 2 ; 20. 17 ; Titus 1. 5 also substantiate what has been said.

Reference is made in certain scriptures to groups of assemblies situated in a particular province acting together in unity. In 2 Corinthians **9**. 1-5, Achaia and Macedonia are so mentioned, and Galatia in 1 Corinthians **16**. 1. Further, in 2 Corinthians **8**. 23 it would appear that these three provinces acted together in the choice of messengers appointed by the churches to travel with the apostle, as verse 19 states, in rendering this ministry to the saints. Such unity of action could, we believe, only be accomplished through those who rule and guide in the assemblies in these provinces, acting together in joint responsibility.

The first Epistle of Peter was written to the five provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. This indicates that not only churches in a province were linked together in responsibility, but also the churches in these five provinces were contemplated as a unity. In chapter **5** of this epistle the apostle, writing to the elders, shows that they were regarded as acting together in the care of the assemblies in which they had been given the oversight. He writes of "the flock" in the singular, and of their oversight showing that their responsibility as overseers extended to the five provinces. So that however wide the area in which the churches are situated they are contemplated as a unit and the overseers in the churches are regarded as a body of men exercising a service conjointly for their Lord and Master.

Matters affecting a local church only are properly the concern of that church and are to be dealt with locally; such a matter is mentioned in Matthew **18**. 15-20. Then we have in Acts **15** a matter of wider import than one affecting a local assembly and which could not be dealt with by the assembly in which it arose, viz., Antioch. It was a matter that affected the churches of that day as a whole, and required to be brought to the notice of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for solution. After there had been discussion, a consideration of the Lord's dealings with the Gentiles, and reference to the Scriptures, a decision in keeping with the mind of the Holy Spirit was reached. As a result "the decrees for to keep, which had been ordained of the apostles and elders" in Jerusalem were taken by Paul and Silas to the churches as far afield as Derbe, Lystra and Iconium. The happy result was that "the churches were strengthened in the Faith, and increased in number daily" (Acts **16**. 4, 5). What was enjoined upon the churches in Antioch and Jerusalem was also enjoined upon all the churches for they were together in the one Fellowship.

Among the churches of God today overseers serve in the local churches and deal with all matters which are proper to that sphere. Then the churches are linked together in districts, and the overseers in each district serve as a unit in matters proper to that district sphere. Should a matter arise in one of the churches in a district and local overseers are not able to reach oneness of mind, the matter is then brought for the consideration of overseers together in that district,

who, after prayerful consideration, are usually able to arrive at agreement as to the right course to be taken. Should there be matters involved upon which agreement is not reached, it may then be taken to the wider sphere of responsibility, and in keeping with the word "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety," the help and guidance of their fellows in the country may be sought. In more difficult cases where principles are involved affecting the assemblies as a whole, help may be sought from overseers when they are together from all the churches in the Fellowship that are able to send all or some of their number to such gatherings.

As the local oversight is composed of all the overseers in the local church, so the district oversight is composed of all the overseers of all the churches within that district, and the country oversight, where one exists, is composed of all the overseers within that country, and the widest sphere of responsibility, the Fellowship oversight, is composed of all the overseers in the churches of God within the one Fellowship. We have laboured this point because we find there is a notion in some quarters that there are little local men, then men of somewhat higher standing known as district men, then others of higher standing still known as country men, and lastly men whom the writer has heard referred to as "an inner circle of archbishops"; these latter presumably are supposed to be the Fellowship overseers. Where these notions originated we do not know, but we take this opportunity to state most definitely that there is not, nor has there ever been, any such thing in existence in the Fellowship comprising the churches of God. This is true concerning the early days of the apostles and equally so of these days in which, we believe, God has graciously raised up again churches of God built according to the pattern of the New Testament Scriptures, and composing one Fellowship as in New Testament times.

We certainly believe that wherever there are men acting together, there will be those among them who take the lead, men, it may be, who have a wider knowledge of the will of the Lord than the general body of their fellows, or, it may be, they have been given certain gifts by the Lord which fit them to take the lead among their brethren. Such men serve in the matter of giving counsel and guidance, but in no sense would they claim for themselves, nor attempt to exercise, executive powers. In an advisory capacity they seek to serve their fellows, and in no way do they attempt to "lord it over them." They do not, as has been said in some quarters, make decrees which then become binding upon the assemblies to keep.

The responsibility of all overseers is to guide the flock of God. Any decisions reached on matters of doctrine or practice, which come before them, are the result of the consideration of the Scriptures and unity of mind as to the will of the Lord being achieved. All overseers from all the churches who are able to get together are present when the discussions take place. As an additional safeguard, these decisions are then sent to the districts for further consideration before ratification.

R. T. H. HORNE.

“THEY BEHELD GOD AND DID EAT AND DRINK ”
(Exodus 24. 11)

There is something very striking about the facts joined in the above text. “They beheld God.” What a moment of glory was theirs! an uplifting and awe-inspiring revelation of God’s greatness; yet associated with the vision we read the words, they “did eat and drink.” This reminds us of those other words, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10. 31).

In the passage recorded in Exodus, the ordinary things of life are closely related to its high moments, for it is in the small things of life that the great things are tested. It is futile to imagine that in the power of some moment of high vision, we shall be able to do exploits, if we are failing in the relatively small things of life to sanctify them to His glory. “Do all things to the glory of God.” What a standard is here set before us!

*“The trivial round, the common task
Will furnish all we need to ask.”*

Indeed, the words, “They beheld God, and did eat and drink,” include for us the entire range of life’s experiences, from the highest spiritual joys to the simple everyday material needs. Thus every meal may be a means of fellowship, as we lift our hearts in true thanksgiving. Failure in the reverential act of giving thanks was the first step in the downward course of man’s original departure from the knowledge of God, as recorded in Romans 1. 21. . .
“They neither gave thanks.”

“And they shall eat those things wherewith atonement was made” (Exodus 29. 33). Aaron and his sons were to be separate from others even in the smaller details of their lives. The distinguishing features of their dress, alliances, inheritances and food, all point to the same lesson, namely that they were persons separated to the service of God.

We, too, who claim to be a “holy priesthood,” and also a “royal priesthood,” need to lay to heart this solemn truth. Men who minister in the holy things must themselves be holy, as it is written, “Ye shall be holy, for I am holy” (1 Peter 1. 16). Moreover those who “wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar” (1 Corinthians 9. 13). Those who would proclaim “Christ crucified” must themselves be feeding on Him. Their inner life must be Christ-supported and sustained, so that what they proclaim to others is a constant and vital reality to themselves. By feeding upon the sacrifice the precious truths of His atonement become increasingly real, and, instead of the atoning work of Christ being a “truth we hold,” it will become a “truth that holds us” and be the great central power in our lives.

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England
and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

Paul, in the epistle to the Colossians, speaks of being filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, and of increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1. 9, 10). Whilst there is close association between the knowledge of God's will and the knowledge of God, the two terms are not synonymous. The will of God, as this relates to ourselves, is the revelation of His mind as to what we ought to do to please Him, and in the doing of it is our highest and best good. Man by nature is naturally foolish, and the bent of his mind is to do that which is evil. Paul puts it in his forceful way when he says that "the mind of the flesh is death." This was the mind by which we were dominated prior to regeneration. It is the mind that is still in the flesh of those that are born of God. Such are not in the flesh (the evil corrupt nature that is in their flesh), but are in the Spirit because the Spirit of God dwells in them. "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be" (Romans 8. 6-9). Thus it is that the child of God has a battle to fight with himself, that is, with his old nature, if he is going to do God's will after learning it.

The knowledge of God may be acquired in two ways, a knowledge of the ways of God and a knowledge of the names of God which are given in the Scriptures. The Hebrew word for way is *derek*, which is derived from the verb *derak*, which means to tread, that is, to walk. Gesenius says that *derek* means (1) the action of walking, a going, a journey one takes; (2) a way, a path, in which one goes, it may either be the way of, or the way to; (3) the mode or course in which one goes, a way of living or acting. It is in this third sense that the Scripture speaks of God's ways.

It was in this third sense that Moses asked God in Sinai, "Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, shew me now Thy ways, that I may know Thee, to the end that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people. And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." These words of Moses, "Shew me now Thy ways, that I may know Thee," clearly indicate to us that in the mind of Moses a knowledge of God's ways was necessary to the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of God was necessary to the receiving of further gifts of divine grace. God's answer to Moses' request is alluded to in Psalm 103. 7, where David says that

*"He made known His ways unto Moses,
His doings unto the children of Israel."*

Moses had revealed to him the way in which God acted, but Israel only knew God in His acts. How scant indeed was the knowledge of God on the part of His ancient people! This lack of the knowledge of God led to the complete disaster to almost the whole nation. David refers to this in that psalm wherein he encouraged Israel to get upon their knees in the light of the purpose which God had laid upon his heart to bring up the Ark of God to Zion. He said,

*"O come, let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker:
For He is our God,
And we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.
To-day, Oh that ye would hear His voice!
Harden not your heart, as at Meribah,
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness:
When your fathers tempted Me,
Proved Me, and saw My work.
Forty years long was I grieved with that generation,
And said, It is a people that do err in their heart,
And they have not known My ways:
Wherefore I swear in My wrath,
That they should not enter into My rest"* (Psalm 95. 6-11).

Let the quotation in Hebrews 3 be carefully considered in its context and it will be seen how important it is to have a knowledge of God and of His ways. David, too, in his time, in which there was a great revival of the truth of God's house, asked, as Moses did, "Shew me Thy ways, O LORD" (Psalm 25. 4). J.M.

JOTTINGS

As we have elsewhere pointed out, the knowledge of God is bound up with a knowledge of His ways, even so is it with a knowledge of His names. God tells us that His thoughts are not ours, nor are our ways His ways, His being higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth (Isaiah 55. 8, 9). God reveals Himself by the names by which He is known in the Scriptures. The earliest names for God found in the Scriptures are *Elohim* (Genesis 1), and *Jehovah Elohim* (Genesis 2). How it came to be that men called God by different names, whether God so described Himself to enlightened men so that they might be able to lay hold upon Him, or whether by divine enlightenment they so named God according to their understanding of the Divine Being, or yet again, whether men by their own estimate of God so described Him, may be a moot point. Of the Greek word for God (*Theos*), Parkhurst in his lexicon says, "A name reclaimed from the heathen, and used by the writers of the N.T. for the true God." By this and by other words we see that God uses the language of men.

"God", in the Old Testament, may be a translation of one of three Hebrew words, *El*, *Eloah*, *Elohim*. In contrast to *El*, and *Eloah*, which are singular, *Elohim* is a plural word. Whilst some think that *Elohim* is a plural of majesty, that is, although a plural it is used as a singular, the view of others is that it is a plural, denoting the three Persons of the Trinity. Genesis 1. 1 : Mr. Newberry says of this verse, "In the beginning God (*Elohim*) created the heavens and the earth"; here it (*Elohim*), is joined to a verb in the singular: God (*Elohim*, plural) created (singular), showing the Trinity acting in unity. It also frequently occurs with adjectives, pronouns, and verbs in the plural.'

El means a mighty One; strength and might are what are indicated in this name for God. *El* is first used in the Scriptures in Genesis 14. 18, where Melchizedek is called "priest of God Most High" (*El Elyon*). Then he blessed Abram, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth." Here among the heathen of Canaan was this unique man maintaining amidst the surrounding darkness the knowledge of the true God and a service ampler to such knowledge.

Eloah : on this name Mr. Newberry makes helpful comment; "(God, singular), from *Ahlah*, to worship, to adore, presents God as the one supreme object of worship, the *Adorable One*." He also says, "First, in Deuteronomy 32. 15, 'Then he forsook *Eloah*, which made him'; again, verse 17, 'They sacrificed to devils (demons), not to *Eloah*.'" He points out that it is often used in the book of Job, and that *Elah*, found in Ezra and Daniel, is a Chaldee equivalent of *Eloah*. Whilst strength permeates the meaning of *El*, worship is the thought that springs from *Eloah*.

Elohim, the plural form of *Eloah*, is the name of God most frequently used in the Old Testament, and occurs over 2,000 times. Our view is as that of Mr. Newberry expressed above, that this is a plural noun and is indicative of the Trinity, not simply a plural of majesty.

In Genesis 2 we have *Jehovah Elohim* (LORD God) for here God in making man entered into a covenant with him regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Upon man's obedience to the covenant terms to abstain from that tree was bound up man's well-being and that of his posterity. Alas, he ate and sinned and fell. *Jehovah*, the eternal I AM, who changes not, is He who covenanted with Israel in that name (Exodus 6. 2-8; Malachi 3. 6). In Genesis 2 we have also the covenant of marriage (verses 23, 24; Malachi 2. 14-16), to which the LORD was and is witness. Much has been said and written about the Elohistic record of Genesis 1 and the Jehovistic record of Genesis 2, as though Moses put together two accounts which are opposed to each other. How could any man have an account of Genesis 1, man being created only on the sixth day and the last of all God's work? If we believe the Scriptures to be inspired of God, then we must accept the fact that the Holy Spirit is the Author of these chapters and of all else in the sacred canon. He caused Moses to write the account in the desert, out and away from, and free from the thoughts of men. The Lord Jesus, who is the Truth, believed these accounts and quoted from them as being divinely authoritative and true. That is enough for the believer; those who doubt Christ will doubt everything that matters within the covers of the Bible. It is interesting to study the occurrences of God (*Elohim*) and LORD (*Jehovah*) as used in the book of Genesis.

J.M.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

PAUL'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM: TROAS AND MILETUS.

After the rioting in Ephesus caused by Demetrius and his fellow-silversmiths, as recorded in Acts **19**, Paul left Ephesus and departed into Macedonia. From thence he went on to Greece, particularly to Corinth, where he hoped to receive the bounty of that assembly for the needy in Jerusalem, to which he refers in Romans **15. 26, 27**; 1 Corinthians **16. 1-4**; 2 Corinthians **9. 1-5**. He remained in Greece for three months. He hoped to sail from Greece to Syria, but owing to a plot laid against him by the Jews he determined to return through Macedonia.

There accompanied Paul as far as Asia certain outstanding servants of the Lord: of Beroëa, Sopater; of Thessalonica, Aristarchus and Secundus; of Derbe, Gaius and Timothy; of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus; the latter was an Ephesian, who evidently accompanied Paul all the way to Jerusalem (Acts **21. 29**). These went on before and were waiting at Troas for Paul and Luke, who left Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, which were for seven days after the day of the Passover, and reached Troas by ship in five days. There they tarried seven days. Then on the first day of the week they were gathered with the disciples in the church of God in Troas to break bread. It is clear that it was the custom for the disciples to be gathered together on the first day of the week, as we learn from the fact that they were together on the evening of the first day of the week, on which day the Lord was raised from the dead (John **20. 19**), and they were together eight days after, both first days included in the eight days (verse **26**). Then they were together on the day of Pentecost, which was the first day of the week (Acts **2. 1**). But it is to Acts **20** we turn for definite guidance as to the day on which the Lord's remembrance in the breaking of the bread is to be kept, as He instructed His disciples on the night in which He was betrayed (1 Corinthians **11. 23-29**).

The breaking of the bread is to be observed not more often and not less seldom than on the first day of each week, not every day, as some seek to do, not once a month or once in six months, as others do, and not once a year at Easter, as do some others who observe it once only in the year at the time of the year at which it was instituted by the Lord. If the breaking of the bread was to be only at Easter, then Paul and his companions were in error in breaking the bread some nineteen days after the Passover, and besides, the Lord did not institute His remembrance in the breaking of the bread on what is now called "Easter Sunday," for He rose from the dead on the first day of the week after His death on the day of the Passover three days before. How totally blind are some who read the Scriptures!

Another thing that we need to pay definite attention to are the words of Luke relative to the ministry of the word by Paul, when the disciples were gathered together to break bread. His words are,

“And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow ; and prolonged his speech until midnight ” (Acts 20. 7). By no process of reasoning can a case be made out, that it is the Lord’s mind as contained in the teaching and practice of the apostles, that ministry of the word should be excluded from the meeting for the breaking of the bread. Paul’s ministry took place, the passage says, “when we were gathered together to break bread.” The occasion was peculiar only in this, that Paul continued his speech (*logos*) until midnight, for, as Paul told the Ephesian elders that they should behold his face no more (20. 38), it was improbable that he would be back in the church in Troas.

At this meeting for the breaking of the bread there were many gathered together and many lights in the upper chamber. Eutychus, a young man, fell asleep as Paul continued his discourse, and he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. But Paul went down and fell upon him, and embracing him restored him to life. Paul’s action was similar to the actions of Elijah and Elisha (1 Kings 17. 21, and 2 Kings 4. 34), when these prophets restored boys to life. There can be no reasonable doubt but that Eutychus was dead and that Paul restored him to life. After this miracle Paul returned to the upper chamber. The passage says, “And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed ” (verse 11). Many textual critics insert “the” before bread. It seems far from proper to conclude that the breaking of the bread in the Lord’s remembrance had been kept back until after midnight and that this was interrupted by the accident to Eutychus. They had come together for the purpose of breaking bread and that purpose, we judge, was fulfilled before Paul commenced his discourse. After having eaten, Paul talked with them for a long while, even till the break of day ; he then departed to walk alone on the over-twenty-mile walk from Troas to Assos. Why he determined to walk alone to Assos we are not told, therefore it is vain to conjecture. It shows clearly the powers of endurance of the apostle, that after his long discourse, and being up all night, he set out to walk the journey to Assos, while Luke and the others went the easier way by ship.

The word “before,” in “we, going before to the ship,” is somewhat difficult to understand. We ask, “Before what ? ” It may be, before the accident to Eutychus and Paul’s miracle. This, no doubt, is the chief matter in the paragraph, not to us now, but in the history of events as narrated by Luke.

Paul met the others at Assos and they took him into the ship with them. They set sail and certain places on the voyage are mentioned, Mitylene, Chios, Samos, before they arrived at Miletus. Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, not to be detained there, so that he might arrive at Jerusalem at Pentecost. Thus we read, “From

Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church." When they came, he addressed them. His address is one of the outstanding addresses in the book of the Acts. We have a few of his addresses on different occasions. It may be that what is given to us by the Spirit through Luke on this occasion (and perhaps on others) is an accurate synopsis of his address, for what is given would only take a minute or two to deliver. In his review of his work he begins from the first day that he set foot in Asia. He tells of his manner of serving the Lord, with all lowliness of mind and with tears. He mentions his trials from plots of the Jews, which were of frequent occurrence in his ministry in different cities. He declares to the Ephesian saints all that was profitable while he taught them publicly and from house to house. His message to both Jews and Greeks was repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Now he was going to Jerusalem, bound in the spirit, it being God's will that he should go to Jerusalem. He knew not what would befall there, save that the Holy Spirit testified to him in every city that bonds and afflictions awaited him there and afterwards. But the nobility of his character and sincerity of purpose shone out in his words, "*But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*" This was his consuming desire, to preach the gospel, especially where the name and work of Christ were unknown. It was to this end he was separated unto the gospel of God (Romans 1. 1). Then he tells them that they, among whom he went about preaching the kingdom (of God, A.V.), would see his face no more. He further said that he was clear from the blood of all men, for he shrank not from declaring the whole counsel of God. Thus his ministry among them had been, (1) the gospel of the grace of God, (2) the kingdom of God, and (3) the whole counsel of God; the gospel to the sinner, the kingdom for the obedience of the saint, and God's whole counsel reaching back into His eternal purposes and forward to their future accomplishment. He had laid a foundation of divine teaching and it was now their responsibility to see that they held it fast.

Following these words he begins to warn them of the stormy waters ahead in the voyage of life. He counsels them to take heed to themselves, and to all the flock in which the Holy Spirit had made them overseers. This is one of the places in which the Revisers of the R.V. would have done well to let well alone, instead of changing "overseers" of the A.V. to "bishops." The word "overseer" is more easily understood, a word derived from the Anglo-Saxon, than bishop, which is an Anglicized Greek word which has been seriously misused in things ecclesiastical. Elders were overseers; they were elders because they were mature men, and overseers as to their work of overseeing the flock. In the time when the Scriptures were written there were elders or overseers in each church of God (Acts 14. 23; 20. 17; Philippians 1. 1), and it was not until the apostasy was well advanced

that we read, in what we may call church history, of "the bishop" of this and that place, and later of "archbishops" or "patriarchs." Men had by then drifted well away from the pattern given to the early saints through the apostles. First of all, overseers must oversee themselves, for if they do not take heed to themselves, they will be useless in taking heed to the flock. The Holy Spirit makes (*Tithēmi*, to place, set or constitute) overseers in the flock. There would be no flock unless there were persons to care for it. The overseers were to feed (*Poimainō*, to tend, or shepherd): see John 21. 15-17 where the Lord said to Peter, "Feed (*Boskō*) My lambs," "Tend (*Poimainō*) My sheep", "Feed (*Boskō*) My sheep." *Poimainō* conveys more than simply to feed (*Boskō*) the church of God, it covers the whole work of a shepherd. Though some textual critics incline to the reading "the church of the Lord," no other scripture in the New Testament conveys such a thought. We may therefore without fear follow the text of the A.V. and R.V. The words which follow therefore call for consideration, "Which He purchased with His own blood." The word "purchased" (*Peripoiēō*, being in the middle voice here, means to acquire for oneself), means "acquired," see R.V. marginal reading. The best attested reading of the Greek is *Hē peripoiēsato dia tou haimatos tou idiou*, which literally is, "which He (God) acquired through the blood of the (His) own." This means that the church of God was what God acquired for Himself through the blood of His own Son.

Paul then warns the elders what would happen after he was gone, that grievous wolves would enter in among the elders who would not spare the flock, and that men from among themselves who were present there that day would arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Here was a state of things envisaged in which the Flock of God would be torn and scattered. This state of things caused Paul to leave Timothy in Ephesus at a later time to charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine (1 Timothy 1. 3), and in 1 Timothy 4. 1-3 he indicates that this work of undermining the Faith was the work of seducing spirits, which were actually demons at work injecting their foul doctrines among the saints, through the hypocrisy of men that spoke lies. This state of things came to such a pitch, that Paul called on Timothy and the faithful to purge themselves out from such evil teaching and evil teachers, and to "follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2. 21-26).

In the light of impending declension Paul reminds the Ephesian elders that for the space of three years he ceased not to admonish them with tears. Now as a father who had nursed them, was leaving them and expecting not to see them again, he commends them to God, and to the word of His grace, which was able to build them up and to give them the inheritance among all them that are sanctified (verse 32). Not God without His word, and not the word without God, both are

needed if saints are to be built up upon their most holy Faith, and if they are to realize the purpose God has in them in that present inheritance among His gathered people.

After reminding them of his manual labour whilst he laboured among them in spiritual things, and of the need that there ever is to minister to the poor, as the Lord had said in one of His sayings (not recorded in the Gospels), he kneeled down and prayed with them all. It was a touching scene, one of the most touching in his ministry, for they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, greatly sorrowing because of his words that they should behold his face no more. Then they brought him on his way to the ship.

After parting from the Ephesian elders they sailed for Syria and landed at Tyre. Certain places are mentioned on the voyage, Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Phœnicia, and Cyprus. The ship was to unload at Tyre, and having found the disciples, Paul and those with him tarried there seven days. The disciples in Tyre were enlightened by the Spirit as to what would happen to Paul at Jerusalem, and their counsel was that he should not set foot in Jerusalem. Nevertheless Paul pursued his journey to that city. The disciples with their wives and children brought Paul and his companions on their way, and outside Tyre this godly company kneeled down on the beach and prayed, and then, bidding each other farewell, Paul and the others went aboard the ship. They sailed from Tyre to Ptolemais where they saluted the brethren and remained with them one day. The next day they departed and came to Cæsarea, and there they entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, who is the only one in the New Testament called an evangelist, though there were undoubtedly many evangelists in those days. Philip is mentioned in Acts 6. 5, and more at length in chapter 8. Philip's four virgin daughters were evidently women who had devoted themselves to the Lord, for it says that they prophesied, within the sphere proper to women. There they tarried for some time. Agabus, a prophet who came down from Judæa, came to Paul and taking his girdle bound his feet and his hands, and said, "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." Those that heard this besought Paul not to go to Jerusalem. Paul answered them, "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, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done."

Following their stay with Philip at Cæsarea, they went up to Jerusalem, and certain disciples from Cæsarea accompanied them, and they brought with them an ancient disciple called Mnason of Cyprus with whom they were to lodge. Thus Paul arrived at Jerusalem, ending his third missionary journey, and bringing to the needy in Jerusalem the bounty of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia.

THE TABERNACLE

The Golden Altar

(Exodus 30. 1-10, 34-38)

The golden altar was to burn incense upon, and its place in the sanctuary was before the veil. It was made of acacia wood, and was overlaid with gold. It was foursquare—a cubit long and a cubit broad, while its height was two cubits.

The command to make all the other furniture of the sanctuary is found in chapter 25 of the book of Exodus, but it is not until we come to chapter 30 of this book that we find instructions for making the altar of incense. This fact has frequently been noted as of more than passing interest. We believe that the golden altar speaks of Christ in His life before the face of God. There are evidenced the merits of His sacrifice on Golgotha, and the value of His Person and work in resurrection life. Obviously this could not be done unless the cross-work were completed. His death, by which He put away sin, and by virtue of which He can make propitiation for the sins of the people (Hebrews 9. 26 ; 2. 17), must precede His priestly activities. May there not be some connexion between these precious truths and the fact that the copper altar with its victim precedes the golden altar with its incense ? We believe there is.

CHRIST'S COMPLEX PERSON

The Humanity of the Son of God is before us in the acacia wood of the incense altar, while His Divine glory is indicated in the gold that covered the wood. The Holy Spirit delights to present to our vision the complex Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God and Man in one combined : one Person of two natures. Nothing can be of greater importance than that we have right thoughts respecting Him. Alas ! that the adversary has been so successful in deluding men concerning the God-Man. Despite the many types and shadows which set Him forth, the prophecies which predict His character, and the New Testament Scriptures which speak expressly concerning Him, myriads remain in darkness concerning the Son of God, and the great salvation which He has procured ; of Him the Spirit says, " I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth " (Isaiah 49. 6).

THE ETERNAL SON

Since we are destitute of faculties to explore and investigate the great subject of the *nature of God*, because of His inscrutability, we are shut up to receiving testimony thereon. We hold that this testimony is clear and definite, and that "*the Only Begotten Son*", *the Being* (*ho ōn*) "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1. 18), was such from eternity. There is One spoken of as begetting and One spoken of as *being begotten*. As being perhaps more euphonious the term *generation* has been adopted, and so we speak of eternal Sonship, and of eternal generation. It was the Son who made the worlds (Hebrews 1. 2) ;

it was in the Son of His love all things were created (Colossians 1. 13, 16). The words of Agur come before us : " Who hath ascended up into heaven, and descended ? Who hath gathered the wind in His fists ? Who hath bound the waters in His garment ? Who hath established all the ends of the earth ? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if thou knowest ? " (Proverbs 30. 4). The answer is—

" God the Father, and . . . Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father "
(2 John 3).

A CROWN OF GOLD

There was one gold rim or crown to the golden altar, and this may suggest the priestly crown,

" Where Holiness shines bright."

Provision for approach to God is set forth in the shadows of the golden altar, and thus we are directed to Him who is crowned and anointed to be a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. Truly His is a ministry the more excellent, and He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which hath been enacted upon better promises. Through His own blood He entered in once for all into the Holies, having obtained eternal redemption. See Hebrews 8 and 9. It is thus that we can draw near with boldness (freedom of speech) to enter into the Holies by the blood of Jesus. The value of His sacrifice made outside was indicated on the horns of the altar, *inside*, by the stains of blood thereon.

THE HORNS OF THE ALTAR

These horns, we think, speak of His having all authority, and the blood-stained horns connect the humbling and the exaltation of our Lord. " He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him, and gave unto Him the name which is above every name ; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father " (Philippians 2). The fat of the victim, whose blood was put on the horns of the golden altar, was on the copper altar, then, outside the camp, the body was burned with fire. The portion on the altar of burnt offerings spoke of what Christ was to God in all the sweetness of His sacrifice : that outside the camp foreshadowed what He became for us. But the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense indicates the abiding efficacy of the cross-work of Him who ever liveth before the face of God for us.

*" By Him our Sacrifice and Priest,
We enter through the veil."*

" Let us therefore go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach " (Hebrews 13. 13).

Should these lines be read by saints who have not yet responded to the call to separation, may it be that the Spirit's exhortation quoted above will come home to the heart with force and meaning,

and result in obedience to the call. There are very many who consider such a call as unworthy of attention, there are others who cannot be sure what "*outside the camp*" means, and there may be those whose exercise has not yet been aroused. If you are exercised, dear reader, please note that *the camp* is simply that place where the will of the Lord cannot be given effect to. If His claims have become paramount with you, you will not fail to heed His call, even though in giving effect thereto you may have to pay a heavy price. You will be glad to buy the truth and sell it not. A beloved co-labourer used to say, "No matter how much you pay for the truth you have got a good bargain; and no matter how much you get in selling the truth you have made a bad bargain." This is solemnly true. Let us keep well before our hearts that there is a close link between "outside the camp" and "inside the veil."

STRANGE FIRE ON INCENSE

Not only did God specify what was to be burned on the golden altar, but He also mentioned what was *not* to be offered thereon. "Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt offering, nor meal offering; and ye shall pour no drink offering thereon" (verse 9). The drink offering speaks of the Lord being entirely poured out in divine service, and the meal offering of His perfect life of sufferings, and the burnt offering of His death as a sweet savour unto God. All these are associated with the altar at the door of the tent of meeting, and refer to what our Lord endured in His work and death down here. The golden altar, as we have seen, has to do with His life in resurrection before the throne.

A solemn instance of strange fire is recorded in Leviticus 10 where we read: "Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took each of them his censer, and put fire therein, and laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them." Because of this they were devoured by fire before the LORD. Divine service is most solemn, and God has put this on record that we should fear before Him. The fire that should have burned on the golden altar should have come from the copper altar, and we judge these sons of Aaron obtained the fire from some source other than the altar where, typically, Christ is seen in death. Fleshly activity before God in worship we regard as strange fire. The Lord has graciously arranged that, as we come before God in collective worship, we should be brought face to face with the Person and work of the Lord Jesus by means of the loaf and the cup. These are merely symbols, but they are intended to bring Himself before us; and as the loaf is broken and the cup poured out we are, as it were, at the altar of death with our censers to receive the fire that burns there. May it be that no other fire shall ever burn on our censers as we draw nigh to God. While we muse the fire will burn.

Strange incense would speak to us of material other than Christ. The ingredients of the sweet incense that was offered to God all speak

of Him whose name, Person and work are fragrant in the sanctuary. Christ must ever be the subject of our worship, as God is the object, and the Holy Spirit the power.

INCENSE OF PERFUME

Stacte, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense, of each a like weight, and seasoned with salt, were the component parts of the sweet incense. That some of it was beaten *very small*, and put before the testimony in the tent of meeting, might turn our thoughts to Him who stooped so low for us.

The root thought in the word *stacte* is to drop, or "distil," something coming from above. May not this be designed by the Spirit to have a link with the One who came from above, who said to those around Him, "I am from above: . . . I speak the things which I have seen with My Father" (John 8. 23, 38)?

*"My doctrine shall drop as the rain,
My speech shall distil as the dew;
As the small rain upon the tender grass,
And as the showers upon the herb"*

(Deuteronomy 32. 2).

But they refused to believe on the heaven-sent One, and concluded that He possessed a demon, so His words will become a fire and a sword instead.

Onycha signifies a "lion," and seems to indicate the King. *Galbanum* has for its root thought, "fatness," and, in the writer's mind, is linked with the perfect Man, Christ Jesus, whose life on earth provided a feast of fat things for the God of heaven.

Frankincense contains the idea of "whiteness," and recalls the righteous One whose service to God was such that God could term Him, "My righteous Servant."

The Son of God as the One from above is the burden of the Gospel by John: the King of Israel, who will one day soon take unto Him His great power and reign, is the special theme of the Gospel by Matthew: the Man who pleased God so perfectly on the earth is presented in the Gospel by Luke; and God's righteous Servant is seen at work in the story from the pen of Mark. It is this lovely, fragrant One of whom the sweet incense speaks. As the sons of Aaron brought the fire from the copper altar, and put the incense on the glowing embers, the sanctuary was filled with its sweetness. When the high priest brought in the atoning blood, and sprinkled it on and before the mercy-seat, he was lost to view amidst the fragrant cloud of incense which arose from the censer. In the divine presence there must be the fragrance of Christ alone.

THE PRAYERS OF THE SAINTS

In the story of Zacharias seeing the angel of the Lord standing at the right side of the altar of incense, recorded in Luke 1, there are many precious things. The angel had come to announce the birth of John the Baptist, and his appearance to Zacharias was at the time

when he was at the altar to burn incense. We are informed that the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the hour of incense (verse 10). They seem to have appreciated that at that time the clouds of incense would be penetrating through the veil and their words would reach God in the sweet perfume of the clouds of incense. It is thus that we make mention of the name of Christ when we approach the throne of God.

It should be noted that this multitude had come to the house of God to pray. They did not belong to the class of people who on a cold or very wet evening sit down at home and comfort themselves by saying that they can pray at home. It is as needful as ever that we enter into our closets and shut to the door and pray to our Father in heaven, but such prayer individually cannot take the place of the collective assembly prayers. The Spirit of God has so arranged it that the people of God come together and function before Him, and amongst these exercises is that of the assembly prayers. Let us see to it that our seat is not vacant on the occasions when it is possible for us to be present. The golden bowls full of incense are said to be the prayers of the saints (Revelation 5. 8) and in Revelation 8. 3, 4. we read, "And another angel came and stood over the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should add it unto the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand." Those will be days of severe trial, and many and fervent prayers will go up to God, but the divine provision for the people of that day will not be lacking. As we consider thus the value of Christ we may well exclaim:

*"Precious name, oh, how sweet!
Hope of earth and joy of heaven."*

The psalmist David appears to have the two altars before his mind and heart when inditing the words of Psalm 141, verse 2. There he says,

*"Let my prayer be set forth as incense before Thee;
The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."*

As he stretched forth his hands in prayer the dual thought contained in the two altars was the burden of his invocation—the sweet fragrance from the incense on the golden altar, and the sweet fragrance from the victim of the ascending offering at the door of God's house. God kept before Himself thus the work of His Son in His death, and in His life before the throne.

A CONTRAST

To all this there is a sharp contrast in Lamentations 3. 44 where we read, "Thou hast covered Thyself with a cloud, that our prayers should not pass through." Why was this? What had occurred? The story is a sad one. God's people had been persistent in disobedience. They had refused to listen to His prophets, and to respond to His messengers. At length judgement came, with death for many, and

captivity for others. Instead of having a sweet-savour cloud, which speaks of the sweetness of Christ, to add to their words in the divine presence, there is now a cloud surrounding God which shuts their prayers out from His presence. Have we known a period like this when the heavens were brass and the earth was iron? Humility and repentance with confession will bring back the desired condition. Have we not much need today to humble ourselves before our God? We feel certain it is the need of the hour. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time; casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you" (1 Peter 5. 6, 7), is a message to which we should all take heed.

G. PRASHER.

DIVINE HARMONY AND ABOUNDING FRUITFULNESS

The beautiful robe of the ephod worn by Israel's high priest was made of woven work, reinforced around the neck as a coat of mail, so that it could not be rent. Arranged around the hem as a fringe were a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, equal in number. The bells were of pure gold and between the bells were the pomegranates coloured in blue, purple and scarlet. The purpose of this unique adornment around the hem of the robe of the ephod was that, "It shall be upon Aaron to minister: and the sound thereof shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the LORD, and when he cometh out, that he die not" (Exodus 28. 35).

On the great day of Atonement Israel's high priest entered into the awesome presence of Him who dwelt between the cherubim upon the mercy-seat. On this occasion no sound was heard, for the high priest was robed in garments of plain linen (Leviticus 16. 4)

After performing his service before the mercy-seat and at the copper altar in the court, he changed his garments, and again the joyful melody was heard by a waiting and worshipping people, as he trod the sacred path out of the Tabernacle.

Gold is a type of divine glory. The sound the bells gave forth was sweet music to the ears of the people and to the ears of Jehovah. How appropriately are thus portrayed the character and service of our High Priest! His every step is golden and His speech has a heavenly cadence. He is the true Wearer of the ephod all of blue. Many heard the golden music of the voice of Him, God's pattern Servant, and they left all and followed Him. "Never man so spake" (John 7. 46).

His voice went forth and many an ear was attuned to the divine message. In all this there is a lesson for us. Is our spiritual attire fringed with the golden music of divine testimony so that other ears may hear the heavenly harmony of the golden bells?

Corresponding exactly in number with the golden bells were the pomegranates, examples of abounding fruitfulness. This Eastern

fruit is described as being "all seed and sweetness, each pearly seed resting in its crimson bed of luscious pulp." The divine testimony of the golden bells is equally balanced by the rich and abundant fruitfulness of the sweet pomegranates. This sublime balance of testimony and fruitfulness was evidenced in the life and walk of the Lord Jesus Christ and it should also characterize the walk and work of His true disciples, who are responsible to sound forth the glad tidings of divine grace and to bring forth fruit, the fruit of a godly life.

The Lord Jesus said of His early disciples, "Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide" (John 15. 16).

With what infinite care and patient toil has the Divine Husbandman nurtured every plant in God's garden in order that it may bear fruit, and bear it abundantly!

The pomegranate provides a prolific amount of seeds: it is all seed and sweetness. This indicates the extent to which it draws fertility from a rich soil. So our roots should go deep down into the word of God, that rich and fertile soil from which to draw the needful nourishment that we may be abundantly fruitful and exhibit the sweet graces of a Christlike life. Paul said, "If we live by the Spirit, by the Spirit let us also walk," and the delightful fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance (self-control)." See Galatians 5. 22, 23. Such fruitbearing gives pleasure to the Divine Husbandman. It is well when He can be invited to come into His garden and eat His precious fruits (Song of Songs 4. 16).

A. J. TAYLOR.

"THE SONGS OF ASCENTS"

(Psalms 120—134)

A short introduction to these Psalms may be helpful. Whilst we have no certain knowledge as to the precise period when all these psalms were written, or as to the authors of all, yet the evident progress of thought expressed in them does lead to suggestions which we hope may be helpful to our readers. In the Revised Version of our Bible, one hundred and fifty psalms are divided into five sections or books. Within the fifth section or book we have what is sometimes termed "the little Psalter" comprising fifteen psalms, called the "Songs of Ascents, or degrees" and sometimes called the "Psalms of the Return."

A brief explanation of the word *psalmos* may not be out of place. Vine gives *psalmos* as "primarily a striking or twitching with the fingers on musical instrument strings," and arising from this is the exercise of making melody, not so much upon strings, as with the heart unto the Lord.

Obviously a psalm or song is that which arises from a heart experience. How delightful if we think of the Lord playing upon

the heart, and what melody may arise from such an experience! It seems needless to remind fellow-readers what a wealth of spiritual experience lies behind the five books of the Psalms, and the fifteen psalms which we would like briefly to review. Truly many if not all are “gems from the furnace.”

It has been suggested that the fifteen psalms known as the Songs of Ascents were composed to commemorate the experiences of those whose hearts were stirred to return to Zion from Babylon to build again the house of the LORD and the wall of Jerusalem. The moving experiences associated therewith are set out for us to read in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. How could they sing the LORD’s song in a strange land? They had no spirit to sing when their tormentors (Psalm 137. 3, R.V. margin) asked them to sing one of the songs of Zion. The fitting place for the song of triumph was not down in Babylon (Psalm 120), but in the land and the city of divine choice.

Who can assess the effect upon the spirits of those in captivity as beloved Daniel was found upon his knees (see Daniel 9. 3), knowing that the time had arrived for the accomplishing of the desolations on Jerusalem, and though he did not himself return, the Word of God played upon his heart, and he set his face to seek the Lord God. Springing from such prayer was a changed mind in those in captivity. Secular history records that many Jews were exceedingly prosperous and at ease in Babylon, the land of their captivity. Others were stirred up; they became disturbed and exercised about their disobedience to the voice of the LORD through His prophets, and their rebellion against His law.

* This we believe can be seen as the background of Psalm 120 for the individual is in distress of soul. Too long his soul had its dwelling with him that hated peace. He boldly avers that he is for peace. “But when I speak, they are for war” (verses 6, 7).

We suggest the background of Psalm 121 is that of exercised individuals on their journey across the desert from Babylon to Zion, and in that experience they knew in a very real way the keeping power of God, for this is essentially a shepherd psalm. The natural tendency is to look to help from the king (see Ezra 8. 21) perhaps indicated by the verse,

“I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains : from whence shall my help come ?”

But faith in God triumphs, and the returning ones realize that their help cometh from the LORD.

*“My help cometh from the LORD,
Which made heaven and earth”* (Psalm 121. 1, 2).

They looked from the creature and created things to the Creator. This Psalm may well rank second to Psalm 23 as the Shepherd psalm. How appropriate are the words at its conclusion!

*The LORD shall keep thy going out and thy coming in,
From this time forth and for evermore.”*

Looking back on these two steps or ascents (for men who desired to worship are viewed as ascending or going up to Zion), we suggest two truths may be associated with these two Psalms, **120** and **121**, namely REPENTANCE and FAITH.

In Psalm **120** the individual is in distress of soul because he had long dwelt among those who hated peace. Perhaps years had passed when there had been no exercise on the part of himself or others to seek peace or the city of peace, but now his mind is changed, he desires earnestly for peace and the dwelling of peace. Psalm **121** shows us faith rewarded, the captives now returning singing aloud with joy of the keeping power of their God ; and the promise they sang of and experienced its fulfilment on their journey was :

*“ The Lord shall keep thy going out and thy coming in,
From this time forth and for evermore ”* (Psalm **121**. 8).

We have simply sought to set forth the historical background of these two delightful songs of ascents in relation to the captives released to return from Babylon to Zion, but we may suitably enquire at this juncture what lessons can we learn in regard to the present day from these ascents ?

Like David in the Vale of Elah, as he beheld the trembling forces of Israel shaken by the repeated challenge of the hated Philistine, we can well ask the question, “ Is there not a cause ? ” as we behold the disunity that exists in Christendom today—the tragic state of divided forces. Any seeker after God and spiritual things must be completely confused as he perceives the veritable labyrinth into which he or she may be drawn. It was the conviction that these captives in Babylon had which caused them to return to Zion. They knew that amidst the constant warlike intentions of the inhabitants it was impossible to enjoy peace. Never in Babylon could they give effect to the will of God in collective testimony and worship, for that could alone be done in the place of God’s choice—Zion.

Is there a similar conviction in your heart, dear reader, that, to give effect to the will of God as set forth in the New Testament pattern in Acts **2**. 41-42, it will be impossible to do so amidst the innumerable systems and ideas of men—a veritable Babylon today—a babel of voices, drowning the voice of God to all who are born again ?

*“ Light and repentance give
Those who are unaware
Dark error binds their feet
In Satan’s subtle snare ;
Unfold Thy way of unity,
Show them the one Community.*

*Grant that more perfectly
Thy will may be expressed ;
That gathered saints may show ;
Thy way of truth is best.
So mid this discord men may see
Divinely ordered unity.”*

AUSTIN JONES.

(to be continued.)

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Box 240, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

In Exodus 6. 2, 3 we find God saying to Moses, "I am JEHOVAH: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name JEHOVAH I was not known (made known, R.V. marg.) to them." It was not that the name Jehovah was unknown to men in the days of Genesis, for as early as 235 years after the creation of Adam, at the time of the birth of Enosh, the grandson of Adam, it is said, "Then began men to call on the name of the LORD (Jehovah)" (Genesis 4. 26). Indeed both Cain and Abel are said to have brought offerings unto Jehovah (Genesis 4. 3-5). The meaning of the LORD'S words to Moses in the above verses in Exodus must be understood, that the covenant name in which God chose to reveal Himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in which name He covenanted with them to be a God to them and to their seed after them, was God Almighty (*El Shaddai*). God Almighty is used six times in Genesis, but is only once used in Exodus, in the words of the LORD quoted above, and once in Numbers, and there it is used by Balaam (Numbers 24. 4). It is nowhere else found in the writings of Moses, and Moses never uses it himself when speaking of God. The word Almighty (*Shaddai*) is found thirty one times in Job, but is found only twice in the Psalms.

The meaning of Almighty in the original Scriptures is the same as the meaning in English, signifying one who is most powerful. Some have suggested that there is some relation in the derivation of *Shaddai*, with that of *Shad* or *Shod*, which is the Hebrew word for the breast or teat of a mother or animal (as bulging), but I can find no proof of this. Gesenius gives no indication of this. God Almighty or the Lord Almighty, which can be applied to God alone, shows Him to be One whose power is infinite. Such is the God who "giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might He increaseth strength" (Isaiah 40. 29). Such was He to the patriarchs in their earthly pilgrimage, men who were separate from the pagan peoples with whom they were surrounded. Of them it is said,

*"They went about from nation to nation,
From one kingdom to another people.
He suffered no man to do them wrong;
Yea, He reprov'd kings for their sakes;
Saying, Touch not Mine anointed ones
And do My prophets no harm."*

The Almighty spread the wings of His all-powerful protection over and around His chosen ones. Such is the Lord Almighty to His chosen and separated people still, who are dependent on His almighty power to provide and to keep. He cannot desert or fail those that trust Him (see 2 Corinthians 6. 14-7. 1).

In contrast to the meaning of *Shaddai* (Almighty), "Jehovah" shows One who does not change. Jehovah explains His name and character through Malachi, "For I the LORD (Jehovah) change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed" (Malachi 3. 6). Jehovah, the eternal *I AM*, the One who was and is and shall be, for ever the same, entered into a covenant with Israel in the name Jehovah. His covenant was changeless, as were also the promises He made to His people, but while He abode faithful to His word, they broke His covenant, they deserted from the promise which they made at Sinai, for they said, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do" (Exodus 19. 8; 24. 7). For long weary centuries He bore with the disobedience of His people, rising up early and sending His servants to them with messages of entreaty and rebuke, but they would not hear. Then, last of all, He sent His Son, who was also Jehovah the Son, and Him they arrested, and denied before the face of Pilate the Roman judge. In such circumstances the question which the LORD asked through Isaiah might be repeated, "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Isaiah 5. 4). With great sadness Jehovah turned His face from the house of Israel when His Son left the temple, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23. 38, 39). It was a closed door for Israel during the dispensation of grace which was to follow, yet in the Lord's words was a door of hope, and this was conditioned upon their saying, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

J.M.

JOTTINGS

As we have elsewhere pointed out, the knowledge of God is bound up with a knowledge of His ways and His names. We have also indicated the meaning of some of the names by which God is called in the Scriptures, such as *El*, God, singular, the One who is strong. *Eloah*, God, singular, derived from "*Ahlah*, to worship, to adore, presents God as the supreme object of worship, the Adorable One." To give what is due to Him to any thing or person is idolatry. *Elohim*, God, plural (plural in Hebrew means more than two), is a name common to the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. *El Elyon*, the Most High, is first used in connexion with Melchizedek; who was priest of God Most High (Genesis 14). This name shows God to be supreme, far above all that may be called gods. This name is used mostly, though not altogether, where men are outside of covenant relationship with God. *El Shaddai*, God Almighty, One who is most powerful, whose power is infinite. In this name God entered into a covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were weak, dependent men, who lived in the midst of pagan peoples, and needed the strength and protection of One who was infinite in power (Genesis 17). *Jehovah*, "He that always was, that always is, and that ever is to come," the Ever-existing One, and the One who abides eternally the same, with whom change is impossible. Such was the character in which He entered into covenant relationship with His people Israel, on the ground of their obedience to the terms of His covenant. *Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*, I Am that I Am, "The force is, I continue to be, and will be, what I continue to be, and will be. *Ehyeh*, I Am, in force and meaning, 'I that ever will be.'" This is similar in meaning to the name *Jehovah*. *Jah*, this name is also expressive of eternal existence. It is frequently used in association with praise, as in Hallelujah, Praise ye Jah. *Adon*, Lord, singular, is thought to be derived from a word which means to make firm, as a foundation, but some think it is derived from a word which means to judge, to command, hence to be lord, owner, master. *Adonahy*, Lord, plural, Sovereign Lord, Master. "In this form used only as a divine title; different from *Adonay*, plural of *Adon*."

There are thirteen *Jehovah* titles.

Jehovah-Jireh, "Jehovah will see, or provide" (Genesis 22. 14).

Jehovah-Ropheca, "Jehovah that healeth thee" (Exodus 15. 26).

Jehovah-Nissi, "Jehovah my banner" (Exodus 17. 15).

Jehovah-Mekaddiskem, "Jehovah that doth sanctify you"

(Exodus 31. 13).

Jehovah-Eloheenu, "Jehovah our God."

Jehovah-Elohay, "Jehovah my God."

Jehovah-Eloheka, "Jehovah thy God."

Jehovah-Shalom, "Jehovah send peace" (Judges 6. 24).

Jehovah-Tsebahoth, "Jehovah of hosts" (1 Samuel 1. 3).

Jehovah-Rohi, "Jehovah my Shepherd" (Psalm 23. 1).

Jehovah-Heleyon, "Jehovah Most High" (Psalm 7. 17).

Jehovah-Tsidkeenu, "Jehovah our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23. 6).

Jehovah-Shahmmah, "Jehovah is there" (Ezekiel 48. 35).

The great statement of Moses in the law, which the Lord quoted in His reply to the Pharisees (Mark 12. 29, 30), was, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6. 4, 5). LORD here is *Jehovah*, and God is *Elohim*, "Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah." *Elohim* as we have seen above is plural, and signifies the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It very properly arises in our mind how *Elohim* can be one *Jehovah*.

The Hebrew word for "one" is *Echad*. Its first use in the Scriptures is in Genesis 1. 5, "And there was evening and there was morning, one day." The A.V. gives "the first day," but the R.V. is literally correct, "one day." *Echad* means to be united. It is derived from the Hebrew word *Achad*, which means to unite, or it may be that the numeral one (*Echad*) is derived from *Achad*. Whichever is the correct view, the idea of a composite one is contained in the word *Echad*. This is seen in the fact that the evening and morning unitedly made one day. This is also so in connexion with two persons joined in marriage, they become one flesh (Genesis 2. 23, 24). There are other instances in the Old Testament where more than one object united together make one.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

JERUSALEM: PAUL'S ARREST AND JOURNEY TO ROME

When Paul and his companions arrived in Jerusalem, the brethren received them gladly. The following day Paul went in to James, and all the elders were present. When Paul had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. When they heard it, it is said that they glorified God. Then, following closely on the heels of their glorifying God, the old trouble was raised, the matter of circumcision and the keeping of the law. See Acts 15. The matter of circumcision as it affected the Gentiles was settled at the council in Jerusalem, that circumcision and law-keeping were not to be put as a yoke upon the disciples, "which," said Peter, "neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." The Gentiles which believed were only to be required to abstain from such necessary things, as from the pollution of idols, from fornication, from things strangled, and from blood. It had been alleged against Paul that he taught all the Jews amongst the Gentiles to forsake the law of Moses, not to circumcise their children, neither to walk according to the customs. It may seem at first sight that we have a head-on collision between what existed among the ten thousands of Jews in Jerusalem that believed and the apostle's teaching in the epistle to the Galatians. What is he arguing against in the Galatian epistle? He is contending that circumcision and law-keeping are not essential adjuncts to faith in Christ in order that a person be justified and saved. In this matter, he says, "Neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature (or creation)" (Galatians 6. 15). If a person received circumcision to the end that circumcision was a necessary part of the work of salvation, then that person was under the obligation to keep the whole law, and consequently was under a yoke of bondage, toiling away at law-keeping and never attaining to the righteousness of God nor eternal salvation (Galatians 5. 1-4). Consequently he says, "Christ is become of no effect unto you" (A.V.), and, "ye are fallen from grace." Circumcision and law-keeping were never intended by God to be a means of life, but a rule of life, showing the Israel people how they should behave themselves until Christ should come, He who is in all dispensations the one and only Saviour. "For," says Paul, "if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law" (Galatians 3. 19-22). The law was given to lead men to Christ; by it also came the knowledge of sin, but it could never make alive the person who was dead through his trespasses and sins. What was raised by James and the elders in Jerusalem was simply circumcision and law-keeping as a rule of life.

It seems clear enough that the believing Jews in Jerusalem had not advanced into the clear light of the truth proper to the new dispensation of grace, and in the light of this and in view of the advice given to him by James and the elders, Paul subjected himself to his brethren. The matter of salvation by faith alone in Christ was

not the matter at issue. All the statutes of the moral law, as contained in the ten commandments, save the keeping of the sabbath day (and the sabbath day has its antitypical teaching), are contained in the Faith. Indeed the two great commandments of the law can never be made void, "Thou shalt love the LORD thy God," and, "thy neighbour as thyself." These are the very essence of the entire Old Testament as to God's requirement of man, but if these were made a condition of salvation, who then could be saved? None! Paul was asked to take the four men that had a vow upon them and to purify himself with them from the charge which had been laid against him, thus to show that he walked orderly, keeping the law, which of course he did in its true meaning and application.

Following this we are told, "Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them" (Acts 21. 26). Paul's view of the ceremonial side of the law was that it was weak and beggarly (Galatians 4. 9), and that it made nothing perfect (Hebrews 7. 19; 9. 9; 10. 1). Though undoubtedly the subjecting of himself to the counsel of James and the elders was the right thing for him to do in the circumstances that existed in Jerusalem, where so many of the believers were mere babes in their understanding of the oracles of God, as Paul describes the Hebrews to whom he wrote in Hebrews 5. 11-14, his being in the temple was to cost him much of suffering at the hand of the Jews. They had seen him in the city with Trophimus the Ephesian, and they concluded that he had brought Greeks into the temple; this, added to the fact that they accepted the rumours in circulation, that he taught people against the temple, and the law, and the Jewish people, raised the ire of the Jews, and the whole city was moved, and the people ran together, and they laid hold on Paul and dragged him out of the temple. In view of this rabble the doors of the temple were shut, and news reached the chief captain of the Roman soldiers that the city was in an uproar and that they were seeking to kill Paul. When the chief captain with the soldiers ran down upon them they stopped beating Paul. The chief captain commanded Paul to be bound with two chains, and inquired who he was and what he had done. Some shouted one thing and some another, and when he could not know of a certainty he commanded Paul to be brought to the castle. When he came to the stairs Paul had to be borne of the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, which kept crying out, "Away with him."

Before Paul entered the castle, he asked if he could speak to the chief captain. The captain asked Paul if he knew Greek. To the captain's question whether he was the Egyptian who was guilty of sedition and led four thousand men into the wilderness, Paul explained that he was not, but that he was a Jew of Tarsus, and he asked leave to speak to the people. The captain gave him leave and he stood upon the stairs and addressed the crowd in the Hebrew language. They

were more quiet when they heard him speak in Hebrew. He began from his birth, his education at the feet of Gamaliel, his persecuting activities against "the Way," even unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, his journey to Damascus for the same purpose of binding the Lord's disciples and bringing them to Jerusalem to be punished. Then he related the story of his remarkable conversion outside of Damascus, his return to Jerusalem (as is given in Acts 9. 26-30), and his leaving Jerusalem by the command of the Lord (which was also the mind of the brethren, for they knew that the Jews went about to kill him), and at the end he made reference to his hand in the stoning of Stephen. His reference to the Lord's command when He said, "Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles," brought his address to an end, for they shouted that he was not fit to live, threw off their clothes, and cast dust into the air.

The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle and that he should be examined by scourging. When they had bound Paul with thongs, he asked the centurion that stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" When the centurion heard this, he went to the chief captain and asked him what he was about to do, seeing that Paul was a Roman. When the chief captain interrogated him on the point, Paul said, "I am a Roman born."

On the morrow the chief captain commanded the chief priests and the Jewish council to come together so that he might set Paul before them to know the certainty of why he had been accused by the Jews. Chapter 23 gives his appearance before the council, his remarks about the irregularity of the high priest, his proclaiming himself a Pharisee as touching the hope and resurrection of the dead, whereupon there was a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the scribes of the Pharisees said, "We find no evil in this man." Then in the dissension between the rival sects of Pharisees and Sadducees Paul was like to be torn in pieces, so the soldiers at the command of the chief captain took Paul by force from among them and brought him to the castle. That same night the Lord stood by Paul, and said, "Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning Me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." What a comfort the Lord's words must have been to Paul!

The following day forty men bound themselves under a curse not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. Paul's sister's son heard of their plot and informed the chief captain, whose name we learn was Claudius Lysias, who decided to send Paul to Felix the governor at Cæsarea that same night. So Paul, guarded by two centurions with two hundred heavily armed soldiers, and seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen, set out in the darkness of night for Cæsarea. The soldiers went as far as Antipatris, about half the distance, and left Paul with the horsemen to go the rest of the journey. Such was the way in which the powers of this world guarded God's noble servant from harm.

When Felix read the letter of the chief captain he said that he would hear the case when his accusers had come. In chapter 24 we have the accusation laid against Paul by the orator Tertullus on behalf of the Jews, after which Paul was beckoned to speak. He told of his arrival in Jerusalem but twelve days before, of his purpose in coming to Jerusalem, of his service to God among a people who were regarded to be a sect, yet, at the same time, he believed all that was written in the law and the prophets. He said that his hope was similar to that of the Jews, that there would be a resurrection of both the just and the unjust; he had come to Jerusalem to bring alms; and that the Jews found him purified in the temple, and later, when he stood before the Jewish council, that he had done no wrong, only that he had cried out among them, "Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day." Felix, who had more exact knowledge of "the Way," deferred judgement until Lysias the chief captain had come down. He gave orders that Paul whilst in prison should have indulgence and that his friends should be able to minister to him. After certain days Felix came with Drusilla his wife, who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgement, and Felix was terrified and said, "Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will call thee unto me." Alas, Felix was a mercenary, for though he sent for Paul the oftener and communed with him, it was with a view that Paul would give him money. He is a sample of many others who for money sell their souls and eternal happiness. After two years Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and to gain favour with the Jews he left Paul in bonds.

After Festus had come to the province, he went up from Cæsarea to Jerusalem and there the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul. They wanted him to agree to send Paul to Jerusalem (there would be those who would lay wait to kill him), but Festus would not agree to this. When the Jews came again to Cæsarea, Paul was brought, and they again began to lay grievous charges against him. These Paul denied, and said, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar, have I sinned at all." Festus, desiring to gain favour with the Jews, asked him, "Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?" Paul answered, "I am standing before Cæsar's judgement-seat where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest . . . I appeal unto Cæsar." When Festus had conferred with the council, he answered, "Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar shalt thou go." Such an appeal was possible only for a Roman citizen, and such was Paul. Thus it was, that despite the fact that the scales were weighted against him, in Festus seeking to gain favour with the Jews, the Lords' word that Paul would bear witness at Rome began to take shape.

After certain days king Agrippa (Herod Agrippa II), son of Herod (Herod Agrippa I), of Acts 12, who was grandson of Herod the great,

of Matthew 2, came with his sister Bernice to Cæsarea, and saluted Festus. Whilst they were there, Festus laid before the king the case of Paul who had been left a prisoner by Felix. He said that he had found no charge of evil things laid by the Jews against him, but rather there were certain questions about their own religion, and about one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive. He said that in his perplexity he had asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem and to be judged there, but as he had appealed to the emperor, he had commanded him to be kept until he should send him to Cæsar. Agrippa said that he himself would like to hear the man. So on the morrow, with great pomp, Agrippa and Bernice arrived, and there were gathered the chief captains and the principal men of the city, and, at the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. Besides it being a gesture of Paul that Festus might have somewhat to write to Cæsar concerning the case. King Agrippa then addressed Paul and told him that he was permitted to speak for himself. Paul stretched forth his hand and made his defence. He said that he was happy to make his defence before the king, because he was expert in all the customs and questions among the Jews. Then he gave an account of his life from his youth. His early life was known to them for he had lived amongst them. He was moreover a Pharisee and was a believer in the resurrection of the dead. He told of his life as a persecutor of the saints and of his remarkable conversion by the Lord Jesus who had been raised from the dead, following which he had been sent to the people of Israel and the Gentiles to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in the Lord. He appealed to Agrippa, "Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." His peroration, before Festus interjected, summed up the course of his life, "Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that He first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles." Thus ended a defence, which for power and clarity could not be excelled.

Festus evidently was powerfully moved and with a loud voice he addressed Paul, saying, "Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning doth turn thee to madness." Paul replied, "I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things." He turned to the king and said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." The reply of Agrippa has been variously rendered. The following seems to give the sense, "In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian." To which Paul replied, "I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds."

This brought the hearing to an end, but the day will declare the effect of Paul's defence. He stood before the bar of Rome; others were brought before the bar of God by that day's proceedings. When they had withdrawn, their conclusion was, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds," and king Agrippa said, "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar."

Now we come, in chapter 27, to the journey to Rome. Paul was accompanied on the voyage by Luke and Aristarchus of Thessalonica. In the ship were soldiers, prisoners and crew. The centurion, Julius by name, was a kindly man and treated Paul with kindness and allowed Paul to go unto his friends and refresh himself. The first stage of the journey was from Cæsarea to Myra a city of Lycia. There the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing for Italy and he put Paul and the others therein. The voyage was now with difficulty and at length they reached a place called Fair Havens in Crete. Some time was spent there and Paul was convinced that to go further on their voyage was dangerous, so he addressed them, "Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives." However the centurion gave more heed to the master and the owner of the ship rather than to Paul's advice, and the most part advised that they should set sail. At first all went well, for the south wind blew softly but not long afterwards, the fierce wind called Euraquilo beat down upon them, and though by various means they kept the boat afloat, they were driven in the storm until the ship became a complete wreck off the coast of the island of Malta. However, midst all the distress of those days, a message by an angel reached Paul, "Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee." Paul proclaimed his faith in the angelic message to all aboard. He advised them to take food, "for," said he, "there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you." Thus this disastrous voyage ended through the word of the apostle being rejected. Many others shall reach a more disastrous end through rejecting **THE WORD!** When they all got to land, Paul was gathering sticks to make a fire because of the rain, and a viper bit him, fastening itself on his hand. The barbarians on the island thought he must be a murderer to have escaped the sea only to be bitten by a viper. But when Paul shook off the beast into the fire and suffered no harm they changed their mind and thought him to be a god. After that Paul healed Publius the chief man of the island of fever and dysentery, and the rest on the island who suffered from diseases came and were healed by Paul. Because of this they showered many honours on the shipwrecked people, and when they sailed they put on board such things as they needed. After three months they sailed from Malta in another ship of Alexandria called the "Twin Brothers." The ship touched at Syracuse, Rhegium, and Puteoli where they found brethren and tarried seven days. From Rome the brethren came to meet them at The Market of Appius, and The Three Taverns, "whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage." Luke says, "**SO WE CAME TO ROME.**"

THE TABERNACLE

The Ark and Mercy-seat

We now come to consider the vessels of the most holy place of the divine sanctuary. These consisted of the ark and the mercy-seat with the cherubim spreading out their wings on high, covering the mercy-seat.

The ark was of acacia wood covered with pure gold. Its measurements were two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half broad, and a cubit and a half high. It had a crown of gold round about, and there were four rings of cast gold, two on either side, for the staves.

Shadows of our Lord are again before us here, the wood speaking of His humanity in all its beauty and purity, and the gold reminding us of the glory of His Deity.

The mercy-seat was made of pure gold, and its length and breadth agreed with the measurements of the ark. No mention is made of its thickness. It is here at the ark with its blood-stained mercy-seat that we seem to be face to face with

“MERCY’S VAST, UNFATHOMED SEA.”

The mercy-seat was the cover of the ark, it rested upon it. In this we are reminded that if the mercy of God were to reach man it could only be through the Lord Jesus—the one Mediator between God and men, “Himself Man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a Ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times.” Gazing hereon we may hear the Spirit saying: “Herein was the love of God manifested in our case, that God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4. 9, 10, R.V.M.).

In the New Testament the mercy-seat is mentioned once, as in Hebrews 9. 5, where the cherubim of glory are said to overshadow the mercy-seat (*hilasterion*). It is clear that the Lord Jesus is spoken of as the Mercy-seat.

A COVERING FOR SIN

The Mercy-seat was part of the furniture of the Tabernacle and therefore it had to do with the people of God, not as individuals, but as a collective people. It was from thence that there was communion with Moses, in commandments for the people (Exodus 25. 22). Before proceeding with its primary teaching for a collective people, it is useful to recall some of the elementary principles of God towards individuals.

It is, however, in the root of the Hebrew word that we glean the thought which the Spirit would have us grasp in the teaching of the mercy-seat. *Kapporeth* is from *kaphar*, to cover, or cover over. The pitch (kopher) which Noah spread over his ark excluded the waters of the flood, and so there was a covering from the judgement for those inside the ark. The blood of the victim which Aaron sprinkled on and before the mercy-seat made a covering for sins, and so there

was forgiveness for the guilty. Together with the covering or atonement at the mercy-seat there was also the confessing of all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins, over the head of the live goat, which was sent away into the wilderness (Leviticus 16). Indeed these two, (1) the uncovering of sin and (2) the covering by atoning blood, must accompany each other if the blessing of forgiveness is to be enjoyed by the sinner. Christ is the Mercy-seat, and He bears the marks of death, that death which He died . . . unto sin once, and so the covering before God is complete, but to enjoy the expiation made the sinner must acknowledge his sinfulness.

It would appear from Psalm 32 that David had for some time covered over his guilt, and was loud in his complaint on account of God's hand being heavy upon him. Then at length he says :

*"I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid :
I said, I will confess my transgression unto the LORD ;
And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. (Selah)."*

Then he could say :

*"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no guile."*

Joseph's brothers covered their sin for over twenty years. The blood-stained coat was recognized by Jacob as the garment he had made for his favourite son. The deception on the part of the brothers was complete. God, however, was working out His plan, and under the most humiliating circumstances, of these "true men," Judah was heard to exclaim, "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" (Genesis 44. 16). Reconciliation to Joseph soon followed this confession. It is much better to be humiliated in time, before it is too late for repentance. This is the sad feature in the story of Judas, the betrayer of the Lord. When he saw that the Lord was condemned, he repented himself, and brought back the ill-gotten gain, and went away and hanged himself. He had covered his guilt too long. Oh to learn the lesson of humiliation and confession ! It was there that we commenced with God, and it is thus that we must go on with Him. The publican's prayer, "God be propitiated (*hilasthēti*) to me the sinner," well befitted us.

"HE IS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS ;
and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (1 John 2. 2).

*"There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads ;
A place, than all beside more sweet,
It is the blood-stained Mercy-seat."*

"There I will meet with thee," said God to Moses, "and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."

We are caused to think of the condemnation of both Jew and Gentile as seen in the early chapters of the epistle to the Romans,

followed by the propitiation in chapter 3 with its resultant blessings namely : justification, reconciliation and glorification on the positive side: with no condemnation, no accusation and no separation on the negative side. All these are set out in grand form by the Spirit in the first eight chapters. When, however, Romans chapters 9—11 are passed, we are given instruction relative to the kingdom of God, which is associated with the house of God. A wonderful climax is attained in chapter 8 in the glorification of those who are called ; but another climax is found in chapter 15. 6 in connexion with the kingdom of God, in the desire of the apostle that “ the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus : that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Since He has glorification in store for us, to say the least, we ought to aim at glorifying God now. To do this aright we must be together according to His word and will.

THE THRONE UPHELD

The cherubim were made of one piece with the mercy-seat, their wings spread out on high covering the mercy-seat. Covering the throne of God appears to be the work of the cherubim. “Thou wast the anointed cherub that covereth ” is stated of the king of Tyre in Ezekiel 28. We believe Satan is here referred to under the figure of this king, and the exalted sphere he filled prior to his fall is thus indicated. It should be noted, however, that this word translated covering is *sakak*, the sense of which is, *to fence in*. The word is also translated *defence*, and affords the thought that the divine throne is defended against all that fails to agree with the holiness of God. The cherubim have been referred to as the “ bodyguard ” around and over the throne of God.

MERCY AND TRUTH MEET

As we consider the cherubim over the mercy-seat the truth expressed in the Psalm 85 seems to emerge :—

“ *Mercy and truth are met together ;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.* ”

Again in Psalm 89 we read :

“ *Righteousness and judgement are the foundation of Thy throne :
Mercy and truth go before Thy face.* ”

Truth, righteousness and judgement are in keeping with the holiness of the LORD. The foundation of His throne would be destroyed were He to countenance evil. Righteous judgement must be meted out. Divine justice must ever be satisfied.

Where, then, is this manifested in the mercy-seat ? In reply let us notice the words of Exodus 25. 20, “ Toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be.” We might ask, At what were they gazing ? Surely the answer is that they looked upon the stains of blood upon the pure gold of the mercy-seat. These were the evidences that a death had taken place for the transgressions or sins done aforetime. As God looks upon His Son He sees the Lamb slain,

and therefore He can "be just, and the Justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus" (Romans 3. 25, 26).

*" Mercy and truth unite,
Oh ! 'tis a wondrous sight,
All sights above.
Jesus the curse sustains,
Guilt's bitter cup He drains,
Nothing for us remains,
Nothing but love."*

David the king of Israel spared his son Absalom, who should have known the sword of judgement. Soon he was fleeing from his throne and from the city of Jerusalem. "The king kissed Absalom," with all those sad, subsequent events. God waits to kiss the returning sinner, and yet His throne is stable, and this because we are reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Romans 5. 10). How precious it is that grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ !

*" Mercy and truth preserve the king :
And his throne is upholden by mercy "* (Proverbs 20. 28).

FOUR LIVING CREATURES

In Revelation chapter 4 are seen four living creatures in the midst of and round about the throne of God, and this vision given John in Patmos has much that resembles the visions of God that Ezekiel saw. The close association with the throne which these wonderful beings have suggests the position of the cherubim ; and the fourfold character, with other features which they possess, contain much that is mysterious and beyond our ken. At the same time we judge that the faces contain links with the Gospel stories. Following the order in Revelation we have the lion, the calf, the man and the flying eagle. May there not be some connexion between the lion and the Gospel by Matthew, between the calf and Mark, the man and Luke, and the flying eagle and the high soaring flight of the Gospel according to John ? One thing we are sure about is that those wondrous creatures are connected with the government of God ; and the glorious One set forth in the Gospels, having all authority, is Head of all principality and power (Colossians 2. 10). Courage, strength, intelligence and swiftness are indicated in the cherubim, but on the mercy-seat we behold God's love.

STAVES TO BEAR THE ARK WITHAL

The staves were made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold. On the journey through the desert, and also in the land of Israel, these staves would distribute the weight on the shoulders of the Levites. The family of the Levites had the honour of bearing the burdens on their shoulders. They knew what fellowship in service meant. They would also learn to keep step with their fellows. This is still of great importance. In assembly life there is much to be done, burdens to be borne, and these should not be left to one or two. Where there are those capable there should be a shouldering of the burdens together, and all should be done decently and in order, for God is not a God of confusion.

When David made a new cart, after the fashion of the Philistines, to bring up the ark of God, which is called by the Name, even the Name of the LORD of hosts that dwelleth between the cherubim, he was sharply drawn back by the judgement-hand of God. His sincerity could not avail while he acted contrary to the divine ordinance. Then he learned that "None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites." "And the children of the Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the word of the LORD." See 1 Chronicles 13 and 15. It is still of prime importance that God be served according to His word.

THE PLACE WHERE I WILL DWELL

The mercy-seat was the Divine throne. God dwelt between the cherubim. His glory filled the house. See Exodus 40. 34. The desire of the heart of the LORD was at length fulfilled, and He rested in the midst of His redeemed people. Let us keep well before us what led up to this happy result—His being able to say, "This is the place of My throne, and the place of the soles of My feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel" (Ezekiel 43. 7). Firstly they had to be redeemed and separated. This was by the blood of the lamb, and by the waters of the Red Sea. They had to enter into a covenant with their God, a covenant of obedience, as in Exodus 24, and on the condition that they would obey His voice, and keep His covenant, the house was built according to the divine pattern, and filled with the glory of the LORD. To be His house today the same solemn truths are involved. It is not enough to have the blessings of redemption, of reconciliation, and the hope of eternal glory, all of which are purchased by the precious blood of Christ our Saviour; but, as is manifest in Peter's first epistle, there is the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ before there is mention made of the saints being built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood. In every age the house of God is a privilege conditioned by obedience on the part of the people of God. Time and again it has been forfeited by reason of disobedience. These facts, which are incontrovertible, displace all possibility of all the children of God being in the house of God today, since it is obvious that many disregard the way of the truth. The epistle to the Hebrews, well termed the Leviticus of the New Testament, is the epistle of the house and priesthood. There Christ is seen as Son over God's house, and also Great Priest over it, and He conveys a solemn message to every saint in the words,

*"While it is said,
Today if ye shall hear His voice,
Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation"*

(Hebrews 3. 15).

There is much solemnity also in the words of the LORD to Ezekiel—
"If they be ashamed of all that they have done, make known unto them the form of the house, and the fashion thereof" (43. 11); and surely it is still but right that we should be ashamed of the perverted ways which are not in agreement with the ways of the Lord.

G. PRASHER.

“ THE SONGS OF ASCENTS ”

(Continued from page 160)

Many believers in Christ are concerned very much today at the lack of unity in Christendom. Even the Pope shows concern by calling for 1960 an Ecumenical Council to discuss ways and means of uniting professed Christians. It is noteworthy that the Lord makes clear the way in which the unity of His disciples can be realized—“ For the Words which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them ” (John 17. 8).

When Israel forsook the Word of God they knew calamity after calamity resulting in their captivity and the burning of the House of God. In the closing days of the apostolic era another sad scene is witnessed—a terrific apostasy took place, and the House of God (the churches of God in the aggregate) were laid waste, and corporate testimony for God on earth ceased. In Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s time it was the Remnant who were stirred to return from captivity and to build the House and the wall surrounding Jerusalem, and today in much weakness a remnant has returned to build again the House of God and maintain the light of collective testimony on the basis of Acts 2. 41- 42.

This collective testimony, this divine unity, is beautifully emphasized in the psalm which we now briefly consider.

PSALM 122

Here occurs a word of interesting significance to the subject before us—divine unity. The word *Chabar* means “ to be joined ” and is elsewhere (Psalm 94. 20) translated “ fellowship ” ; in this Psalm 122, Jerusalem is referred to as a city that is “ compact together.” Here we have the individual finding others with a like mind to go up unto the House of the Lord. How lovely it is to find others with a like mind ! Paul spoke thus of his child Timothy (Philippians 2. 20) : “ I have no man like-minded, who will care genuinely (margin) for your state.” How encouraging it must have been to find those of Judah and Benjamin who were stirred to go up and build the House and later to enter into the fruits of an accomplished work ! What joy had those who strove, under great difficulties, to erect the altar, lay the foundation of the House, and then build thereon eventually to commence the service of God therein, when that House was dedicated (Ezra 6. 22) !

What joy the early pioneers (under God) of the present divine movement had as they saw others step out from the disunity of believers in the spiritual Babylon of their day, and, by the leading of the Spirit of God, come together, having a divine constitution, and possessing a united elderhood to ensure the continuity of that unity ! Only such could enter into a somewhat similar heart-stirring experience of these words,

“OUR feet are standing
 Within thy gates, O Jerusalem ;
 Jerusalem, that art builded
 As a city that is compact together :
 Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the LORD,
 For a testimony . . .
 To give thanks unto the Name of the LORD”
 (verses 2, 3, and 4).

The opening words of Psalm 122 remind us of the words of Psalm 42, true we suppose of David in the first place, as he reflected on the day when he led the multitude keeping holyday—yes, led them to the House of the LORD—but also true of the Lord, that worshipping Man, who often “went up” to Jerusalem.

The Remnant of Ezra and Nehemiah returned and built a House for God which was made up of stones recovered from the heaps of rubbish, and the older men wept as they saw this House because they had seen the Solomonic one, yet God took great pleasure in this House. The House of God in the apostolic era was not a House of stones, hewn from the quarry, or recovered from the rubbish heaps, but was composed of ransomed saints, “living stones, built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2. 5).

It is interesting to recall that though only those of Judah and Benjamin returned to build a House for God in Zion, leaving the other tribes scattered or indifferent, those who did build for God when they dedicated the House (Ezra 6. 17) offered twelve he-goats for all “all Israel” as a sin offering—so that representatively Judah and Benjamin offered for “all Israel.”

PSALM 123

To return and build the House involved them in separation and much hardship. As individuals they were encouraged in this Psalm, as servants are encouraged when waiting in attendance on their masters, to watch for every call, or as maidens watch their mistresses for every instruction, so their eyes were encouraged to look up to the One who sat in the heavens. It must have been a magnificent sight to behold the service that was given by the servants in the House of Solomon: recalling the words of 1 Kings 10, notice the successive impressive service then: (1) the meat of his table, (2) the sitting of his servants, (3) the attendance of his ministers, (4) and their apparel, (5) and his cup-bearers, and (6) the “ascent by which he went up unto the House of the LORD” (verse 5). The effect upon the Queen of Sheba was that there was no more spirit left in her! Those men, separated to the service of Solomon, were happy evidently in such service (verse 8), and what a privilege it is for those who now are separated for divine service in God’s House!

PSALM 124

True separation involved the men in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah in persecution which is evident in this psalm. Men are

pictured rising up against them (verses 2 and 3), but they are not given as prey to their teeth (verse 6).

Encouraged by the prophets Haggai, and Zechariah the son of Iddo, the leaders arise again and build, after ceasing from the work through persecution. Thank God for these valiant prophets who stirred the hearts of the leaders again! The prophets joined them in the work; what a heart for the work they had and a vision which made them no shirkers, no mere talkers! By example and precept they joined hands with their brethren. This is a lovely background to this Psalm; and the vision of divine unity called forth many hands to be joined together in such happy service, even though they were persecuted.

PSALM 125

Though they were persecuted, the promise of the LORD about which they sang refers to the salvation they enjoyed from the hand of their enemies, for "They that trust in the LORD are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever" (Psalm 125. 1). Were they not in the LORD's work? Was it not reasonable to expect the LORD to be with them, for were they not building a House for Him to dwell in? Though around them was much to discourage, and always the danger of trouble arising within, yet to give themselves wholeheartedly to the task on hand was indeed their salvation. The weakening of their resolves and efforts landed them in the condition of things seen in Psalm 124, when the work ceased, but they knew a revival again and this is pictured for us in

PSALM 126,

where we suggest the truth of Revival is experienced. When they first knew deliverance from captivity, they could hardly believe it; they were like to them that dream (Psalm 126. 1), and it almost seems that in this psalm, having reached a measure of progress in the work of the LORD, they looked back and all seemed like a dream. Even the nations around, looking at this little remnant which had returned, remarked, "The LORD hath done great things for them" (Psalm 126. 2) and they re-echo such a truth, "The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." There was much in their experience that had saddened them; they had sowed in tears—they shall reap in joy. At the dedication of the House "the LORD had made them joyful" (Ezra 6. 22). Because they had put the LORD's things first, and had builded a House for Him, blessing followed, and this is beautifully brought out in Psalm 127. AUSTIN JONES.

(to be Continued)

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England and from Mr. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Box 240, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.

JOTTINGS

In our search after the knowledge of God, we find that as we approach nearer to New Testament times the fact of the Trinity of Persons, as implied in the name *Elohim* (God, plural), becomes more evident. This is especially so in Isaiah, who writes much about Jehovah's Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. The well known passage in Isaiah 61. 1, which was quoted by the Lord in the synagogue in Nazareth, says, "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me." Lord GOD here is *Adonai Jehovah*. The Jewish people now would read this as *Adonai Adonai*, as they never repeat the name of *Jehovah*, superstitiously regarding that name to be too holy, and lest they be guilty of taking the name of *Jehovah* in vain. "Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD (*Jehovah*) thy God (*Elohim*) in vain; for the LORD (*Jehovah*) will not hold him guiltless that taken His name in vain" (Exodus 20. 7).

In this passage in Isaiah 61. 1 the Trinity is clearly seen. There we have the Spirit, the Lord GOD, and Me, the Lord Jesus. Nothing could be clearer than that we have here a Trinity of Persons, unless we should be so blinded by heresy as to say that the Spirit is only an influence and not a Person at all; then we have only two Persons, the Lord GOD and the Lord Jesus. We do not wish to enter upon the subject of the personality of the Holy Spirit, and we would just say in passing, that in personality we must have three things, mind, will, and emotion. We read in Romans 8. 27, "the mind of the Spirit." In 1 Corinthians 12. 11 we have the will of the Spirit, and in Romans 15. 30 "the love of the Spirit," and in Ephesians 4. 30 we have the grief of the Spirit. Thus the Holy Spirit has the qualities and characteristics of personality, and we would declare our faith that we emphatically believe that the blessed Holy Spirit is a Person, and that He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son.

In Isaiah 48. 16 we have the Lord Jesus again speaking, this time of His being the sent One of God; He says, "Come ye near unto Me, hear ye this; from the beginning I have not spoken in secret; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord (*Adonai*) GOD (*Elohim*) hath sent Me and His Spirit." The A.V. translates this, "Now the Lord GOD, and His Spirit, hath sent Me." This rendering leaves us in no doubt as to the part that the Holy Spirit had in the sending of the Lord into this world as *Jehovah's* Servant. Indeed we are glad to see that the translators of the A.V. believed in the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, as in this verse, by printing Spirit with a capital "S." He who is the eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God (John 1. 1), is shown by the words of Isaiah to have spoken from the beginning, but not to have spoken in secret. Amos, speaking of the Lord's ways says, "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3. 7). Here in the sending of Christ into the world we see the Trinity in action.

The same fact, as seen in Isaiah 61. 1, is seen again, in Isaiah 11. 2. Here *Jehovah's* Servant is the Shoot and Branch from the roots and stock of Jesse, emphasizing the Lord's humanity. It says that "the Spirit of the LORD (*Jehovah*) shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD (*Jehovah*)." Thus we see again the Trinity, in the Spirit, *Jehovah*, and the Lord Jesus the Shoot out of the stock of Jesse. It perhaps need hardly be said that this Shoot, the Seed of David, is also the Son of God (Romans 1. 3, 4).

These facts are further emphasized in the words of *Jehovah*, in Isaiah 42. 1, "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My Chosen, in whom My soul delighteth: I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgement to the Gentiles." This putting the Spirit upon the Lord took place at His baptism in the Jordan, as we have it in all four Gospels, when the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form as a dove and abode upon Him. In the power of the Holy Spirit He went forth to accomplish the work which God had given Him to do, and this He did perfectly to the glory of God. Never was there, nor could there be, such a servant. He delighted to do God's will, His scent, as Isaiah 11. 3, R.V.M. says, was in the fear of *Jehovah*, ever seeking out what would please His God, and never deviating from the path of obedience. Let us follow Him!—J.M.

JOTTINGS

In the happy employment of seeking the knowledge of God by means of His names we come to the New Testament. Here we enter as into a beautiful and fruitful sunlit valley, where we may move around at will, enjoying, through the sight which God has given to us in our once blinded eyes, the delectable things which are spread out before us. Was there ever such a book as this? Never, and nowhere within the knowledge of man is there such a volume containing twenty seven books by different writers. Here is the fullest revelation of the Divine Being made to man in the present time. No one can doubt that there will be a further revelation of God for man, when for him time shall be no more, and especially so for His saints, but for the present human life we have all here that we need or could desire.

The covenant name of God, in the covenant which He made with Abraham, was God Almighty (*El Shaddai*) (Genesis 17. 1); His covenant name to Israel was *Jehovah* (Exodus 6. 3, 4); and now today the covenant name of God is Father. It is not that He ceased to be God Almighty when He revealed Himself to Israel as *Jehovah*, nor is it implied that when He revealed Himself as Father by His Son, who is eternally in His bosom (John 1. 18), He ceased to be either God Almighty or *Jehovah*. Father is the name in which God's children are taught by the Lord Jesus, the Son, to call God; "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by Thy name" (Matthew 6. 9), and also we are taught by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God's Son, to cry, "Abba, Father" (Romans 8. 15; Galatians 4. 6). We approach to the Father through the Son and in the Spirit (Ephesians 2. 18). In my opinion any approach to the Divine Being, any speaking to one of the Persons of the Trinity, which implies one and not the Holy Three is fundamentally wrong. I say this after long meditation on the subject of approach to God. I do not further enter here on this subject.

Nothing could be clearer in regard to the coming of the Lord from heaven to earth than that this was the result of the action of the Trinity. Let those who toy with the idea, or are deeply steeped in it, that our blessed Lord only became the Son of God by His birth of Mary in Bethlehem consider well Galatians 4. 4: "When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law." Where did He send Him forth from? and where did He send Him forth to? When these questions are answered, then the further question may be asked as to the Holy Spirit, where was He sent forth from? We know that He was sent into the hearts of believers. But where was He sent forth from? The answers must be that both the Son and the Spirit were sent forth from the presence of God in heaven. In the one case the Son was sent forth and was born of a woman, and the Spirit was sent forth into our hearts. Neither the Son nor the Spirit became the Son and the Spirit through or consequent upon being sent forth. Such facts should be clear enough to such as take, in the simplicity of faith, the Scriptures as written.

The New Testament Scriptures are replete with references to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. In the baptism formula disciples at the Lord's command were to be baptized into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28. 19). In the salutation of Paul, in 2 Corinthians 13. 14, he says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." In John's salutation to the seven churches in Asia, he says, "Grace to you and peace, from Him which is and which was and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; and from Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1. 4, 5). It will be seen that the order in which the Persons of the Trinity are placed is different in these three instances. When men speak or write of the first, the second and the third Person of the Trinity, it must not be taken that there is any inferiority in one being described as the second or the third Person. It simply means that the Father is first among equals, and as we have seen from the scriptures quoted, the Father is not always first, the Son is not always second and the Holy Spirit is not always third.

In this profound subject of the knowledge of God, the most profound in all revelation, we must ever bear in mind that the Lord Jesus who became Man to be the Servant of God, never ceased to be God. He was still in the form of God though He took the form of a bondservant (Philippians 2. 7).—J.M.

THE GROWTH OF THE FELLOWSHIP

ROME : PAUL'S IMPRISONMENTS AND END

The planting of the church of God in Rome was the work of unknown persons. It was in existence when Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans, probably from Corinth, certainly from Greece, for in Romans **16** we have the commendation of Phœbe the deaconess of Cenchreæ, a town contiguous to Corinth. The Roman epistle may have been written during the winter of A.D. 57-58. Certainly there is not the slightest evidence that the church in Rome was planted by Peter. It was certainly not planted by Paul. The later chapters of the Roman epistle prove this, and on Paul's arrival in Italy brethren from Rome came to meet him, and this was the first time that we read of Paul being in Rome.

When Paul and his companions entered Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him. At the end of the Acts we are told, "And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him."

Three days after he arrived in Rome he called together the chief of the Jews and gave to them a brief account of how he came to be a prisoner in Rome. Though he had done nothing against the Jewish people nor against the customs of the fathers, yet he had been delivered a prisoner into the hands of the Romans. The Romans had examined him and would have set him at liberty, but because the Jews spoke against it, he was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar. He had intreated them to see and to speak with him, for it was because of the Hope of Israel (the Christ) he was bound with "this chain." Their reply was to the effect that they had received no letters regarding him from Judæa, but they desired to hear what he thought, and concerning this "sect" (the disciples of the Lord), for it was known that it was everywhere spoken against. When they had appointed a day, they came to his lodging in great number. He expounded the truth, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and the prophets, from morning till evening. It happened in Rome as elsewhere, for "some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved". The Jews could not agree among themselves, and Paul quoted the words of the Holy Spirit through Isaiah, found in Isaiah **6. 9, 10**, in regard to Jewish deafness and blindness, and he concluded with the words, "Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear" (Acts **28. 17-28**). Thus ends the story of the Acts of the Apostles which began in Jerusalem and ends in Rome with the apostle bound, but as he wrote to Timothy in his second epistle to him, near the end of his second imprisonment shortly before the end of his wonderful life, "the word of God is not bound" (2 Timothy **2. 9**). Paul had set in motion among Gentile peoples a message which in due time was to reach all shores, and bring endless blessing to countless millions.

It seems clear that Paul was released from prison in Rome after two years, it is thought about A.D.63. It is generally accepted that he wrote the four epistles of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon whilst he was in Rome during his first imprisonment. Some have thought that after his release he visited Spain, but that is very doubtful (Romans 15. 24, 28). There is no proof whatever that his desire to visit Spain was ever realized. That he left Timothy in Ephesus when he was going into Macedonia after his release is clear (1 Timothy 1. 3). He also left Titus in Crete. He also says that he left Trophimus at Miletus sick, which may be later than the time that he left Timothy at Ephesus and Titus in Crete (2 Timothy 4. 20). It is also clear that after he left Timothy and Titus, he decided to winter at Nicopolis, the seaport town near to Philippi, and thither he desired Titus to come to him (Titus 3. 12). In order to relieve Titus in Crete Paul was going to send to him either Artemas or Tychicus, and Titus was to set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their journey diligently, and see that nothing be wanting unto them (Titus 3. 13). Yet it seems clear that Paul soon found himself once more a prisoner in Rome.

Though so near his end, his interest in the movements in the Lord's servants was unabated, as we learn from 2 Timothy 4. 9-12. Demas, who was one of the Lord's servants as late as the time of Paul's first imprisonment (Colossians 4. 14; Philemon 24), now forsook him, because of his love for the present age, and went off on his own to Thessalonica. Crescens had gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. He had sent Tychicus to Ephesus, and Timothy, who was probably at Ephesus, was to come to him at Rome and to bring Mark with him. He was also to bring Paul's cloke which he had left at Troas with Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments. Whether Timothy and Mark reached Paul before the fatal day had come of which he wrote, "I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come," we know not (2 Timothy 4. 6). Only Luke the beloved physician was with him, the faithful Luke, who perchance ministered to him medically to relieve the pains of his poor suffering body which had been subjected to so much abuse at the savage hands of men.

In 2 Timothy 4. 16 he speaks of his first defence, which possibly was his first appearance at Cæsar's tribunal (though the emperor Nero may not have presided there in person), when no one took his part, but the Lord stood by him and strengthened him. The result of his defence was to the effect that all the Gentiles might hear the message of the gospel for which he was an ambassador in chains. No doubt his defence was circulated far and wide. At that time he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, whom ancient writers understood to be the emperor Nero. Here the story and work of Paul ends, so far as the inspired narrative is concerned, and we need not turn to other sources of information which may be of doubtful veracity to fill in what is not given in the inspired Scriptures.

We have traced the work of God, in that Fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which began in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost at the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2), and have seen it extend to Samaria and to Galilee. Then onward flowed the wave of blessing to Antioch in Syria, and from thence the apostles Paul and Barnabas were sent forth by the Holy Spirit. The province of Cilicia is joined in the sacred narrative with that of Syria. Paul and Barnabas *went through Cyprus and on through Pamphylia to the province of Galatia*. Besides in the province of Galatia, churches of God were found later in the provinces of Cappadocia, Pontus, Bythinia and Asia. Then the Fellowship extended to Macedonia and Achaia, Dalmatia and Crete, and on to Italy and to Rome. We know not in what parts of the earth the other apostles laboured, but the coming day will reveal the scenes and fruits of their labours no doubt. The Acts of the Apostles is mainly taken up with the work of Peter in the early chapters, and then with that of Paul from chapter 13 to the end of the book.

At the close of the apostolic period the apostasy set in and soon the pattern left by the apostles in the churches of God was given up and men's ways took the place of God's ways. But the pattern for the churches of God still remains in the New Testament Scriptures, to be followed by all who truly love the Lord and fear His holy Name. Let the scattered children of God prayerfully read the Scriptures to find out where they should be and what they should do in honour of their soon-coming Lord.

J. MILLER.

THE TABERNACLE

THE TABLES OF THE COVENANT

“The ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant” (Hebrews 9. 4).

In the above verse it will be noted that the ark in early days contained three things, a golden pot, Aaron's rod, and the tables of the covenant. We desire to dwell on these a little, as they contain much that is precious in their teaching, and we will commence with the last named—the tables of the covenant.

The covenant associated with these tables had to do with the constitution of the children of Israel as a nation, and as the people of God. In those solemn days when God covenanted with Israel, mount Sinai was sanctified by the presence of the LORD, and the people were warned against even touching it on pain of death. Both man and beast were prohibited from contact with it. The sounding of the LORD's trumpet, the ascending smoke as from a furnace, and the quaking mountain afforded a scene so fearful, “that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake” (Hebrews 12. 21).

Thus Jehovah spoke the ten commandments in the hearing of the people.

*“ And they sat down at Thy feet ;
Every one received of Thy words ”*

(Deuteronomy 33. 3, R.V.M.).

It seems evident that in this condition the LORD's words reached their hearts, and He expressed Himself to Moses in the words : “ Oh that they had such an heart as this alway, to fear Me, and keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever ! ” (Deuteronomy 5. 29, R.V.M.).

THE CONTENT OF THE LAW

It is interesting to note that the law had two sides—one Godward and one manward. Four of the commandments appear to be Godward, and six of them manward. Eight of the words are negative and two positive. That God had to utter so many “ *Thou shalt not* ” may remind us of the active nature of the flesh which requires so many prohibitions. How prone the natural man is to do evil ! “ Their feet run to evil ” (Isaiah 59. 7) is the Holy Spirit's testimony. The law, then, gave instruction to God's people how to deport themselves towards God and man. The Lord Jesus summed up this matter beautifully when He replied to the lawyer's question, “ Which is the great commandment in the law ? ” saying, “ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ” (Matthew 22. 35-40). Then He added, “ On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets. ” “ Love therefore is the fulfilment of the law ” (Romans 13. 10).

A MOLTEN CALF

Alas ! that within so short a time God's people should forget. The absence of Moses from their midst for a period of a few weeks was sufficient to make manifest the waywardness of their hearts, “ Up, make us gods, ” was their demand to Aaron. The voice of their God had already vanished from their hearts.

“ The early dew of morning has passed away at noon. ”

“ Thou shalt have none other gods before Me ” was the first commandment, spoken audibly in their ears by the God of heaven, and also written by His finger upon the tables of stone ; yet Aaron at the people's request made a molten calf, and fashioned it with a graving tool, “ and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. ” A feast is proclaimed for the morrow, and they “ offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings ; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play ” (Exodus 32. 1-6).

THE BROKEN TABLES

It was with a heavy heart that Moses descended the mount, carrying with him the two tables of the testimony which “ were the

work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables." The LORD had revealed to him the declension of the people, and the judgement He proposed to mete out to them for their guilt. The intercession of this great servant of God resulted in the LORD repenting of the evil which He said He would do unto Israel. While this success must have given him joy, yet the sight of the calf and the dancing so aroused his anger that he broke the tables by casting them out of his hands.

There is solemn significance in this breaking of the tables of the covenant. The whole story of mankind is here in shadow. "For all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."

*"We spurned His grace, we broke His laws,
And yet He undertook our cause
To save us, though we did rebel,
Christ Jesus hath done all things well."*

The law was broken by God's rebellious people long before Christ, the perfect Man, came to earth and kept it fully and perfectly.

GREAT MEN ARE PRONE TO FAIL.

We pause to note in passing that "the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him," but Moses prayed for him at the same time (Deuteronomy 9. 20). Whilst we shrink from expressing anything disparaging regarding so great a person as Aaron, yet we must recognize that the LORD has recorded his failure in order that we may profit thereby. Amid the darkness of that apostasy what a glorious opportunity presented itself to Aaron! Might he not have stemmed the tide of idolatry, strong indeed though that current was? Instead, however, he yielded to the request, invited their gold to be brought, and made the idolatrous calf. We are reminded of a servant of God who used to say, "We must learn to say, No, at times, and say it with a capital N." His meaning will be apparent, we feel sure, and if only Aaron had so acted how different might have been the result! Let us, then, learn to stand with our loins girded with truth.

THEIR RINGS OF GOLD

Another solemn consideration is before us in the gold that Israel brought to Aaron. It would appear that about this very time, high on Horeb's mount, God was saying to Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they take for Me an offering . . . gold, and silver, and brass" (Exodus 25. 2, 3). Surely the adversary's design is evident in that the gold that should have been brought for the LORD's offering, to be used in making His dwelling and its furniture, was diverted to his evil work—a veritable sacrilege, because the first of their gold should have been the LORD's. Is there not a voice herein for us that we use with care and knowledge what of this world's goods our God may entrust to us? It is still possible for gold rings to become a god. "My little children, guard yourselves from idols" (1 John 5. 21).

That is an important matter expressed by the psalmist :

*“ Thou wast a God that forgavest them,
Though Thou tookest vengeance of their doings ”* (Psalm 99. 8).

Let us remember this, and increasingly fear before God. Though judgement is His “strange act,” yet He says, “I will recompense. And again, the Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” We may with profit ponder over the three thousand slain by the sword of Levi, and the twenty-four thousand that died in consequence of the wiles of Balaam.

I WILL NOT GO UP IN THE MIDST OF THEE

Beside the sword of judgement by the hand of the tribe of Levi, the plague whereby “the LORD smote the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made,” and their being caused to drink the gold dust of their idolatry (Exodus 32. 20, 35), there is also disclosed the most calamitous result of their iniquity, namely, that the LORD refused to take His place in their midst. It was His purpose to do so as expressed in chapter 25. 8, where we read, “And let them make Me a sanctuary ; that I may dwell among them.” This request of the LORD was consequent on the ratification of the covenant, when He avouched them to be His people, and they avouched the LORD to be their God. See Deuteronomy 26. 16-18. Now the LORD speaks of “the people which thou (Moses) hast brought up out of the land of Egypt ” (Exodus 33. 1-6).

We should note that while the LORD at this juncture appears as One who disowns His people, yet He makes an important promise in the words, “I will send an angel before thee ; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.” Had Moses been content with this offer unquestionably there would have been great evidences of divine power among and through them, but this is a matter altogether different from the LORD’s being in the midst of them. This latter implied His dwelling in the midst of the camp of Israel in the dwelling which He had previously requested His people to make for Him. We thus see clearly the conditional character and the great importance of the divine dwelling, or the house of God. It is so in every dispensation : “whose house are we, *if* we hold fast ” (Hebrews 3. 6). The evidence of God working in power through any company or companies of people, much as this is to be desired and longed for, is not in itself, therefore, an assurance that God has His dwelling among that company, or those companies. Scripture shows that God works in His sovereignty, and performs His counsels. Those were wonderful days of victory when Saul the son of Kish sat upon the throne of Israel, when the Ammonites were so defeated by his valour that not two of them were left together to prolong the contest ; and the people, thrilled with the conquest, exclaimed, “Who is he that said, Shall Saul reign over us ? bring the men, that we may put them to death ” (1 Samuel 11. 11-13). Yet withal in the days of Saul God had no house in which to dwell. See 1 Chronicles 13. 3.

THE TENT PITCHED WITHOUT THE CAMP

In agreement with what we have noted above we find a sad story in Exodus 33. 7-11. "Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it, The tent of meeting." Though the Authorized Version says, the Tabernacle of the congregation, let us be assured that this was not the Tabernacle that was reared by Moses for the LORD to dwell in. Jehovah's dwelling at that time was not made, and it is not until we reach chapter 40 of Exodus that we read of the Tabernacle being erected. But a tent of meeting was pitched by Moses during those days when sin had caused such grief of heart to God, and the place of erection was outside the camp. In this tent God had no resting place. When He came down to speak with His servant Moses His place was *standing at the door*. From this story we may learn the difference between the dwelling and the tent.

HEW THEE TWO TABLES OF STONE

How true to the character of the LORD is His proclamation, "The LORD, the LORD, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth . . ." (Exodus 34. 6)! The burden of the intercession of Moses was *that God would consider this nation His people*, and "*that Thou goest with us*, so that we be separated . . . from all the people that are upon the face of the earth" (Exodus 33. 13-16). In those blissful moments of communion, which Moses enjoyed when the LORD spake face to face with him, as a man speaketh unto his friend, although it was outside the camp whither the LORD had been driven, and where all who sought Him resorted, Moses heard the gracious words: "I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name" (Exodus 33. 17). Then God says to His servant: "Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon the tables the words that were upon the first tables, which thou brakest. And be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me on the top of the mount" (Exodus 34. 1, 2). As Moses hastened, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped on the mountain top the burden of his heart still is, "O Lord, let the Lord, I pray Thee, *go in the midst of us*." There the LORD made a covenant (Exodus 34. 10), and the decalogue was graven on two tables of stone which Moses had hewn. Forty days and forty nights the servant of the LORD was in the mount, and his face shone by reason of his speaking with God. Thus "Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of the testimony in Moses' hand." As he recounts this at the end of the forty years' desert journey he says—"And I turned and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me" (Deuteronomy 10. 5).

SHADOWS OF CHRIST

Within the gold-covered ark, with its mercy-seat above, these tables of the covenant were preserved, and they foreshadow Him, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose heart contained the law of the LORD, as the psalmist foretold :

*"The law of His God is in His heart ;
None of His steps shall slide "* (Psalm 37. 31).

And again in Psalm 40. verse 8 we read,

*"I delight to do Thy will, O My God ;
Yea, Thy law is within My heart."*

In Him God found a heart of flesh on which to write His words. "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thine heart" (Deuteronomy 6. 6), and good is it for the disciples today to attend to this command. "The day is long past," it has been said, "when God wrote on stone, and if He is to write His law on our hearts we must present to Him hearts that are softened by His grace." Let us learn from the perfect Man to keep soft, tender hearts on which the Spirit of God can engrave His message. There is so much within and around that tends to harden the heart, but that hardness is usually the result of cold indifference. The warm glow of the love of God will act on the heart like the sun on the frozen ground, or like heat on the solid wax, and restore susceptibility to the touch of God. The Lord Jesus had nothing within that could harden His heart, for "in Him is no sin," and, like the clean fish which has fins and scales, He made His way down here, resisting all evil from without. Thus God, for the first time in the history of man, gazed on a perfect Man, who had the law (*torah*) within His heart. This is the word used by the Spirit in the above quotations from the Psalms, the root thought of which is *to teach*. It is by means of God's law that we are taught His ways. Would that we could say with the psalmist,

"Oh how love I Thy law !

It is my meditation all the day.

Thy commandments make me wiser than mine enemies ;

For they are ever with me " (Psalm 119. 97, 98).

G. PRASHER.

"THE SONGS OF ASCENTS"

(Continued)

PSALM 127

Is it not naturally a desirable thing that, having built the House, the builders should petition the LORD to sustain the workers and bless them with children who will grow up and become worshippers therein? Is it not a delightful picture given us in this psalm, for such children are indeed an "heritage of the LORD"? No rising early or taking rest later in this work for the LORD, will be sufficient; the LORD must build the House. How often have we seen in our own experience, and in the experience of assemblies, that everything materially possible is present, but "except the LORD build the House, they labour in vain that build it." The rosiest prospects are blighted in a moment, except the Lord be working, reminding us of the words,

“They went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word by the signs that followed. Amen” (Mark 16. 20). His presence and blessing are the essential things.

PSALM 128

Here again is a lovely psalm, for prosperity follows blessing. John wrote, “Beloved, I pray that in all things thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 2). How lovely to see the husband and wife walking in the ways of the Lord and fearing Him, the husband eating of the labour of his hands, the wife fruitful, and the children like olive plants round the table! Here is the family unit, and what a delightful thing it is to see such a family dwelling in God’s House, and to see these young ones continuing, within the House, and even until old age each of them is seen as a “green olive tree in the House of God” (Psalm 52. 8).

Psalm 129

Here again the worshipper pauses to look back. This is a psalm of retrospection—the individual had known affliction from his youth up, and how true of Israel in its harrowing experiences as a nation! Even now, in again building the House, they had known checks and discouragements. “We had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us” (Hebrews 12. 9) and it resulted in giving them reverence. Such experiences as the Remnant had were designed with that object in view, that as they knew chastening, affliction, pressure from many sources to hinder the work, it either deepened the work of God in their heart or they broke down under it. This psalm passes from the individual and his affliction and goes on to review Israel (perhaps here in the Remnant) and the nation in past days.

Psalm 130

The individual is taking close stock of his own soul and its experiences, for then, as now, the believer knows light and shade. Sin rears its head within, in one form or another, and this psalm is largely occupied with the soul’s dealings with God day by day. It might be titled “introspection,” a gazing within. What the individual was in his experiences with God, so the Remnant (and ultimately all Israel) were. It is certain that as a nation we are nothing more than what we are as individuals.

Psalm 131

What a lovely state of mind and heart is viewed in this psalm! probably only true, perfectly, in regard to the Lord! We are soon on the high road to haughtiness. We set our eyes so easily on “place-seeking,” and dabble in matters too wonderful for us. Here is the full-grown man who can say in regard to the LORD and His things,

*“Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul;
Like a weaned child with his mother,
My soul is with me like a weaned child.”*

Such will be found hoping in the LORD, and such is the desire of the individual here for Israel.

Psalm 132

We now come to the last set of three ascents, a triad of songs that bring the worshipper to the topmost pinnacle of praise. The mind of the worshipper is carried back in the song to the bringing up of the ark of the covenant, by David, that worthy man, to "its place, which he had prepared for it" (1 Chronicles 15. 3); for there was commencing at that time the gradual ascent of glory which was to reach its fulness in the time of Solomon. Constantly, in that chapter recurs the phrase, "Thus all Israel brought up" the ark. Such a noble task found its origin in the heart of this pattern servant of the Lord, David. The destruction of Goliath of Gath in the vale of Elah was an early evidence of that zeal for God in David's heart that led on to the more glorious vision, the restoration of the ark to its place and the establishing of the House of God.

What had transpired in the experiences of the Remnant as revealed in the previous ascents or songs, namely, persecution, affliction, weeping and sorrow, were truly the experiences of David.

"LORD, remember for David all his affliction."

But also in Psalm 132 we have laid bare the inmost thoughts of David's heart. What zeal characterized him!—

*"I will not give sleep to mine eyes,
Or slumber to my eyelids;
Until I find out a place for the LORD,
A tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob."*

Though David was not permitted to build this House for God, the responsibility being Solomon's (whose name means rest or peace), we can certainly see the noble mind of David, in that he provided magnificently out of his own personal treasure. Apart from influencing others, he caused the whole nation itself to supply material for the House in abundance. What a whole-hearted giver was David! Here God had rest. Here He could say,

*"This is MY RESTING PLACE for ever;
Here will I dwell, for I have desired it"* (verse 14).

It is well to notice, too, that the House of God in Zion was the Place of God's choice, not the choice of men. Is it not then a natural thought that those who were brethren should find their chiefest joy within the precincts of that House? It was David who "assembled all Israel" to bring up the ark. Under David, Israel reached a divine unity that excelled perhaps any other experience of the nation, even though at this time the ark was but in a tent, and the actual House was built later in the days of Solomon. This leads us to

Psalm 133

which sets forth the lovely truth of brethren dwelling together in unity. It reminds us of Aaron and the unity of his family as priests in divine service in the tabernacle in the wilderness. There was a unity of purpose about their lives because they were carrying out the word of God. It was the main-spring of their service. Is it not a desirable thing that all who are brethren, children of one Father, should be together in the House? Is not that the divine will? Should not all

who are priests, form a priesthood, and serve within the House of God today? No ecumenical councils or conventions will bring such a divine unity about among all believers. The Lord reveals that divine unity is the work of the Spirit of God, revealing to the believer in Christ, that the basis of divine unity is the word of God. "For the words which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from Thee . . .," and further, "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (John 17. 8, 20). How fitting that

Psalm 134

brings before us the service of God and views the servants together in the House of God, standing by night (this world's dark night) and lifting up their hands to the sanctuary, serving within the House by the light of the olive oil in the golden lampstands! Let us hold fast that which we have, that none take our crown. Soon will dawn that day of rapturous ascent which will transcend all we have struggled to behold in these songs of ascents. All honour to these valiant men and women of a past day who sought by all the means in their power, in much weakness at times, to give expression to the will of God in their day for collective service within His House.

*"The LORD bless thee out of Zion;
Even He that made heaven and earth."*

AUSTIN JONES.

LESSONS IN HUMILITY

In Matthew 5. 1-10 (which please read), we have the Lord Jesus speaking early in His public ministry. In these rich beatitudes we shall find much-needed lessons for us today. We are living in a day when men are seeking to fill the places amongst the exalted of the land. They seek the honour of men, rather than the approval of God. Sometimes, even in the things of God, men are similarly occupied! "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (verse 5). Men make mockery of this divine saying today. Need we remind ourselves that these Scriptures are the teaching of the Lord Jesus?

Matthew 11. 28-30. These words were spoken at a later time in the life of the Lord Jesus, when looking upon the multitudes, He saw so many labouring under the burden of sin. "Come unto Me . . . and I will give you rest," were the sweet words which came from His lips. He did not stop there, however, for He further said, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart . . ." Many, as lost and guilty sinners, have listened to the first part, and have received sweet rest. It is not God's intention that they should stop there. No man or woman should stop short of the purpose of God. Because of men doing this, there is much confusion today with regard to God's purposes for those who have received rest. Such

as stop short are accepting the blessings, but are refusing the responsibility which should accompany these blessings.

“Vain man is void of understanding. Yea, man is born as a wild ass’s colt.” The wild ass dwells in the wilderness, without restraint, free to do its own will. Man in his natural state is like this: he desires no restraint. The words of the Lord Jesus are, “Take My yoke upon you . . .” If we are to obey these words, then we must place ourselves under the restraint of His will. He must become our Teacher. The teaching, or the doctrine, of the Lord Jesus is found in the Word of God. The Lord Jesus did further say, “My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.” This will be the happy experience of those who are subject to Him, and have set their hearts to please Him.

Matthew 21. 5-9. Here we see the Lord Jesus as He entered Jerusalem. Matthew, in the Gospel that bears his name, presents the Lord Jesus as “King,” and thus we find no record in this Gospel of the Lord Jesus entering Jerusalem until the time He entered as a King. Never did a king enter his own city in such a lowly fashion as did He, the King of kings! The Lord rode upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass. Possibly this was a redeemed colt. Surely if the King of kings and Lord of lords could ride thus humbly, we should be humble, too! We have little cause to glory in anything, save in His grace.

Philippians 2. 3-8. The church of God in Philippi called for very little reproof from the apostle Paul, who wrote these words to them. They were walking in the ways of God, as they had been taught, knit together in the bonds of love and peace. They were not glorying, one against another, as were some in the church of God in Corinth. The cure for such pride, if it should arise, is found in the words, “in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself” (verse 3). There is a certain amount of pride in each one of us, but if we remember that there are others so much better than we are, it will be a corrective. This is how God would have us think. The question that each one should ask is whether a contemplated act will adversely or beneficially affect his brethren and sisters, and how it will affect the glory of God.

When the Lord Jesus walked this scene, accompanied by His disciples, He once asked them, “What were ye reasoning in the way?” They had to hold their peace “for they had disputed one with another . . . who was the greatest” (Mark 9. 33, 34). Their reasoning was of Satan, for it is ever his work to stir up strife amongst the followers of the Lord. The action of the Lord is instructive; “He took a little child, and set him in the midst of them: . . . He said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in My name, receiveth Me: and whosoever receiveth Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me”. Luke further adds, “for he that is least among you, the same is great” (Luke 9. 48).

It is ours then to be like that little child, to take the low place. This is the spirit of humility which the Lord Jesus taught. This is what we need today in the service of God.

(To be continued, D. V.)

M. HUTCHISON.

“WHAT HAVE THEY SEEN IN THINE HOUSE?”

(2 Kings 20. 15).

These words of the prophet to king Hezekiah may well be used to exercise our hearts today. It seems as if there was ostentation on the king's part in the display of his riches to the men from Babylon. Today it is all too easy for us to be proud of our houses and all they contain. The danger is very real. The austerity (as it would be called) of 100 years ago, when wealthy Christians refused carpets on their floors, has given place to the opposite extreme in many cases. What the world sees in our houses and in our lives is of profound importance. It is either evidence of God's control, and for His glory, or it ministers to our own glory.

Alas! how much there may be in our houses which speaks, not of His rule, but of our own self will! How much of our time and energies are expended to the accumulation of “things,” forgetful of the truth spoken by Christ, Himself! “A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth.” With the increase of material comforts, and what is called “a higher standard of living”, the senses seem to become dulled to the vitality of the truth of the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a great contrast indeed between our modern homes and the statement of our Lord, concerning Himself, that He had “not where to lay His head,” or of Paul, and his companions, “having no certain dwelling place.” But the main consideration for each of us should be (whatever kind of house we are blessed with) that men should see Christ in our lives and homes. Anything which hinders this is bad; anything which fosters this is good.

A. G. JARVIS.

ANOTHER GENERATION

“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the work which He had wrought for Israel” (Judges 2. 10).

These sad words give rise to a very vital question. Who was to blame for this ignorance of the LORD in the rising generation? Did they not want to know the LORD? or were their fathers neglectful of their responsibility to instruct their children? In this particular case in the book of Judges we may never find an answer, but it becomes us as wise men to examine the point as it affects ourselves today, lest such a tragedy should overtake us.

In order that divine testimony may continue, it is necessary that there be the speaking of, and the listening to the word of God. The things of God, which are embodied in the word of God, must be passed on from men to men, from generation to generation. Those who speak the word of God must first of all have heard it, that they, in turn, may pass it on to others. This is the perfect example of our

Lord Jesus Christ who said, "The things which I heard from Him (the Father), these speak I unto the world" (John 8. 26). And besides this, He said to His disciples, whom He called His friends, "All things that I heard from My Father I have made known unto you" (John 15. 15).

Let those who would speak be persuaded that they have somewhat to say as from the Lord (Ephesians 5. 6), otherwise they will be speaking empty words, that is, words with nothing in them, which cannot convey anything to those who hear. It is necessary that men keep the things of the Lord alive in their day, and this they do by speaking about them. This was the commandment given to Israel—"Thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6. 7). The apostle also speaks of spiritual fathers who had gone before, and he says, "Remember them that had the rule over you, which spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13. 7).

Men are often remembered by things which they said or wrote, and it will be a high commendation if a man is remembered in the generation after him as one who spoke the word of God.

In the Lord's prayer recorded in John 17 the Lord said, "The words which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them": but then He adds, "and they received them" (verse 8). This last sentence may appear to be superfluous, but it shows how exact the wording of Scripture is. The Lord Jesus Christ handed over to these men the words of God. They in turn received them in completion of the transaction, and as a voluntary act on their part.

Herein lies a great lesson for the present rising generation. The truth of God is being passed on today by the lips, and by the pens, of faithful men. That is their part in the work, but let those who are at the receiving end be faithful also and let not these precious things fall to the ground and be lost. Otherwise it may be recorded in heaven that there arose another generation which knew not the Lord.

It must have been a comfort to such a man as Paul to know that, amidst the declension and apostasy of his closing days, there were some who were prepared to continue in divine testimony.

His were the giving hands as he handed over the treasures of heaven. The hands of Timothy were the receiving hands, and he in turn was to commit them to faithful men, who would be able to teach others also (2 Timothy 2. 2). H. KING.

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Issued by the Churches of God.

Obtainable from Needed Truth Publishing Office, Robot Buildings, Leeds Road, Bradford, England and from MR. A. TODD, 3, Marshall Avenue, Box 240, Postal Station D, Hamilton, Ontario.

Printed in England by Jas. Harwood Ltd., Derwent Street, Derby.

Price 6/- per year.

Registered for Canadian Magazine Post.